

Research Directions and Trajectory of the University of the Philippines Asian Center: A Critical Analysis of Asian Studies Theses

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Introduction: Towards Regional Cooperation

The turn of events in the post-world war II era in international political and foreign policies brought tremendous shift from the strictly modern conception of nation-states to an international world community anchored on principles of alliances and cooperation. A major defining event in this respect was the world political battle between the proponents of capitalism and the guardians of communism. Asia, being one of the vital venues of the mentioned ideological battle, had been witness to some of the most significant phenomenon that happened in the last fifty years. In the midst of the threat of communism, military and economic alliance had been the immediate reaction to maintain stronghold of capitalism. Having faced these events, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization had been established (US Department of State). The modern nation-states moreover, in the context of globalization characterized by the opening of trade and commerce, massive information sharing, and the rise of global citizenship, needed to respond proactively and relentlessly. Supranational, in the form of regional alliances, had become the name of the game. These phenomenon led the nation-states with no other direction but to forge alliances and cooperation. Indeed, this seeming fragmentation of nation-states had become a necessary offshoot of modernity.

Southeast Asia, considered as a potent key player in globalization, responded to these historical unfolding of events with pro-active stance. The last forty years saw the forging of alliances within the region that finally gave birth to ASEAN. In 1967, five countries in Southeast Asia formally ushered the ties

that will later be a powerful key player in international political and economic affairs. To strengthen the bonds of formerly 'colonized' states (except Thailand), building economic, cultural, social, and political alliances, among others, had been, this far, the most effective means of maintaining visibility and existence in international scene.

Knowledge Formation and the Academe

Education 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 a critique if necessary), if not the 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 trajectory. Forging of strong ties does not only entail consensus in the economic and political areas. Such also necessitates drawing principles of common history and pursuing identity formations, which only educational institutions can truly undertake. In contemporary societies, such identity grounding is being underpinned by theoretical anchoring provided by knowledge production, in which springboards are coming from educational institutions. Knowledge production, in any modern nation-state springs from the discourses formulated through scholarly debates and intellectual discussions that educational institutions fashion.

Being one of the key players, the Philippines remains active in this respect. University of the Philippines, Diliman, as a state-sponsored institution, has been at the forefront of accompanying these developments in so far as the national leadership goals and directions are concerned. Though technically the Institute of Asian Studies had been instituted in the university way before the founding of the ASEAN, the formal establishment of an Asian Center had only been formally concretized through Republic Act 5334. This law provided for the founding of the Asian Center and paved the way for the funding of all necessary infrastructure and equipment for its function. As such, one of the main thrusts of the center is to produce researches "on a broad range of political,

economic, social and cultural issues affecting Asia and the Pacific”

(ac.upd.edu.ph.). Moreover, the mandates of the said law, as manifested by the major aims of the Asian Center is to promote “initiatives to understand the Philippines in its broader Asia context, and to understand Asia from the Philippine vantage point” (ac.upd.edu.ph).

In this respect, after more than forty years of existence, this paper wishes to examine the research directions and trajectory of the Asian studies program of the Asian Center. Through archival works, topical analysis, and critical hermeneutics, the topical directions will specifically be explored. In so doing, the grounding epistemology of researches will also unavoidably be elucidated. As earlier alluded, since one of the pivotal thrusts of the Asian Center is “to understand Asia from the Philippine vantage point”, the perspectives deployed into the researches would also be put into the limelight. The paper will particularly unfold how, if any, Philippine perspective had been positioned in the wide array of topics endeavoured by graduate students in their research works. The same can be clearly extracted from the manner on how researches conducted were viewed in the midst of the economic, political, cultural, and social dynamics and needs of the Philippine society. In order to provide richer discussions of the aforementioned, historical analysis in the levels of international, national, and domestic affairs (referring to the whole University in general, and the Asian Center in particular) will also be utilized in the search for some historical factors that led to the track of the Center’s graduate research program.

