



Social Science Information

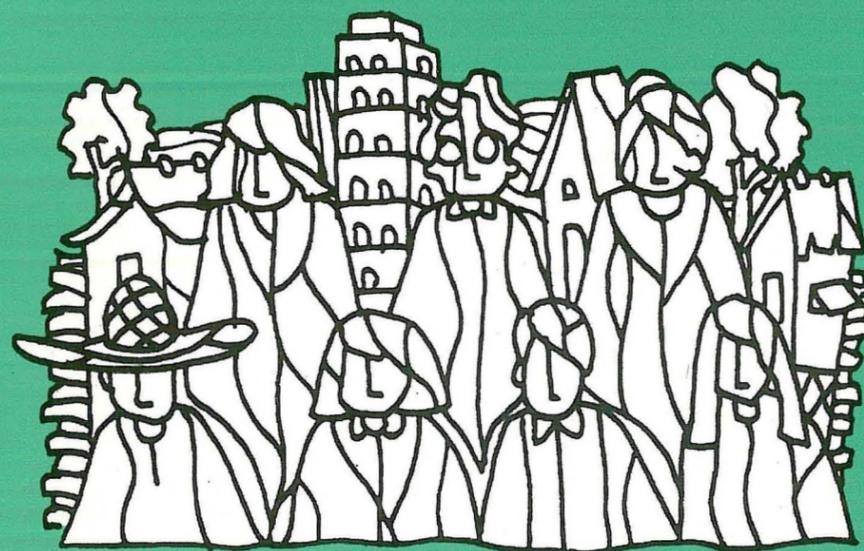
VOL 29 NO 2

JULY - DECEMBER 2001

**PSSC LECTURE
SERIES 2001**

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's
State of the Nation Address: Perspectives
from the Social Science Community

Reporting
Public Opinion Polls



**SOCIAL SCIENCE
INFORMATION**

Philippine Social Science Council
P.O. Box 205 UP Post Office, Diliman, Quezon City, 1101

May be opened for postal inspection

ISBN 0115-1160

THE PSSC SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION

The *PSSC Social Science Information* is published twice a year by the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC), with offices at PSSCenter, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City; U.P. Post Office Box 205, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines.

In line with the mandate of PSSC, the *PSSC Social Science Information* seeks to promote the dissemination of social science knowledge and research findings and their use in public policy-making.

The views expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect those of PSSC or the authors' institutions.

Guest Editor	:	REYNALDO V. GUIOGUIO Philippines Communication Society
Technical Assistance	:	ISAGANI A. LACHICA, ELVIRA S. ANGELES
Circulation	:	MILAGROS J. TOLENTINO, ERNESTO S. ACOSTA

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Proper acknowledgments should be given to quotes taken from this publication.

Cover Design: Ariel Manuel



Editorial

Policy Issues Forum on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address: Perspectives from the Social Science Community

Opening Remarks and Introduction of the Keynote Speaker

Alex B. Brillantes, Jr. 1

Keynote Address

J. R. Nereus O. Acosta 3

Paper Presentations

The State of the Nation:
Psychological Perspectives
Amaryllis T. Torres 10

Addressing the Problem of Inequality:
A Sociologist's Reflections on the
President's State of the Nation Address
Sylvia H. Guerrero 13

Reactions to the SONA from the Perspective
of Public Administration
Ma. Concepcion P. Alfiler 17

An Economist's Reactions to the President's
State of the Nation Address
Cayetano W. Paderanga, Jr. 19

A Historian's State of the Nation
Leslie E. Bauzon 21

Forum on Reporting Public Opinion Polls

Panel Presentations 33

Joseph Y. Lim
Ana Maria L. Tabunda
Benito O. Lim
Ricardo G. Abad

Open Forum 45

About the Speakers 55

EDITORIAL

The Social Scientist in the Public Sphere

The "public sphere" is a term created by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas to denote the arena where public discussions and exchange of information take place. For Habermas, the concept of a free marketplace of ideas is the living fabric that underlies the existence of democratic societies. The public sphere in short, is the sum total of information and communication modalities that people use when they exchange views and formulate opinions. These would include social and political institutions such as the legislative, the press, public assemblies, broadcast networks, the internet, etc.

What is crucial is that the principles of the public sphere involve an open discussion of all issues of general concern in which the exchange of views are employed to ascertain general interests and the public good. The public sphere thus presupposes freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision-making. The challenge therefore for contemporary societies is to broaden the participation and quality of debate in the public sphere in order for the better alternatives or solutions to emerge that will ultimately benefit our people. This is a call for social scientists to actively engage in and to put in their views and research expertise in the issues and concerns affecting Philippine society.

The idea of the "public sphere" in a way is the common thread that ran through the two PSSC forums whose proceedings are now being published in this issue of the *PSSC Social Science Information*. One can glean from these discussions the underlying theme of public involvement and participation in the national issues that affect the lives of millions of Filipinos, many of whom are mired in the shackles of ignorance, deprivation and oppression.

One critical issue that emerges from these discussions is the need for clearer and better-informed analysis of the problems facing the nation. For social scientists who might be motivated to wade in or participate, the prospects could be very unnerving. More often than not, reasoned judgment is obscured by rhetoric; sectarianism obviates the presentation of facts; those who shout the shrillest tend to get the most attention. The image that sticks in the mind is that of a popular evening television show in which the participants go through histrionics just to get the chance to speak, conduct that could scare anyone from being involved—not just the researcher or the academician.

Yet our experience shows, and that is what publishing these seminar proceedings is all about, that there could be other ways by which discussions or participation in the public sphere can take place. The exchange of views and opinions that we highlight in the two seminars presented here gives truth to the proposition that contending ideas could give birth to better solutions than those kept in isolation. Our concepts are made productive, our research enhanced when we participate in the public sphere.

What this all amounts to is for the Philippine Social Science Council and its member associations and affiliates to continue and further strengthen their commitment to the public weal by opening their lines of communication with policy-makers, non-governmental organizations, community organizations and the general public. PSSC has on its mandate the application of social science research to problems affecting our society. The two seminars that we have conducted this year reiterate that mission. It is a goal worthy of PSSC and its membership to pursue in the coming years.

REYNALDO V. GUIOGUIO, PH.D.
Chair
Social Issues Committee

Policy Issues Forum on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address: Perspectives from the Social Science Community

18 August 2001

Opening Remarks and Introduction of the Keynote Speaker

ALEX B. BRILLANTES, JR.

I take pleasure in welcoming each of you to this morning's Policy Issues Forum on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (SONA) as analyzed from different social science perspectives. This forum was planned on the initiative of the PSSC Social Issues Committee (SICom) chaired by Dr. Reynaldo Guioguo of Philippines Communication Society, and with Dean Angelito Manalili of UP College of Social Work and Community Development and Mr. Leonardo Estacio, Jr. of Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao.

The SICom has been very active in organizing policy issues forums. This is the second that the Committee has organized this year and which the Governing Council thought should also serve as an occasion for PSSC to invite some of its former heads and chairpersons to share their views and insights on issues of the day and revisit PSSC at the time of the Council's General Membership Meeting. During the planning for this forum there was apprehension that since the President's SONA was delivered

about three weeks ago and it has been analyzed and re-analyzed by newspaper columnists and other analysts, this forum might already be superfluous. But I believe time does do something, that when we hold this discussion weeks away from when the SONA was delivered, we'll be able to somehow give dispassionately our opinions and analysis on the state of the nation from our respective disciplines.

We are thus very honored that five of PSSC's former Chairs have accepted our invitations for them to constitute our panel this morning. I wish to welcome them — Drs. Amaryllis T. Torres, Ma. Concepcion P. Alfiler, Sylvia H. Guerrero and Cayetano W. Paderanga, Jr. Dr. Leslie E. Bauzon is the fifth member of the panel but unfortunately, he cannot be with us today because of the sudden death of a nephew in Pangasinan. He sent his paper yesterday afternoon and which his fellow historian and Governing Council member Dr. Bernardita R. Churchill has graciously agreed to present on Dr. Bauzon's behalf.

We also have with us other former PSSC Chairs this morning—Dr. Bonifacio P. Sibayan, Prof. Carmencita T. Aguilar and Dr. Ma. Cynthia Rose B. Bautista whom we wish to welcome and who we hope we can invite as speakers to future policy issues forums.

We also welcome each of the representatives of PSSC's regular members and associate members. A modest snack will be served during the forum but we wish to invite everyone to stay for lunch and for the General Membership Meeting which will immediately follow this morning's forum.

I now go to introducing our keynote speaker, Congressman J. R. Nereus O. Acosta of the first District of Bukidnon. Congressman Acosta, already a familiar face to most of us, especially to those who attended our Midyear General Membership Meeting last year and stayed right after for the start of the PSSC-UP School of Urban and Regional Planning lecture series on environmental security, is indeed part of the social science community. He has a Ph.D. in

Political Science from the University of Hawaii, and he has done some work in the Kennedy School of Government. Before his foray into politics, I knew Nereus on a personal level when I met him abroad in the early 90s. That he continues to be the only member of the House of Representatives with a Ph.D. says a lot about the quality of his legislation. He is the principal author of the landmark law on environmental protection popularly known as the Clean Air Act. He has done a lot of lectures at the Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro City, Ateneo de Manila University, University of the Philippines and of course here at PSSC. I think Congressman Acosta remains a social scientist and a member of the academe at heart that he has not turned down any of PSSC's invitations for him to speak and participate in PSSC functions and activities. We hope that we can maintain our ties with him and that he also continues to serve as the social scientists' bridge to the world of public policy making. Again let's welcome and give a round of applause to Congressman Nereus "Neric" Acosta.

Keynote Address

J.R. NEREUS O. ACOSTA

Magandang magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat. Before anything else, I always say that I thoroughly enjoy being in gatherings like this—anything that leads me back to the academe. That is why I still make it a point to teach because it keeps my sanity while being in politics. And that is said in all earnestness. *So unang-una*, to all of the PSSC family, my former professors, my fond greetings. (Yesterday I was also keynote speaker in the Environmental Security Management Course at the National Defense College. Dr. Clarita Carlos and I saw all these UP Political Science graduates from different batches, many of them much younger than we. And I could not believe it has been almost 17 years since I was a student at the UP Political Science Department.) And of course Dr. Brillantes in Hawaii, at the East-West Center, *medyo mas matanda lang ho siya ng konti sa akin*. We shared the same dissertation advisers and committee members. And to Dr. Miralao as well, and to all our distinguished panelists, to Dr. Torres, Dr. Bauzon, Dr. Alfiler, Dr. Guerrero, Dr. Paderanga, friends in the different institutes, research think tanks and such, *sa inyong lahat, magandang magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat*. And coming from the advocacies that I hold very dear to my heart, Mr. Clean Air as they call me, despite the fact that it's still not being implemented and we are now ranked as the second most polluted mega-city in the world next to Mexico City, *isang makakalikasang pagbati po sa inyong lahat*.

I was told by Dr. Miralao to just launch off into whatever I thought was called for as far as an analysis from my perspective as a policy maker, as an educator myself, and as a social scientist myself, of the State of the Nation Address of President Macapagal a few weeks ago. And I have so much to say but I cannot belabor each and every issue, each and every area of concern. That is why we are here today because we're going to do it on a disciplinary basis. I don't know what perspective will override this kind of an analysis. Is it the social scientist in me, is it the politician, is it the policy maker? Because there are distinctions, believe me. And it's a major juggling act, if not a tight-rope act to be in the kind of jungle or circus, however you may wish to see it, that is the Congress of the Republic of the Philippines. As I said earlier, I have to keep doing this, and I welcome such opportunities. It's just a matter of scheduling. In the National Defense College, they asked me to also teach there next semester. Of course, without batting an eyelash, I just said, it's a matter of just getting a time management scheduling arrangement here. At the risk of sounding presumptuous, the same is being proffered to PSSC. So please do call on me. I was just with Dr. Miralao for the APMRN Migration Conference in March, and that was in the middle of the election campaign, but I had to fly to Manila. Because that is the commitment that we have to have to the further strengthening not only of the academia, but

the linkages between policy and institutions such as yours. Because if there is anything that is truly lacking in this country, it is a fuller analysis, a fuller understanding of issues that span the whole gamut of governance, of government, of policy-making, and of the very delicate balancing that has to be struck vis-à-vis all of these issues that we care so deeply about.

So I guess this is the continuing overture I am making. Now, having said all that, I just want to begin by saying that there was really nothing new in the State of the Nation Address of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, except of course the rather nice and heartwarming sight of Erwin, Jomar and Jayson. Of course it's good to put a human face to poverty. And I laud the President for the specific targets, I believe 35 of them, which she set for herself and for this government to meet in the next three years. But you know, stripped of many of these very concrete targets, they were largely in a sense to me (and I know this is probably nitpicking and I know we can be accused especially as academics as always engaging in such) a list of some welfare targets, without really an overarching philosophy, an over-riding framework, an encompassing consciousness about the very reasons why we have to pursue such goals and such targets over and beyond the obvious which is that we need to, of course, provide jobs, better education, housing, better governance, and this whole gamut of the delivery of basic social services.

So sige, nandoon na tayo, ang ganda, naka-set. Because these are measurable, these are good indicators, but beyond that, in 66 minutes of that SONA, I was dying, I was waiting, I was anticipating, I was desperately hoping that the President would mention some concerns which I believe are important. What I believe is so critical, in fact so urgent and pressing that I just found it incredible that there was not a squeak made on it, and I refer, in a word, to human

development issues inclusive of population and the environment. Nothing. There was a cursory mention of the solid waste problem we have in Metro Manila, which is of course to put it rather lightly because it is more than a problem. It is a catastrophe staring us in the face.

I want to mention this because if you do not talk about the population situation (I do not want to even call it a problem) and mention ecosystems and mention the very basis of life itself, which is air quality, water quality, agriculture and sustainable development, if you do not mention solid waste, if you do not mention biodiversity, you do not mention the very sustenance of this society, and the fact that we are going to double to 160 million in 29 years (in 2030), at this birth rate of 2.4 or thereabouts, then that is intellectual dishonesty of the highest order.

And I find it sad because President Macapagal-Arroyo is an economist, has a Ph.D., is an academic, and she did not see fit to mention any of these in 66 minutes. I cannot (and I will even quote or paraphrase from the Institute on Church and Social Issues of the Ateneo for instance) see how she could even miss mentioning that one of the most important variables affecting economic growth and society's capacity to improve the living conditions of the people, particularly the poor, has to do with population, inclusive of ecology—four elements of ecology: population, technology, environment, and social organization. How could she miss that? And I think it was deliberate because President Macapagal-Arroyo is a very astute politician. She has very keen political instincts and is a very real political animal. And I do not mean that in any negative sense. What I am just saying is that it is sad because it is something that is so glaringly apparent for anyone of us to see. And yet, this is conveniently overlooked. And so I want to mention here that there is just no way that the SONA targets can be met (I gave a privilege speech last week and a press conference

after that on the same issue). No way. No way at all if you do not incorporate honestly, sincerely, effectively all of these issues on population and environment. Nothing. None of those will ever come into fruition. Because you can have jobs (one million in agriculture), you can cut medicine prices in half, you can put up a school building in every barangay, etc., as she had mentioned, but you have to take into account realistically, the fact that we are the 14th most populous country in the world, although we are the 126th only in size (there are 159 countries in the world). There are 38 Philippines, land area-wise, that you can put in the continental United States. But we have almost 80 million people. I am sure more than that unofficially. We are the 9th most populous country in Asia, the fastest growing country in the region, and as I said earlier, we are going to double our population to 160 million in 29 years. Demonstrably, we cannot even cope with the basic delivery of services—the delivery, the effective and efficient allocation of resources as we see fit. I am a member of the Committee on Appropriations and we study these matters. Demonstrably you just cannot do it. You just cannot do it with 80 million people. It is going to be catastrophic at 160 million people in 29 years.

The budget deficit is a perennial problem. And government is the only sector now that is spending. Businesses are down as we know it. (I know this does not bear repeating. We all know these.) I had dinner with Peter Wallace the other night and this is his perspective. I may have

disagreements with some of his points, but there were some that I believe are just right on the mark. And he spoke about, does the Philippines have a chance? And it was printed in some of the broad sheets over two weeks ago. He said that in the past 25 years, the Philippines has averaged



only 3.1 percent annual GDP growth with the population growth of roughly 2.4 or 2.5 percent, which means hardly any improvement for the Filipino over those 25 years. This is about half or less the rate achieved by other nations in Asia. It is the last. Using 1975 as the base year, he ranked some of the Asian countries according to compounded per capita GDP index, and the Philippines ranked the last in this order: China, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines. Well, he did not include Bangladesh, thank God, but that is of little consolation, is it not? The Philippines' compounded per capita GDP index was 116 compared to 733 for China, 333 for Thailand. Which means that over those 25 years on per capita basis, the Chinese have become 7 times richer than the Filipinos, and the Thais 3 times richer than the Filipinos. And on and on and on.

And he identifies nine of the reasons why (and if you will just allow me very briefly to run through them): First, politics (need I say more?), vested interests versus the national good. You can write dissertations about this 10 times over. Second, uncontrolled population growth. Third, a very weak and rapidly deteriorating educational system (don't we know this?). Fourth, corruption. I just came across a World Bank study that showed that 40 percent of our national budget goes to corruption. And that is also validated by the Transparency International. How much is the budget deficit roughly if we do some number crunching here? This may be a bit of an over-simplification but nonetheless it should be valuable. If we look at the budget deficit every year, on average, it is about 40 percent of our national budget. Fifth, inadequate infrastructure. Sixth, an agriculture system that has not improved in the last 25 years. Seventh, a very inadequate focus on job creation. Eighth, a judiciary or justice system in need of an overhaul. Hoodlums in robes and this whole brouhaha now with Lacson and Corpus. It is an indictment, it is a reflection of this whole system of a judiciary in need of major improvement. Ninth, security, you know, inclusive of Abu Sayyaf. And this is where I come in with the population and the environment, although of course he mentioned already uncontrolled population growth. This is a security problem to my mind which is what I told the National Defense College yesterday. You just cannot think of the environment other than in this case, in this phenomenon we are facing now, as an internal security threat. Why?

