



GOVERNING THE PHILIPPINE PUBLIC: THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE AND THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP WITHOUT IDENTITY

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This paper examines the manner of reconciling the concepts of Public Administration as a discipline and the contemporary actual realities in the Philippines as carried out by the National College of Public Administration and Governance of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. As a center of academic excellence and bestowed with the mandate of advancing nation-building into which utterance of identity is an implicit element, there is no other academic institution where expectations to advance the development of a 'grounded' public policy is so high than the said College. The paper studies the research direction of the NCPAG vis a vis its role in strengthening Philippine Public Administration both as discipline and praxis by developing approaches that are culturally and socially grounded in the Philippine society. The paper however limited its scrutiny to the epistemological element of the researches. Through content analysis, the article analyzed the theoretical frameworks used in the dissertations covered by the study and tries to answer the question of whether or not there is an attempt to develop, let alone to utilize in its analysis of phenomena, an indigenous theory. Initial results of the study had been juxtaposed to the academic orientation, research interests, and history of the College.

Keywords: NCPAG, Public Administration in the Philippines, Indigenization of Social Sciences, Public Administrative Theory

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QUEST FOR 'GROUNDED' ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership and the quality of governance are integral elements in the success of any nation. If systems and processes of governance and leadership styles are to be effective, these must be within the social and cultural milieu of the governed. Owing to the long colonial history of the Philippines, questions and issues pertaining to identity hound not just the realm of identity politics but even the discipline of public administration in the country. If public administration is truly to be considered an applied science, it must always be culturally and socially grounded.

'Grounding' public administration has been one of the major concerns of both those in the 'ivory tower' (academics and scholars alike) of the universities searching for indigenous theoretical anchoring and those in the public sector searching for contextualized leadership and governance frameworks. The overwhelming preponderance of 'Western', which is to a large extent American, public administration theories and concepts in contemporary national and local issues and concerns manifests that the identity crisis has indeed penetrated the very capillaries of public administration as a discipline in the Philippines. The search for a genuine Filipino ethos of Philippine public administration has been the preoccupation of scholars since the 1980s up to date. Such underpinnings have been the topic of investigation in conferences and public discourses among practitioners and academics in the country.

TOWARDS INDIGENOUS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

The course to indigenization indeed had been one of the major concerns of the National College of Public Administration and Governance in the

University of the Philippines being the 'premier' educational institution in the country in the field of public administration. In a conference of educators in the field, Jose Abueva (2008), the former Dean of the said College, pointed this out. He stressed the need to develop a public administration perspective that is truly within the purview of Philippine historical, social, and political contexts. The inability of the field to offer 'grounded' expositions of indigenous concepts leads to the paradox of dissatisfaction of Filipinos with how democracy and the overall system of governance work on one hand while simultaneously calling for public participation in the same system on the other. This paradox is being attributed by Abueva to the inability of the Filipinos to grasp the concept and system of governance imposed upon them without modifying it based on the socio-political and cultural realities they live by. Thus, the result is a system that does not necessarily respond to and alien from the societal conditions into which the same system is supposedly designed to be implemented.

Similarly, Brillantes and Fernandez (2013) questioned the relevance and applicability of prevalent Western paradigms in the praxis of public administration in the Philippines. Coining the phenomenon as identity crisis, the authors call for the development of theoretical underpinnings based on the platform of "emerging practices or existing indigenous and local practices that partake of the nature of 'public administration' and 'governance'..." (p. 83). As an applied social science, public administration should develop 'grounded' theoretical lenses into which praxis can be evaluated that comes from local practices where these theories emanated. It has been suggested that Western views cannot truly capture practices that takes cultural and social peculiarities of the Philippines. This can be summarized in the quotation below (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2013):





“However, questions about the relevance and applicability of Western paradigms and models have arisen considering the unique contexts of the praxis of public administration in the Philippines...there has to be a recognition that local and indigenous forms and practices have to provide the platform of analysis of public administration and the development of public administration theory and not the other way around, namely, bottom-up rather than top-down.” (pp. 82-83)

Despite the calls of both practitioners and academics alike to indigenize public administration, a clear and coherent discussion about what specific course to take in the process is glaringly lacking. Though there are constant and persistent calls to the effect, the process and ways as to how this path can be taken still remain obscure. In the absence of a clear and coherent characterization of what a ‘grounded’ public administration ethos is, the writer is of the belief that the same can be considered as indigenous in, at the very least, three respects (dela Cruz, 2015): 1. Epistemology, 2. Methodology, and 3. Content.