This task will be done by carefully examining, aided by critical hermeneutics, the researches produced in Asian Center’s graduate program in Asian studies for the past twenty years (1992-2011). The writer is in the position that the aims enumerated above can be concluded by looking at researches that had been conducted in the period covered. Since the primary goal of the paper is to describe the contemporary directions with the futuristic perspective of examining the trajectory of the Asian Center, twenty years of research trend is sufficient. This paper is also in the view that the materials included in this survey can also

reflect the institution's research thrust since Masterate theses, as a guided research program by the center, mirrors the priorities and agenda of the entire academic community. The assumption is that such program puts into rigorous process all researches being instituted since the entire community (faculty, administration, etc.) is involved in the process. Thus, these researches will not only manifests individual researcher's inclination but institutional goals and directions as well.

This paper will also utilize some basic analysis of the numbers of researches produced in the Asian center. However, it is not in any way the aim of this paper to reduce the same into mere analysis of such statistical data. Statistics will be treated as secondary to content analysis of the materials.

Incidentally, the paper will also explore 'metanarratives' or 'grand discourses' created by the researches covered by the study in line with a lucid interrogation of the Asian Center's trajectory in the light of contemporary research and literary trends in the academe. The ultimate aim, therefore, of this paper is to be able to offer and propose possible research topics and explorations that may be conducted.

Limitations

Though a considerable amount of attention will be given to 'broader' Asian studies, an emphasis will be vested by this paper on Southeast Asian studies. Moreover, it must be noted at this point that the paper will be excluding in its survey the studies conducted in the center pertaining to Philippine studies. There is never a point of argument that Philippine studies is a sub-area of Asian studies. However, in Philippine studies research as such already entails Philippine perspective. Such exclusion is not meant for anything than to concretely examine Asian studies aside from Philippine studies (referring to the program) and the integration of Philippine perspective thereto.

Predominance Of The Philippine Studies In The Asian Center

Breakdown	Number
Asian Studies (other than SEA studies)	21
Phil. Studies MA Theses	47
Phil. Studies Ph.D. Dissertations	67
Asian Studies (SEA studies)	16
Total	151

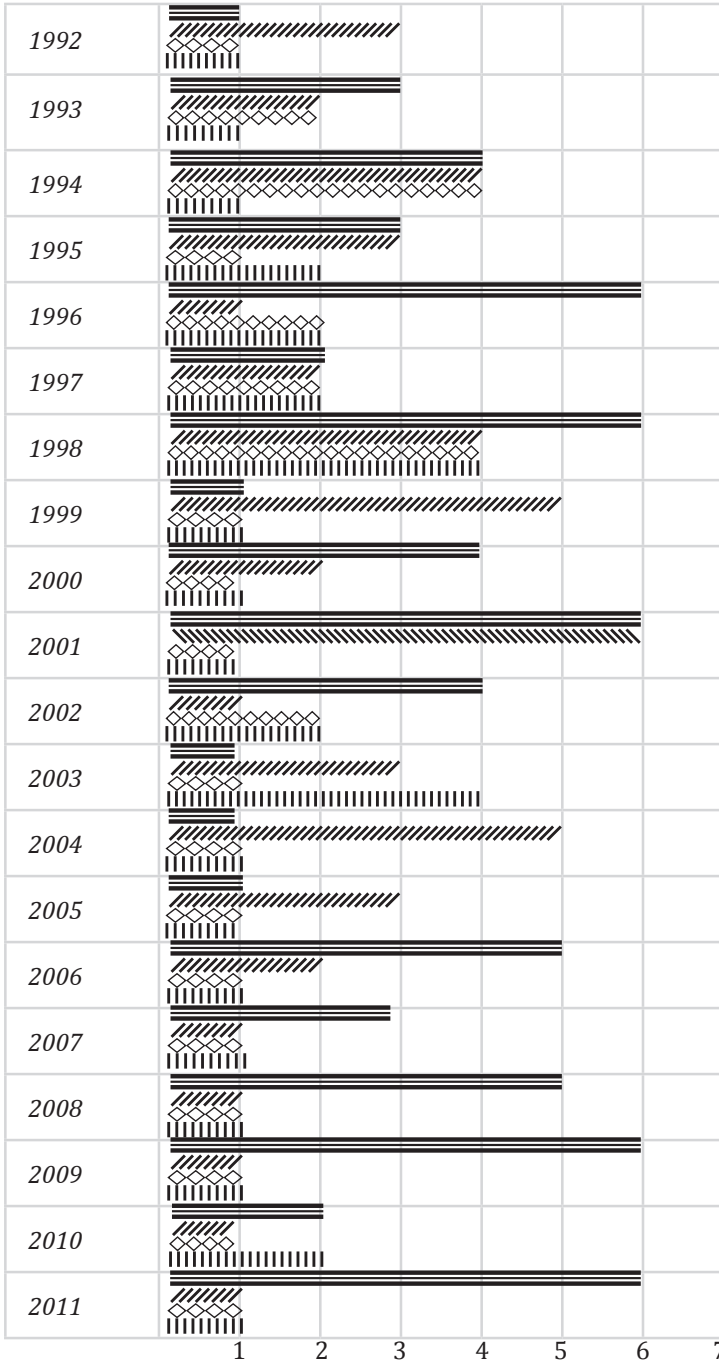
Table 1
Number of Theses and Dissertations in Asian Center
(1992-2011)