A few days ago, I accessed a website called the Environmental Sustainability Index. For the last two years, the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland has come up with this Global Leaders of Tomorrow Environment Studies. And it has commissioned Yale, Columbia, Harvard and different institutes all over the

world to come up with the index for the last two years; it is a brilliant index. It is voluminous, but you can access it on the web. It's something like 500 pages. (It's www.yale.edu/envirocenter, if you care to look at it.) Anyway, this is what I mentioned and called attention to in Congress last week when I gave my privilege speech. And this is very important and pressing. Last year, there were 60 countries studied on five components: first, environmental system; second, environment stresses and risks; third, human vulnerability; fourth, social and institutional capacity; and fifth, global stewardship. I'll explain them very briefly in a while. Anyway, out of the 60 countries studied last year, ranking all of them based on our capacity to cope, to manage the stresses to our environment inclusive of those five components I just mentioned (again, environmental system; environment stresses and risks; human vulnerability—like the flooding we have, FERIA, Cherry Hills, Payatas, Ormoc, lahar, name it, that is human vulnerability to environmental impacts; social and institutional capacity; and global stewardship), does anyone hazard a guess where we ranked among the 60 last year? Well, we did a little better than Zimbabwe, because we ranked number 59. This year, they expanded the field to 122 countries, including sub-Saharan Africa like Nigeria, Gabon, Rwanda. Now, do you want to guess where we are? Eight countries did worse than we did. (Haiti ranked the last, Gabon, Niger, Afghanistan). If I remember right, we were 112th; Bangladesh, 10th and behold, was 97th; Malaysia, 52th; Thailand, 74th; Indonesia, 88th (you see I've seared that in my brain); Japan, 22nd; Norway, 2nd; Finland, 1. Scandinavian countries were all there, Canada, 5th; the United States, 11th; Singapore, 16th, I believe. The Philippines; 112th, the lowest in Asia. Why? And President Macapagal does not mention this in the SONA. (It is like, hello, this is the Titanic, Madame President. What are we

doing, playing the violin? *Di ba* they were still playing the violin when the Titanic was sinking?) Still talking about giving jobs and education, and health care. Yes, we all need that. No one is saying we do not. *Pero aanhin pa ang damo kung patay na ang kabayo?*

As I said earlier, when my mother was the Ecology Chair many years ago in the 9th or 10th Congress, she authored the Clean Air Act. (You know, this is a family affair, this Clean Air Act. There is a 12 year gestation.) At that time, Metro Manila was ranked number 20 among the megacities in the world with most-polluted air. By the time the son authored the Clean Air Act, and pushed it through and made it through the Erap years which became the first environmental landmark law of this country, Metro Manila became, according to World Health Organization standards, the 5th dirtiest city. As of a few months ago, we were second to Mexico City in terms of TSP, Total Suspended Particulates. Stand in Cubao and you will know what TSPs are. Valenzuela, Makati, Cubao have the highest lead content. *Nakaka-bobo ang lead*. Kids in Ramon Magsaysay High School have their IQ points dropping a few points because of the inhalation of lead. But I always said, especially in the last administration, and maybe it could be said about still a lot of our institutions today, that maybe the highest lead content was not in Makati, or in Valenzuela, or in Cubao; it was in Congress and across Pasig River in Malacañang at that time. Because you are talking about intellectual deficiencies caused by lead!

But the point of all this is not about doom-saying and about doomsday scenarios. But for crying out loud . . . you know, *anong term* in the vernacular, *Anak ng tinapa naman, hindi nyo pa nakikita ang problemang ito?* My goodness! This is really the situation we are in. And I just cannot believe that we are not acting on it at all.

I was also guest speaker at a judges' seminar in Palawan. It was about Environmental Law, how judges should learn about all of these problems so that they may be guided in the prosecution of cases or in their judgements concerning dynamite fishing, logging, etc. If I may go very briefly, we have poor air quality measured among other variables by sulphur concentration in urban areas, 33 micro grams per cubic meter in the Philippines compared to only 2.2 in the United States. In terms of total suspended particulate index, 200 in the Philippines (these are nitrous oxide, sulphur oxides, carbon monoxides, etc.), compared to 7.8 in Canada.

We have one of the world's worst rates of land degradation and when it comes to deforestation, we end up the last. We rank last of the 122 countries in biodiversity. Why? Because we are not part of any mainland, we are an archipelagic country. We have the highest rate of endemism of flora and fauna. Palawan has the mouse deer and Mindoro has the *tamaraw*. One of the bills that was passed by the last Congress was the bill I filed on the protection of Mt. Kitanglad. It's the only specially protected area now in Mindanao, ahead of Mt. Apo. In one hectare in Mt. Kitanglad you will have three hundred tree species. This is like three times more than any given one hectare in a northern European or north American forest. The endemism of our flora and fauna is truly very high that we are ranked by the UNESCO as one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world. Meaning, we have the richest biodiversity, but we are also killing it at the fastest rate.

We have one of the world's worst rates of land degradation, as I said, and end up the worst in that. Next, our population growth, as I said earlier, is one of the highest in the world. I know this is very contentious, and I am going to take the risk of incurring the ire of Cardinal Sin here, but I have been saying all along that we

are offering (call this an overture) a fresh call for a dialogue. We cannot be ostriches burying our heads in sands of denial. We have to start talking again about this and put it in the forefront of our national agenda. To do otherwise, again as I said, is intellectual dishonesty of the highest order.

Pressure on the land is very severe. Ninety-eight percent of our land has more people than that of Japan. And in Metro Manila alone, there are 2,300 people per square kilometer. Fourteen million people in this metropolis and growing. Need I say more? I mean, go to C-5. You wonder why the garbage is there. What self-respecting country will throw heaps upon heaps of its own rubbish in its own thoroughfares?

In terms of vulnerability to environmental impact, we fared badly on two measures. Prevalence of infectious diseases, 700 for every hundred thousand people. And the number of deaths each year from natural disasters — Baguio, FERIA, typhoons, Boac River in Marinduque, Cherry Hills, Ormoc, etc. And the number of deaths each year from natural disasters, an average of 35 per hundred thousand people, is the highest rate of all the countries studied.

In terms of social and institutional capacity to deal with these environmental problems and stresses, two variables again are very dismal. First, expenditures for science and technology. (I should know this because I'm a member of the Science and Technology Committee and of the Committee on Appropriations.) How much do we allocate every year on average? Less than .2 percent of our GNP. Compare that to over 1.3 in Singapore, and 2.2 percent of GNP in the United States for research and development. I gave the 11th Congress five national environmental laws, the only freshman to do that. But I'm not Chair of the Environment-Ecology Committee. I am not

because of the internal dynamics of the speakership fight (I was the spokesperson of Congressman Butch Abad for the speakership).

I am talking about institutional and social capacity here. Governance. I am not claiming I am the resident expert. I am just saying I do not know what the criteria were. What I am just trying to get at is I am not entirely sure where the whole appropriations, where this whole process is taking us, because it is highly politicized. If there is any one instrument or apparatus of the Philippine State that is most politicized, it is the Philippine budget every year. And you know, in this distribution of chairmanship of committees, the Science and Technology Committee had no takers. I wanted to be Chair, if they wanted to give me a Chairmanship. ("You could not give Environment, then give me Science and Technology.") But it was not given to me, ultimately.

The most lucrative committees are appropriations, franchise, accounts, ways and means, games and amusement. Do you see a pattern here? Do you know the common denominator? And of course, I am not a member of the Spice Boys, but all of them now are chairing these committees. (Am I sourgraping?) But the point I'm trying to make is, for those committees left—science, indigenous peoples, social services, family, population—no one cared. But everyone wanted to get their hands on the moneyed committees. Science and Technology, who cares, right? This is what it is, less than P5 billion a year out of 780 billion pesos for General Appropriations Act this year.

Second, we are not producing enough research scientists and engineers. We have one of the world's lowest ratios of engineers-scientists for every million people. You know in Singapore (not that I am making Singapore a model of all of these things, I am just stating this here to dramatize the comparison) there are 2,728

scientists, engineers, technical experts per one million people (and Singapore has only 3.5 million population), 350 in China per one million people (China — the biggest country in the world), 3,732 per one million people in the United States. Do you want to guess how many research scientists and engineers we have in the Philippines per one million people? One hundred fifty seven per one million people. I do not know where they are. Maybe half of them are leaving the country as part of the 2,500 potential immigrants to the United States, Canada and elsewhere everyday. Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) admitted that 75,000 Filipinos leave the country every month.

Am I depressing you already? I have a point to all of these, ladies and gentlemen. I am not Mr. Cassandra. I am not Mr. Pessimist trying to create these doomsday scenarios. If anything, we have to do this because hope begins with understanding. And we have to be purveyors of that hope. So this is my point. And finally, in terms of all of these, we do not have global stewardship. We do not have an understanding of the globality of the issues inclusive of globalization. We do not understand how our economy relates with other economies and how we must try to incorporate the paradigms of governance, of policy-making, of setting targets and agenda with the rest of the world's realities and the rapidly changing, increasingly changing complex world that we live in.

So where do we go from here? I do not know. I am going to listen to all of you in the panel. Give us a road map. I just came from a workshop

of the legislators in Clark for two days, and we touched on the same recurrent themes. We need jobs, we need education, we need this, we need that, we need more money. At some point, some of us wanted to say, look, it is not just about throwing money and increasing your budget. It is also about the efficient allocation and use of resources. Really. And not just financial resources, but a dwindling natural resource base. How do you regenerate that? Because at the end of the day, what good is a job if you yourself are not productive because you breathe the second most polluted air in the world? What good is half-priced medicine if you face a water crisis and you are most vulnerable to infectious diseases? What point is it if you cannot be productive because your ecosystems are severely damaged?

My argument here, and I have been ramming this through Congress in my little way, is that economic competitiveness has everything to do with the ecological health of a country. You miss that point, you forget the future. So that is a friendly but firm reminder to the President and to all our policy-makers. I am not claiming to be the resident expert. I am just simply saying that hope begins with understanding and with analysis. I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said that the minute you extinguish hope, you create desperation. And friends and colleagues in the academe and partners in the purveying of hope for this country and our children's future, the last thing we need is a desperate government, a desperate future, and a desperate Philippines and children of the Philippines.

Thank you very much and good morning.

The State of the Nation: Psychological Perspectives

AMARYLLIS T. TORRES

GMA: Spokesperson for the Poor

In her State of the Nation Address, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo begins by identifying herself with the poor. She tells the story of the paper boats as a way of acknowledging the perceived needs of the disadvantaged sectors of Philippine society. She reminds us that her father was the "poor boy from Lubao" and that she shares his "poor man's dreams." She relates her vision to that of a national hero rooted to the masses, the Great Plebian, Andres Bonifacio.

This egalitarian stance is consistent with other elaborations of herself: as *Gloria Labandera*, as someone who goes to slum areas to interact with the poor, as a commander-in-chief who shares a meal with ordinary soldiers.

The image of GMA as head of state with all the powers invested in it, and of herself as a woman of the masses, cannot be easily reconciled. Power connotes control over resources; poverty is its antithesis. The state dispenses resources and services; the poor are bereft of these in their daily lives. Government dictates the directions of Philippine life; the poor are often powerless in directing their development.

In adopting the vision of the poor as her own, GMA invites disadvantaged groups to the centers of power, opportunity, resources and decision-making. She provides a glimmer of hope that the families of Jason, Jomar and Erwin will overcome their present deprivations and attain individual and community well-being.

She sees the goals of Philippine development to be those of prosperity, freedom and justice. She envisions a society where the power of the state is transferred from the traditional bosses to the people. These are the same objectives of groups and individuals from the ranks of civil society that work with the poor including NGOs and people's organizations.

GMA speaks with the voice of the poor, but the question remains: will the programs of government she outlines in the SONA allow them to achieve human development and personal well-being?

Psychology and Poverty

I have been asked this morning to provide a psychological perspective on the state of the nation, so allow me to share some of my thoughts with you.

Psychology is the study of individual choices. It presupposes that a person's behavior is linked to his or her freedom to choose from an array of decisions in ways that will satisfy motives and aspirations. Individual personality is shaped as much by physiology as it is by society, culture and the environment. The psychology of poverty and underdevelopment identifies the limitations to human choices and freedoms. It describes the motivations, emotions and aspirations arising from deprivations to human well-being.

In my own experience as a social scientist in development work, I have been witness to the many limitations in choices open to the poor

and the powerless. In a market economy where money is the avenue to opportunities, people with limited incomes have few or no choices in terms of survival needs. House rents are unaffordable, food prices are beyond their means, health care is a rare luxury, and employment is insecure. For the landless urban and rural poor, insecurity of abode and uncertainty over the future lead to learned helplessness. Self-actualization and the realization of the human potential, is nearly an impossible dream for families caught in the cycle of poverty.

GMA believes that support to free enterprise will result in more jobs. But it is unclear what 'social conscience' is attached to this. Over the past several years, open to the influences of global forces in a liberalized economy, free trade has not stemmed unemployment and underemployment. In a capitalist economy where skills are a premium, scores of unskilled individuals from the ranks of the poor have had fewer choices by way of jobs. Instead, employment arrangements that foster job insecurity have flourished. Contractualization of labor, informal wage and labor arrangements, and the lay-off of casual labor in state and private enterprise are well-known experiences among our workers. Such developments have severely limited the labor rights and dignity of our workers. They have retarded labor organizing, which is the workers' avenue for expressing their aspirations and participating in decision-making processes affecting their well-being.

A pro-poor strategy needs to examine the effects of these informal labor arrangements on individual lives. How have displaced workers coped with job insecurity? What measures are being taken to uplift their feelings of inadequacy in the face of constant threats to work and wages? How will work enhance the needs of individuals for personal and family security, and achieve satisfaction with their daily circumstances?

Industrial peace is mentioned as a strategy, but it is unclear in what ways tensions between labor and management will be reduced, at a time when employers are cutting back on labor costs and workers' wages are fast falling below the cost of living. Hopefully, industrial peace will mean more efforts to hear the side of the disadvantaged, enabling labor to negotiate for reasonable wages and benefits that allow for a decent standard of living. Our economy cannot always take the minimum perspective in terms of workers' benefits. To move out of poverty implies adequacy of income for the acquisition of sufficient goods and services. Subsistence wages will never mobilize sufficient resources for human development.

ICT, or industries fuelled by information technology, is mentioned as the foundation of our future economic development. While our nation cannot be left out of the Information Age, such a step will in fact exacerbate differences between the rich and the poor, urban and rural spaces. Steps have to be identified to enable the poor to benefit from ICT equally with more privileged classes. For instance, GMA readily admits that electric power is not a public resource readily available to all. Right now, ICT is a resource available only to electrified communities with telephone connections. Computers are not usual appliances in urban and rural poor households; it is not even accessible to scores of middle-class workers, rural-based teachers, and students in basic public education.

To the typical individual or family in a poor community, aspirations for internet connectivity are merely frustrated by the lack of resources and infrastructure. The situation of poverty serves to create a dissonance between the individual's desire to be part of an important aspect of national life, and the objective realities of one's limited means and resources to qualify as participant. Technology has to be affordable and accessible, if it is to have positive effects on the lives of the poor.

Equity is another goal often mentioned in the SONA. However, its attainment seems to be limited to strategies for employment generation and agricultural modernization. Individual differences are mediated, not only by class differences, but also by gender. Social constructions of gender roles in industry, agriculture, education and the economy need to be transformed towards providing women and men the means to equally attain self-actualization through national development.

Women's development and gender equality cannot be attained merely through micro-financing. On the labor front, the working conditions of our women in export-oriented industries need to be improved and their jobs made more secure. As overseas workers, measures are needed to continue protecting the integrity of their persons and the dignity of their placements. The deleterious impacts of economic liberalization on the livelihood sources of poor women have to be mitigated. Trafficking in women brought about by ICT and other global factors has to be stopped. In education and training, women's motivations, potentials and aspirations arising from their multiple roles need to be given free rein, rather than frustrated by gender stereotypes. In the economy, there is a need to understand the impacts of macroeconomic policies on micro situations: to identify how investments and capital accumulation affect households and the women who run them—as consumers, producers, and reproducers.

Psychology teaches us that reducing uncertainty enables individuals to make better decisions and make informed choices. People's participation remains a key ingredient in empowering the poor. Their views on agricultural modernization, capital markets

and investment portfolios are equally important as those of our trading partners, local capitalists, economists, educators, and development planners.

The mechanisms for people's participation are already in place. There is an active civil society in our midst that constantly analyzes and critiques the impacts of global trends and national policies on the grassroots. Mass media freely disseminates the opinions of influential individuals as well as the opinions and beliefs of the people. National planning processes institutionalize bottom-up planning, and allow for partnership efforts between the state and the masses.

These democratic spaces have to be protected and enlarged. They are the avenues for the poor to wisely select their individual and collective choices. Transparency in plans and policies, sensitivity to the aspirations of women, men and children in various social sectors, and commitment to total human development must be part of the nation's psyche. The muzzling of public opinion through terrorism and harassment, discrimination against certain sectors on account of gender, religion or ethnicity, and an uninformed deliberation of national priorities, have no place in a pro-poor society.

Being One with the Poor

The voices of the poor are echoed by GMA. But she must also enter their hearts and their minds to understand the core of their existence. More jobs, more schools, secure housing and food on the table are essential components of a favorable way of life. But they will truly be beneficial only if the constructive impacts of selected strategies, in the long run, outperform their potentially harmful consequence on the very individuals needing these resources.

Addressing the Problem of Inequality: A Sociologist's Reflections on the President's State of the Nation Address

SYLVIA H. GUERRERO

I watched briefly President Gloria M. Arroyo on TV as she delivered her State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July 23, 2001 and liked what I saw. To a feminist sociologist, it was a powerful image: a woman president at the helm of a nation that has survived another political crisis—a picture of confidence as she prepares and gears up for the battle for national recovery.

Three boys—children from Payatas—Jomar, Jayson and Erwin—had been chosen to represent the poor whose main concerns are quite basic and minimum— food, shelter, education and jobs—*“permanenteng trabaho para sa tatay ko para hindi siya mahirapan,”* says Jomar. And to Erwin: *“Ipasara ang Payatas dumpsite, at bigyan ng lupa ang aking pamilya.”*

What about the girl children? Why was there no one to represent them? Of course, Jason in his letter did ask for help. . . *“kasi po, ang nagpapaaral sa akin ay ang lola ko lamang.”*

There was something appealing about the imagery and the representation; I said to myself how much more powerful it would have been if gender were factored in. Though a minor slip—an oversight maybe, I realized, as I read the SONA, that indeed, the SONA was gender-neutral. And the oft-quoted statement in the UNDP Human Development Report 1995, published on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, rang in my ears: “Development if not engendered is endangered.”

