



BRIDGING THE DISCIPLINE AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN PHILIPPINE GOVERNANCE: CONCERNS AND PROSPECTS OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

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Knowledge generated no matter how intellectual and pedagogic without any aim to improve the conduct of lives of men is like having a nuance of perpetual light without any single idea of darkness. Hence, academic research in educational institutions must not only display epistemological, substantial, and methodological prowess but it must always keep abreast to man's preoccupation no matter how mundane and worldly. While it is the aim of educational institutions to unveil 'abstract' elucidations pertaining to human existence it is also its duty to make the same man enjoy existence life without restraint, both ideologically and materially. It is within this backdrop that the paper examines how the Science of Public Administration as manifested by researches produced for the past decades in an institution that introduced it in the country had been carried-out vis a vis governance, leadership, and political issues that beset the Philippines at the time of the writing of these researches. The paper manifests, albeit subtly, the link between academic research program and their aims on one hand and the manner the ivory tower bends its knees to maintain correspondence with reality on the other.

Keywords: Public Administration, Philippine Public Administration, Intellectual History, NCPAG, Knowledge-Power Relations

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KNOWLEDGE, POWER, AND THE ACADEME

In elucidating the interconnectedness of power and knowledge in his ‘genealogical’ analysis of early societies, Michel Foucault claims: “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, ‘becomes true’. Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations.”¹ Indeed, as Foucault clearly explained, legitimized knowledge is a source of power. Such statement holds true not only in early societies but it remains a valid assertion in the midst of contemporary socio-political contexts.

As one of the venues where knowledges are being legitimized and subsequently being formally structured, educational institutions are amongst the main actors in this interplay of power-knowledge relations. Consequently, educational institutions manifest and hold power being a venue of legitimated knowledge that are carried out by the body of sciences. This same body of knowledge, in turn, becomes the very basis of and, at the same time, comes from specific nuances provided by human interactions and societal relations. Lucid of this exercise as a formidable tool that exudes political influence, educational institutions in general and the social sciences in particular are also into the enterprise of simultaneously understanding social phenomenon through its epistemological renderings of social events and draws normative

principles to the conduct of institutional affairs. In due course it also offers suggestions, backed by assumptions founded on critical and painstaking analysis of societal events, that are thriving towards economic, political, social, and to some extent even cultural, emancipation.

In other words, educational institutions are bestowed with dual functions. On the one hand, it tries to develop ‘abstract’, ‘conceptual’ underpinnings about man’s quest for self-determination. This however should not be its end-purpose; for if it is to be the ultimate goal of educational institutions, it would be, as Hegel points out to philosophy: nothing but the spirit of that time expressed in abstract thought. In order to compensate to this seeming incomplete way of merely rendering the ‘abstract’, nay its meaning-constitutive function, educational institutions are also expected to develop practical studies that aim to make man’s life better. This indeed is and should be the ultimate consequence of existence of all educational institutions in the first place.

On the other hand, the ‘pragmatic function’ of these institutions becomes so imperative in the midst of societal complexities brought about by recent economic, technological, transportation, and sociological developments. Along with the convolution of varying degrees of intersectionalities that contemporary social arrangements produce lies the duty of the academe to render meanings in man’s existence. As rightly pointed out in an earlier study about the role of educational institutions in present-day societies: “educational institutions, in the midst of these tremendous events, should perform the task of maintaining and subsequently deepening the discourses pertinent to these developments. Such institutions set and deploy necessary perspectives and theoretical grounding (it may be in the form of critique if necessary), if not the

¹ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 27.





underlying justifications based on careful scrutiny of empirical facts and pertinent information, that would eventually initiate directions that will serve as a light for policy makers in setting policy trajectory.”²

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A DISCIPLINE AND THE CHALLENGE OF GOVERNING THE PHILIPPINE PUBLIC

The complexity of government affairs brought about by the multifaceted demands of the society and the interconnectedness of public management coupled with the complex realms of politics and economics gave birth to a social science that examines concepts, not to mention evaluates ways and directions, in the field of administering the public. This social science is so ‘applied’ that it cannot be detached nor that it could be alien from the very ‘public’ that it wishes to govern.³ It is thus that Woodrow Wilson mentioned the function of the discipline of Public Administration in his examination of its nature and function. In the quest for meaning and self-determination, the Father of American Public Administration, in his most celebrated work, emphasized that Public Administration as a discipline must revolve around the context of the ‘public’ where its notions and concepts are to be applied.