The answer to whether public administration is grounded can be demonstrated if it is anchored on and/or coming from a theory that has been developed within the context of the people it is aimed to be applied. So vital this aspect is that a ‘grounded’ theory is considered as the very backbone to where succeeding researches and studies can be hooked into. In an earlier study of dela Cruz (2015) in examining philosophy as a discipline in the Philippines vis a vis its grounding to Philippine contexts, it emphasizes the significance of developing a ‘grounded’ theory that will result to the efflorescence of Filipino Philosophy in the claim: “the immediate concern of Filipino philosophers and students of philosophy in the Philippines today is not much to look for a language, for as clearly expressed the Filipino language offers more than enough words that would utter Filipino

ways of thinking, than to search for clear epistemological grounding and explore precise philosophical methodology where future studies can be concretely grounded” (p. 166). Taking from the stated claim, it is not just desirable but totally necessary to develop theoretical foundations that will serve as springboard where future studies in the field can be anchored. This is especially the case in a study of an applied science such as public administration. Concepts of administration and governance must take an epistemological grounding that is neither alien nor detached from the very ‘public’ that it wishes to serve.

Secondly, public administration is grounded if it uses, in understanding processes, patterns, and structures, indigenous methodology. Several disciplines that have ventured in the narrow path of indigenization have proven that a ‘grounded’ methodology is not just possible but fruitful as well in understanding phenomena within their respective fields. Hence, history developed *pantayong pananaw*; psychology, *mga metodo sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino*; anthropology, *pilipinolohiya*; and philosophy, *pilosopiyang Pilipino*, among others.

Lastly, a ‘grounded’ public administration can be characterized as such if it exudes leadership styles, institutional processes, and governance-related concerns that are within the values, goals and aims, and traits of being Filipino. In other words, a gaze that discharges ‘Filipino-ness’ is an authentic Philippine public administration.

NCPAG: THE ROAD TO INDIGENIZATION

From the foregoing, this paper aims to examine how the path to reconciling the concepts of public administration in the Philippines and the contemporary realities in the Philippines





is being carried out by the National College of Public Administration and Governance of the University of the Philippines. As a center of academic excellence and bestowed with the mandate of advancing nation-building, which clarification and eventual utterance of identity is an implicit element, there is no other academic institution where expectations to advance the development of a 'grounded' public policy is so high than the NCPAG. The paper examines the research direction of the college vis a vis its role in strengthening Philippine public administration by developing approaches that are culturally and socially grounded in the Philippine society. This research direction will be clearly elucidated in the dissertations being produced by the College in its graduate school. The research outputs of graduate students manifest not just the inclinations of the researchers but these will also show the overall direction and trajectory of NCPAG as an educational institution. The development of theories and perspective from the praxis of administration and governance is indeed the duty of educational institutions. It is in these mechanism of the society that nuances and concepts from modes of actual human practices must be elucidated. There is no other societal institution where the exploration and utterance of what are seemingly abstract concept can be elaborated. These concepts, in turn, will set as guide and patterns for practitioners in the field. In order to critically analyze and examine the research track of NCPAG this current study takes on the output of doctoral students. Dissertations are considered in any academic institutions as the culmination of all the theoretical inclinations, perspectivist disposition, and pragmatic propensity not just of the individual writers but of the institution in general.

Specifically, the paper will examine doctoral dissertations from 1990 to 2010. The

periodization is anchored on the view that academic discourse pertaining to indigenization of public administration in the Philippines had its advent in the last semester of the 80s. Though the path of indigenization in other social science disciplines came rather earlier, it was only during the 1980s that this trend has been explored in the said field as can be gleaned with the publications of the faculty members of the college. It can therefore be assumed that since the discourse of indigenization had been carried-out by this time, the research directions as displayed by these dissertations and the academic leaning of NCPAG will also be within that line. The review of these dissertations will show, whether or not, scholars of public administration in particular and the NCPAG in general give credence to such trajectory. The paper will however limit its scrutiny to the epistemological element of the researches. It will examine the theoretical frameworks utilized in the dissertations and whether or not there is an attempt to develop, let alone to utilize in its analysis of phenomena, an indigenous theory. Initial results of the study will be juxtaposed to the academic orientation, research interests, and experiences of the faculty members of the College. Moreover, an examination of the curriculum and changes thereto (if any) of NCPAG will also be considered for a holistic conclusion. Proposals based on the findings will be provided towards the strengthening of 'identity' of Philippine public administration in the College.