My own decade-long work in pursuit of gender equality has made me overly-sensitive to these omissions. We have bannered shocking and gendered statistics to stress the issues. Poverty has a woman's face—70 percent of the world's poor are women. When times are bad—“women bear the burden of making ends meet, taking paid work to ensure that children survive the economic crisis.”

The SONA was also silent on the population issue. With a current growth rate of 2 percent per year, our population of 75.3 million is expected to double in 35 years. Efforts to advance equitable development have been hampered by a rapidly growing population. The Year 2000 State of the Philippines Population Report highlighted the problem of unmet needs for family planning and showed gender to be a major factor.

GMA's promises are not new—previous presidents have pledged to liberate the masses from the shackles of poverty and injustice, giving us hope and the promise of a good future. GMA's setting of concrete targets as well as expected outputs are commendable: a million jobs in the countryside; 200,000 hectares every year will be placed under land reform; 100,000 built houses every year for workers (*manggagawa*) and 50,000 more for the poor, etc. I like her resolve and mind-set—no fear or foreboding of failure in the face of tremendous odds.

Poverty-reduction, poverty-alleviation—jobs, food, housing—no one can disagree with these

concerns. As a recent UN consultant quipped, poverty has been mainstreamed in the development discourse (like gender, I added) and I guess, it does not bother us that much anymore.

What is it then that disturbs me about the SONA's analysis? Why was I and some colleagues I interviewed not moved by the SONA? I found something very critical, missing in the analysis—poverty alone is not the main problem. To me, it is the disparity, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the continuing and deepening inequality that has disturbed me in the last three decades that I have engaged in research and development.

In the much appreciated 1997 World Bank study on poverty in Tanzania, using participatory poverty assessment methodology, with the report entitled *Voices of the Poor*, one respondent expressed his view very simply: "*The one with nothing has everything taken from him, while the one with something has more given to him*".

Recent assessments of income inequalities (using a Gini coefficient) within and across countries confirm the increasing inequalities and disparities between the rich and the poor—the top and bottom income groups. With 0 representing perfect equality and 100 perfect inequality, the Philippines scored 46.2, with Slovakia being lowest in inequality at 19.5 among high HDI countries (compare U.S.A at 40.8, Japan at 24.9 and Sweden and Belgium at 25) and Nicaragua and Swaziland, highest at 60.

Over the last few decades, income levels across countries have been "both diverging and converging." There have been improvements in some East Asian and Pacific countries, with Latin American and Caribbean countries registering highest levels of income inequality.

The following summary results of the study by Brando Milanovic of the World Bank, using household surveys in 91 countries from 1988 to

1993 are most instructive (UNDP HD Report 2001). As Jomo K.S. points out, this was the period when neo liberal globalization was accelerating significantly. Despite some adverse reactions to the "early excesses of neoliberalism, including neo liberal globalization" the trend continues relatively unabated.

- World inequality is very high. In 1993, the poorest 10 percent of the world's people had only 1.6 percent of the income of the richest 10 percent.
- The richest 1 percent of the world's people received as much income as the poorest 57 percent.
- The richest 10 percent of the US population (around 25 million people) had a combined income greater than that of the poorest 43 percent of the world's population (around 2 billion people).
- Around 25 percent of the world's people received 75 percent of the world's income (in PPP US\$).

Highlighted and boxed in the UNDP Report 2001 is the article entitled "*Why Inequality Matters*"—an issue which, as many of you know, goes back even before the time of Karl Marx. Let me quote some relevant portions that support my own position and contentions on the problem of inequality.

For development economists concerned primarily with the World's poor countries, the central issues have been growth and poverty reduction, not inequality. And for mainstream economists, during most of the postwar period of the 20th century, inequality was at worst a necessary evil—helping to enhance growth by concentrating income among the rich, who save and invest more, and by creating incentives to work hard, innovate and take productive risks.

Among the consequences of income inequality cited are:

- Inequality can exacerbate the effects of market and policy failures on growth and thus on progress against poverty.
- Concentration of income at the top can undermine the kinds of public policies—such as support for high quality universal, public-education—that are likely to advance human development.
- Inequality is likely to erode social capital, including the sense of trust and citizen responsibility that is key to the formation and sustainability of sound public institutions.
- Inequality overtime may increase a society's tolerance for inequality.

Closer to home, top tycoon Washington Z. Sycip, awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the U.P. last April 2001, zeroed in on this major problem of inequality in the Philippines as the rich have become richer and the poor remain '*impoverished*' in the last half century. Sharing his thoughts on the basic problems we have to solve, he identified eight—with five dealing directly with inequalities in: 1] the tax system (employees pay their proper taxes and their employers do not); 2] government services that should benefit the poor but are inefficient and inadequate—irrigation and farm services, garbage collection, water supply, transport; 3] lack of concern by the upper income group on corruption (such corruption will not be possible if the rich do not provide the funds); 4] the rich who move much needed capital abroad rather than reinvesting in the country, while the overseas contract workers (OCWs) bring in much needed capital; 5] the unfairness of the tuition policy in the state university—as it unnecessarily benefits the upper class.

Colleagues in sociology, community development and gender studies invariably arrive at some consensus on the roots of the problem that beset our country.

To mention just a few, Fr. John Carroll S. J., in a recent paper he read at the NAST's (National Academy of Science and Technology) 23rd Scientific Conference, referred to the bloody confrontation at Malacañang in Mendiola as a "massive and threatening sociological reality" brought about by the vast gap in our country, both economic and cultural—"with the poor ready to be ignited by a spark." The theme "Social Science in a War Zone" came to his mind as he reflected on the future of Philippine society. What he considered urgent was the need not only to reduce the possibility of conflict brought about by this gap but "to eliminate the massive injustices on which our society has unfortunately been built." The Constitution calls for equality, to be concretized through agrarian and natural resources reform, urban land reform and housing, health and women. But the traditional elites and landlord lobbies in Congress, he reiterates, have emasculated these reform bills.

In his recent August 6, 2001 column (There's the Rub) in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* Conrado de Quiros writes about the Banana Republic—the case of the government property in the Davao Penal Colony—5,212 hectares that DAR Sec. Braganza is giving "undue attention" to as priority land reform area—strongly opposed by the Tadeco which pays a measly P1,500 per hectare rent to the Bureau of Correction (or P7.8 million yearly) compared to its P500 million net income or P2.1 billion gross, and purportedly by Pres. Gloria Arroyo herself. Is this a bias for the poor, he asks. How many haciendas of the rich and powerful have been exempted from land reform?

Perhaps this is where the sociological analysis of power comes in. As John Gaventa wrote in his book *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*, power indeed serves to create power as powerlessness serves to reinforce powerlessness. "Power relationships," he points out, "once established are self-sustaining. Quiescence in the face of inequalities may be understood only in terms of inertia of the situation..."

As we in community development have learned through the work we have done in over three decades, the powerless must be organized, mobilized, and capacitated to overcome the many barriers that prevent them from making decisions and taking action to change their situation and their lives—in short, empowering them to alter the power relationships now existing to their disadvantage. To my mind, equality—economic and gender—is the medicine we need to recover from the national malady of

many decades. And the monitoring of the impact of the flagship programs (agricultural modernization, land reform, etc.) on the level of inequality should be a major concern.

The evidence is overwhelming that shows growth does not necessarily lead to a more equitable distribution of benefits. As one independent reviewer of poverty reduction and development assistance had put it—only growth with equity will break the cycle of societal poverty.

Moreover, knowing some of the good/best practices in changing the lives of people and communities, it is time we use this knowledge to benefit the larger society. As Lisbeth Schorr—social analyst and director of a Harvard project of effective interventions put it—"We have learned to create the small exceptions that can change the lives of hundreds. But we have not learned how to make the exceptions the rule to change the lives of millions." It is high time we did.

Reactions to the SONA from the Perspective of Public Administration

MA. CONCEPCION P. ALFILER

My task this morning is to look at the President's recent State of the Nation Address (SONA) from the perspective of public administration. I am pleased that the PSSC has taken this initiative to look at the SONA from the various disciplines represented in the Council.

The Process: Crafting a Performance Contract

The first thing that attracted my attention to the SONA was not the speech itself but the process that went into the preparation of this speech. In a recent radio interview, Secretary Emilia Boncodin of the Department of Budget and Management described the meticulous process that went into the crafting of the SONA. She discussed how the President sat with her Cabinet more than twice, as they went through this speech, page by page, word by word. This process is indicative of the emerging management style of the President. The President wanted to ensure that the document she would present to the Filipino people was one that would bind the members of the cabinet and her administration to a performance contract. This contract spelled out its underlying principles, the deliverables, the resources involved and who are expected to deliver what.

Measurable Targets

The President enunciated her administration's commitment to four fundamental principles that will underlie her government's war against poverty: free enterprise, a modernized agriculture sector founded on

social equity, social bias towards the disadvantaged and raising the moral standards of government and society. As she proceeded to elaborate on how these principles will be translated to concrete programs and services, she provided concrete details on what her administration hopes to achieve in a year's time. Thus, she explained how 20 billion pesos investment in agriculture would mean 6 billion for irrigation; 2 billion for post harvest facilities; 2 billion for infrastructure, 2 billion for loans; and 2 billion for research and development. All these investments in agriculture will generate one million jobs in the countryside: 800,000 jobs from the 8 billion pesos put into irrigation and post harvest facilities and another 200,000 jobs will be created from new areas opened for farming.

How Delivered

How will these results be achieved? Will there be a major restructuring of the public bureaucracy or the executive departments? Will a new government agency be instituted to carry out new mandates and programs? Will existing offices be abolished? Government employees need not be anxious about how they may be adversely affected by yet another government reorganization in the first year of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

Except for a proposed Department of Housing that is to evolve out of the existing agencies that are now involved in the complex task of assisting Filipinos in acquiring their own homes, no mention is made of any intent to restructure or reorganize the bureaucracy.

Confronting Red Tape and Corruption

There was a clear message, though, about how the Macapagal-Arroyo administration's culture of governance is to be captured in four words: plain talk and common sense. Government administrators are to devote less of their time to meetings and more of it to directly implementing programs and providing services.

Moreover, they are also to reduce red tape and corruption. Members of her cabinet are challenged to deliver tangible results within twelve months in fighting graft in their respective offices. In cutting red tape in public transactions, she specifically asked government agencies to cut in half the number of signatures required for seeking their services. She cited the case of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council's effort to reduce the number of signatures from 158 to 45 signatures required in processing housing application papers. She commended the Land Transportation Office (LTO) for issuing licenses in half an hour and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for giving out clearances in one day.

Anti-corruption efforts in the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs are to be the showcase of this government's determination to curb graft in government. She has put her full support behind the new commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The drive against corruption requires that the President use the full power and authority of her office to back her administration's anti-corruption campaign. Studies in corruption reveal that chances for success in any anti-corruption program are greater with a leader's determined political will to prevent corruption and to punish those who are engaged in corrupt activities. Sustained action that lead to visible results must make corruption a high

risk and a low reward activity for public officials.

A Manager vs. a Leader

Those who expected the SONA to be an inspiring speech that will propel the bureaucracy to greater heights through a call for commitment to the cause of the Filipino people, were in for a disappointment.

From a public administration perspective, the SONA effectively projected the President as a hands-on manager, who continuously challenged her cabinet members and the bureaucracy to be prepared to set clear targets, be accountable, reduce red tape and more importantly, to fight corruption.

What is sadly missing in this speech? We expected more from the speech, considering the circumstances under which she ascended to the power and the position of the Presidency of the Republic of the Philippines. We were hoping that the President would seek to capture the heart of the bureaucracy and inspire and move them with her leadership by appealing to their sense of mission and their commitment to the cause of nation-building. We expected that through her leadership she can move them with her vision and give them a sense of ownership of this vision as well. Unfortunately, the President has not done so.

The SONA presents the President as a manager. The country needs a leader and not simply a manager. The President must show her capacity to lead, to inspire and more importantly to empower those whom she leads. This she can do with the power of ideas, conviction and the synergy that government derives from partnership not only between and among government agencies, but between the state, civil society organizations and the private sector as well. The President's speech failed to project such an image of a leader.

Thank you and good morning.

An Economist's Reactions to the President's State of the Nation Address

CAYETANO W. PADERANGA, JR.

Congressman Neric Acosta, fellow panel members, my friends in the audience, good afternoon.

I actually like the SONA in the sense that it set out measurable targets and it gave the message that this is a government that is willing to be judged by its accomplishments. And in that sense, I think it set a map for next year for each of the agencies to take what course they had to take and the things that they had to do because they are actually going to be judged at the end of the year.

But then again, as Congressman Acosta says, we are in the academe. And if we don't nitpick, we're going to lose our license. So I am going to start nitpicking—please take it in that vein and in that spirit.

My main nitpick with the SONA would be with the character of it. Not with what's there, but what's missing. I've always believed this even before when I was in the Cabinet. I've always thought that the SONA is a road map, but it is a road map that is more topological than the one that you get from travel agencies. In other words, you don't have to see the gas station at the end of three blocks and so on. Rather what you want to see is a SONA that says, okay at around this area there is going to be a very steep incline, please make sure that you go into low gear, and so on.

I've always differentiated the State of the Nation Address and the Report of the President. And I've always suggested that actually in the State of the Nation Address, what you want to do is to show directions. The task of the SONA is to capture the imagination of society so that you can bring them together to a place where you want

them to be in the future. You want to show directions and you want to point out dangers. That's what I essentially think is the character of the SONA.

And I remember (I think sometime in 1991) actually writing a very short note to the Secretary of Finance at that time, Jesus Estanislao, as we were preparing for the last State of the Nation Address of President Aquino. And I actually said: "The address should leave images in the minds of the people. It should tell them what we want to become and what are the dangers of trying to go there." On the other hand, I think the targets can be specified as to where you actually want them to be at some time in the future. These targets can be placed in an accompanying book that is distributed at the time of the State of the Nation Address and given as part of the report of the President.

What had happened this year, of course, was that (and I think it was very good) the President expressed her views about the concrete targets for her government. So what you got were the specifics. You can go through the specifics in order to see the directions that are expressed as specific targets in the SONA.

I think that perhaps because I am an economist, I could look through the SONA and point out some issues for the immediate and medium term. You find these there though they may not be directly addressed as such. The first issue that is recognized when the SONA talks about the main philosophy of the government and the safety nets that it is preparing is, I think, the issue of globalization. What is happening to the world economy, what is happening to the way

by which people interact and trade with each other and the dangers? What the SONA says is that it will essentially depend, for the majority of the work, on the market. This is expressed as "free enterprise" in the State of the Nation. The government will then work on the social side to address the adverse impact that globalization is going to bring to some sectors of the economy.

The second major issue, I think, that was tackled in the State of the Nation Address is the issue of agricultural modernization. I think this is expressed, for example, in the targets for agrarian reform that are stated there. To just nitpick a little bit more, having experienced for the last 15 years more or less our own version of agrarian reform, I think there is something that has to be done that is radical. It is very clear that our version of agrarian reform is not working. You see it in the very low investment levels for the agricultural sector. You see it in the continuing erosion of the environment as you talk about the farming on the hillsides. The manifestations of failure are just so much that you take a litany to find out that what we need is a new, radical reappraisal of that program if, in fact, we are going to make a difference. And perhaps that is an issue that can be addressed in future state of the nation addresses.

The third issue that I would like to point to is the one that of course woke us up with extreme shock sometime in the last week of April which is, and I think Professor Guerrero alluded to this, the issue of the socially disadvantaged in our society. What to do with them? There are immediate problems that need to be addressed.

And the final issue, I think, and here the SONA really talked about it in great detail, is the issue of governance, the issue of promoting targets, including the fight against corruption. It is very clear to me that governance could be, together with globalization, the most urgent and the most immediate problem that will have to be addressed as you go through this. The amount of

leakages that have been mentioned by Congressman Acosta and the succeeding speakers just show that there are many benefits from fixing governance in our society. Congressman Acosta, for example, said that there is not enough budget for science and technology. There should be enough because you have a very big Department of Science and Technology. Except that there, you are paying drivers and clerks, not research.

Maybe it is time that we have a very radical look at departments. We have so many promotional and developmental agencies, all of which can show you probably nothing, for all the years that they have been in existence. Fifty years ago, the coconut industry was a backbone of this country. What happened? Our coconut products have become obsolete in the world market. So you want to ask yourself, what has Philcoa been doing all these years? What has the Coconut Research Foundation been doing? You can go on and on. What about the Fiber Development Authority? And you can find this in all sectors.

There is a lot of resources there, but you do need the political will to tell people that they have not been doing their jobs. This is probably just a manifestation of something that is happening all over our society. People delivering products that are of low quality and expecting to be paid for them. If you are doing this in Japan or the United States, the products would be rejected and you would end up having paid the cost without getting anything in return. So I think this is a major issue that is actually of societal proportions, not just of government. The issue of governance is both in the public and the private sectors. And as we try to look through the SONA, as we critique it for lessons that we would like to get from it, I think it is important to think, rather to remember, that we may want to make a critical self-examination from our own society's point of view, so that we can embark on actual activities that will bring this country forward into the 21st century.

A Historian's State of the Nation

LESLIE E. BAUZON

I have the honor and pleasure to have this splendid chance of sharing my thoughts and reflections with you this morning regarding what I see, from my standpoint as a historian, as the state of the nation. There are many social dilemmas besetting the Filipino nation and I believe that historians should lend their disciplinary expertise in seeking solutions through historical studies. Such studies may serve as basis for the formulation of alternative policies more attuned toward improving the social condition of the Filipino people. I recognize the need to subject the entire field of social and economic problems to more studies and analysis not just by sociologists and economists, but by historians and other social scientists as well, and thus provide the principles and the empirical basis for the solution of these problems, such as poverty, inequity, population growth, peasant landlessness and indebtedness, lack of agriculture productivity, social and civil conflict, and indigenous deculturalization. My aim is to emphasize the full historical dimensions of these problems, therefore providing complementary perspectives and approaches. I trust that I will be able to shed light on the historical and contemporary aspects of our country, and to give a valuable input toward the formulation of appropriate policies leading to the tackling of the social dilemmas above, thereby uniting and strengthening our nation.