“The idea of the state and the consequent ideal of its duty are undergoing noteworthy change; and the idea of the state is the conscience of administration. Seeing everyday new things which the state ought to do, the next thing is to see clearly how it ought to do them. This is why there should be a science of administration which shall seek to straighten the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its

organization, and to crown its duties with dutifulness. This is one reason why there is such a science.”⁴

As clearly stated, Public Administration as an applied science should definitely be within the realm of the ‘state’ where its idiosyncrasies are not just acknowledged but are rendered with lucid examination and, in some cases, critical vetting. As Wilson rightly pointed out, this applied science must not only take its ‘theoretical’ anchorage from the cultural, social, economic, and political milieu of the ‘governed’ but it should also take the direction of setting the overall pattern and paradigm of governance in the country where it operates. In other words, this social science must go back and forth (as to what would come first is a predicament very similar to the chicken-egg problem) to the theoretical foundations and governance culture on one hand and the specific practice of administration and governance on the other. This goes without saying then that Public Administration as a field, if it is to serve the ends of Philippine public administration and governance practice, it must be culturally and socially rooted to Philippine social realities. In other words, it must take its shape from the political, social, governmental, and to some extent economic backdrop of the country for it to attain its very essence of existence.⁵

The endeavour of venturing to the rather bumpy road of indigenization had been the track of several Public Administration scholars in the Philippines in the past. This course is necessary since the field had been introduced to the soil by a former colonizer with its imprints of consciousness and ways of governance all over. As an academic discipline, American scholars had established Public administration in the University of the Philippines’ Institute

² Luisito dela Cruz, “Research Directions and Trajectory of the University of the Philippines Asian Center,” *SCIENTIA* 4, no. 1 (2015): 49.

³ Luisito dela Cruz, “Governing the Philippine Public: The NCPAG and the Crisis of Leadership without Identity,” *SCIENTIA* 9, no. 2 (2020): 52.

⁴ Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Administration,” *Political Science Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1887): 201.

⁵ Dela Cruz, “Governing,” 51.





of Public Administration in 1952 supposedly to prepare Filipinos to sustain self-governance.

“If the establishment of the Institute (now College) of Public Administration were to be used as the point of reference for the genesis of the study of the discipline in the country, it could be safely assumed that Public Administration here was exported, shipped, and packaged to Philippine shores as a result of an agreement between the United Nations and the United States Technical Assistance Program, and facilitated through the technical cooperation of the University of Michigan with financial support from both U.S. and Philippine Governments.”⁶

However, this cannot be an excuse for both scholars and practitioners alike for the failure of Public Administration to take indigenous form both in the levels of theory and methodology. For the longest time, since 1952, the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) in particular and the Public Administration as a discipline in the Philippines in general had already undergone modes of self-realizations. Along the process, Public Administration in the Philippines, after decades of independently existing from its American co-founders, should have attained the level of maturity necessary for self-determination and to develop its own identity different from the American perspective that defines its very establishment. Nevertheless, the predominance of literature pointing otherwise is glaringly noticeable. Scholars in the field of Public Administration in the Philippines display, rather obviously, the seeming ‘chain’ that connects the practice of the field in the Philippines to Western epistemological premises hence the ‘Philippine Public Administration’s identity crisis’.

Through a coherent consolidation coupled with critical analysis of publications in the field of

Public Administration in the Philippines, Reyes claims that this identity crisis does not stem from the intellectual crisis of lack of subject-matter, just as the case in American Public Administration in the 20th century, but is an epistemological crisis that loses its own peculiarities in exchange to foreign, and perhaps considered by others in the field as ‘more legitimate’, theoretical foundations. His contention can be summed as follows: “For the study of Public Administration in the Philippines, I believe is a discipline not in search of a subject-matter, as American Public Administration is or was, but rather one in search of its past, its roots, its tradition, and consequently, its direction.”⁷

Brillantes and Fernandez have also argued the claim that Philippine Public Administration has some sort of ‘identity crisis’. One of the sources of this ‘identity crisis’ as pointed out by the said scholars is the disconnectedness between the abstract realm of theory (largely based on Western paradigms) and the more practical domain of practice. “There is an identity crisis of public administration in the Philippines considering the continuing disconnect between theory and practice, and the imperative to bridge the gap by reconciling both into the ‘praxis’ of public administration. Theory without practice is living in an ivory tower; but practice without theory is living without meaning and ideology.”⁸ Indeed, theories, in any applied science must not only be confined to the ivory towers of the universities. It must translate into guidelines and frames into where the practice of public administration must be anchored into for practice without theory is like a bell without clapper and mere theory without having to be applied in practice is like a flower devoid of fragrance. This dynamic

⁶ Danilo Reyes, “The Identity Crisis in Philippine Public Administration Revisited,” *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 23, no. 1 (1979): 13.