METHODOLOGY

Archival work has been done in order to cull the epistemology of the dissertations covered by the study. This descriptive study utilizes content/discourse analysis of the theoretical frameworks of the dissertations to be coupled with a brief





historical rendering of the history, thrusts, and trajectory of the College. All of these will be subjected to careful analysis and hermeneutic interpretations in order to formulate sound conclusion and useful recommendations.

There are a total of seventy nine (79) dissertations that the NCPAG produced for its Doctor of Public Administration program from 1990-2010. However, only seventy four (74) works have been located in NCPAG Library. Five (5) works were not able to found. Hence, this study will include in the examination only the seventy four (74) works that were located. Nevertheless, 74 out of 79 will already reflect the theoretical foundations that are prevalent in the said College. These works will be thematically analysed and theories will be culled from them.

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

The National College of Public Administration and Governance was initially established as Institute of Public Administration on June 15, 1952. The said establishment in the University of the Philippines was initiated by the Americans through the University of Michigan. At first, the Institute only offered Master of Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration degrees. This is apart from the various programs that the Institute developed to cater the public administration capability needs of civil servants at the time.

From the Institute's establishment, it has taken several names that would manifest the evolving role of the Institution. The Institute of Public Administration had been renamed to Graduate School of Public Administration on March 14, 1963. In 1966 it was called School of Public Administration into which in the

same year it was renamed to College of Public Administration. Finally, on November 26, 1998 it got its present name of National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG, n.d.).

THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE SEARCH OF FILIPINO IDENTITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The development of a coherent and precise epistemological grounding is *sine qua non* to the genesis of any matured institution that considers itself as a 'science', much so in an exercise that involves the welfare of the state in general such as Public Administration. Intricacies in the turf of public administration and governance in terms of practice desire for theoretical utterances that will set the springboard and eventually guide practitioners in the field. Challenges and demands of public administration as manifested in the web of institutional crossroads, such as economic concerns, constitutional philosophy, statutory construction, political conflicts, nuances in decentralization and devolution, among other things, coupled with the need to develop a welfare-state that would guarantee equity, fairness, and justice, call for substantial conceptual underpinnings in the form of public administration theory. Englehart (2001), a public administration practitioner for decades in the Department of Job and Family Services of the State of Ohio clearly explicated the point at hand. The public administrator, as she pointed out in demonstrating the marriage of theory and practice, must not only be organizationally sound and competent but must be able to fuse theory and practice. Demonstrating her points about this respect she claims that:

“Without an understanding of theory, the public administration practitioner becomes merely the user of a 'cookbook', a step-by-step guide any person of reasonable intelligence could apply. Practice without





theory is a hollow exercise and public management without theory is mere tinkering with systems. The absence of theory within practice greatly diminishes the perception of public administration as a profession.” (Englehart, p. 371)

The statement above is both highlighting the role of theorizing in Public Administration as a field of science and floating the need for practitioners to anchor their practice of policy formulations and hook their organizational decisions in verified and tested public administration theories. If there is a marriage indeed between theory and practice then conceptualization of theories in this area must be grounded in the very society that these theories about governing the public had been extracted. This will not just connect the abstract realm to the practical but this will also lead to clear ‘identity formations’ of Public Administration as an area of study.

For the reasons stipulated above it goes without saying that an evaluation of the theories that are prevalent in the writings of dissertations in NCPAG is necessary since as mentioned elsewhere in this paper, these dissertations manifest not just the author’s immediate concerns but they also show the thrust and directions of the Center. It is not enough that there exists a practice of public administration in the Philippines but this practice must definitely be accompanied by underlying epistemology, let alone indigenous epistemology.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

As earlier alluded, there are 74 doctoral dissertations in the National College of Public Administration and Governance from 1990-2010. These research works were revisited to determine the theoretical standpoints that were used in viewing, assessing, defining, and understanding concepts of public administration

and governance in the Philippines. It has been observed in the process of reading the dissertations that searching for the epistemological lens in the studies included in this paper, these being papers that overemphasize praxis (though analysis in this respect will be provided in the succeeding portions of this article) is not an easy task. It must be noted that in the process of examining the research works, there were some research materials into which a clear identification of the theories being deployed is missing.

There are research works that lucidly identified and explained in the theoretical framework and in the methodology part the theories they used in understanding their research problematique. Since the authors of the dissertations clearly explicated their theoretical anchorage, an assessment of whether or not these are indigenous nuances can be easily captured. However, in the search for the underlying theoretical concepts of dissertations that either does not have theoretical framework or such framework does not necessarily reflect the over-all assumptions in the material, the researcher had to go back and forth to the conceptual framework (though not cited in many instances, the theories used are imbued in the formulation of the conceptual framework), methodology and questionnaire (there are works that take their questionnaire from patterns provided by public administration theories), review of related literature (this happens when the foregoing are tainted with blurry assumptions), and in some worst cases, if in case all parts mentioned above could not give a clear clue as to the dominant theories in the paper, the interpretation of data in the last chapter had been hermeneutically scrutinized (this task is rather tedious since going back and forth from the interpretation to the review of related literature is necessary).