As an independent Southeast Asian nation, one of the basic goals of the Filipino people is the attainment and preservation of national unity. The unity of the nation is essential toward

political stability, which in turn is a vital prerequisite to economic progress and prosperity. Ideally, all the citizens should be doing their part to make society tick and to push the economy together in the same forward direction, instead of pushing each other to the brink of disaster on account of politically disintegrative tendencies based on cultural, social and economic differences. Unfortunately, this ideal has remained elusive. The Filipino nation-state remains weak and there is no full national unity.

The affirmed reality in its historical and contemporary aspects is that flagrant inequalities and disparities in income exist in Filipino society. This is not to mention the real division between the dominant Christian lowland population on the one hand, and the non-dominant indigenous non-Christian minority population on the other. This dichotomy between the Christians and the non-Christians is an unfortunate but a real fact of life in the Philippine nation. What is important to bear in mind is that the Filipino nation-state at present is confronted with two major obstacles toward the realization of genuine national unity. These obstacles are related to the iniquitous nature of the Philippine social structure as well as the existing dichotomy between the dominant Christianized population and the non-Christian minority cultural communities.

The Dominant Christianized Majority

Within the context of the dominant Christianized sector of Philippine society, we find all kinds of political, economic and social dilemmas besetting the people. There is the

dilemma and problem of the imbalance in the distribution of political power. The incumbent power structure is controlled by rural warlords and family dynasties in towns and provinces throughout the Philippine archipelago. For the most part, they are the ones who manage to get elected to public office because the country's electoral system is such that only the rich can expect to be elected to elective public offices or appointed to high government posts. Moreover, the country's administration of justice is often tilted in favor of the politically powerful and those with connections to the powers that be, while the poor people are the ones languishing in jail because they cannot afford to hire lawyers to defend their rights. This is known as the compartmentalized administration of justice: one for the affluent, and one for the impoverished.

In the economic sphere, there is the dilemma of widespread rural and urban poverty. The economically deprived and the underprivileged are suffering all the more because of the raging economic crisis and the Philippine government has not adequately managed to cushion the adverse the impact of the said crisis on the impoverished elements of the dominant Christianized society. There is widespread unemployment, and those who somehow land jobs are compelled to accept measly pay and even harsh working conditions. Then there continues to be the problem of landlessness, wherein land ownership is concentrated only to a few people while the larger population remain landless. This is aggravated by the persistence of usurious moneylending practices, because bank loans, even the ones called the character loans, are still generally inaccessible to rural and urban dwellers. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program is hardly making a difference in the lives of the landless tillers because of obstacles like landlord opposition, lack of funding, bureaucratic inefficiency and venality, and the absence of a political will to reduce if not eradicate inequities in land distribution.

And in the social sphere, there is inequality and class division into Upper, Middle and Lower classes, between the "Haves" and the "Have-Nots" in society. This is the modern character of Filipino society, and this stratification is reflected in words like "baknang" for the rich and "agrigrigat" for the poor in Ilocano; "eggegga" for the rich and "mariga" for the poor in Ibanag; "macualta" for the rich and "calulu" for the poor in Kapampangan; "mayaman" for the rich and "mahirap" for the poor in Tagalog; "dakulang tao" and "sadit na tao" in Bicolano; "maysarang" for the rich and "mapiut" for the poor in Ilonggo; and "datu" for the rich and "pobre" for the poor in Cebuano and Bisayanized Mindanao. In other words, this social class division is nationwide.

Impoverishment prevents the poor people from availing of opportunities for basic and quality education, and thereby be liberated from illiteracy. In fact there are villages in many parts of the Philippines without schoolhouses for basic education students. It also prevents them from having adequate nutritional support to keep them physically able and strong to engage in labor. Furthermore, it prevents them from availing of medical care to protect their health and that of the members of their families. These sunburnt and rain-drenched impoverished people face desperate choices while being in the margins of existence everyday. Given this situation within the context of the dominant Christianized sector of society, the unjust, oppressive and iniquitous conditions as well as structures have bred popular forms of protest, such as outright banditry, millenarianism and revolution. These protest forms have become fact of life in contemporary Philippine society because injustices, iniquitous social and political institutions, and grueling poverty remain intractable problems crying for action by the authorities controlling the incumbent power structure in the country.

Banditry may be interpreted as a form of social and popular protest, and as a form of individual resistance to the imposition by the

ruling elites of their world view on the lower classes. This form of popular protest is usually local in scope and is oftentimes undertaken not in coordination with other elements of society on a nationwide basis. The immediate and underlying causes of banditry are the wrongs in society such as the failure of courts to administer justice fairly; the accumulation of vast fortunes by owners of landed estates while their workers and tenants remain landless and receive meager incomes; and the lack of any hope on the part of the poor masses to have any meaningful participation in the governmental processes.

In the Philippines, bandits may be classified as being of the mercenary type or of the Robin Hood type. The mercenary type bandit robs people simply because they are robbable, and enjoys the loot from such act purely for his personal gain. This type of banditry is rampant in the country, and gives peace-loving people a sense of insecurity and fear for their safety. On the other hand, the Robin Hood type of banditry also exists in Philippine society. He is also known in the literature as a social bandit. The social bandit is often perceived to be endowed with special or supernatural qualities. He articulates the needs and desires of ordinary people. Consequently, the peasantry often support, admire and protect him. When killed during armed clashes with lawmen, the peasant mourns his death. Statues are often erected in his honor and he is looked up to as a local culture hero. For the social bandit, there is no ideology except to take the law into one's hands to avenge the wrongdoing done on him. A good contemporary example of a social bandit in the Philippines is Leonardo Manecio, alias "Nardong Putik," of Cavite.

Millenarianism in the Philippines is a form of protest resorted to by the humble classes to challenge the iniquitous institutions and injustices prevailing in society. Their leaders are

oftentimes charismatic individuals claiming supernatural qualities and dependent upon charms or amulets to protect them from any harm. Millenarian members are usually recruited from the agricultural laboring population; and often they operate independently from one another. The millenarian groups, however, do not believe in taking direct human and political action to change their conditions and attain a better life. Their tendency is to withdraw from the larger society. They establish their "ideal communities" in isolated mountains or remote islands, examples being Mt. Olivete in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, where we can find the Sambahan ng Amang Kaama-amahan at Inang Kaina-inahan (Church of the Most High Father and the Most High Mother); Mt. Banahaw in Dolores, Quezon, where we can find 200 millenarian groups, the most well-known of which being the Tatlong Persona Solo Dios (Three Persons One God) in Kinabuhayan; Ang Suprema de la Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios (Supreme Court of the Mystical City of God) in Santa Lucia; the Alaph Divine Temple in Divina Colonia, Sagay, Negros Occidental; the Salvatorri in Siaton, Negros Oriental; the Dios na Amahan (God the Father) in Marintob, Quezon, Southern Palawan; the Alpha and Omega in Mt. Apo, Makilala, North Cotabato; and the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association in San Jose, Dinagat Island, Surigao del Norte. However, there are also millenarian groups that flourish in urban poor communities, such as Father SQUPQUZ Holy Catholic Church in Pasig City, Metro Manila, with known branches in Cavite City and Puerto Princesa City and the Church of Yahweh, Father of God based in Parang, Marikina City. This is not to mention the Wisdom of the World Church in Parañaque, Metro Manila. You may be aware of other examples in your respective towns and provinces. Do let me know so that I can include them in the mapping of Philippine millenarianism that I like to see done.

The point to remember is that millenarianism is a form of protest, a manifestation of the dissatisfaction and disillusionment of the humbler classes with existing conditions in Filipino society. When big numbers of people withdraw from mainstream areas to isolated and remote places — there to hope and pray for deliverance from their dismal state in the form of divine intervention — that hoping and praying mean hopelessness with leaders who think only of getting elected in the next elections rather than thinking of the next generation, and with prevalent social and political institutions or structures that are unresponsive to the miserable plight and needs of the poor and the impoverished. Even if there is prophetic disconfirmation especially with regard to the occurrence of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, millenarian followers cling to their faith and still express their hope that their messiahs, redeemers, divine masters and popes will remain true to their promises of having a better life within the egalitarian communities in which they have nurtured and engendered a deep sense of belonging.

An even greater obstacle toward the attainment of unity and stability for the Filipino nation-state is revolution. Revolution occurs when the people simply get tired of their government because it is not responding to the society's felt needs. The government has become callous, the wielders of its powers have become abusive, power-hungry, self-centered, absolutely corrupt. The corruption of the prevalent power structure is compounded by the iniquitous distribution of wealth, the failure of the courts to provide impartial justice, and the grinding poverty of the inhabitants. Therefore, revolution involves the overturning of society and the implementation of fundamental changes. Usually, it takes place when one class overthrows another class, in which case it is typed as a social

revolution. However, it is typed as a national revolution when it is directed at a foreign power and it aims at political emancipation from colonial rule. In the context of present Philippine society, revolution as an option and path for the poor to effect fundamental change breaks out when the impoverished and the miserably poor do not wish to wait for divine intervention, and simply decide to take direct political and human action to overthrow the existing order. This existing order is controlled by the ruling social, economic and political elite unable to reconcile their interests with those of the lower class. Furthermore, this elite is unable to assume the humbler people's views, sentiments, and aspirations. Consequently, the state controlled by the ruling elite responds and the urban poor are protesting and why they have been compelled to take protest actions. The elite-dominated state then becomes preoccupied with the outward manifestation of peasant unrest, but being invincibly parochial, it does not make an effort to grasp the peasant worldview, and it does not bother to ask why people are rebelling. The ruling elite does not try to understand the root causes of peasant unrest. This is the tragedy of it all. As a result, the powers that be in the present social structure and government do not, cannot muster the political will, and is even unwilling to undertake unequivocal and drastic reforms designed to redress the fundamental imbalances with regard to the distribution of economic and political power in society. The elites do not make a serious effort to bridge the gap between their own world view, thought system, and perceptions and those of the peasants. They do not recognize that it is incumbent upon them to rise up to the challenge of statesmanship and try to transcend their manipulative egoism as well as their personal and class interests, and to reconcile these interests with those of the lower layers of the population. This is the best way to avert being swept in a massive social upheaval.

I see two major examples of revolution in contemporary Filipino society taking place in the context of the dominant Christianized population. One seriously occurred in 1947–1954, and nearly resulted in the overthrow of the democratically constituted government at that time. I am referring to the Huk revolution— even if it failed I would still classify it as revolution since it aimed at fundamental social change — led by Luis Taruc. The Huk revolution stemmed from the age-old problem of caciquism or landlordism in the Central Plain of Luzon, from the deterioration of tenancy conditions, from usurious moneylending practices that reduced the landless tenants to debt peonage, and from the impoverishment that tenant farmers wanted to do away with.

The second example is the ongoing revolution being waged by the New People's Army as the military arm of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front. The New People's Army reached its peak strength during the martial law years under the late dictator, Ferdinand E. Marcos. With his authoritarian abuses, greed, corruption, and monopolistic policies favoring crony capitalists, Marcos himself became the number one recruiter for the NPA, although some of those joining the rebel army were not necessarily communists but were simply tired of dictatorial rule and wanted to restore democratic rule in the country. At present, there is a peace process being pursued by the government of the Republic of the Philippines with the CPP-NPA-NDF. Let us hope for the success of this process for the sake of national unity, political stability, and economic progress. The government should not feel satisfied with a mere military solution to the conflict with the communist rebels. It should demonstrate the capacity and the political determination to make the ruling elite of the country share their privileged status with those in the under-

privileged and economically deprived classes before it is too late. The country could be faced with a far more serious case of social upheaval if the inequalities that engendered two social revolutions within the past half-a-century are not remedied to everybody's satisfaction.

The Non-Dominant Cultural Minorities

While the conditions and realities in the dominant Christianized society are such that centrifugal forces are weakening the Filipino nation-state and preventing it from attaining and maintaining national unity, thereby making it difficult to build a stable nation-state so essential toward economic progress, it is well-known that ethnic cultural diversity has been and continues to be a historical fact of life in the Philippines. The situation is unlikely to change in the future years, although the rapid advances made by globalization in recent times are mercilessly impacting on indigenous culture, sometimes leading to the near-extinction of some ethnolinguistic groups.

The indigenous upland inhabitants, not to mention the Muslims, have come to be considered as outsiders by those claiming ethnic and cultural dominance in the Christianized lowlands and coastal areas. This utter social segmentation is reflected in the disparaging words used by the dominant Christianized minority in describing those in the minority communities. Thus in the Philippines, we hear the Christians of the Central Plain of Luzon referring to the Aetas as "Balugas," a term of derision and condescension. Worse than this, a prominent Filipino diplomat and educator, the late Carlos P. Romulo, branded the Igorots of the Northern Luzon Cordillera mountains as "non-Filipinos," even as the Christian lowlanders use the label "Igorot" condescendingly to mean the inferiority and cultural puerility of these Cordillera highlanders. In the Southern Philippine island of Mindanao, the Christian inhabitants there display their own

biases toward the island's highlanders, known across Mindanao as the *lumads* or "sons of the soil." There is one lumad group in Northeastern Mindanao, especially in the Surigao and Agusan provinces, known as the Mamanwa or "people of the forest." The Christianized Surigaonon and the Agusanon lowlanders have a term for the Mamanwa: "Kong King" which is a play of "king Kong" the gorilla! The implication is that the Mamanwa are no better than monkeys dwelling in trees up in the Eastern Cordillera ranges of Mindanao.

With regard to the Muslim Filipinos in Mindanao, I know that we Christianized lowlanders all over the Philippine archipelago have typecast them as fearsome, warlike, treacherous, filthy and inferior. We call them "Moro" disparagingly, and this label itself connotes all the negative meanings carried by the word — fearsome, war-like, treacherous, filthy and inferior — which I have just mentioned. This is the reason why Filipino Muslims are deeply resentful toward the Christian even up to this day, despite the late Prof. Mamitua D. Saber's writing that the Maranaos, the Maguindanaos, the Tausugs and all other Muslims should be proud of the name Moro because to him, it means bravery, courage and resistance to Western colonial aggression. During my visits to Muslim areas like Marawi City, Jolo, Sulu, Cotabato City and Tawi-Tawi, I have talked with Muslim Filipinos who expressed to me their bottled-up feelings of resentment for being treated as inferior by the Christian Filipinos. This despite Chairman Nur Misuari's having proudly proclaimed his being a Moro and having dignified the name by calling the movement he founded as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which aimed during the height of the MNLF secessionist rebellion in the 1970s and early 1980s, for the establishment of a Bangsa Moro Republic. There is empirical basis for the resentment of the Muslim Filipinos because some

years ago, during the mid-1970s, the Filipino sociologist Rodolfo Bulatao did a nationwide study on the attitudes and feelings of Christian Filipinos toward the Moros. Majority of those surveyed responded by saying they would not want to have a Muslim for a neighbor, a Muslim for a superior or boss in office, Muslim for a son-in-law, and so on. This prejudice is prevalent even in today's media where you see news stories banner headlines saying Muslim bandits being responsible for this or that criminal activity in Mindanao, but it does not say "Christian bandits" for those committing similar crimes in Metro Manila and elsewhere in the Christianized areas of the country.

In other words, there is a wide gulf separating the cultures of those in the majority and those in the minority, even if the latter are living within the borders of the nation-state where the dominant Christianized society lives. No congruency of interests, obligations, in other words, identity, has taken place or is taking place between the majority group and the minority groups, mainly because the prejudices or the majority society are so deep-seated that it has been difficult to arrive at a common consensus about how to reconcile the interests of the majority-controlled state and the indigenous peoples. In the absence of social and economic equality in lowland-upland as well as in majority-minority relationships, and in view furthermore of the absence of such a belief in social and economic equality pervading the governmental process, it comes as no sudden wonder or astonishment that liberation movements and insurgency have become a fact of the life in the Philippines. From this perspective, the problems of multiculturalism in the Philippines are significant because they have a bearing on national unity and stability. For example, there have been, and there continues to be, armed liberation movements in the Philippines. It is for this reason that ethnohistorical studies are

needed in order to foster our greater knowledge and understanding of the rich cultures and creativity of the ethnic groups comprising the Philippine population, and thus recognize them as a precious part of our cultural heritage.

The examples of liberationism in the non-dominant cultural minorities include the Moro National Liberation Front, which waged a fierce armed struggle for the establishment of an independent Moro homeland in Mindanao, and thus dismember the territory of the present Philippine nation-state, during the 1970s. The fighting decreased after the signing of the Tripoli Agreement in 1977 and the subsequent establishment of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao comprised of the four provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi where the Muslims are in the majority. Both sides observed an uneasy ceasefire until a peace process came about which culminated in the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front in September 1996. Consequently, Nur Misuari won as governor of ARMM and concurrently serves as chair of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development. While there are problems facing the implementation of the GRP-MNLF peace agreement, it is hoped that both sides are committed that there shall be no more war, and that they will sort out their differences on the negotiating table instead of in the battlefield.

The reality remains though that the Muslims are themselves divided along ethnolinguistic lines, and while the GRP-MNLF peace agreement is so far holding, a breakaway faction of the Tausug-led MNLF known as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the leaders and members of which are Maguindanao Muslims, is presently waging a guerrilla war against the Philippine military. There is currently a ceasefire while a peace process is also being put in place.

For the sake of unity and harmony among Filipinos, it is hoped that progress will be attained in the current peace process with MILF while keeping the peace with MNLF. But even if peace is eventually achieved with the MILF and maintained with the MNLF, there is still the Abu Sanyaf ("Bearer of the Sword"), a militant and hardline Muslim rebel group that is against any peace agreement with the GRP, and will not stop its armed struggle until a separate and independent Moro Nation is achieved.

Still in Mindanao, this time among the *lumads*, there is actually a growing assertiveness among them for the protection of their ancestral rights and for the preservation of their indigenous cultural heritage. There exists a Mindanao Highlanders Association waging a peaceful campaign for the government to reverse centuries of neglect and pay more attention toward the sad plight of the non-Muslim, non-Christian cultural communities in Southern Philippines in particular. This means that they aim to present a united front in meeting the unremitting advance of Christian and Muslim interests over areas used to be their preserves, and which now threaten to overwhelm them. In other words, the Mindanao highlanders do not wish to be pushed aside altogether and go into extinction culturally. They are aware of their respective cultural identities and the richness of their heritage, and some of them, especially the Manobos of Northeastern Mindanao — the largest indigenous cultural community among the lumads with over 300,000 members — they are ready to engage in armed struggle through the recent formation of the Bagani Force Liberation Front. "Bagani" means "warrior" and in traditional Manobo society, the bagani was looked up to as a local hero because he was brave, courageous, an expert in fighting, and a protector of and provider for his follower in the village.