⁷ Danilo Reyes, “The Study of Public Administration in Perspective: A Passing Review of the Development in the Discipline,” *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 39, no. 1 (1995): 57.

⁸ Alex Brillantes and Maricel Fernandez, “Theory and Practice of Public Administration in the Philippines: Concerns for an Identity Crisis,” *Asian Journal of Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2013): 81.





interplay of theoretical-building and practice is what what will exude the genuine 'praxis' of public administration.

This same principle is for Raul de Guzman the very essence and the *raison d'être* of the field of Public Administration. If an 'identity crisis' of Philippine P/public A/administration both as a field of study (with capital letter P and A) and as a practical exercise (the one with small letter p and small letter a) is to be resolved, deriving disciplinary boundaries or normative valuations is only one aspect. Another aspect, and perhaps as important, is to search for its identity in its capacity to respond to the needs of Philippine public administrators and managers; to provide them with ample rationality and direction in their quest for 'good public governance'. In other words, it should provide public administration with the conscience and the empirically-tested bases in the process of administering and governing the public. The same view had been shared by Raul de Guzman, one of the thinkers at the forefront of Public Administration's supposed indigenization.

"...A public administration academic program would be deemed relevant if it meets the educational needs for administrators equipped with the necessary perspective, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to perform their various roles as expert, change agent, and modernizer in the society. The educational needs, in turn, derive from the character of the development goals in the country. Ultimately, therefore, we have to take into account the given goals, objectives and priorities in a society when making judgment of the question of the relevance of a public administration curriculum and its component courses...."⁹

RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY

It is within the backdrop stated above that this paper critically examined the student

⁹ Raul de Guzman, "Is There a Philippine Public Administration?" *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 30, no. 2 (1986): 372.

researches produced by the Graduate School's Doctoral Students' Research Program of the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Through content analysis coupled with critical hermeneutics, the paper scrutinized themes of the Ph.D. dissertations of the NCPAG from 1990-2010 and evaluated its ability to respond to the needs and directions of the practice of public administration in the Philippines. With brief discussions about national issues and trends in the Philippines from the late Corazon Aquino Administration up to the Arroyo Administration, this paper will review the capacity of the Center, through the research outputs of its graduate students, to respond to the challenges confronting the country and the national goals in terms of policy formulation and implementation. The period had been selected for it was towards the end of the 1980s that the calls for indigenous Public Administration was so high in the Center and elsewhere that discourses about it had been at the forefront of both academic and pragmatic circles that lasted until the turn of the century.

Archival work on dissertations that the Center produced from 1990-2010 has been conducted for the purpose of writing this paper. It is assumed by the author that there can be no other research program that can clearly manifest the direction of NCPAG other than the dissertations it produced. No other research program in the Center or in any other educational institution is as 'directed' and 'guided' as the writing of doctoral dissertations. Doctoral dissertations are supposed to be the culmination of all the academic activities of the student that should illustrate the inclination of faculty members (the heavy academic requirements in Philippine graduate schools would definitely lead into this), curriculum, instruction, and even the institutional expertise of the unit. The choice of





topics, methodology, and theories, among other things, in doing graduate students' research, are evaluated not just by individual academics but by a panel of 'experts' in the College. Hence, it is not hasty assumption that the meticulous process taking place in accepting nay approving a dissertation is enough grounding into which the research direction of the Center can truly be reflected.

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

Initially established as Institute of Public Administration (IPA) on June 15, 1952, the founding of National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) as an academic discipline in the state-funded University of the Philippines was a product of the recommendations set forth by the Bell Mission, part of the activities aiming to prepare the Philippines for its supposed 'independence' from the United States.¹⁰ Among the proposals of the said mission was the improvement of public administration for the proper implementation of the United States' economic programs in the Post-War Philippines. Part of this improvement is the establishment of an institution that will 'educate' the Filipinos for the said purpose.

The official establishment of the IPA came as a result of the contract that was signed between the University of the Philippines and the University of Michigan, the latter providing for the initial expertise and logistics needed by the former. Initially offering Master of Public Administration and Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration degrees, the Institute also catered the "in-service training and capacity building programs" needed by civil servants in

¹⁰ National College of Public Administration and Governance, "History," <http://www.ncpag.upd.edu.ph>

the Philippines that will initiate "government reorganizations, public service reforms, and development initiatives" in the country.¹¹