Table 1 – Theoretical Anchorage based on Study Area and Country of Origin

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN								
Type/Area of Theory	United Kingdom	United States	Germany	Southeast Asia	Africa	Australia	Philippines	LA
1.Public Administration Theory								
a. Administrative/Bureaucratic Capability		5	3					
b. New Public Administration		1						
c. Development Administration		9						1
d. Public Policy Development &/or Implementation		6						
e. Public Welfare/Service		1			1			
f. Systems Theory		1				1		
g. Citizens/Participation	1		1	1			1	
h. Devolution & Decentralization		1						
i. Organization & Culture		1						
j. Governance Theory		7					1	
k. IT Management Theory	1							
1. Financial Administration		1						
2. Political Science	1	3						
3. Philosophy		1	1					
4. Economic Theory	5	2					1	
5. Psychosocial Theory		2						
6. Grounded Theory							3	
7. Technology & Innovation		1						
8. Feminist Theory	1						1	
9. Sociology			1	1		1		
10. Counter Insurgency							1	
11. Human Rights		1						
12. Historical Studies (2 works)*								
TOTAL : 74	9	43	6	2	1	2	8	1

*The two historical studies do not clearly show theoretical grounding, discussions provided below

From this archival work, the research identifies the theoretical anchorage of the the 74 dissertations included in the covered years (1990-2010). Theories had been thematically grouped based on the areas of study where such theory can historically been assumed to fall under. The country of origin of the theory is also provided in the table for a clear presentation of the data. The country of origin had been identified based on the locality into which the proponents developed their respective theories. As such, it can be said that these theories were epistemologically formed within the social, political, and governance contexts of their country of origin. It must also be mentioned that there are some dissertations that utilized more than one theoretical standpoints. However, careful examination of these cases reveals that the theories used by these dissertations belong to the same area of study and they mixed theories coming from the same country of origin. Hence, the theories that were used have been taken to belong in a single category by this paper. This in effect will produce 74 theoretical bases that is equivalent to 74 dissertations that were scrutinized.

DISCIPLINAL IDENTITY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

As previously mentioned, the table above shows the theories based on their areas of study. It can be observed from the data that majority of the research works take public administration theories as theoretical foundations of their analysis. Forty five (45) dissertations out of 74 or 61 percent of the works utilized epistemological framing based on public administration field.



In a coherent essay discussing the seeming ‘identity crisis’ of Public Administration in the Philippines, Danilo Reyes (1979) identified that this supposed ‘identity crisis’ of the field takes two layers/levels of manifestation. The first layer concerns itself to what critics of Public Administration as a field of science call as the ‘absence of concrete normative and definitional theory’. “Public Administration, as a disciplinary enterprise today continues to suffer – or so its scholars claim – from sheer ambiguity, if not absence of a well-defined and concrete normative and definitional theory” (p. 1). This ‘intellectual crisis’, so to speak, stems from the seeming over-dependence of Public Administration to Political Science so much so that the former is considered to be a child that cannot stand on its own in terms of conceptual foundations without the latter.

“Public Administration as an academic enterprise has to the present-day continuously languished under the predicament of being referred to as a child of Political Science. Whether the child is now mature enough to be treated separately or independently of its mother is a problematical issue which scholars of the field of Public Administration hope to resolve. And in dealing with the problem squarely, the question of Public Administration’s conceptual base and definitional boundaries will continue to crop up.” (Reyes, p. 6)

As shown by the table above, it is more clear than apparent that the concern of Public Administration in terms of ‘intellectual crisis’, pointed out by Reyes as the first layer of ‘identity crisis’ of the field, is no longer a concern that calls for alarm today. It can be inferred from the fact that most of the dissertations can be anchored using hard-core public administration theories developed elsewhere as herein showed by the examined data. As indicated in the table, there are enough theories in the fields of development administration, administrative capability, governance theory, and public policy

development and implementation, among others. This goes without saying that indeed, generally speaking, the field had already reached the point of being developed as a legitimate ‘body of knowledge’ capable of understanding and uttering analyses independent of its mother discipline.