In Northern Luzon, we all know that Fr. Conrado Balweg, an Itneg from Abra who used to

be a priest of the Society of the Divine Word, organized the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) during the early 1970s. The CPLA fought the military forces of the Philippine government, especially and during the height of martial law under the late dictator, Marcos. A highlight of this struggle was the bitter opposition it spearheaded toward the construction of the proposed Chico River Dam Project, which was intended to modernize life in the Cordillera Region through electrification, while providing irrigation water to thousands of hectares of farmland. However, the project would have meant the relocation of whole village populations to other places, and the submergence of sacred burial grounds so essential in the cultural identity of the Cordillera. One of those who gave his life during this struggle was Maclining Dulag, who is now elevated to the status of a folk hero among the Kalingas. Eventually, when the Marcos regime collapsed in February 1986 and Ms. Corazon C. Aquino rose to the presidency, Balweg and President Aquino met at the Mt. Data Lodge shortly thereafter and had a peace pact that ended the fighting, paving the way for the creation of what is now the Cordillera Autonomous Region.

For me, the point to bear in mind with regard to the non-dominant cultural minorities is that they wish to preserve their customs and traditions in the face of the acculturative and assimilative processes they have been subjected to in the course of the Spanish and American colonization, and the onslaughts of modernization in the late 20th century. They revere their ethnic cultures because these are rooted in their own experiences over the centuries, and these seem to have satisfactorily provided their essential needs for subsistence and survival. Their cultures are based on their common tongues, legacies, values and appurtenances for confronting the tasks of everyday existence. The feelings of togetherness and belonging draw inspiration from their

tradition-based cultures. Their unwritten epic literatures mirror these feelings. Their indigenous cultures gave them self-sufficiency, defined their relationships, gave them a sense of unity and social cohesion, and instilled in them a feeling of oneness with the land or forests in which they live. Being sons and daughters of the soil, they are the forest that served as the source of their nutritional requirements. What is foremost in their minds is then the preservation of their own precious cultural heritage because it has been tested by tradition and time to be sufficient in enabling them to satisfy their essential requirements for living. The tragedy is that the Christianized lowland Filipinos have stereotyped them as inferior and relegated them to the margins of existence and the underclass of Philippine society. As a result they have been branded even as non-Filipinos. Is it any surprise then that they have taken the countervailing option of liberation from the Philippine nation-state?

Possible Approaches Toward Unity of the Nation-State

Prof. Tsuneo Ayabe of Josai International University, in a study that is at the leading edge of ethnic studies in Japan, identified and analyzed three types of relationships between ethnic groups in the United States and the building of the American nation. Professor Ayabe's typology is relevant for the purposes of my conceptual framework for the study of Philippine History and the building of the Filipino nation. These types are *assimilation*, *amalgamation*, and *multiculturalism*. Each of these may be explained further for the context of my analysis of present realities and situation in Philippine society. I understand Professor Ayabe's seminal model as follows:

Under *assimilation*, for all intents and purposes, the culturally and numerically dominant society plays a colonialistic role, and overlays its culture upon the minority cultures.

In the process, the latter lose their cultural heritage and identity, become assimilated into the majority culture, and assume a new identity which is that of the majority. Assimilation need not only be cultural. It can also be political and economic. This means that when applied to the case of the dominant Christianized majority, those with centrifugal tendencies will be assimilated into the political and economic system of the majority, are taken in and made part of the whole dominant society.

In *amalgamation*, there occurs a synthesis and a blending of all cultures, with no ethnic group playing a dominant role. The "melting pot" principle applies in this situation, with the different ethnic groups gaining some and losing some during their interaction with one another. From out of the hodgepodge, a kind of hybrid culture appears, not unlike the commingling of races which produces half-breeds or *mestizo* offspring. In this time hybrid culture assumes a new identity of its own. There is a mixing of cultural influences from different provenances. The amalgamation principle can also be applied to the political and economic spheres, with a real give and take process taking place, until new political and economic approaches appear that mix the best of the diverse viewpoints.

Multiculturalism recognizes no majority-minority dichotomies. There is no absolute social division existing between the different ethnic groups, which means there are no marginalized underclasses in the nation, because all ethnic groups are accorded equal treatment, based on mutual respect and tolerance of each other's beliefs, values, customs, practices and contributions toward the weaving of the national tapestry. All are members of the nation according to the principle of equality. Therefore, all have a

stake in pushing the economy together and enjoying equally the fruits of national development. There is only one nation, and the ethnic groups are loyally bound to the preservation of national unity, but the rich diversity of cultures is allowed to flourish. It goes without saying that multi-culturalism also involves plurilingualism, which means respecting and preserving the rich multiplicity of languages as the thumbprint of identity of each ethnic group comprising the nation. No single language is permitted to be dominant to the point of resulting in internal colonization by the native speakers of that dominant language.

In the sphere of the dominant Christianized majority, there is political pluralism, not to mention freedom of ideas in the academe to allow those espousing socialist and communist ideologies to come out in the open and compete freely for the hearts and minds of the electorate in the political arena. Let the general public judge what is the best political platform based on the unfettered discussion and presentation of these platforms of government. Nobody has the monopoly of knowledge, and let no one impose his will and views on others through intimidation or authoritarian methods. The nation-state will be noisy with political debate, but the bottom line is that no group is higher than the nation-state, and when it comes to the preservation and the upholding of national unity, then everybody knows what is good for the country. They will close ranks and transcend their partisan interests to preserve the very freedom that allows them to engage openly in political discourse.

The Role and Prospects of National History

In this presentation, I have taken pains to show you how I view the societal situation in the Philippines, the situational dimensions of societal

problems — social, economic, political, and cultural — as a means of improving our understanding of these current areas of concerns. I also tried to seek to describe and discuss briefly the persistent problems and the patterns of reactions and responses by the people and by the government toward them and their multiple effects on Philippine society. My aim in doing so is to show the dynamic nature of history, how it influences and shapes the present. In short, the present is the product of the past. Therefore, the study and teaching of Philippine national history can play a vital contributory role toward clarifying the developmental and originating causes of present social, political, economic and cultural problems and critically elaborating on the full dimension of these problems in terms of the present conditions, thus providing complementary perspectives and approaches. My point is that the study and teaching of Philippine national history can and should shed light on how we came to form our nation-state; how it came to pass that this nation-state is weak and unable to enjoy full national unity, how the modern character of Filipino society was defined by events in the past; how we came to have class divisions; how we came to have iniquitous power structures; how we came to have an unbalanced landholding system that gave rise to centrifugal forces like banditry, millenarianism and revolution; what the historical and contemporary examples are of these phenomena in Philippine society in order to enable us to understand the nature of peasant society and peasant movements; how the Filipino people was Christianized and how the Christianized population became dominant; how the absolute social division between the dominant majority and the non-dominant minority cultural communities came about; what the underlying and short-term factors have been that gave rise to liberation movements from the disenchanting groups; and what the nature is of these liberation groups in terms of their leadership, membership, history,

structure, beliefs, and objectives. By undertaking the necessary studies on the developmental and originating causes of these issues and social dilemmas, then history, national history, can transcend its reputation of being concerned with the past that is long dead, but can make the past alive and demonstrate how it molded the present, and then the knowledge derived from such studies can then provide inputs toward the formulation of appropriate policies and legislation leading to the solution of the social dilemmas I pointed out in my conceptual framework. These findings and studies will also hopefully conscientize and sensitize our policymakers and legislators to our basic social, economic, political and cultural problems, and challenge them to exert political will and determination to become true statesmen concerned with the welfare of the next generation instead of just being politicians concerned with winning in the election.

I therefore see the prospects of national history for the 21st century bright. What I would like to emphasize here is the fact that there is a great deal more that needs to be done and many more areas of our history and contemporary developments still remain hidden from us. Part of the reason for this flaw is that we lack a national sense of history. Also, as a people, we need to develop a greater love for research into our past beyond the contemporary happenings, while relating the past to the present.

It has been said that a large segment of our national population, especially the cultural communities in the various regions of the country, had been marginalized or even neglected. Consequently, they are left out of the range of historical understanding of our race and culture. There are many more reasons for this unfortunate development. It has been said that our education, dominated and molded by Western influence, has also misoriented our vision of ourselves. And we have been guilty of overemphasis in one area and comparative

neglect of the other. There are many more problems that we encounter in historical research. And they need to be addressed immediately. My conceptual framework underscores my recognition of the fact that the marginalized small cultural communities, with their rich and varied cultural history, cannot be neglected. The pressing demand for national unity and development makes it imperative for us to take up this challenge willingly.

I propose the following practical measures to engender appreciation of our national history as the bedrock of our identity as Filipinos for the 21st century.

- a. There should be a law requiring the preservation of public records which are of historical significance and proposing new measures on how to take care, preserve and maintain our historical sites and monuments so they can be transmitted as a legacy to the next generation.
- b. There should be established archives and museums and libraries in a single unified complex in each region and where possible, in every city of the Republic; the State shall assist the regions and the cities in this task to set up such a unified complex of archives, libraries and museums. Moreover, they should set up historical gazettes, a periodic publication that will record and document all researches, new findings, new discoveries and rare records that are of relevance to the present and future generations and to require their preservation and conservation.
- c. Regarding our current history, I recognize the elemental importance of day-to-day developments in the country as the fountain head of national history. I also recognize the weakness and neglect in the systematic keeping and preservation of records in the various branches of the government, and I

note with regret and awe the official documents reportedly sold as scrap papers; or bundled and neglected in the storage areas of various offices and agencies. The scholars today as well as the future generation of scholars will be denied access to current history if we do not take urgent and decisive steps to remedy this deplorable situation. I recognize further that the three branches of the national government—the executive, the legislative and the judiciary — are apparently neglecting the conservation and preservation of their official records; it is reported that among many individual officials, when completing their tour of duties in elective or appointive offices, cart away official documents and papers and leave behind either nothing or incomplete records of their tours of duties. I therefore sincerely urge the President of the Republic, the members of the cabinet, and the heads of all offices and entities to take necessary steps immediately to inculcate the virtue among their employees and officials of the value of official records as bases in reconstructing what has happened. Similarly, I urge upon the current leadership of the legislative branches of the government—the Senate and the House of Representatives—to set up similar measures to ensure that the records of the legislature are not denied to our scholars in the years to come.

I also urge the judicial branch of government to take particular care of the historical papers on the administration of justice in our country so that our children and our children's children can learn from our errors and omissions, as well as from our achievements.

I would like to take this opportunity to articulate the idea and recommendation that the deliberate burning, or the burning through negligence, and the destruction of public records

to hide anomalies and irregularities, be considered as a heinous crime against the whole national community and the future generations. Such a heinous crime does not only deprive the present generation of Filipinos their right to know of their current history, but it deprives forever the coming generations of Filipinos who will never know of the past.

I implore the national government to pay particular attention to the enhancement of the people's aware-ness of our national history. It is my firm conviction that it is only through the learning of the various conflicts of the past, such as those I have discussed, that we can fully appreciate the need for a united national community for our survival, development and growth.

The role of the private sector in this particular regard is even more important and significant. It must in fact play the lead role and act as the catalyst for our national emancipation from our self-imposed ignorance and indifference toward our history as a people.

I also urge upon the various private sectors, the educational institutions, the NGOs, the professional groups and associations, the business firms, the labor sector, the women and the youth and all other sectors to recognize the urgent need for consolidating their records for their respective and specific historical significance. It is only through such combined and concerted efforts that we shall realize our dream for a complete and total historical overview of our society, culture and people.

I also urge those who call themselves revolutionaries of one persuasion or another not to forget the significance of record keeping regarding their activities and their exploits, as they perceive them today, so that the future generations may decide for themselves how they

will assess the significance and importance of their doings and undoings, and all those who set themselves to reconstruct or remake our society.

Last but not least, I appeal to all committed scholars not only in the discipline of history but in all fields of learning to give special attention to the role and contribution of the marginalized and inarticulate sectors of our society today. Their deeds, their words, their problems, and their aspirations need to be documented and articulated and placed in the proper context of our struggle as a nation.

The scholars and the academics and the observers of our current history are also urged to take special notice of the Filipinos who are forced to leave the country for good for better or for worse, and where they are forced to seek whatever employment comes their way as a laboring class all over the world — in the Asia-Pacific region, in West Asia, in Europe, in North America, in South America, and in various parts of Africa. Their history must also be documented and written and their role as a force in the cultural and economic transformation of the global community deserve careful examination.

In closing, let me say how happy I am to have this chance of sharing my conceptual framework for the study of the national history of the Filipino people, and to demonstrate through this framework the dynamic relationship between the past and the present, and in the process, demonstrate as well how our field of history can contribute toward building our nation, strengthening our nation-state, and attaining as well as maintaining national unity. The prospects for national history in the 21st century are indeed good. Let us get to work! Thank you for your time and attention, and good health to everyone.

Forum on Reporting Public Opinion Polls

May 4, 2001

Panel Presentations

JOSEPH Y. LIM

To start with, I think there is a big role for opinion polls in the country. They provide us an essential service and of course, the two big ones, Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia, have the right credentials because they tell you what they really should be doing. They should be giving the public pulse and giving us an idea of how people feel, how people stand in certain issues, who they support and who they will vote for.

This positive role of providing information is important in our society that calls for democracy and transparency. However, there is a lot of misinterpretation of surveys and opinion polls especially as carried by media where it should be made clear. The polls define how people feel with very simple answers like how many percent stand on whether ex-President Estrada should be incarcerated or not. The numbers are there but they do not answer the question "Why?"

The surveys can actually do this but it may cause more money so they don't probe anymore into the feelings or as to "why".

Maybe it is there but the media do not usually go for a deeper probe as to why they feel that way. Especially since what is needed in the Philippines now is an issue-oriented type of politics rather than one based on personalities. It should be very important to probe why people feel the way they do. If, for example, they support Estrada because he is a long-time idol, that should come out in the surveys too. That should also be understood as opposed to "he's been performing very well" and "his anti-poor programs are working;" these are very important matters for us to know.

These are probing questions, but they are, as I say, very difficult because these are open-ended questions. I tried these in some surveys and they pressured me "bakit ang bilis-bilis ng SWS at Pulse Asia, e

ang bagal-bagal mo?" Sabi ko e open-ended ito no! I mean, one week gusto nila tapos na, e one month di pa nga ako tapos (*Ed. translation: Why is SWS and Pulse Asia faster with their results when you are so slow? My reply is: my questions are open-ended. They want me to finish in one week when even after a month I am not yet finished*).

I think that since the polling organizations are already making money, it is also good to invest in some of these deeper probes because it's important for issue-oriented politics that we want to bring our nation into. This is where the media may be at fault. Sometimes (not all of them though) what they present does not answer which is right and which is wrong. There is a tendency to be populist about it — that the majority is always right. I think the Estrada phenomenon should make us start thinking that it is not just the majority; that it is how people feel and the reasons why, and what is



really good for the country might not be the same as what the majority feel especially if there is lack of information or if gut feelings abound and not rationality.

So that's another thing, and of course, what is important is the interpretation of the results which sometimes is not done properly by media. For example, let us turn to Social Weather Stations whose favorite theme is subjective poverty. I think it's a very good thing to do, it's how people feel about whether they are poor or not and where they stand. It's good but that is not the be all and end all, as what some of the media people do. They think that that is already 'the' poverty thing. I think it has to be matched by objective measures of poverty also. Let me give an example: in this survey that we did with UP College of Social Work and Community Development

(CSWCD) on women home-based workers, there were women who were subcontracted and subcontractors. Women subcontractors were better off than those who were just subcontracted and it comes out with their objective measures, i.e. it comes out if you ask for their income. But when you go to subjective, like if you ask them "are you poor or just right" with this scale of 1 to 5, it came out that subcontractors were worse, they said they were poorer than the subcontracted. Of course, there has to be a probe question here.

Now if you just use the subjective, it comes out that subcontractors are poorer and then if you probe deeper, it seems that because of the contraction of the garment sector with the difficulty in competition, the subcontractors are having more difficulty finding markets. So they are the ones who cannot

sleep at night because they see right away the market shifting. Whereas for the subcontracted group, the process is extended — the downturn in orders is a slow thing and not the sudden development that the subcontractors see. So I think that if you probe deeper the results may not be what they seem; again the interpretation of results is very important in these.

Finally, opinion polling is not a forecasting device. Of course the closest it is to a forecasting device should be its prediction of election results. But it is not a forecasting device as the media play it in past events, for example, in the past crisis we had on the impeachment and in the current crisis after the incarceration of former President Estrada. I'm sure you all know that during the impeachment, the opinion polls were saying that the net rating of Estrada was still above the rating of Cory Aquino's and Cardinal Sin's but that GMA had the lowest rating. Everybody remembers that, and so that gave some people including the Estrada administration the idea that they had the upper hand.

But unlike election results, it's not the simple count or one vote one count thing. If the entire business community is against Estrada, the weight becomes important here. If 100 percent of business is against

Estrada, if the hierarchy or let's say 85 percent of the intellectuals are against Estrada, then that makes a lot of difference. Of course this just shows that the poor doesn't have much clout. It just shows the reality of things. In that case the weight becomes important, and then it's complicated further by the moral conviction of those opposing Estrada when the sealed bank envelopes were not allowed to be opened at the impeachment trial. When people went to EDSA 2, this moral conviction was added to the weight of public opinion opposing Estrada. This separated the EDSA 2 crowds from those who were supporting Estrada but stayed home; from those who were not ready to give up their lives or whatever for the former President.

I think we should all be aware that there was a lot of moral conviction and anger that we saw in EDSA 3. Which brings us to the even more complicated question of the episode now dubbed as EDSA 3. First, "pinatalsik mo yung binoto namin, tapos kinasuhan mo pa tapos binilanggo mo pa, ano ba yun, sobra na yun" (*Ed. translation: You removed Estrada whom we voted for and now accuse and imprison him; that is too much*). The moral conviction is very strong. I am against all these people who say that it's just a "bayaran" (paid) thing, of

course "may bayaran pero" (but they're not mutually exclusive. So anyway, the sentiment is very strong and of course that's why it became dangerous.