The table above shows the total production of researches in the graduate programs of the Asian Center. As manifested, the Asian Center was able to produce 151 theses and dissertations in both Asian and Philippine studies combined. As earlier alluded, it is never the wish of this paper to exclude Philippine studies in Asian studies, it is just that aside from the Asian Center having a separate program in Philippine studies, the writer is in the position that the main aim of the paper to cull the Philippine perspective in Asian studies can accurately be seen by discriminating researches being made in Philippine studies program. However, table 1 also shows the predominance of the Philippine studies researches produced both in the MA and Ph.D. programs. It can also be said that this trend had been very consistent since 1992 (start of the coverage of this study). From that year to 2011, it can be inferred that the MA and Ph.D. programs in Philippine studies have been the most popular, so to speak, programs of the Center (see Chart 1). On the other hand, the Asian studies theses comprise the minority in the graduate school research production of the Center. It was only able to produce studies totalling to 37 in which 16 of such are specifically endeavouring topics about Southeast Asia. It is noteworthy at this point that pursuing Southeast Asian topics is relatively high considering that it forms just a little less than the half of the whole Asian studies researches yielded by the Asian Center. Chart 1 shows the graphical presentation of the year distribution of studies conducted in AC.

Chart 1

Year Distribution of the Theses and Dissertations in the Asian Center

≡ Phil Studies Ph.D // Phil Studies MA ◇◇ Sea Studies |||| Broader Asian Studies



Year Distribution

Neglect of Southeast Asia and ASEAN Studies

Chart 1 clearly manifests that throughout the period covered by this study that though there are significant vertical movements in the numbers of theses successfully carried out in both the MA and Ph.D. in Philippine Studies programs of the Center, these still remains to be the highest in terms of research production. Be that as it may, through the graphical presentation above, it can also be observed that the Southeast Asian studies had been neglected for a long time (from 2000 to 2006). It must be said that this shall I call 'neglect' in Southeast Asian studies during those times is rather strange, to say the least. It is strange since the periods 2000-2006 can be said to be a very significant time for Southeast Asia particularly to the ASEAN since this was the time (2000) when integration of newer members, namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, had been facilitated. Accompanied by such development was the launching of the ASEAN Integration (IAI) "with the objectives of Narrowing the Development Gap" (asean.org). How a development of that sort pass without notice in the graduate school community? This, to say the least, should have been a period to either interrogate or, at the very least, scrutinize the said development in the ASEAN.

In the same manner, a significant decline in Southeast Asian studies in the following years is also noticeable. From 2007-2011 the Center was only able to produce three (3) researches pertaining to Southeast Asia; one each in the years 2007, 2008, and 2010. Similar to the point earlier raised by this paper, this movement in the researches conducted in the center is rather odd since this was the time that the Bali Concord II, the very basis of the ASEAN integration that is set to be fully implemented by 2020, had been formally signed (ASEAN, 2008). Such development in the ASEAN community initiated some major reforms in major sectors in the societies of Southeast Asia not to mention the significant changes it initiated in the educational system, at least in the Philippines. Oddly enough, none of these three researches mentioned was endeavouring into preoccupations of Southeast Asia pertinent with the said historical development. This can well explain the obvious 'shock and awe' attitude and reaction that the

implementation of the ASEAN 2015 integration brought in the Philippines, not to mention in the University of the Philippines itself and within its ranks. With the assumptions that the Asian Center (the forefront of Asian Studies in the Philippines) being abreast with contemporary development, cultural, and economic issues confronting the region and the graduate researches as reflection of its directions and trajectory, it can be said that this can exemplify the 'national neglect' casted by the Philippines in the said ASEAN development.