To further demonstrate this point, it can also be surmised that only four (4) studies take Political Science as their theoretical anchorage. Two of the four of these studies utilized theories on democratic practices; one in assessing the administration of elections in the Philippines (Espinoza-Abadingo, 1990) and the other in examining corporate governance vis a vis standards of transparency and accountability in managing the Clark Special Economic Zone (Reyes, 2008). The third examined the review power of the judiciary, particularly the Philippine Supreme Court that used the political science theory of separations of power in its underlying epistemological assumptions (Carmona, 2003). International human rights framework is the theoretical anchorage of Librea’s work (2010) in understanding development and governance projects initiated both by the government and the civil society. The very minimal number of dissertations that opted to lay foundations on political science theories manifest the ‘independence’ of public administration as a field of study in the Center.

In explicating the evolution of the field of Public Administration, Brillantes and Fernandez (2008) claimed that the same can be divided into two major phases: the traditional/classical phase from the late 1800s to the 1950s and the modern phase that proceed after the 1950s. Modern Public Administration can still be divided into subfields those are as follows:





1. Development Administration - 1950s-1960s;
2. New Public Administration - 1970s;
3. New Public Management - 1980s-1990s;
4. Reinventing Government - 1990s; and
5. PA as Governance - 1990s-present (Brillantes & Fernandez, p. 2)

It has been manifested based on the area of theory used in the dissertations that Development Administration takes the biggest share having ten (10) dissertations extracting theoretical notions from. In the works of De Guzman (1986) and Corpuz (1986), Development Administration was suggested to be the 'most appropriate' framework to which studies relating to Philippine public administration can be initiated from. "The term 'development administration' was used to suggest that it may be an appropriate framework to examine the State's experience as it tries to rebuild its institutions within a democratic framework, as it struggles to new economic, political, and social challenges, and as it adapts to the trends and demands of globalization" (Brillantes & Fernandez, p. 5). The sheer number of works within the area points to the fact that the calls to use Development Administration perspective apparently came into fruition.

DOMINANCE OF WEBERIAN CONCEPT OF BUREAUCRACY

Concepts developed by Administrative/Bureaucratic Capability, which is among the traditional areas of public administration still remains to be attractable having eight (8) studies falling within the area. It must also be mentioned though, that throughout the researches, whether those that utilized classical or modern theoretical underpinnings, concepts within the parameters of 'classical' features of bureaucracy developed by Max Weber that had been re-echoed, albeit with twists and turns, by succeeding scholars, consistently appear both in form and substance.

Concepts of hierarchy, division of labor, formally written rules and procedures, impersonality and neutrality, parameters provided by the traditional notion of bureaucratic efficiency, were among the consistent nuances being brought forward by most of the studies examined in this paper. It can be interpreted that though Modern Public Administration has been integrated in the academic system of NCPAG, traces of the 'classical/traditional' areas are still being carried-out. This trajectory has long been the concern of Amelia Varela (1995). In calling for a change of paradigm from the traditional western organization model to the administrative/organizational culture perspective, Varela cited that public administration scholarship in the country is still largely based on the concept of Weberian bureaucracy. "The Philippine administrative system was patterned after a western organizational model: that of Weberian bureaucracy. As such, its dominant features followed the structural and systems perspectives of organizational theory. It enshrined the bureaucratic values of rationality, efficiency, and effectiveness and later those of responsiveness, equity, and participation" (Varela, p. 161). With the inclusion of some modern public administration theories, as illustrated by the dissertations, the claims of Varela in 1995 still resemble the case today.

FROM TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO GOVERNANCE TRADITION

Governance and public policy development and implementation theories were also among the most applied frameworks in dissertations that used hard-core public administration theories. The shift to 'Governance Tradition' has long been one of the thrusts of the Center. This was precisely the *raison d'être* of the inclusion of the term Governance in the School of Public





Administration. Cariño (2002) mentioned in reiterating the shift to the term “Governance”:

“Governance like New Public Administration and Development Public Administration has left the temple of value neutrality. A major element of governance is that it transcends the state and includes activities of the private sector and civil society. In the Philippines, our venture into voluntary sector management has rested on the same idea: that public administration must study all mechanisms – not just government – that purport to serve the public interests.” (Cariño, p. 691)

The proliferation of studies in the private sector and civil society go with the efflorescence of theoretical lens within the new concept of governance. Next to development public administration and administrative capability theories is governance approach, which eight (8) dissertations established conceptual base. With this it can be mentioned that the shift to ‘Governance’ had been successfully translated into research works in the guided research program of the institution. “This is a focus that NCPAG has formally adopted in its new name, as it recognizes the scope of public administration to include all institutions and processes recognized in governance.” (Cariño, p. 692)