The moral conviction became important but then that brings us to the question of connecting why it didn't work this time when the second one (EDSA 2) worked! The military did not move; again, the rationality becomes important behind that moral conviction. People saw, the whole world saw that in the impeachment process, the evidence shown and the case presented against Estrada was strong, it seemed at least to the world. Therefore, the moral conviction of EDSA 3 was lessened by that and it was the law that stated that plunder, which Estrada was accused of, was non-bailable and all these things made it difficult for military people even if they wanted to actually switch sides. And of course, the historical accident that the present defense secretary was then the AFP Chief who turned against Estrada cannot look like a "balimbing" again (turn-coat). This brings us to another point, that strategies, historical conjunctures, also make events happen. It's not just how the majority feel; so these are the important points when looking at opinion poll results.

Finally, two issues on the dangers of using opinion polls. I think, we should all be aware

of the timing of the release of information. For example, you had the EDSA 3 crisis and you release polling results right then and there that the rating of GMA was plunging — that contributes to something, doesn't it — the timing of the release. So we have to bear in mind the very important role of timing the release of poll results. Of course one can say you have to be objective, it cannot be like that, but things happen through which events could be manipulated with the use of opinion polls.

Also the net rating is another thing that could be misinterpreted. Of course the polling organizations are correct in using it, but increasing volatile situations in the country and the way media hypes up opinion poll results may lead to misuse. It's not just the survey people themselves but the hype that media people would do to the data that is important. They might lead to increasing the social volatility, that's why we must be careful about these things.

Finally — we are not there yet and I hope we're not going there—but I hate those American-type of opinion polls where the focus is on the contest, let's say, between Bush's vs. Gore's neck to neck race and then all the surveys showed that one is closing in over the other. I think that sort

of mentality actually made Bush win, I mean, instead of just being a pulse, a gauge, it was sort of used by some people to say, "oh, the big lead has narrowed." So that's why we have set limits as to the period that opinion poll results could be reported in the media. I think none of us here are guilty about that, but we just want to show the danger of the American type of opinion polls; this kind of obsession that makes polls dominate and create opinions rather than just measure or give us the pulse of the people. They become the lead rather than just the ones gauging public opinion.

I think these are some of the most important points that I want to bring up. In summary, we all know the benefits of opinion polls and we really need them. I think the basic point is to accept that it's just a pulse, it's just a measure of how people feel so don't put too much into it. The reasons for it, the right or the wrongness of it, it's not there. There has to be deeper interpretation and deeper analysis that they should do before putting more political impact or more political interpretations into these results. Thank you.

ANA MARIA L. TABUNDA

I would like to voice the concerns of the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) and I'll try not to be technical.

Opinion polls will always use sampling. Our concern is that not all surveys use it correctly, and this affects the analysis and interpretation. Our other concern is this: if some survey organizations themselves do not appreciate the implications of not conducting a survey correctly, neither will the general public.

Our first concern is the representativeness of the sample, a concern which is probably not applicable to the better known pollsters such as the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia. These two organizations strive for representation by sampling across the main regions, and by having equal gender representation. But it is applicable to those surveys that proliferated especially during the impeachment period—phone-in surveys on television and on radio, for example, that automatically exclude people who have no access to phones. Such surveys are not representative of the general population of adults. Worse, the results of such surveys could be manipulated by having a whole telephone brigade keep sending their calls to a particular TV or radio station.

Opinion surveys conducted through the e-mail are also not representative of the general population. There were a lot of these surveys during the impeachment trial. The problem with this kind of survey is

that only those who have access to the Internet can respond. Generalizing the results of such a survey to the whole population leads to invalid inferences.

The problem here is that we can't stop the media from trying to conduct their own opinion surveys in their attempt to hold onto their audience. I think that we have to educate our own people regarding sampling, because media tends to misinterpret survey results. There is, among mediamen, a natural instinct to go for the headline that grabs the attention of the public.

For example, the day after we came out with the results of the first pre-election survey, the newspaper carried a photograph of the President looking tired and worried and a headline about the decline in her approval ratings. Because the survey results were released after the May 1 incident at Mendiola, people were likely to mistakenly infer that her approval ratings declined primarily because of the May 1 incident. But this survey was conducted prior to May 1. The President's ratings did decline but she still had a net approval that was positive. The headline of course did not and could not, for lack of space, state that.

Anyhow, the media and our profession each has a role to play. That's how media gets people to even look at what

they write, at what they produce. As for my colleagues and myself, we rarely get the chance to teach our people how to interpret these things. That's a problem and our explanations are so technical. That's another problem.

Now, another concern of the Association is the use of weights based on the sampling of respondents. In a sense, it's about how much one person's opinion contributes to the total picture. For example, if it's an AB (income group) person calling, and we only have 10 percent of the AB, then the opinion represents, at most, the opinion of 10% of the population. For even if all of these AB call and even if, let's say, they're all against Estrada, that's only 10 percent of the population. But supposing 50 percent of respondents from the D income class, which constitutes about 75 percent of the population, are against Estrada, then a big proportion of the population are possibly against Estrada. That's why we have to weight the responses.

Our concern here is the quality of ad hoc surveys done on TV and radio, which do not realize the need to use weights at all. The main survey organizations apparently are using weights based on registered voters. Household weights can be used, but these are not the correct weights to use in the case of voting or election

preference, because the target is the registered voter. You're trying to draw conclusions about the registered voting population in an election poll survey. Ideally we would like to hit the population who actually go to the polls — voter turnout — which is the harder thing. Not everyone interviewed in a pre-election survey is definitely going to the polls come May 14.

So we don't know if survey organizations use weights, but SWS and Pulse Asia apparently are using the correct weights when they weigh their results in terms of registered voters.

For valid inference, the sampling design should be properly taken into account when producing estimates. National surveys employ sampling designs because it would be too costly to pick a completely random sample. National surveys normally sample urban and rural barangays from provinces, sample households from barangays, and if applicable, sample individuals from households. The manner in which the selection is carried out at each phase determines the sampling design, which in turn determine the weights and estimation formulas. We're not sure that the sample design is properly taken into account by all the opinion surveys. This has a bearing on the weight and the sampling error.

This is another issue — sampling error. When newspapers and television flash say, "Noli de Castro 65.4 percent", many think the figure is exact, that exactly 65.4 percent of the population at that particular time preferred Noli de Castro. Actually there's sampling error there. In the sense that because we're only taking a sample, and even if we do our sampling correctly, there's still that chance that it is not truly representative of the population. And so we bracket our estimates for possible error. Let me give a simple example of this. In a class, I identify the truly underweight students and the truly overweight students and I take a sample of 3 out of 30 students. If I choose this particularly overweight group, I get a large average weight; if I choose the particularly underweight group then I get a low average weight. That's just an artifact of sampling, so there's sampling error. We're not sure that all those who conduct the opinion surveys are aware that there's such a thing as sampling error.

I remember an incident concerning the very first pre-election survey that SWS conducted in the 1998 presidential election. The supporters of then Senator Roco were very mad, because Roco got zero in that very early survey. Zero, as in no one

mentioned Roco as their preferred presidential candidate. For one thing, voter preference percentages are usually low when election is still some months down the road. For another, because of sampling error, that may not be estimating a true value of zero. It may be estimating a true value, at that point in time, of 3 percent. Alternatively, somebody who got 3 percent in the sample could just as easily have obtained 0 to 6 percent in another sample. It's not an exact thing because of sampling error. And we have to take into account the sampling design to be able to have an idea of the magnitude of that sampling error.

Another example: in the last preelection survey that Pulse Asia conducted, Noli de Castro got 65%. The next person, Flavio, got almost 46%. It's a difference of almost 20 percentage points. Any statistician will no longer test whether Noli de Castro is way ahead of the pack. We know at once that it is a significantly large difference. If you look at the next 8, which are all People Power Coalition (PPC) candidates, the last one among them led the next one who followed by about 5 percentage points. That difference is also rather large, because if you look at the differences of the candidates who ranked from 2 to 9, these were mostly 1 or less than 1

percentage point. Suddenly there's a gap of 5 percentage points. Those that ranked 10 to 13 were mostly Puwersa ng Masa candidates; their percentages differed by 0.4, 0.6, 0.5. Even if we rank them 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, or 17, these eight candidates were really fighting for the last 4 positions. But the news don't convey that information. Instead it conveys the impression that here are the magic 13, they're in and 14, 15, 16 sorry, they're out. That's the impression people get. Actually those who rank 10 to 17 are all still vying for the last 4 positions.

By the way we're not talking about non-sampling error here. That's a different thing. An example of non-sampling error is "tinamad yung interviewer mo, di pumunta sa respondent, gumawa ng sarili niyang questionnaire" which is what irresponsible students often do (*Ed. translation: The interviewer got lazy, did not go to the respondent, and answered the questionnaire himself*). When we talk about sampling error, that's something we can more or less gauge from the design. Non-sampling error cannot be correctly measured, and we don't know if those who conduct the surveys are aware of it.

Another problem with polling is insufficient time. The client wants a quick turnaround time and tends to

discourage, as Dr. Lim said, probing with the use of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions take time to encode. The issue at hand is multi-dimensional, yet you can't go into the Whys. Otherwise the cost will be prohibitive.

Now as to the question of the dangers of opinion polls, in the last election, there was one columnist who was pushing for placing a ban on election surveys altogether. Notwithstanding our reservations, those of us in the Statistical Association believe that we need these preelection surveys even if they contradict each other. Eventually the good survey organizations will establish a track record and will tend to corroborate each other's results, barring massive election fraud. They serve a function, just like NAMFREL. These also serve as some kind of check on flagrant cheating.

I remember this: there was one candidate during the last presidential election who was refuting survey results and insisting that he was ranking second and not third as many independently conducted surveys were showing. And I was thinking, so what if you're number 2? You still don't get to be President, you're still far away from it. Unless of course you intend to cheat. It is of course more believable if someone jumps from 2 to number 1 than it is for him to jump from

number 3 or 4 or 5 to number 1.

Finally, surveys only measure attitudes, preferences, intentions, aspirations, and the like. That's all surveys can do. If we are to address the issues that confront us, such as poverty and unrest, we have to look at our survey results and take it somewhere from there.

BENITO O. LIM

There are polls and polls and generalizations will only muddle the issue. I want to begin by saying that we must recognize the importance of polling in a democratic society such as ours. If conducted scientifically and properly, all findings can give us a fairly good idea of our people's sentiments regarding our government, its personnel and its policies.

There is no doubt that public opinion is a real force and in the words of some people, I quote "implacable as the wind, yet a force which all are trying to discover and nearly all obey." EDSA 1, EDSA 2, and now EDSA 3 have demonstrated the implacable force of public opinion. To better serve our people and to strengthen our democratic institutions, it is important therefore that we ascertain the will of our people at all times. One cannot govern in a democracy without the continuous cultivation of public support.

Public opinion is the basis of government, therefore measuring and mobilization of public responses is inevitable in our system.

Election forecasting appears to be the most dramatic, most publicized undertaking of the pollsters. No election campaign has been as poll-driven as today. This is so because newspapers, television and radio are no longer the organs that report public opinion, public needs and public interest but the organs of money, business and vested interests. Polls are supposedly to have taken over in identifying public sentiments and needs. But sad to say, the pollsters today solely focus on the popularity of the candidates to the neglect of other issues. The very process of polling becomes inadvertently the media and political event.

But the question I want to ask this morning is this, "Has recent polling — now dramatized by who are the most popular senatorial, congressional, gubernatorial, or mayoral candidates — really advanced the democratic process in our country?" Do the pollsters make an attempt to distinguish the difference between popular personalities and urgent issues?

Polling, as far as our people can tell, remains to be a popularity contest. It has become one of the means to

gain celebrity status. Instead of feeling the pulse of the public, they make our national elections a horse race — the effort appears during elections, solely to predict the outcome of the election or to second-guess the people by interviewing the so-called "representative sample", however small the sample and however randomly selected. Yet according to Mr. Polling himself, George Gallup, "the importance of polls is to ascertain popular will on significant political, social and economic issues."

Do our pollsters ask our people what are the issues that are of greatest concern to them? Do they ask what are the policies of government that disturb them most and those that they welcome most? Do they ask our voters what issues and problems they want the candidates to address? Do they ask whether the people are satisfied with the song and dance or entertainment fare dished out by the politicians in their so-called campaign sorties? Do they ask whether good dancers and singers are criteria of new politics for electing leaders of our country? What will our congressmen and senators do on the issue of pork barrel? Will they continue to plunder the nation by appropriating millions for themselves in the name of countryside development?

For all the years given to polling, have they pinpointed the issues that are of most concern to our people and to our leaders? Or do they simply go out to measure the approval ratings of our leaders and report that as of the last two months, their approval rating are way above or below 50 percent mark? Precisely because popularity rating seems to be the most important agenda in the polls, our politicians have become cynical — they have come to believe that politicking is a matter of learning the tricks of gaining popularity and playing on the credulity of the common people.

It appears that in this campaign season, politicians who did not make it in the magic circle are trying to disassociate themselves from looking intellectual, avoid posing as serious analysts ever ready to offer hard-nosed solutions to our national problems. Worse, politicians are convinced by media advertisers and campaign handlers that to do so is to appear “aloof, impersonal, and distant” from the masses. Political campaigners are told to be cool, slick and funny to the point of being ridiculous. They should behave like those in the ad “magpakatotoo ka” (*Ed. translation: Be real*). Or that they should try very hard to look sincere, warm and concerned

about the needs of the Filipino masses, and most of all to look good before TV cameras. They spend millions to hire public relations specialists to teach them the correct way of dressing. For instance, they are told to wear clothes with the right design and color. White is prohibited because it is not colorful. It makes them look pale or ashen.

Political candidates are rehearsed on body language, handshaking, kissing babies, and how to be charming without being “plastic”. They are taught how to attack their opponent and how to appear as “good guys and gals”. They are supposed to promise everything to everyone all at once. They are coached how to sing and dance throughout the campaign season. To the campaign managers, the following steps are supposedly the best way to pursue the so-called “new politics”: candidates must anchor their principles on clichés that have ringing appeal. Make sure that they’re flexible. Tailor the campaign issues according to the sentiment of the audience. Above all they must emerge bright and bubbling with wisdom and well being. Smile when TV cameras are on or when riding through campaign parades even when their lips are dehydrated. Always smile and wave even if blood runs dry in their hands.

Precisely because polls have gone out of hand by emphasizing the importance of personality and acting, we now have a generation of actors who want to become politicians. They believe they can run the country by acting. Take a look at the current campaign; while our people are languishing in poverty, the economy is going nowhere but further down, both of the two major parties are putting their bets on the legitimacy of EDSA 2 as the process in the removal of President Estrada. The PPC points him as the devil incarnate while the Pwersa ng Masa paints him as the insulted and the injured underdog.

What I’m saying is that if the pollsters should make money by making the election campaign a horse race, they should not be reporting regularly on who is ahead in the electoral race or whether President Gloria has higher approval rating or not. They should ask politically and socially relevant questions and to inform the public, the candidates and the nation on what are the issues that are of great concern to our people. Pollsters should not be confined to the agenda dictated by political parties which are full of motherhood statements and are bankrupt of ideas. Worse, they are cynical and they underestimate the capacity of our

people to learn and to appreciate programs of action that will improve our society. Pollsters should not inflict on the voters the same tedious report month after month on who is ahead of the rest and still tell us that we have more of the same to really ensure their predictive value, and therefore they have to continue polling not only up to the last moment but they should be allowed to follow-up the results by an exit poll. The question then is, what use are all the earlier surveys and polling if in the end they cannot tell you who's going to win?

No doubt, the issue of whether former President Estrada was given due process or not or was he guilty as charged is important. But the economic recovery, solving poverty, problems of injustices are ultimately the more critical issues in our society. Yet there are no clear-cut programs for economic recovery presented by either side of the political parties. There are no statements by our senatorial and congressional candidates on how they will reduce the pork barrel appropriated by their predecessors and to use the money in a more constructive effort that would benefit not only the country but most especially the marginalized sectors of our society. No questions are asked on the programs that should be carried out to alleviate the

inflationary effects of the financially irresponsible policies of previous administrations.

Had they spent time to determine what clear programs they have for economic recovery, whether the budget was designed to create an appropriately educated workforce, generate jobs, and to improve the quality of our people's lives, our people and our leaders would have by now a better understanding of our national problems. Had they framed and reframed, tested, verified and cross-tested their questions to yield usable subtleties related to the above issues, our leaders today may have already arrived at a meaningful and intelligent solution to our national problems.

Polls are important if the questions stimulate people to think clearly about issues that may otherwise remain vague in their minds. It should help people to think and articulate social problems and how these may be solved. Pollsters should highlight areas of ignorance, inconsistency, controversy, disagreement and leave to our leaders such as educators, philosophers, journalists, economists, political and social analysts to take over from there. Sometimes our pollsters allocate to themselves the task of interpreting and analyzing their findings, ignoring other ways of analysis

and other perspectives as well as contrary views. Certainly, pollsters should not ask political leaders to follow the polls blindly and ignore or suspend their own judgments. No doubt, polling can do a lot to help inform, educate and stimulate the thinking capacity of our people so that they can become more responsible citizens of a democratic republic. Pollsters should be entrepreneurs of ideas and issues that are of utmost concern to our nation.

RICARDO G. ABAD

When I was a graduate student in the United States during the 1970s, one of the big issues we took in class was the use and misuse of sociological knowledge. Many social science works—and even social scientists—were under fire because both the work and the writer were producing knowledge that benefited counter-insurgency efforts against the Vietnamese. And so we, the graduate students, were advised to be careful about the sources and consequences of the knowledge we produce in the name of social science. Today, listening to my colleagues in this forum, we seem to be coming back to the notions of the use, misuse and even abuse of social science knowledge. Do survey polls benefit the people more than they do interest groups like politicians, media organizations,

or even social scientists themselves? Are polls in the first place good social science knowledge? Should polls be banned for a certain period before elections?

The issues we have taken so far can be divided into three topics. One is the source of knowledge itself. Two is people's reaction to that knowledge, and also the ways in which knowledge is used or misused. Three is the impact of that knowledge in society. Do survey polls showing the prominence of certain candidates increase the winning chances of these same candidates? Do survey polls only benefit political groups with the most resources?