NCPAG's search and quest for self-determination led to the institution's change of names four times. These changes of names were not just nomenclature but "recognition of the changing scope and perspectives as well as expectations of its roles and contributions to development"¹². From 1952-1963 the institution was known as Institute of Public Administration. On March 14, 1963 it was renamed to Graduate School of Public Administration (GSPA). For a short period it was called School of Public Administration (SPA) before being named in October 1966 as College of Public Administration (CPA). Finally, it got its present name of National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) on November 26, 1998 for the reason that "it broadened its focus from governmental management to governance for public interests"¹³

Currently, the NCPAG and its academic program are considered as Center for Public Administration and Governance Education (CPAGE). It maintains its triad functions of instruction, research, and extension service of the University of the Philippines in public administration. As an institution of public administration in the country's 'premier' University, NCPAG "has always been at the forefront of improving public administration in the country through training public servants and local government executives, conducting case studies on national and local government administration, and extending advisory and consulting services to government agencies

¹¹ National College of Public Administration and Governance, "History."

¹² National College of Public Administration and Governance, "History."

¹³ National College of Public Administration and Governance, "History."





for their technical and other problem-solving needs”¹⁴.

Needless to say, Public Administration as a field of study, let alone the National College of Public Administration in University of the Philippines, has been vested with the pragmatic function of ‘preparing and educating’ public administrators of the country. From its inception, it has already been considered as an institution that should not just ‘theorize’ but should translate this ‘theorization’ into something that would be of use to the process of the country’s nation-building and the formulation of its policy directions vis a vis the governance contexts of the Philippines, among other things.

DISSERTATIONS BASED ON CONTENT TYPOLOGY

Based on the archival work, the National College of Public Administration and Governance is able to produce a total of 79 doctoral dissertations for the period covering 1990-2010. Of the 79 dissertations, 74 were able to be located and subsequently reviewed by the researcher. There were five (5) doctoral research works that cannot be found in the library. Be that as it may, it is in the belief of the researcher that the 74 out of 79 research works examined are more than enough to serve the purpose of the study i.e. to examine the capacity of these researches to capture national development goals and economic, social, and political issues that beset the country at the time of the writing of these papers.

In order to find out the concerns of the institution in the covered period, grouping list based on content typology has been provided. This will enable the paper to critically examine the areas most researched about that will provide a clue as

to the track taken by the College. Moreover, this can provide ample background as to the capacity of the research program of NCPAG to be abreast with contemporary issues and national goals/directions in the Philippines.

As a basis for thematization in the grouping list, this paper used the typology provided for by Brillantes and Fernandez. Their work were used to determine the traditional and the new and emerging trends and areas of Public Administration. Subsequently, the same material also clearly defined and enumerated the concerns and issues in each of these areas and subfields. The areas provided for in the said work will be the typology that this paper employs i.e. organization and management, public personnel administration, public fiscal administration, and local government administration. In addition to these traditional areas, public policy and program administration, public enterprise management, voluntary sector management, and spatial information management were also identified as the new sub-fields of public administration.¹⁵

Table 1 – Number of Dissertations Based on Public Administration Sub-Area

TRADITIONAL SUBFIELDS	1990-95	1996-2000	2001-2005	2005-2010	TOTAL	%
1. Organizational & Management	7			4	11	15%
2. Public personnel admin	2	1	1		4	5%
3. Public fiscal administration	1				1	1%
4. Local government admin	3	4	2	1	10	13%
NEW SUB-FIELDS						
5. Public policy & Program admin	8	1	5	3	17	23%
6. Public enterprise management	5		5	3	13	18%
7. Voluntary sector management	4		5	4	13	18%
8. Spatial information management	0		1	1	2	3%

¹⁴ National College of Public Administration and Governance, “History.”

¹⁵ Brillantes and Fernandez, “Theory,” 90-98.





9. History of Philippine public administration*	1			2	3	4%
TOTAL	31	6	19	18	74	100%

**Added sub-field by the researcher, discussion will be provided below.*

Demonstrated in Table 1 are the number of dissertations based on both the traditional and the new and emerging sub-areas of the field of Public Administration. Clustered groups of five (5) years has also been provided to add flavour to some of the interpretations that will be manifested in this paper.

It is shown in the table that the area of public policy and program administration has the most number of dissertations; producing seventeen (17) research works out of 74. This area produced 27% of the total number of dissertations in the Center. It is also manifested that together with local government administration area, public policy and program administration are the only areas represented in each cluster. All others are either represented only in two or three clusters. It can be surmised that this clearly demonstrate that the NCPAG carries great interest in discussing issues and concerns within the area of public policy and program administration. It must also be mentioned that most of these researches are produced with the end-view of particularly evaluating public programs in the national level. Moreover, researches in this area also traverses the processes, models, contexts, perspectives, and content of public policy.