Thematic Profile of Asian Studies Researches

Thematic Profile (Asian studies)	Frequency	Percentage
Culture and Identity	9	24.33
Foreign Policies	8	21.62
Political Studies	6	16.22
Development Studies	5	13.53
Education	3	8.10
Gender	3	8.10
Historical Studies	1	2.70
Muslim Representation	1	2.70
Migration	1	2.70

Table 2
Thematic Profile Broader Asian Studies

The table above shows the typology and number of occurrence of the Asian studies researches conducted in the Asian Center from 1992-2011. Through topical analysis, studies had been classified under nine different topical trends (culture and identity, foreign policies, political studies, developmental studies, education, gender, historical studies, Muslim representation, and migration). In completing the task of mining the underlying epistemology of the research trajectory of Asian Center this typology is seen to be very essential. By deploying typological clusters in the types of researches being conducted, the priorities and directions of the Asian studies program of the Asian Center

is being unveiled. From the figures stipulated above it can be inferred that the most appealing topics, if not the topics that are given high degree of priority, in the Asian Center are topics connected to culture and identity and foreign policies. These two main tracks of Asian studies are followed by political studies and development studies while the rest gained very minimal attention in terms of the number of researches being conducted by graduate students in the program.

Preponderance of Studies Related to Japan in the Asian Center

In critically examining the aforementioned research materials it can be observed that there is an overwhelming predominance of research undertakings pertaining to Japan. Japan as a topic of discourse had been generally dominating the entire discursive formations created in the Center. This predominance of studies relating to Japan can most especially be manifested in at least three areas: culture and identity, development studies, and education.

Japanese culture had been main source of discussions in the theses falling under culture and identity. This can be attributed to the vast literature and the immediate availability of resources exploring the same not to mention that throughout Asia, Japan (particularly Kyoto University) remains to be the main contributor in Asian studies researches. Moreover, this also manifests the strong cultural ties of the Philippines and Japan since the Philippines had been one of its major partners in cultural exchanges.

Aside from culture and identity, development studies that were pursued in the Center mostly explore Japanese aids in the Philippines. This is not surprising however, since Japan had been consistent in delivering economic aid programs in the Philippines up to the present day. However, based on the particular studies conducted pertaining to development aids of Japan in the Philippines, the most significant program i.e. Japan-Philippine Economic Agreement was never explored in any of the studies conducted. This has also been the case in terms of studies conducted pertaining to education systems. Two out of three studies endeavours Japan educational system.

Foreign Policy and Political Studies

An immediate observation that can be raised is majority of the studies conducted about foreign policy define and discuss issues pertaining to the foreign policies of China. Most of these studies centered on security issues (in terms of territorial rights) in Asia involving China. There is a common direction on the studies of that sort that China remains to be (though this is more clear than apparent in the unfolding of events in contemporary territorial disputes especially in Southeast Asia) one of the biggest stakeholders in contemporary foreign community hence the number of studies conducted thereto.

In political issues, the common trend is to examine individual political structures and national policies of individual Asian countries. It is the writer's observation, however, that it is strange to find out that there is an absence of scholarship in comparative political studies. Comparative studies in political structures and national policies can be rich sources of information in research communities such as the Center.

Other Tracks

Despite of the relatively significant number of Muslim countries in Asia (especially SEA), there is only one study specifically discussing Muslim representation. This can nevertheless be explained by the existence of Islamic Studies Center in the University. On the same manner, gender studies remain to be in the peripheries of studies being conducted by graduate students. There were only three studies that deployed gender perspectives from 1992-2011. Two of the three explores women's rights and one about gay consciousness. Notwithstanding the proliferation of gender discourses and the efflorescence of literature about the same in contemporary academic research trend for the past several decades not just in the Philippines but in international academic community as well, it is rather surprising to note that this topic remains to be less travelled in the center. Not to mention the presence of women professors in the center that takes gender as their primary advocacy.