The first point — the source of knowledge. Results of survey polls constitute a kind of knowledge, a set of information that describes a state of affairs at a certain time. Now as Professor Tabunda said, the quality of knowledge may vary: some may be good, others are not so good. Social scientists will know for sure. But even the best of surveys have one limitation or the other. So a great deal of discussion is spent talking about ways to get more accurate survey results. Issues like sampling and non-sampling errors, adequacy of sample size, or survey method (face to face or mailed questionnaire, for example) come to the fore. The point is

to produce better knowledge, a better social science product, that others can buy, share and hopefully use well.

Yet survey polls, no matter how acceptable technically, may also produce tainted knowledge owing to political factors. One factor is the funding source, and the collision of interest between sponsor and survey group. Of course many professional survey groups manage to remain loyal to the canons of social science research and produce relatively objective knowledge. But it may be difficult for the public to be convinced that results from a poll sponsored by a political party will not benefit the party in some way. Moreover, the more an organization relies on outside sponsors to fund its surveys, the more likely may the survey group's work agenda be defined in terms of the client's interests. This is what Professor Lim earlier cited as survey work being more "client-driven" than "social-driven." While there is of course nothing wrong in being client driven, much work remains to be done to dispel suspicions that client interests are embedded in the supposedly "objective" knowledge produced by social scientists.

This leads us to the second topic, namely public reaction to knowledge. In general, people accept and approve of poll results, and some groups like

Social Weather Stations (SWS) are perceived to be credible survey groups. But many times I am asked if survey results announced by a certain survey group are reliable. Or if the sample is large enough for the entire Philippines. Other times I am asked why the results of Survey Group X are different from Survey Group Y. These questions are on one level indicative of a lack of familiarity with survey methods. On another level, however, they suggest some amount of suspicion with poll reports, that perhaps knowledge from poll surveys is tainted for some reason or the other.

Mass media groups, especially those that commission or help to commission surveys, provide another source of public action. These groups — television stations or the newspaper dailies — disseminate poll results to a national audience and magnify the results that usually show some candidates in better position compared to others. This amplification of results has led several groups to declare that surveys generate a "band wagon effect" — a claim survey group like SWS deny. Others argue that a certain trend — let us say the 8-5 vote of the recent senatorial election — conditions the official counting of the votes — another variation of the bandwagon effect. Still others argue that different stations play

to the political preferences of their audiences. So while the trend in one media station favors the administration, the trend in another station favors the opposition. This is using poll results to create bandwagon effect according to political lines. SWS claims, however, that there is no evidence of a bandwagon effect. What polls do instead is to help candidates assess their strategies and perhaps redistribute resources to insure victory. Many people may not feel the same way. In fact, the state has imposed a so-called "survey ban"—it is forbidden to report survey results 15 days before national elections and 7 days before local elections. Thus, like questions people have about conflicting poll results, issues regarding bandwagon effects imply suspicion that poll surveys—or knowledge in general—are heavily tainted with bias.

The third area concerns the implications of poll results, or its impact on society. Professor Lim speaks, for example, of a "showbiz mentality" created by the polls—a kind of popularity contest. I am not sure this actually happens, although I will admit that election campaigns have taken a largely showbiz turn in recent years. What seems more plausible—and this is also the experience of other countries—is that polls help the democratic process

because it gives people a stronger voice in the selection of its political leaders. But then, as one of our panelists has observed, who are the people empowered by the process? Who is the majority? Is it the statistical majority—the poor and working class of this country? Or is it the more powerful middle and upper classes that have the resources to effect changes in the electoral process when surveys tell them trends are not going their way? In sum, surveys give people a statistical voice, but it takes other forces to transform that statistical voice into an effective democratic voice. Witness, for instance, EDSA II—the middle and upper classes, who constitute a minority in Philippine society, were able to make their voices felt because of their access to key resources, among them the media, communication technology, business sectors, and the Roman Catholic establishment. The participants of EDSA 3, who represent the majority, had the numbers, the statistics, but not the power. Small wonder they got crushed.

Polls and surveys are not simply academic products—a kind of social scientific discourse reserved for an intellectual elite. They are also resources—forms of intellectual capital—that many groups seek to claim and to use for their own political ends.

One way to claim this capital is by sponsorship of surveys. Another is by appropriating it as part of the mass media discourse. And still another is by effecting strategies of change based on the survey results, a task done better by individuals and groups with sufficient material and human resources. Academicians also claim the results, of course, and ally themselves with certain sectors—typically influential sectors—to insure their survival and to seek legitimation and approval of their work.

Foucault spoke of "knowledge/power" by which he meant two things. First, that knowledge is not a form of absolute truth but a set of ideas that some people claim as true. And second, that for others to see that form of knowledge as true, then knowledge must be associated with power, or a mechanism that would assure that others accept, comply with, believe, even defend this form of knowledge. Knowledge from polls and surveys can be seen in a similar light. It is a discourse that more and more people have come to accept as a good and valid gauge of public sentiment and electoral trends. Because of this acceptance, a process constructed over the years, polls and surveys have come to acquire a power of their own. It is a commodity that academicians can sell to the

market at a profit. It is a resource product one can use to network with influential sectors in business, media, politics and the church. It is also a product that many groups can depend upon. And the more reliance is placed on polls and surveys, the more power they hold, the more demands it can make on its users.

But like all kinds of power, the status of polls and surveys is contested, its influence checked. Polls and surveys are seen as invalid knowledge, a tool of certain elites, or as tools

to persuade the unwary to think and act in preferred ways. The recent ban on surveys is an example of how the power of polls and surveys is controlled. The contestations will probably continue for some time, and academicians and professional societies will be involved in asserting the legitimacy of polls and surveys.

And then there's the supposedly silent poor, the majority of the respondents, whose replies are collected, processed, analyzed and

interpreted, but who seemingly reaps the least benefit from the power that polls and surveys have acquired in the last couple of decades. Such a situation calls for a new kind of advocacy, a force that combines the democratic potential of polls and surveys and the translation of survey results into acts that protect and enhance the interests of the Filipino majority.

This forum can help begin to think about these issues a little more thoroughly.

Open Forum

ANGELO BERNARDO

(Development Academy of the Philippines)

I was trying to look for some points raised on measuring the performance of governance or government agencies but I did not hear any of that, except having slightly touched on the social issues impact. These are really commentary but mostly the pollsters seem to be concentrating on elections, but after the elections, of course we have to contend with some of the social issues, especially governance as it relates also to poverty.

BENITO LIM

That is one of my complaints against current polling findings. Instead of asking people whether they approve or disapprove of a person, the pollsters should specify the bases for approval or disapproval. For instance, do those polled approve the President's foreign policy; do they approve her economic programs; do they approve the Cabinet members' performance on specific programs; do they approve of certain legislation that are being proposed? Now once you focus on specific programs, issues and policy, then people would have a clear

basis in evaluating the government and the President. In turn, the President would know saan siya nagkamali, bakit ayaw sa kanya ng mga tao. The President will not say, "I'm popular so okay lang maski ano ang gagawin ko." Kasi hindi maliwanag kung ang ginagawa niya ay gusto ng mga tao at ano ba yung ginawa niya na ayaw ng mga tao. Dapat policy-specific ang survey para matulungan natin ang taong-bayan na mag-isip at malaman natin ang isip at damdamin nila.

We should give the people being polled very clear guidelines regarding governance and then ask them what are their sentiments. Questions should specify issues, policies, and programs to find out whether they like them or not. Questions that simply ask whether they like or dislike, approve or disapprove government officials or the President but not why and for what reasons, are not helpful at all. Questions along this line only focus people's attention on personalities, dwell on their emotions and preferences, and often discourage critical thinking and hampers people from addressing their needs. If pollsters frame their questions on specific issues and

problems, the answers would help officials improve or change their performance, or explain their program to the people and seek their cooperation.

ANA TABUNDA

My apologies, I focused on the electoral because that is where I had a hand in the analysis. However, I do know that both large groups do ask questions regarding issues. And I do think they correlate these to the rating. But this is not the regular round, this is the electoral. The one I discussed mainly is the electoral round; I think they have the regular surveys which they do quarterly. I don't know the period exactly but they do probe into the issues that respondents perceive as material. They probe into the current programs of the particular administration.

Now, I'd also like to point out that in the briefing for the network, in one instance I pointed out to them that they look at the respondents who were undecided. In that instance, it was 40% undecided. I was trying to impress on them that this is essentially a 3-way split because of the percentages and I'm saying it means the people are divided on

this issue. So we're still trying to tell them exactly what those percentages, those net ratings mean. Because that's one of the concerns of statisticians and I've been hearing this from years back: why are they giving net approval and net disapproval? If there's very big percentage down the middle, then it doesn't say anything.

You can appreciate the survey organization's need to convey information as quickly as possible. But it should try to warn the eventual user of the measurement operationalization and such concerns. Also, we are all aware—pollsters, market researchers alike—that Filipinos and Asians in general will not give a negative rating directly. It's so hard to get them to give a negative feedback. So when you do your approval ratings, satisfaction ratings, and trust ratings, you have to phrase the question carefully. You phrase it in such a way that it comes out positive not negative.

LINDA GUERRERO

(Social Weather Stations)

First, I would like to advertise our (SWS) survey data library. It is open to the public and I would like to invite everybody especially Mr. Lim [Ben] to look at our library. As of now, our library includes about 190 data sets available in diskettes, and code books. You will be surprised at the amount

of survey data that we have collected over the years. We have data on opinions on the Spratlys, on the Mischief Reef, on the Visiting Forces Agreement, on agriculture, etc. There are so much survey data actually but because we lack resources to tell you about them, it is not well known. If public opinion pollsters like SWS do election surveys, it is I think more because we want to tell people that our methodologies work. Alam nyo sa sampling hindi naman itinatanong lahat ng tao, di ba. So for example ngayon, ilan ang registered voters, siguro mga 44 million and yet pag pre-election surveys 1,500 lang ang kinukuha. So ang trick dyan is really trying to select the right respondents. Because for example, a respondent in the National Capital Region may be actually representing 14,000 other registered voters. So kung mali ang methodology mo, ibig sabihin palpak din lahat ng klase ng surveys mo. So if, for example Pulse Asia or SWS do election surveys, it is to tell you that if our prediction is correct and because these are the only kinds of survey which are validated by official statistics, then ang gustong sabihin ng Pulse Asia & SWS ay tama ang methodology kasi saan ka nga ba naman nakakita ng 1,500 respondents lang ang sasagot. I'm also teaching a course on public opinion polling at the

Ateneo graduate department of communications and we stress that public opinion polling is not really the communicating but the listening side. It is really getting responses, monitoring opinions of people, feelings of people on different issues. It was not actually meant to become a forecasting tool as Joseph [Lim] was indicating. And if we do subjective indicators, it is really more because they're easy to obtain.

With respect to the question of Mr. Lim [Ben] asking whether pre-election surveys have furthered democracy in our country, personally I would like to think yes, very much so. In fact it is because we have the democratic space that the public is able to give its opinions. Through surveys, people are able to tell other people their feelings that they don't like Erap or that they don't like GMA. Can you imagine that being done in Malaysia for example? No. But in the Philippines, because we have democratic space, people are able to speak out their own opinions.

Then finally, I'd like to talk about the survey election ban. We have been fighting this ever since and I hope just by telling you about this that you will also help us in this fight. We filed a petition with the Supreme Court hoping that the Comelec will be prohibited from enforcing the election ban. In 1998, we were able to publish our pre-

election survey results and this prevented cheating, I think. In fact, sabi nga ni Senator Tatad, ang Comelec daw gumaya sa resulta ng SWS para lang maipakita na pareho ang resulta ng Comelec at ng SWS. Of course, that's absurd. So we're hoping that we can get a prohibition for the enforcement of this from the Supreme Court. Alam niyo ho, importante na talagang ma-publish ang results of election surveys. Maski sabihin niyo na lang na may bandwagon, ano ba naman yon? Kayo mismo nagbabasa sa mga kolumnista, kayo mismo naki-kinig sa mga broadcasters, meron po kayong sariling pag-iisip. Kung gusto niyong sumunod sa sinabi ng mga surveys, okay pa rin yon. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But in the literature, there is actually nothing that shows that there is any substantial bandwagon effect.

BENITO LIM

I agree with you that the release of survey findings during campaign period should not be banned. In fact, if it is accurate and precise there is no reason to keep them from the public. On the point raised that releasing survey findings might influence voters, in the first place, if the survey was properly conducted, then voters have already made up their minds. While we cannot firmly establish that surveys influence

the undecided voters, still we should continue to conduct surveys. What I am against is, while agencies and outfits that conduct surveys are getting rich, they are not doing enough to raise the awareness of the people on issues that affect their lives.

JOSEPH LIM

I don't know if this is the right time to say this, but I think that's precisely the point, that is the role of public opinion polls. But the problem is sometimes it gets misinterpreted by media hype and sensationalism. That's the point. I think that's what we are all saying. That's why I wasn't saying that it's for forecasting, it's just that some people who are for Estrada will say, look, mananalo siya. It's the way it is being used. So my suggestion here is maybe the public opinion polling organizations, the responsible ones at least, should release their data to media people who are responsible and who are issue-oriented. Maybe give it as a scoop rather than to give it to everybody all at once and have it misinterpreted and whatever. Sabi nga nila kahit na i-educate natin sila e, nandiyan naman parati ang sensationalism. Hindi responsible lahat kahit na alam nila. So anyway, I'm suggesting that as a possibility.

Another thing, I'm not a free market economist although I come from the School of

Economics, but I really believe in governance and regulations. And this is a case where, like Ana [Tabunda] said, there is the proliferation of irresponsible surveys and it has to be regulated somehow because they become powerful too. So my suggestion is maybe it cannot be the government doing it because there's conflict of interest, it should be the private sector who should do it led by responsible opinion poll survey organizations like SWS and Pulse Asia. They can form a nice group to regulate and to condemn certain polls that are not doing it right and are being manipulated by vested interests and to actually pinpoint them. I think that would be a good service to us kasi kung hindi, hindi natin alam. I mean ordinary people or the masa won't even know SWS basta alam nila "polls" so paano ba yan? At least those who are responsible will be able to say these are the credible ones.

Finally, there are so many surveys being done by the academe that are not being disseminated, like on the peasants. I think if you create a group, you can lead the way to using them. You can say there's a good study on peasants, etc. to these responsible media people. These are good surveys that should be known lalo na kung nagiging issue yung topic. For example, natapos na ang agrarian reform

2000, naging issue na, so maybe at that moment these data would be useful.

FELIPE MIRANDA
(Pulse Asia)

I think there are basically three kinds of reports that we have to be concerned with: the report that pollsters make and deliver to their peers in academe; the report that they transmit to a more general audience, the most critical of which is media; and then the report of media to the general public which really is the most influential of these three reports.

I am not usually a fatalist, but I think there is little control we can have as an academic group on what media report, how they report it even. This is a function of culture, how people have been socialized, how people have been educated. The answer as regards the style of media reporting would have to lie in a strategic program of education for our general population. Educate our citizenry better and from this citizenry you'll have better journalists, and then the better journalists will make for better reports. But clearly, in the short run, no group whether it is the SWS or Pulse Asia or PSSC will be able to influence the kind of reporting being made right now.

Now, if I'm right about these thoughts, then yuong mga



reports na ibinibigay ng isang polling group sa kanilang mga peers sa academe ay importante na nagagawa on a fairly regular basis. This is why in Pulse Asia, it is customary that before we brief the President or media, we have an academic briefing which involves the Pulse Asia academics before we go public.

I've been arguing that this academic discussion should be done systematically and regularly. You can discuss all of the arcane matters here — technologies, methodologies and the like. Kaya ang publiko ay medyo naniniwala dito sa ordinary knowledge from their point of view. They think it is scientific knowledge with supposedly a science that goes with it. We, the practitioners, must try not to betray the trust of the public. Among ourselves, we must try to make the

science part of polling as rigorous as possible.

Then the second thing, yuong mga reports natin sa mga kliyente. Here, isang kunsiderasyon iyong correctness ng mga reports. Kung naghanda ka ng report that will withstand the scrutiny of your colleagues in the University and academe, okay yun. Kung talagang basically correct ang data at ang interpretasyon nito, you don't have to worry much about going wrong in the report itself.

The timing of the report is a different thing. Halimbawa, from our experience, meron kaming mga surveys na kinalangang i-release per agreement on such and such a date. Sa akin, kung nandiyan na ang probisyon na yan, you have to go ahead with it. Then you'll just have to trust in the generally good nature of human

beings. Ang assumption dito ay talagang maglalabas at maglalabas ka ng data. But kung mailabas mo na, you should not worry whether ang nilalabas mo ay positibo o negatibo for any specific administration or personality. You have to be prepared to release whatever findings you encounter because as I said, when you poll you really are trying to record kung ano iyong nandoon, hindi iyong mamasahihin mo kung anuman iyon.

The other thing I have to share with you is the sense that unfortunately, media appear to be not really interested enough in the kind of reporting that makes polling work much more effective as an instrument for democratic governance. If people only understood that polling is no more than a human enterprise, subject to resource constraints as well as fallibility, then there would be fairer criticism of it. (Really after everything has been attempted with the best of intentions with the best of expertise, all of the best polling groups in all the world still have fallen flat on their faces at least once.)

Mayroon tayong mga remarks from Mr. Lim [Ben] about kung yumayaman saka kumikita kayong mga pollsters, dapat naman ay magbigay kayo ng higit na makabuluhang mga pag-aaral kaysa mga

popularidad lamang ng mga opisyal ng pamahalaan at mga kandidato sa halalan. Ang katumayan Ben, sa Pulse Asia Ulat ng Bayan survey, ang content noon ay napakaliit iyong personality. Wala pa sigurong mga 10%. Most of the survey content would deal with population concerns, with environmental issues, with how the poor are being taken care of or not being taken care of, with various governance issues and programs, among other things. But when we release the survey results, the media select what to them would be most enticing and exciting. Wala na kaming control doon.

I wish that we could have our own media group also na medyo progresibo at mainam pumili ng inilalathala. To some extent ay mayroon ang *Cyberdyaryo* at *Pinoy Times*. We have access to these two and as the media communication skills of professors also improve, I think there will be better and better collaboration between these media groups and us.