PUBLIC POLICY AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

As claimed in the President's Report 1986-1992 of the Presidential Management Staff of former President Corazon Aquino, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program has been indicated

as one of the milestone programs of the Aquino Administration. Through the enactment of RA 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, the Aquino Administration claims that it was during the Cory Aquino Administration that "the government instituted the most comprehensive and the most radical agrarian reform that this country had ever seen".¹⁶

In the dissertations included in this study, it shows that there are two (2) researches in the NCPAG that evaluated the Agrarian Reform Program of the Government. Both of the dissertations were assessment studies on the impact of the program in specific localities. The research of Gonzales (1990) measured the impact and the efficiency of implementation of the program in the provinces of Bataan and Nueva Ecija. With a gap of twenty years, in 2010, Tabunda also made a study of the same nature in three selected municipalities in Cavite. However, both of the studies concluded that reforms must be formally instituted in order for the Philippine Agrarian Reform Program to gain more positive results.

Another study that is considered to be a reaction to one of the most important policies implemented in post-Martial Law Era is an examination of the 'formal' foundation of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. A study was undertaken to assess and analyze the policymaking process and the problems encountered in the implementation of Republic Act 6734. The research concluded, three years after the enactment of the said law, that the policy is inadequate to respond to the needs and predicaments in Muslim Mindanao at the time. Included in the recommendations of the author were policy formulation towards self-determination of the provinces under the

¹⁶ Presidential Management Staff, *The President's Report: 1986-1992*, by Corazon C. Aquino, Manila:1992, <http://www.malacañang.gov.ph> (accessed November 30, 2019).





ARMM. These recommendations were very similar to what is now being implemented in line with the enactment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, almost thirty years after this study was conducted. It must be mentioned however that despite the relatively high number of studies conducted in Muslim Mindanao, only one tested the waters in terms of the implementation of the founding of ARMM despite of its huge effect in the conduct of governance in the region.

The 1990s up to the turn of the century saw a rapid increase with the number of workers being sent abroad and along with this is also a rise on the demands of overseas Filipino workers in terms of quality of life in their work environment. With this demands are some of the sensational issues concerning the welfare and conditions of Filipino workers abroad. Some of these were the cases of Flor Contemplacion and Sarah Balabagan in Singapore and Middle East respectively that took the national scene in the middle of 1990s. In terms of the policies of the government to the overseas Filipino workers, there were two studies conducted. The first study was conducted by Carmelita Dimzon in 2003, Administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, that examined the effectiveness of the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar Program of the government agency she was heading in terms of program administration. In another research, the dynamics and politics involved in the enactment of RA 8042 also known as Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995 have been the focus of study made by Tigno in 2003 in the area of public policy analysis. The research, after careful scrutiny of the minutes, proceedings of plenary and committee reports, and positions papers regarding the passage of the said law, found out that the execution of Flor Contemplacion in 1995 and the pressure coming from the voters

in the upcoming elections in the same year prompted lawmakers to pass RA 8042.

The other public policies implemented in the years covered by this paper that were explored by the graduate research program are landmark policy decisions of the national government. Some of these policies are the Generics Act of 1988, the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, and Labor Code, among other things. Researches evaluating program administration also includes studies within the context of collaboration between national government agencies and local government units. In this aspect, there is a considerable number of studies that are within the view of assessing national programs being implemented by local government units such as, but not limited to, the National Forestry Programs, various agricultural programs, and solid waste management initiatives.

PUBLIC ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT: ISSUES IN PRIVATIZATION, DEREGULATION, AND LIBERALIZATION

The next areas that were able to produce the most number of research works are the areas of public enterprise management and voluntary sector management. Public enterprise management covers topics like privatization of public utilities and in some cases management of public services. This new sub-field of Public Administration also includes topics about the nature and processes of public enterprise, the relationship between the government and the public enterprise sector, issues in managerial autonomy, public accountability, corporate social responsibility, and the role of the state in the economy.¹⁷

¹⁷ Alex Brillantes and Maricel Fernandez, "Is There a Philippine Public Administration? Or Better Still For Whom is Philippine Public Administration." *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* 52, nos. 2-4 (2008): 263-264.