Thematic Profile (SEA studies)	Frequency	Percentage
Foreign Policy	4	25
Development Studies	3	18.75
Political Studies	2	12.5
Culture and Identity	2	12.5
Gender Studies	2	12.5
Muslim Representation	1	6.25
Historical Studies	1	6.25
Education	1	6.25

Table 3
Thematic Profile (Southeast Asian Studies)

Table 3 describes the thematic profile of the Southeast Asian studies in the Asian Center. Studies pertaining to foreign policy and development emerged to be in the top of the types of topics explored. Political, culture, and gender studies come in next while Muslim representation, historical studies, and education each has one study. As manifested, this part of the paper utilized a clustering similar to that of the clustering used in examining the entire Asian studies theses (the data above are also included in the earlier table). However, a closer reading of the studies specifically examining Southeast Asia is conducted and will be explored in the succeeding discussions. Be that as it may, some of the initial findings earlier presented by this paper can be alluded again for further emphasis.

In Foreign Policy

By carefully examining the statistics in the theses presented above, it can be observed that foreign policy is at the top of the list in terms of number of studies conducted. In this respect, it is noticeable that the underlying epistemology of the discussions in terms of foreign policy issues that confront Southeast Asia rests on the concept of ‘regional cooperation’. Through a close reading of the studies in this group, ‘regional cooperation’ among Southeast

Asian countries is necessary in terms of policy implementation and mitigating threats in national security. In other words, scattered in this respect is the view that more than an individual national concern, policies must be viewed in 'ASEAN' point of view.

Such underpinnings can be easily extracted since all except for one (a study conducted in 2010 regarding China's good neighbour policy towards Vietnam and South Korea) of the studies pertaining to foreign policy treat regional security (in terms of territorial disputes, threat in national sovereignty, and possible ideological and military occupation) with primordial import. There is an overwhelming consensus among studies of this sort that regional cooperation, anchored into general systems theory, remains to be the best shield for regional security.

Another point that is more clear than apparent in issues pertaining to foreign policies is an overwhelming consensus in viewing China and the Russia as primary actors, if not the foremost threats, in the security on the region. It has also been observed that most of the studies considered, as historical events clearly manifested, ideology, more than territorial boundaries, remains to be the strongest element in defining regional threats. In line with this, discourses about nationalism and the defining national interests also proliferated in the direction of foreign policy issue.

Finally, in foreign policy, it must be mentioned that there is no study that specifically explores foreign policy in relation to economic aspect of Southeast Asia.

In Development Studies

Contrary to the foreign study cluster, which places so much emphasis on regional cooperation, development studies hardly mention Southeast Asian regional cooperation. As mentioned in the earlier part of this paper, despite of the direction of Southeast Asian countries in strengthening cooperation among its members in the past several decades through framework formulation and policy statements, the Asian Center places little emphasis, as shown by the number (or the lack of it) of researches produced in the same, in discussing regional cooperation. In spite of the economic developments initiated by the said alliance, there is no research that delve in discussing the same. However, the study

conducted in 1997 somehow tackled about regional cooperation. Yet, the content of the said research is limited in three (3) Southeast Asian countries: Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Taking the growth triangle concept, this study proposed economic development scheme that will best benefit the said countries. A focus had also been casted in problematizing the possibility of sub-regional integration among Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

Two of the researches (PSC: A Case Study of Japanese Investments in the Philippines, 1994 and Trade Relations Between People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines, 1994) explored development departing from the Philippine context.

In Political Studies

There are two studies conducted that form part of the political studies group in Southeast Asian studies. The study conducted in 1995 focused on the political reporting and forms of control deployed in Indonesia by the state towards mass media. Through a case study of the Jakarta Post, state policy on responsible journalism had been exposed. The thesis, towards the end, argued that the state policy implemented was successful, at least in the case at hand, in maintaining a fair and balance news reporting.

Another study in this area presents a historical analysis of the political trajectory of Cambodia's prince, Norodom Sihanouk, from 1970 to 1975. This particularly examined the political dynamism that unfolded in Cambodia's political history in the period of unrest of the Prince's reign. This political tension, as elaborated in the thesis, was brought about by the overarching rivalry in terms of ideological and economic arrangements between the US-sponsored capitalism and the China-backed communism that had been the preoccupation of some countries in Southeast Asia during the period covered by the study.