BENITO LIM

To begin with, I would like to inform my friend, Felipe Miranda, that his concept that academicians are angels and are always above board is, I think, a wrong perception. Professors, like people from the other sectors, oftentimes are very

unprofessional about what they do. Let me now turn to the earlier statement by the representative from SWS as well as your subsequent statement that the primary concern of surveys is methodological perfection. I think that conducting surveys accurately, systematically, and scientifically is a given. If you presume to conduct surveys it is assumed that it is conducted professionally because if you don't, you have no business conducting surveys.

What we are asking is if you presume to be a pollster, if you presume to measure the pulse and opinion of our people, what are your primary concerns? What are the expected outcomes from your surveys? Is it merely to show who is popular and who is not? Aren't polls conducted to help in the democratic process? Isn't it intended to provide the pipeline between the governors and the governed? If the print or broadcast media ignore or gloss over the substantive findings of your survey, it should be part of your business to inform the public and the government. Blaming the newspapermen and broadcasters will not improve matters. It should be your number one concern to make clear what are your findings. Finger pointing is a favorite pastime not only of Filipino politicians but academicians too.

I think the responsibility of pollsters should be to keep people understand social issues and make responsible decisions for the good of our country.

JOSEPH LIM

Just a short compromise here. I think what we're suggesting is that we have to pinpoint who the wrongdoers are. We cannot just say mangyayari yon e. In educating people, in practical education of everybody including media and the readers, there has to be a pinpointing of who are sensationalizing and doing it wrong. I think that is where we can help; together with responsible journalists and newspapermen, pinpoint the sensational articles and those who are ir-responsible. I think it's better if it's a whole group, kung united kayo. And then also kahit na i-give up na lang yung scoop pero at least you have to nurture certain responsible journalists where you can even publish those issue-oriented politics that you said other sensationalist journalists don't care about. It's very important that we go into issue-oriented politics rather than personality-oriented ones. In the personality related ones, nakukuha niyo yung pera e, pero yung issue you have to nurture certain journalists. As you've mentioned some of them, yung set of journalists like from the

Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), are responsible ones that you can nurture and also use as a channel to pinpoint who the wrongdoers are.

ANA TABUNDA

Actually, the Philippine Statistical Association was considering taking a stronger stand on the proliferation of irresponsible surveys, that's why it formed that ad hoc committee. Part of the problem though is it's not that simple because it has to be evidence-based; we have to look at the procedures used. We cannot just condemn an organization on the basis of results, unless it's really clear as in the case of the phone-ins and the text messaging surveys.

So that's one of the problems; it's like we're saying we need to put a seal of approval on certain survey organizations where there's really an effort to control sampling error and non-sampling error. I remember during the impeachment when people were worried about the findings that then President Estrada still had a strong following. They were worried that the main survey organizations were manipulating results and I said, okay, I haven't been able to read up on what these organizations have been doing but I know this - I know their data gathering organi-

zation and I trust and think that that particular organization has a track record and you can trust its results.

It's really funny what our colleague [Ricky Abad] from Ateneo mentioned: that when they like your results, they will use it, and he was talking about SWS and Pulse Asia and other survey organizations in general; when they don't like the results they will say it's biased. That's exactly the problem of national statistics organizations in the entire world. Even when they collect it for their own governments and somehow it does not meet those governments' or private survey organizations' donor's expectations, they are not believed. It's really a problem of survey organizations and it struck me because I just came from a conference and this was the usual complaint of the National Statistics Office. So I hope private survey organizations have more sympathy for government statistical agencies which are not properly supported.

FELIPE MIRANDA

Actually Ben, my intention in mentioning methodology was to demystify it and to make people - especially media people - believe that it is relatively easy to look into something and understand it competently. Pangalawa, hindi

ako interesado sa finger-pointing. But media should be able to take a well-founded criticism na talagang sensationalistic ang thrust ng media all over the world. Pangatlo, yung sa mga issues, well, we in Pulse Asia have tried as much as we can to cover not simply popularity concerns as I pointed out earlier.

One last thing, even now and even among the so-called reputable organizations sa polling, there are things there that must concern us. Ang isang major methodological problem diyan is iyong substitution rate. We are hitting 50, 60, 70% substitution rates in surveys done in the Philippines. If you started even with the most legitimate sampling design and in tracking down your actual respondents and then you get to replace so many of the originally designated respondents after so many tries, it is definitely going to be very problematic for your survey analysts. Other countries have confronted these problems. Sabi ko, sana sa atin sa academe magkaroon tayo ng assessment nitong mga problemang tulad nito.

Ang pangalawang major concern ko, ang Pilipino presents himself as a particularly more challenging person for opinion polling dahil talagang ang husay niyang manghula kung ano ang gusto ng interviewer.

Appreciating this challenge, we in Pulse Asia actually commission some of the brightest physicists of the country to design models that might explore how respondents claiming to be undecided on certain issues could be analyzed.

CYNTHIA BAUTISTA
(Philippine Sociological Society)

I just wanted to support Linda [Guerrero] and Pepe [Miranda] in terms of opening up their data sets because in fact I'm a fellow of Pulse Asia and also of SWS but I did not realize until I started using the data now how much data they have. In a sense, they have done through the years snapshots of the opinions of people on various issues at different points in time but you could now look to construct images and then you could now combine your qualitative analysis to make something of what is there. So for instance, I'm trying to analyze now the net trust ratings of Estrada by social class. Until EDSA 3, I did not bother about looking at the young in E income groups (but of course the sample is very small). I started looking at the young E and discovered that in February, all the young people including everybody, actually their net trust ratings were going down. In fact, by February, they're all negative. But in February, only the young

E class had a positive net rating which meant that there was a reaction probably to the ouster of Estrada. I mean you can analyze this in terms of the cinematic President and then you can bring in the understanding that Ricky [Abad] was saying about their worldview. But then it's nice that you have data like these that you can look at, scratch at the surface and you can now analyze more deeply.

The trends are also there but it's nicer that later on you can present the findings and we see the context of those questions, if they're the same questions and see how they fared with respondents through time. So what I'm saying is, at the moment you already have data sets, they're already archived and they're there. I consider that I am part of SWS, I am part of Pulse Asia but I've never really considered these databases until I actually started looking at the data now. Evidently, there are some kinds of problems that cannot be addressed by surveys although surveys can give you some ideas of the surface. But anyway, I think that's an invitation for us to look more deeply because we also had very few pollsters who are social scientists and it's nice that the social science community can begin using the data sets for their students and also for their own research.

BENITO LIM

I would like to tell Cynthia that earlier, Pepe offered to open the basic data of Social Weather Stations. That was before Pulse Asia was organized. Sinabi niya sa akin basta estudyante ko, they can have access. So, he is aware of the rich possibilities of the survey data to social science students. But what I am asking is that surveys should be more specific issue-related and that findings should reach the people as soon as possible. I have complete faith that pollsters like Pepe and Mahar apply scientific methodology. In fact, Pepe gets excited when he tells me about using AI (Artificial Intelligence) to analyze the undecided voters. And I told him that I am aware of that methodology for even as a graduate student, I was involved in a research project called dating game where we matched people who applied to look for suitable or appropriate dates, and the AI method helps in predicting the likelihood that couples who would be more compatible will be matched. What I am simply saying is please do more than coming out with popularity of politicians.

GLORIA SANTOS (Philippine Historical Association)

I have been intently listening to all that has been said and I do sympathize with

Ana's lamentations. She really has the problem on hand. I mean how do you bring these things (on the credibility of opinion surveys) down to the people. And I would like to ask anyone here if there are any studies that you have done so far as to how many people are really watching out and understanding all of these, especially among the lower strata of society. Because my worry has always been that many of our efforts as professionals, academicians, whatever scientists, do not reach the lowest of strata. In other words, are there any efforts to present whatever findings you have in more simple terms so that they be understood by the greater masses of people? Is there any study that you have conducted to find out how many of these people have really read and understood what our studies are for?

BENITO LIM

I have only a small answer on how to reach the media and avoid being misinterpreted. In the early days of opinion surveys, Gallup and Harris wrote the report of their findings and they signed, printed, and demonstrated it in the newspapers. If the newspaper would not give them free space, they paid for it so there would be no misinterpretation regarding the data. How the newspapermen will

pick up and rewrite it later would not lessen the fact that the entire findings and interpretations regarding the survey have been printed. So if there is any misinterpretation they can always refer to the published report. So there is a way of reaching the media, there is a way of lessening if not preventing being misinterpreted.

GLORIA SANTOS

Do you think it will work out if we have something like this? In Beijing, one of the things I cannot forget is their wall, that big wall there where they put all of the articles that they would like to put to let the people know what is going on and to let the government also know what the people are thinking of. I don't know what they call that wall... sort of a wall newspaper.

REY GUIOGUIO (Philippines Communication Society)

Actually we have now the electronic wall, the website where we can really put up any kind of information. We would suppose that the PSSC website would be open and accessible to opinion polling organizations who would like to put their complete data so that they may not be misinterpreted, as what Prof. Lim [Ben] cautions, before the eyes of the public.

JOSEPH LIM

I think we hit the point here — who is the audience of these opinion polls? And I think the main thing why we need this information is of course for policy changes, formulation of policies, attitudes towards people by everybody, not just the government. I guess, even if the poor people do not know it, they must be represented, both from the government and non-government sectors. That's why organizations are important and they should be the ones who will process this information and do something because individually, we can't do anything. I mean after all the information is for things to change for the better.

OLIVE PAGULAYAN
(School of Statistics)

Pinag-uusapan natin ngayon yung methodology and everything and I would like to inform you that in the School of Statistics, we have a course on survey operations and next semester I will be teaching two classes in survey operations for undergraduates. I expect that I will have about 50 students and we don't have a research topic yet. So I would like to offer our assistance to this forum, if it's possible. This is something similar to what was done in the Detroit study of the University of Michigan where students studied relevant information and assisted in the survey

operations. So I am offering this survey course so that we can use our students and train them for related work after they graduate. At least they know the proper methodology and in the course of studying relevant studies, they know what problems they will encounter.

PROFESSOR ATIENZA
(University of the East
Graduate School)

I don't think there is still a need for issue-related surveys because the government is not really wanting in terms of these data as best exemplified by the Social Reform Agenda and the Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS). And besides, even without surveys, probably with the benefit of hindsight, we can initiate some programs or projects to turn around the lives, save the lives of the urban poor. So if SWS will conduct such a survey, that's practically again a task that would involve some sort of reinventing the wheel. What actually is lacking is willpower on the part of the government to pursue credible programs and projects for the poor.

JOSEPH LIM

I think we also need an objective and independent body aside from the government doing these. But also issue-related things are not just what you feel about agrarian reform.

It's why do you support ex-President Estrada, why do you support Arroyo? I think these are issues and whether it's because of personality or whether they are doing well are important issues. I think they should go into that but I guess there is the problem of funding.

BENITO LIM

Again that is a presumption that the government is dedicated to the people. I think it's good for the polling agencies to remind the government from time to time of their commitment to do something for the poor. I believe that in our democratic society, the pollsters can do a lot and can even compete with or even replace the newspapermen in a lot of things. And I believe pollsters, if they are dedicated to their calling or as social scientists in a democracy, are the new missionaries of information. They can help people reflect on social issues and make intelligent decisions to improve government and our country.

FELIPE MIRANDA

Siguro mayroong isang bagay na maaari nating gawin lahat. Ang isang peligro dito sa mga polls na ito — lalo pa yung ang perang gamit ay perang gobyerno — ay nagagamit sila para sa mga personal na bagay, nagagamit ng mga pulitiko. So I was suggesting to Senator Raul Roco and other senators na

mag-draft ng bill where anytime public funds are used, kailangan automatic na iyong study na iyon will be public domain. Ngayon kung ikaw na isang pulitiko ay gusto mong i-assess lamang kung ikaw ay may personal, political career possibilities, gumamit ka ng sarili mong pera o kaya ay pera ng mga tao na bilib sa iyo.

ANA TABUNDA

I would not favor any government agency funding any polling that is not in keeping with any of its programs. It has to be in accordance with its programs; apart from the fact

that it has to be opened to public domain, it has to be relevant to its functions.

REY GUIOGUIO

This gathering was really called for the purpose of discussing what polling can do and the need to educate the public both within and outside the academe. So we're very happy that we have the members of the academe here. It's unfortunate that some members of the media who promised to come are not here. May we then perhaps use this as a starting point for possible future actions and initiatives.

We do hope that the Philippine Social Science Council will be your venue both for seminars as well as using its website and its publications as database repository to access the public.

We thank everybody particularly our panel of speakers for taking time to come and share their experiences and viewpoints with us. We'd like to thank our participants, both members of PSSC and those from the academe as well as private citizens and we hope that we would, in some future occasion, see you here again at PSSC. Thank you very much.

About the Speakers

RICARDO G. ABAD is professor of Sociology at the Ateneo de Manila University and Artistic Director of Tanghalang Ateneo. He took his Ph.D. in Sociology at the Fordham University in New York.

J. R. NEREUS O. ACOSTA is Representative of the First District of Bukidnon. He is the principal author of the Clean Air Act of 1999. He holds a doctorate in Political Science from the University of Hawaii where he was a scholar of the East-West Center. Congressman Acosta also lectures from time to time at Xavier University, Ateneo de Manila University and the UP National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP NCPAG).

MA. CONCEPCION P. ALFILER is incumbent Dean of the UP NCPAG. Prior to her appointment as Dean, she was the University's Vice-Chancellor for Administration. She served as PSSC Chairperson from 1994 to 1995. She has a doctorate in Philippine Studies from UP.

LESLIE E. BAUZON is Professor of History at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. He holds a doctorate in History from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina and specializes in agrarian history, area studies, and local history. He was PSSC Chairperson from 1983 to 1984.

ALEX B. BRILLANTES, JR. is PSSC Chairperson and Associate Professor at the UP NCPAG. He has a doctorate in Political Science from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His area of specialization includes local and regional governance and civil society. He has written extensively on local government in the Philippines and has been

involved in the selection of best practices among local governments in the Philippines.

SYLVIA H. GUERRERO has a doctorate in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. Her areas of specialization are in community development, social development, family life and sociology. She served as PSSC Chairperson from 1984 to 1985 and teaches at the UP College of Social Work and Community Development (UP CSWCD).

BENITO O. LIM teaches at the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. He has an MA in Mass Communication from the University of Pennsylvania, specializing in communication, politics, China, and Chinese relations.

JOSEPH Y. LIM teaches at the School of Economics in UP Diliman. He graduated magna cum laude with a BS Management Engineering degree from the Ateneo de Manila University and finished his MS in Operations Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and took post-doctoral studies at the University of Cambridge. He has written various papers, mostly on the impact of the East Asian economic crisis. His topics of interest include macro-economics, econometrics and development economics.

CAYETANO W. PADERANGA, JR. served as Chair of PSSC from 1999–2000. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University, and is presently the country's representative to the Asian Development Bank (ADB). He first joined

the public sector as Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority during President Corazon Aquino's term. His areas of specialization are trade and industry, economic development, urban and regional development, and public finance. He teaches at the UP School of Economics.

ANA MARIA L. TABUNDA earned her undergraduate, masteral and doctoral degrees in Statistics from the University of the Philippines. She is a Professor at the UP School of Statistics

in Diliman where she is also the incumbent Dean. Her specific interests are econometrics, multivariate statistics and small area estimation.

AMARYLLIS T. TORRES teaches at the UP CSWCD and was the University's Chancellor for Academic Affairs from 1993–1996. She has a Ph.D. in Psychology from the same university, and her areas of specialization include development studies, women studies, and social psychology of development. She was PSSC Chairperson from 1992 to 1993.

Back Issues of PSSC SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION Available from the PSSC Central Subscription Service

Year	Volume	Year	Volume	Year	Volume	Year	Volume
1973	1 (1) 1 (2)	1979	7 (1) 7 (2)	1985	12 (5) 13 (2)	1992	20 (1) 20 (2)
1974	2 (1) 2 (2) 2 (4)	1980	7 (3) 7 (4) 8 (2)	1986	13 (3) 13 (4) 14 (1)	1992-	20 (3) 20 (4)-
1975	3 (2) 3 (3) 3 (4)	1981	8 (3) 8 (4) 9 (1)	1987	14 (2) 14 (3) 14 (4)	1993-	21 (1) 21 (2-3)
1976	4 (1) 4 (2) 4 (3) 4 (4)	1982	9 (2) 9 (3) 9 (4) 10 (1)	1988	16 (3-4) 16 (3-4) 17 (1)	1994	21 (4)- 22 (1) 22 (2-4)
1977	5 (1) 5 (2) 5 (3) 5 (4)	1983	10 (2) 10 (3) 10 (4) 11 (2)	1989	17 (2) 17 (3-4) 18 (1)	1995	23 (1-2) 23 (3-4) 24 (1-2)
1978	6 (1) 6 (2) 6 (4)	1984	11 (3) 11 (4) 12 (1) 12 (2-3) 12 (4)	1990	17 (2) 17 (3-4) 18 (1) 18 (2)	1996	24 (1-2) 24 (3-4) 25 (1)
				1991	18 (3) 18 (4) 19 (1-2) 19 (3) 19 (4)	1997	25 (2) 25 (2) 26 (1) 26 (2)
						1998	26 (1) 26 (2)
						1999	27 (1) 27 (2)
						2000	28 (1) 28 (2)
						2001	29 (1)

Price per issue: 1973-1978 = P 5; 1979-1984 = P8; 1985-1986 = P 10; 1987-1990 = P15; 1991-1995 = P20-40; 1996-1997 = P 90;
1998-1999 = P100; 2000 = P250

----- ✂ -----

Subscription Form PSSC Social Science Information

Please enter my subscription to *PSSC Social Science Information* for one year.

Enclosed is my payment in the amount of _____ (P/US\$ _____).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Annual Rates (Two issues): Local: P250.00 * Foreign: US\$20.00. Provincial subscriptions must be paid by postal money order.

Send subscription form to:

PSSC Central Subscription Service
Philippine Social Science Council
PSSCenter, Commonwealth Avenue
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos.: 922-9627 * FAX: (632) 929-2602



**SOCIAL SCIENCE
INFORMATION**

Philippine Social Science Council
P.O. Box 205 UP Post Office, Diliman, Quezon City, 1101

May be opened for postal inspection