It is not surprising however that there is quite a number of researches in this area because the Philippines was one of the proponents of economic liberalization and is one of the most vocal supporter of the free enterprise especially during the late years of martial rule that become most pronounced in the policies of the Administration of Fidel V. Ramos. In fact this has been one of the flagship economic development programs of the Philippine government at the time. Topics that were elaborated in this area are the commercialization of technologies, the privatization and regulation of telephone utility, the regulation and development of the coconut industry, regulation of the Philippine electric industry, and the implementation of micro-financing. It is noticeable though that the focus of studies within this area is only limited to the evaluation of the process of migration of specific industries from being public enterprises to becoming private entities. Specifically, most of the researches were only concerned about the readiness and capability of the former public organizations and bureaucracy in line with its thrust of being privately managed. Notable in studies in this area is the absence of a comprehensive examination about the overall effect and the dynamics involved in the conception and eventual implementation of some of the most important economic policies of the national government despite of the ever-changing economic approach and specific policy directions of the administrations from Aquino to Arroyo, let alone the examination of national development goals. Only a study in 2003 by Carmona had been developed in this respect. However, it was only limited to the analysis of the judicial review power of the Supreme Court to the economic policies of the previous administrations.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR MANAGEMENT

It is also noticeable that the area of Voluntary Sector Management also shares the second most number of dissertations. Most of the studies in this sub-field evaluate the level of community participation and the extent and impact of non-government organizations in the formulation and implementation of government programs both in the national and local levels. The intensified interest in voluntary sector management, which includes among other things civil society organizations, had been more pronounced as the natural effect of the country's 'People Power' history. There is no other country in the world that had, in a span of less than three decades, three (3) 'People Power' episodes that overthrew, albeit extra-constitutionally, two sitting presidents. Indeed, these episodes in the Philippine history demonstrated the power of civil society organizations, non-profit organizations, and the voluntary sector. This led to examinations about their level of participation in governance and the eventual effects of the same to the structure, systems and processes of conducting governance both in the levels of local and national public administrations.

It can also be demonstrated that in the same manner there is an overwhelming preponderance, not just of researches within the sub-area of voluntary sector management, but imbedded to majority of researches are recommendations to a shift of paradigm in policy formulation, program implementation, and the over-all style of governance from government-centered approach to participatory approach. Whether or not the findings of these works have been actualized through the development of public policy, which will definitely make Philippine democratic system more matured, is another story.





POLITICAL TRANSITIONS AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT

It can be seen that organization and management got the most number of researches produced in the traditional sub-area group. However, it is also noteworthy that seven (7) of the eleven (11) works were done in the 1990-1995 cluster. This can be attributed to the fact that the early decade of post-martial law era in Philippine political and administrative history witnessed tremendous shift from a 'highly-authoritarian' system to an 'over-democratic' system; a necessary result of the society's discontent from the former political arrangements. This can be manifested in the 'over democratic' and highly conservative dictates of the post-Martial Law Constitution of the Philippines: the 1987 Constitution. Moreover, as a result of this re-democratization process, several government agencies had been either newly institutionalized or reorganized. Hence, studies pertaining to dynamics of organization, decision-making in administration, and the effects of reorganizations were prevalent. There was a momentary gap of ten (10) years (1996-2005) before another four (4) researches were developed within this area. These studies were concerning urban management, aid management, human rights, and crisis management.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE AND THE DISCOURSE ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The omnipresent sub-area of local government administration shows both the number of Ph.D. students involve in local governance and the ever-timely concerns of local governance and administration. It is suggested however by the data that the bulk of studies about this area were developed in the first and second clusters: 1990-1995 and 1996-2000. This fact can be attributed

to the passage of Republic Act 9610 or the Local Government Code of 1991. Though the concept of decentralization was not entirely new to the history of public administration and governance in the Philippines, it was in 1991 that devolution of powers of the national government like health and hygiene, social welfare, natural resources administration, land conversion, and the power of the police have been officially delegated to local government units. Thus, most of the studies in this field critically examine the process, political interplay, and effectiveness of implementation of this devolution of powers formerly held *ab initio* by national agencies.

Two of the studies in the area of Local Government Administration were conducted during the height of the policy debate in the enactment of Republic Act 9610. The researches examined areas that were to be included as part of the said law. Panganiban in 1990 offered in her analysis of local governance a theoretical framework for local self-government incorporating the values of democracy and efficiency. The empowerment and capacity development were also among the recommendations of Leticia Sanchez in her dissertation, completed in the same year, to the Katarungang Pambarangay in order to be more effective in justice administration at the grassroots level in the Philippines.

Though the devolution of powers in the Local Government Code of 1991 had taken three layers: Provincial Government, Municipal/City Government, and Barangay Level, only the capability of barangays in absorbing the devolved functions of LGUs had been explored in NCPAG. The study of Tabion in 1993 examined the administrative capability of fifteen (15) barangay units in the Province of Tarlac in absorbing and effectively discharging the functions and powers set forth by the Local Government Code. The study suggests that





except for devolution of accountability and providing basic services and facilities, all other functions were old and continuing tasks of this governance unit even before the implementation of the Philippine Local Government Code.