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: LACK OF DEVOLUTION AND DECENTRALIZATION THEORETICAL FRAME

Despite the relatively high number of studies exploring Philippine experience of devolution brought about by the enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991, it is surprising that only one study utilized a theory within the devolution and decentralization area. This shows that the focus of other studies, though within the concern of decentralization, can be said to fall within other areas like administrative

capability of local government units, economic development of various locales, etc. Hence, it can be surmised that an over-all assessment of the Philippine’s quest for devolution that had its advent in 1990s, is still lacking up to 2010.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMIC THEORIES

In terms of epistemological anchoring outside the area of Public Administration, economic theory is the most utilized: seven (7) dissertations. This illustrates that outside the area of hard-core Public Administration, the discipline of economics offers theoretical anchorage where public issues and policies can be evaluated into. Political science and grounded theories both have three (3), while philosophy, feminism, and psychosocial fields have two (2). Other areas such as technology and innovation, sociology, counter-insurgency, and human rights have one (1) study within their respective frames.

INDIGENIZATION AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY EXPLORED

It must be mentioned that the two (2) dissertations that offered some sort of ‘intellectual history’ of the field of Public Administration in the Philippines do not clearly carry with the study a clear theoretical framework. However, the contribution of these studies in offering indigenous nuances in Public Administration as a field in the Philippines is immense. Danilo Reyes (1992), who is considered as one of the pillars of the self-realization of Philippine Public Administration, stated his comprehensive search for the heritage of the field in his dissertation. With the objective of identifying important and significant shifts and threads of ideas and issues that have guided the development of





the field in the Philippines, Reyes made an examination of more than 800 published articles of then College of Public Administration from 1952 to 1992. From there, Reyes tried to offer explanations in the development of the field both as a philosophy and science. By demonstrating the value of his study, Reyes (1995) argued that: “It seeks to address the issue by embarking on an analytical journey of intellectual roots and disciplinary heritage and which it is hoped, will help stimulate initiatives towards building or deriving the basis of what is becoming an elusive quest towards defining an ‘indigenous Public Administration’ that would capture and reflect the vicissitudes of the Philippine social milieu” (p. 9). This track has indeed one of the life works of Reyes throughout his journey as a scholar of Public Administration in the Philippines.

The same track had been propounded by Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase (2007). Almase’s study examined State of the Nation Addresses and speeches of Post Commonwealth presidents of the Philippines. It extracts the underlying philosophy of public administration in the Philippines as enunciated by Philippine presidents through their speeches and addresses. In so doing, the author writes: “it tries to examine whether there is or was an indigenous philosophy of administration that signified the idiosyncratic struggles and saga of Filipinos throughout history” (vii). The study, through historical renderings and content analysis of presidential speeches, searched for fundamental principles and propositions in administering the Philippine government. This had been hoped to provide ample theoretical foundations and philosophical contents for public administration field in the Philippines. The dissertation concluded that indigenous Public Administration can be manifested during the times of Quezon, Laurel, and Marcos.

“In the first authoritarian period, the dominant administrative thought that Quezon and Laurel claimed as truly Filipino was the core principle of promoting the good of the State, not of the individuals who ought to render service and sacrifice for the security and sustenance of the State. For Marcos in the second authoritarian regime, the Filipino ideology that he incorporated in his revolutionary agenda of building a new socio-political order was said to reflect the unique struggles and aspirations of the Filipino masses, not the historic interests and ambitions of the elite and of the aliens.” (p. 511)

Though an attempt to cull ‘indigenous’ notions of public administration and governance had been made in the study, the claim that the mentioned modes of Philippine history manifest the indigenous ideology is rather sparse and to an extent vague. The methodology used by the author and the data that were examined i.e. presidents’ speeches and addresses are not repositories of clear operant Filipino concepts of bureaucratic public administration. This is an expected result of culling notions from presidential speeches and addresses that normally express motherhood, albeit very sketchy, remarks and nuances.