There is no significant findings in these researches in terms of epistemic similarities. Clearly, the treatment of data in these two studies forms highly independent stance. However, it is striking to note that there is no comparative study that had been conducted in terms of political structures, system, and/or organization of government among or between Southeast Asian studies. The

writer is not in the position to argue that such is the only acceptable trajectory in Southeast Asian political studies. It is only the stand of this paper that it is interesting to see (and perhaps it can provide rich information) some of the commonalities, if there is any, and points of divergence in politics and governance in Southeast Asian nations.

In Historical Study

There is only one hard-core historical study in the entire bunch of theses covered by this paper. This study elucidated and examined the effects of Japanese occupation in Iligan from 1942-1945 in the broad areas of economic, political, and socio cultural life of the Iliganos. An unveiling of the forms of resistance created by the Japanese occupation in Iligan against military forces had been the main problematique of this thesis. Exemplified by the guerrilla movement led by Pedro Andres, this form of resistance, the thesis argued, led to the establishment of a "Free Iligan Civil Government". Initial reading of this work suggests an anti-colonial stance. Eventually, towards the end, it appears that it only criticize Japanese occupation to favour American forces and government.

Then and again, it is not the position of this paper to exclude studies conducted in and about the Philippines as part of Asian studies. However, since there is a specialized degree of Philippine studies in the Asian Center, works of this kind best belong to the said degree program. Works in Asian studies program must transcend merely discussing the Philippines but, the writer is in the position, that it must be integrated with a highly and broader Asian element other than the Philippines. At the end of the day, one of the thrusts of Asian studies program is to view Asia using Philippine perspective.

In Education

A comparative study of the Muslim Madrasah system in the Philippines and in Java, Indonesia comprises the lone study about education in Southeast Asian studies. With the end-view of viewing the Muslim element in the respective educational systems of the aforementioned, the work critically examined the

curriculum, level offerings, and the over-all management of the system, among others. It determined which of the two is closer to 'real' Islamic education.

It must be noted that one defining characteristic of this study, which can be said to be the source of the epistemic grounding of the same, is that it takes a policy-making perspective. Much of the discussions presented in the end of the work talk about reforms that can be implemented (especially by the Department of Education) with respect to the system of education being used in Muslim regions in the Philippines. This study takes the point of view of the state and how the state can best regulate the system that is entirely different from the rest of the educational system being applied across the country. Of all the studies mentioned throughout this paper, this one is the only pragmatic study, in the strict philosophical sense, since the end-view was to initiate policy formulation and/or reform in the education sector (at least in the Southern Philippines).

In Gender Studies

In international knowledge politics, gender studies had been the focus of attention in the efflorescence of post-modern culture through the accompaniment of post-modern literary products. This undertaking reached the Philippines in the 70s and had its stronghold during the late half of the 80s. In the University of the Philippines, studies about gender had been integrated in the mainstream in 1988 through Administrative Order # 83 issued by then UP President, Jose Abueva (up.edu.ph). These developments can be said to be the advent of gender discourses in the Philippines. Thereafter, it is more clear than apparent, that proliferation of studies and researches about gender thrived throughout academic discourse and across departments. In Asian studies however, in the period covered by this study, researches produced in terms of gender is relatively small and came to be rather late. There are only two (2) studies conducted about gender: one in women representation (2010) and another one about gay identity/ies (2007).

It is noticeable though that the study particularly examining women's role and representation of the Asatizah (Muslim female

teachers) in the Philippines and Malaysia did not take the usual critical epistemology normally deployed in women's studies. The work simply let out the roles and representations of women in the Madrasah systems of the Philippines and Malaysia.

Another point that can be posited is that a study about gay representation (2007) in Bangkok came out earlier than the aforementioned study about women. It is a fact, in international and national knowledge production, that gay studies anchor its theoretical grounding and epistemic validation from women studies researches. However, in Southeast Asian studies, at least through the materials utilized by this paper, the study about women came later than the study about gay identity/ies.