In terms of the devolved functions of the national government to the local government units, disaster management and response have been examined twice; one in 1998 and another in 2007. There is also a study concerning the devolution of environment and natural resources protection power to the LGUs in 1999. It can be surmised however that there is a lack of a comprehensive study about the capability and implementation of local government units of some of the most essential functions devolved to them, despite of the complexities of these tasks, like land conversion, the localization of development and infrastructure projects, localization of basic services, and the jurisdiction over the Philippine National Police. These are very essential topics that could have been considered not just for its timeliness but for its significance in terms of substance as well.

RELATIVELY FEW STUDIES ON CIVIL SERVICE AREA, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT, AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Despite of the persistent attempts of the Philippine government to advance professionalization of the civil service that can produce several possible areas of study, only four (4) or roughly 5% of dissertations were written in the sub-field of public personnel administration. Two of the studies examined the effects of religious beliefs to the performance of government employees: one in Mindanao and one in Thailand, one about career advancement of women managers in Region VI, and another about the motivational factors of municipal government employees in

Thailand. Noteworthy and more glaring is the fact that out of the four, two were written about a foreign country.

The lack of interests in spatial information management as an area of public administration can also be said to be the case considering the number of researches in the Center. Only two (2) out of 74 dissertations concerned itself to the examination of the utilization of technological information systems. In the midst of a shift from manual to technological consolidation, a concern since decades ago, of public data and information, NCPAG should have encouraged studies about this topic in order to inform government institutions of the latest trend in terms of technological information migration. In the same manner, despite the magnitude of the public fiscal administration 'problems' of the Philippines that pave the way, not to mention implies, for possible areas of critical research, in the span of twenty years, only one was written in this area.

INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS ADDITIONAL SUB-FIELD OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: SEARCH FOR INDIGENOUS PHILIPPINE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

With respect to the three undefined dissertations as to their inclusion in Public Administration sub-field, this paper proposes another area of public administration not mentioned in the typology provided by Brillantes and Fernandez but nonetheless is as important as the rest i.e. history of public administration. There were three (3) studies that cannot be considered to belong to any of the fields previously defined. These were studies about the search for epistemological heritage of public administration in the Philippines by Danilo Reyes in 1995, a historical





analysis of political history and management trajectory extracted from the speeches of previous presidents of the Philippines conducted by Domingo-Almase in 2007, and a historical analysis of the Philippine counter-insurgency program by Bajao in 2009. These studies showed that history of public administration as a sub-field of Public Administration can stand by itself and it can provide fruitful discussions and refreshingly new perspectives.

Though the dissertations mentioned cannot effectively be included in any of the sub-fields identified by scholars of the field, the contribution of these studies to the path to indigenize Public Administration is immense. The work of Reyes, for example, set the tune for Philippine Public Administration as a discipline to historically search for the underlying epistemology of the subject while simultaneously calling for the use of 'indigenous' theoretical frameworks in understanding issues in public administration and governance. The same had been the objective of the 2007 study by Almase. The dissertation examined the speeches of former Philippine presidents with the hope of culling underlying public administration grand narratives that can extract Philippine idiosyncrasies in doing administration and governance. Bajao's work that painstakingly search for Philippine constructs of insurgency and counterinsurgency also looked for indigenous theoretical assumptions in the the former counterinsurgency programs by the government. The three works best exemplify the seeming track to the 'lonely road' of creating sufficient foundations for the development of an indigenous field.

ISSUES THAT WERE NOT EXPLORED

Despite of the persistent issues about public fiscal administration and the financial liberalization

program of the Ramos Administration, there is an absence of studies exploring these areas. There was only one work that falls under the Public Fiscal Administration area i.e. Subramanian's 1993 examination of the financial administration of Indian Railways, though this study has nothing to do whatsoever with the fiscal policy of the Philippine government at that time. There was no study conducted in this respect taking Philippine institution as the locale of examination. In the same manner, despite the proliferation of contracts and agreements entered by government institutions using the Build-Operate-Transfer (Aquino and Ramos Administrations) and Public-Private-Partnership (Estrada and Arroyo Administrations) modes, no study had been conducted either assessing the impact of these programs or metaphysically examining the over-all directions and underlying economic effects of the same. The neglect on these areas is rather surprising since there are members of faculty in the Center that had been continuously involved in the turf of fiscal management both academically and in practice hence have experience and expertise in these field. One person who can best exemplify this expertise and experience is Emilia Boncodin, a long-time faculty member of the Center.