PREPONDERANCE OF FOREIGN CONCEPTIONS OF ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

Going back to Table 1, it can be inferred that there is a ‘glaring’ absence of indigenous theories both in the areas of Public Administration and the allied fields. This shows both the failure of Public Administration as a field in the Philippines to offer normative concepts coming from its different sub-fields that either stem from or developed in line with Philippines social, cultural, administrative, and governance milieu and the persistent chain of the same field in Western concepts hence creating a discipline that is either alien from or does not totally capture Philippine contexts of administration





and governance. The table shows that in terms of theoretical foundation, the dissertations from 1990-2010 have taken largely foreign theories in evaluating Philippine governance realities. Out of 74 dissertations, 64 or 86% were developed using theoretical lenses coming from different countries. Forty three (43) of these studies utilized American theories and concepts. It must be mentioned that these theoretical perspectives definitely developed within American social and political contexts. The findings of this research validates the claims of scholars, as stipulated elsewhere in this paper, that public administration in the Philippines largely rests on American nuances and theories. The overwhelming number of foreign, not to mention American concepts, loudly presents the continued epistemological dependence of the Center in particular or perhaps the entire field in general in terms of theoretical assumptions to foreign scholarship. To say the least, this trajectory does not only neglect Philippine idiosyncrasies in understanding what is supposed to be 'grounded' governance but it also devoid Public Administration as a field in the Philippines its very concept of 'identity'.

THE SEARCH FOR INDIGENOUS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORIES

Be that as it may, the hope of anchoring studies coming from indigenous theories is not totally eclipsed by the fact that majority of the dissertations are founded on Western concepts. There are eight (8) researches that opted to use indigenous theories in examining administrative and governance issues. Three (3) of the dissertations used grounded theory, and one each from citizens' participation, governance theory, economic theory, feminism, and counter-insurgency.

The use of grounded theory in the social sciences is premised on the assumption that the lens that should be deployed in a study can only be extracted from the very context it wishes to understand. This approach enables the researcher to overcome the usual predicament of gap between the theory and the empirical contexts in the social sciences. Instead of initially favoring a perspective of understanding being provided by an established epistemological frame, grounded theorizing develops theoretical and conceptual anchorage from the methodological analysis of the data being gathered in the research. As such, researches within this area develop a highly qualitative approach since theoretical presuppositions must be taken from the locale of one's study area. As mentioned, there are three (3) researches that develop arguments within grounded theory. In an assessment of the administrative capability of three municipalities in the Visayas in terms of disaster preparedness, Pujiono (1997) let out the 'concept of disaster' of the people in the localities included in the study. The indigenous concept of good governance was the main locus of study of Domingo (2004). By culling the notion of what good governance is for the members of selected civil society organizations, the said study examined how the same can be practiced within the upper officers of their respective Boards. In systematically assessing the Official Development Assistance (ODA) trends and flows in the Philippines, Imdad (2010) was able to develop the Key Model Framework: ODA Rectangular Framework on Good Governance that are within the scope, concerns, and issues peculiarly experienced in the Philippines. The model, which includes good governance grounded concepts viewed in line with the different areas of concern of ODA, can be used for further studies in ODA management in the Philippines.

Indeed, the use of grounded theory in public administration can be seen to be valuable in two respects. It fulfils dual functions. For one,



it offers theorizing that is within the social, political, philosophical, and historical contexts of the object of examination. While achieving its track to a 'grounded' approach it also leads to the development of a 'grounded' theory that can be used by future researchers in the same field.

In terms of 'hard-core' public administration area, two dissertations used indigenous theories: one within the governance framework and another on public participation. Buendia (2001) utilized a paradigm within the public participation that focuses on community-based expressions of participation by the 'organized disadvantaged basic sectors' of the Philippine society. In understanding the behavior of people's organizations in Philippine contemporary history, from the Marcos Regime up to the Estrada Administration, the study eventually formulated a framework that defines the elements and dimensions of people's participation in governance. The framework that Buendia developed in 2001 was subsequently used by Ferrer (2006) to understand the principles, concepts, contexts, and methods of community governance in various local communities in the Philippines. Together with Buendia's framework, Ferrer also used the participatory concepts of Manalili (1990) that is considered not just a theory that has been developed by a Filipino but a framework that takes peculiarities of Philippine contexts as the starting point. In summarizing the views of Manalili: "*Bago magpiyesta, may komite de pestejos, may komite sa parada, komite sa koronasyon at pasayaw, at iba pang mga gawain. Walang nagpasya nito, at dumating ang piyesta, matagumpay ang labat. Nangangahulugan na may kakayahan at sariling pamamalakad ang tao*" (Ferrer, p. 20), as quoted by Ferrer.

The preponderance of feminist scholarship in the Philippines had also enabled one research to develop lenses within indigenous theory.