Deployment of Philippine Perspective

By carefully assessing the perspectives deployed in the studies covered by this paper it can be extracted that Philippine perspective had been scattered throughout. Be that as it may, there are still groups in the thematic profile where such perspective has not been deployed. Of all the groups that this paper's typology indicated, the field of development studies been the most successful in integrating Philippine perspective. The treatment of development in this group always takes reference and/or departs from Philippine context. This reference enabled these studies to precisely discuss development with Philippine development as the alpha and/or omega.

Foreign policy, as earlier suggested, clearly takes an overarching Asian perspective. Such is also the case in Southeast Asian studies; taking Southeast Asia as privileged vantage point. This is not surprising though since most of the discussions deal with security issues, which are concerns not just of individual countries but regional in scope. Thus, it can be said that in foreign policy, though there is no direct Philippine perspective, the fact that studies in this group took highly regional stance, then such perspective is already imbedded.

Other thematic groups except political studies deployed sporadic Philippine points of view in their respective treatment of data. In education and gender, comparative studies had been

the name of the game (at least in Southeast Asian studies) i.e. the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. The sole study in history, as earlier mentioned, specifically studies a case in Iligan, hence Philippine perspective against Japanese colonial narrative was favoured.

Finally, the only thematic group where an absence of Philippine perspective can clearly be seen is the political studies group. Studies taking this theme as main content settled more on individual national policies and structures of individual government, the Philippines not included. As talked about earlier, deployment of Philippine perspective, in the form of comparative political studies, can also make studies richer and more interesting.

Generally, from the discussion raised above it can be surmised that there is a rather considerable amount of Philippine perspective deployed in Southeast Asian research across the thematic groups included in the study of this paper. This manifests that, at least in perspective, the Asian Center maintains fidelity in the very essence of its existence i.e. providing Asian studies research grounded on Philippine conditions and context.

Recommendations

This part of the paper merely wishes to express some recommendations in terms of the studies that future researchers can explore as suggested by the findings and observations unveiled throughout the work. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

- There is highly a need (due to lack of it) to conduct studies pertaining to regional cooperation. Studies of this sort must be highly prioritized than studies specifically exploring individual countries. This is especially true in studies that can be explored pertaining to development. Regional cooperation, being one of the major concerns of Southeast Asian nations, must be highlighted. Critical interrogation and/or analysis of contemporary policies, framework, and modes of integration must be pursued. Studies of this kind will enable a pro-active stance and better preparation for the involvement of the Philippines in calls for internationalization. Such trajectory must

come from, no less than, the National University of the Philippines i.e. UP. The University of the Philippines, through its Asian Center must keep track and remain abreast in the developments about regional cooperation. As manifested (which is the topic of an earlier publication of the writer) by studies elsewhere and studies covered by this paper, such cooperation is the best alternative for the Philippines to remain afloat in the midst of turning the world into one big community.

- Comparative studies in terms of political thematic must also be prioritized. This can provide in-depth insights and interesting modes of discourse in the midst of a seeming 'weak' political structure being applied in the Philippines.
- In terms of cultural researches, studies searching for some commonalities and differences in the diverse cultures of Southeast Asian countries can also be undertaken. This will enable a better perspective in terms of identity formation that can be extracted through shared history and cultural traits.
- One of the most utilized research techniques in the present in international and national knowledge production is linguistic studies, hence the linguistic turn. However, upon careful examination, it is revealed that there is no study conducted (at least in the period covered by this study) in this track. It can be proposed therefore that study of this sort can also be conducted in line with cultural researches.
- Research about Muslim identities within Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines included, is also a good source of Islamic study that can very well be within the purview of Asian studies. Moreover, types of government in Muslim regions across Southeast Asia is also a good point of departure in terms of the earlier proposed comparative political studies.
- A suggestion to explore graduate researches taking critical perspective with the goal of policy formulation must also be prioritized. In the end, scholarly works are eventually being conducted for the purpose of making lives of people better. With the number of possible topics that can be undertaken in the vast areas of economic, political, and

organizational policies, it is not, in any way, hard to propose topics exploring this trajectory.

- Finally, one of the most appealing theories and bunch of literature in present knowledge production anchor their epistemic formations in postmodern, poststructural, and postcolonial discourses. It is ironic that despite the colonial histories of Southeast Asian countries, a thing common to them except Thailand, there is an absence of study in this trajectory. This, to my mind, is a possible endeavour that can bring about a more intellectual and philosophical research material.

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