Another landmark policy that had great effect to the overall process and system of public administration in the country is the enactment of Republic Act 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act of 2003. This law is the first to standardize and rationalize public procurement process in the entire Philippine bureaucracy. It sets the consolidation and guidelines in the procurement of goods, services, and infrastructure that in effect made the whole system of government procurement more time-consuming and stiffer. However, despite of the significant effect of this law in the conduct of





affairs in Philippine public administration and governance, not a single study has been devoted to analyze let alone critically examine its effects.

Emphasis on good governance in spite of issues of graft and corruption that marred practically all administrations in the post-Martial Law era is also not emphasized by the researches examined. Despite of the clamour of the Philippine public, which led to People Power uprisings, and the persistent supposed 'advocacy' of NCPAG to a paradigm of 'good governance', it is rather surprising, to say the least, that there is lack of topics that explore issues along this line. There were several institutional issues that confronted the country for the past decades like the Expo Filipino scandal, Pork Barrel Issues, and illegal gambling that ended to court prosecutions and even convictions of some of the highest officials in the government not to mention two former presidents. In the midst of all these developments alongside the predicaments and blow to governance that run through the very capillaries of public institutions in the Philippines, the NCPAG as shown by its graduate research program, remained silent about all of these.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS PHILIPPINE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PRAXIS

The survey conducted by this paper that included dissertations from 1990-2010 gives us a clue about the preoccupations of the National College of Public Administration and Governance for the twenty years covered by this study. This is not an all-exhausting work for it does not cover researches in the Masteral Program of the Center and the official publications of faculty members of the College, though the latter had been explored by Reyes and Cariño in their earlier works. This cannot also be said to be all-

encompassing for it only reviewed 20 years out of the more than sixty years of research tradition of the Center. First of a kind though, as it is, the primary contribution of this study is to give the readers an idea on how contemporary public administration and governance issues in real-life situation and practice and actual Philippine realities are being 'academically' and scholarly explored in an institution tasked not just to render theories but to advance the over-all practice of public administration and public governance in the country.

As can be assumed in the data presented and the eventual analysis of the same in the preceding discussions, the researches generally reflect the contemporary issues and historical events in the practice of public administration in the country. However, it has also become more clear than apparent in the presentation of data that there are important concerns that beset the national and local realms of governance that have not been represented. These concerns were so essential and vital in the conduct of public governance that particular attention should have been given to be more reflective of Philippine social, economic, and political realities. As previously alluded, studies pertaining to public fiscal management, information technology management, and civil service management could have been strengthened to actually respond to actual preoccupations of public administration practice in the country: preoccupations that still persist today.

It can also be observed that NCPAG had invested so much, as can be gleaned to the topical and methodological analysis of the dissertations, in evaluating and assessing governance and administration programs and policies of the Philippine Government. There appears to be nothing wrong about it for one of the purposes of academics studying the enterprise of





managing the public is to assess programs being implemented in the field. However, it can also be noted that this over-emphasis on 'evaluative' research leads to the neglect of 'theory-building' that is supposed to be one of the contributions of a graduate research work. In the beginning of this paper it has been argued that the role of the academe is twofold. After careful examination of the topics and substance of graduate student researches in NCPAG, it can be noticed that there is lack of theory-building attempts in the program that should have been imbedded in the dissertations. This leaves the researches and their subsequent works only into the level of assessment and evaluation, the pragmatic aspect, without necessarily contributing to knowledge-generation in the field. The trajectory of the works could have been set to extract nuances and concepts of Philippine public administration and subsequently develop Philippine indigenous abstractions and consciousness in public administration and governance that could eventually be the conceptual bank and epistemological basis of future researches in this respect.

If the graduate student research program of the NCPAG is to be enhanced, it should be done with the ends of eventually laying ground and concretely producing enough epistemological foundation of Philippine Public Administration as a field that can simultaneously be accomplished along with the 'evaluative' nature of its examinations. Neglect of this aspect of contributing to the body of knowledge in the field leaves researches in Public Administration in the Philippines to be overly dependent on epistemological foundations that were created elsewhere in the world that is not 'grounded' on Philippine social realities, an argument that the author presupposed and eventually explained in an earlier paper¹⁸. As demonstrated

by some research works included in this study, and as argued in the mentioned earlier paper, a paradigm shift to 'grounded' perspective is not just possible but commendable. Only through the development of this theoretical frame in institutions like the NCPAG that this task of creating a body of indigenous public administration ethos is possible. It is also only through this track that the fusion of 'grounded theories' in the field of Public Administration and public administration as practiced can take place that in turn can genuinely create the actual PRAXIS of Philippine Public Administration.

¹⁸ See dela Cruz, 2020





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