Sarmiento (2005) evaluated the gender and development mainstreaming policies of the Cities of Las Piñas and Quezon and the Municipality of San Juan, Batangas. In the said assessment, the researcher used the earlier developed gender-responsive local governance theory by Masilungan (2003). This framework is a culture-based theory on gender that is primarily based on the workings and dealing of Local Government Units in the Philippines. Another study that uses indigenous theories is the dissertation of Adonis Rizon Bajao (2009) assessing the country's counterinsurgency program. Through historical and comparative study of the varying thematic transitions and administrative adjustment of the government's counterinsurgency efforts from Marcos to Arroyo Administrations, the study concluded that the government should take a wholistic stance in fighting insurgencies. The research used the different indigenous theories on counterinsurgency in the Philippines. Crisol's Triad Model, Aguirre's Public Safety Theory, Quarter Storms approach, Yap's Macro 4 theory, and Sosmena's Internal Defense and Development Concept were among the indigenous theories that serve as the anchoring points of the study.

Finally, despite the predominance of the use of economic theories from the United Kingdom and the United States in the analyzed dissertations, there is one research that takes anchorage on Philippine economic goals. In examining the policies of the government in advancing and developing the maritime industry, Ogbinar (1990) utilized the national economic agenda of the government as theoretical lens in calling for the over-all development of the industry. In the end, the study concludes by establishing policy implementation framework for the maritime transportation industry where he identified different phases of implementation.



CONCLUSION: TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROUNDED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY

It has been assumed in the earlier part of this paper that development of theory is one of the prerequisite of any discipline in order to establish its epistemology, in turn, a necessary element to the growth of any social science discipline. As such, if any discipline would aspire for indigenization, again, as earlier alluded, it must set the epistemology into where succeeding researches can be anchored into. The overwhelming preponderance of Western concepts particularly American theories had been shown by this paper in its scrutiny of the epistemological foundations of the Ph.D. dissertations of NCPAG from 1990-2010. Despite of the consistent calls of academics in the Center to view scholarly works in indigenous perspectives since late 1980s, it is unfortunate that very few heeded to such calls. Indeed, this finding demonstrates an example of a social science that is bestowed with identity crisis. The same predicament i.e. search for identity of public administration as an area of study and as practice, was also one of the major preoccupations of American Public Administration towards the end of the 19th century. The Father of American Public Administration, Woodrow Wilson, in his pioneering work entitled *The Study of Public Administration* (1887), clearly enunciated the need for Public Administration as a practical science, to aspire for 'grounded' approach. By criticizing the content, method, and theories being applied to American Public Administration and its seeming captivity to European nuances and concepts, Wilson made a beautifully-written statement that is also timely and applicable to the current 'identity crisis' of Philippine Public Administration:

"No; American writers have hitherto taken no very important part in the advancement of this science. It has found its doctors in Europe. It is not of our making; it is a foreign science, speaking very little of

the language of English or American principle. It employs only foreign tongues; it utters none but what are to our minds alien ideas. Its aims, its examples, its conditions, are almost exclusively grounded in the histories of foreign races, in the precedents of foreign systems, in the lessons of foreign revolutions. It has been developed by French and German professors, and is consequently in all parts adapted to the needs of a compact, but to a complex and multiform state, and made to fit highly decentralized forms of government. If we would employ it, we must Americanize it, and that not formally in language merely, but radically, in thought, principle, and aim as well. It must learn our constitutions by heart; must get the bureaucratic fever out of its veins; must inhale much free American air." (Wilson, p. 202)

Be that as it may, the studies grounded on indigenous theories suggest that the road to identity formation in public administration is not at all impossible. The fact that nuances and conceptions that are 'grounded' and indigenous can be used as theoretical foundations manifest that indigenization of the field is only a matter of will. Unless public administration learns Filipino ways, speaks the different languages of the Philippines, uses Filipino values and aspirations, proposes solutions that are culturally, socially, and historically grounded to the Philippines, there cannot be a real Philippine public administration. Public administration both in theory and praxis must be 'grounded' indeed, using the words of Woodrow Wilson: If we would employ it, we must Filipinize it, and that not formally in language merely, but radically, in thought, principle, and aim as well. It must learn our constitutions by heart; must get the bureaucratic fever out of its veins; must inhale much free Filipino air. The current predicament and problems in the Philippine public administration practice can indeed only find its doctors in the Philippines. The sixty years of existence of the discipline of Public Administration in the Philippines that is overly dependent on Western theories had brought the practice of public administration far from





maturity. This should have sounded the alarm bells that should commence a 'paradigm shift', to use Edward Said's term, towards a public administration that is grounded in the culture, society, language, and values of the people it wishes to govern. Only through this that Public Administration can be considered as truly Philippine Public Administration. After all, by doing this, the discipline has nothing to lose but its chains.

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