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Language, Tagalog Regionalism, and Filipino Nationalism: How a Language-Centered Tagalog Regionalism Helped to Develop a Philippine Nationalism

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Language, Tagalog Regionalism, and Filipino Nationalism: How a Language-Centered  
Tagalog Regionalism Helped to Develop a Philippine Nationalism

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Southeast Asian Studies

by

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June 2017

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The Thesis of Christopher James Porter is approved:

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## INTRODUCTION:

The nation-state of the Philippines is comprised of thousands of islands and over a hundred distinct languages, as well as over a thousand dialects of those languages. The archipelago has more than a dozen regional languages, which are recognized as the lingua franca of these different regions. For example, when one wanders the streets of Cavite, one will hear the natives speaking the Tagalog language, but if you are in Bacolod, the language that you will hear is Hiligaynon/Ilonggo. Such is the case for more than a dozen different regions in the Philippine archipelago. Now this phenomenon is not singular to the Philippines, but is also true for many other nation-states in Maritime Southeast Asia. The Philippines, unlike the other nation-states that comprise what has come to be known as Southeast Asia, is a predominantly Christian, or more specifically a Catholic, nation-state. Catholicism was brought to the islands by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippine Islands, the majority of the inhabitants of the archipelago practiced either Islam or some form of animism (Islam having only arrived in the area a few hundred years before).<sup>1</sup> The arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines brought more than just religion, it also brought western style educational institutions. These institutions were established by Catholic friars throughout the islands during the time of Spanish colonization, and would later be changed and developed by the Americans. During these times some educated Filipino elites saw the Spanish language, or Castellan as it was called, as a way of liberating themselves from the figurative and

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<sup>1</sup> Abreu, Lualhati M. "Colonialism and Resistance: A Historical Perspective." In *The Moro Reader: History and Contemporary Struggles of the Bangsamoro People*, ed. Bobby M. Tuazon (Quezon City: CenPEG Books, 2008), 17-27.

literal bondage which they had been subject to upon the arrival of the Spaniards. This new class of educated Filipino elite, known as the ilustrados, knew that only through coming to know Spanish as well as western ideas of liberalism, could they liberate themselves from the oppression of the Spanish. This liberation would be figurative, seeing as the ilustrado class were reformists, not revolutionaries. And since this time, Filipinos have seen formal education as a system of betterment, meaning that through education they hope to better themselves and create a better life for their children. With the arrival of the Americans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century a new colonial power took control of the archipelago. English would soon replace Spanish as the language of the elite as American educational institutions were established throughout the islands. Although today English has maintained its position as a language of power in the Philippines, the Tagalog-based Philippine national language, known as Filipino, has over time become more and more dominant in the archipelago, further supplanting English as the language of the elite. And although Tagalog-based Filipino has become more widely understood by non-native speakers, it has also increased its dominance in elite circles to the point where it is on par with English in terms of usage among elites, and in many instances has surpassed English.

The Philippine national language thus has an extensive history, much of which will be covered at a later portion of this paper, but sufficeth to say that Filipino has been used as a means of perpetuating a Tagalog oriented nationalism in the Philippines. Before delving into how Filipino nationalism has developed it is important to understand that the Philippines is a nation-state of over a hundred separate ethno-linguistic groups. Now this

begs the question, how does a nation of thousands of islands and over a hundred ethnolinguistic groups maintain its national unity? I will show that it is because of the imposition of a national language, and a manufactured sense of cohesiveness, primarily perpetuated through language and formal education, that the Philippines has managed to develop a collective identity despite the existence of various regionalisms, thus creating the cohesive sense of Filipino nationalism that exists today.<sup>2</sup> This language-based Filipino nationalism had developed from Tagalog and Tagalog regionalism, as espoused by groups such as the Katipunan, whereas this regionalism and the defining lines of language in the Philippines were created by colonial powers, thus taking existing cleavages and languages and setting forth dividing lines that would enable the development of language-based regionalism and in turn a Tagalog language-based Filipino nationalism.<sup>3</sup> Filipino nationalism has been imposed upon non-native Tagalog speakers through education and language, originating from a Tagalog regionalism. And although nationalism has many contributing factors such as race, religion, language, and custom,<sup>4</sup> our discussion of Filipino nationalism and regionalism will revolve around

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that there are exceptions to this, such as the Islamic peoples known as the Moros. They have never identified themselves as being part of the Filipino nation, but see themselves as a separate nation continually under the yoke of colonialization, at this point under the hand of the Philippine government, of which they do not see themselves as a part of.

<sup>3</sup> Here I draw from Pecora and his description of primordialism and modernism. Nationalism in the Philippines, as explained here, developed from existing languages and communities that were later further developed and constructed by the Spanish and the Americans, creating the environment necessary for nationalism to form and develop. See Pecora, Vincent P. "Introduction." In *Nations and Identities*, edited by Vincent P. Pecora, 1-42, (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2001) 25-29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.



language, as that is the primary defining factor that distinguishes the peoples of the Philippines from one another.

## PART I: NATIONALISM

This part is meant to recount the history of language-based nationalism and show that language and education is a primary means by which nationalism is perpetuated in the Philippines, with the intended effect of developing a national unity among the Filipinos following centuries of conflict and colonialism. For purposes of clarity, nationalism here is defined as a sense or an idea that a group of people (in this case the people of the Philippines) are united by a common identity, actual or imagined. When nationalism is discussed in this context it lies opposed to regionalism. And while some in Philippines history may be seen as nationalists, they may indeed only be regionalists, promoting a singular vernacular or ethnic culture ahead of others. This is the case in the Philippines. And while the definition of nationalism can be fluid and ever-changing, even impossible to define at times, it is important to remember that nationalism, in this case, although developed from regionalism, has the potential to act as an opposition to regionalism. Regionalism here is defined as a regional culture and language that is espoused by a group or groups of people within a political entity. Thus regionalism always has the potential to undermine nationalism and its goal and aims. And in the case of the Philippines it is my argument that Tagalog regionalism led to the development of Tagalog oriented nationalism which later developed into what is known today as Filipino nationalism. Both nationalism and regionalism in the case of the Philippines are colonial constructs. Nationalism meant to include the people of the Philippines, who are referred to as Filipinos, while regionalism refers to a group of individuals defined by language group and geographical location as established by the colonizer. Furthermore, the fact

that some in Philippine history are said to have promulgated a Philippine nationalism, when in reality it was an overarching regionalism imposed on the masses is a subject of discussion here. Herein I will also address how centuries of colonialism, first under the Spanish then the Americans, as well as the short period of Japanese occupation, helped to foster a sense of Filipino unity and nationalism. It is this nationalism that allowed for the creation of a Philippine state following the events of World War II, being constructed up 'til and including the period surrounding the establishment of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The idea of a Filipino nation was at its earliest conceived after the arrival of the Spanish, but this idea didn't begin to become a reality until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of an educated elite, or ilustrados, with some, like Jose Rizal, beginning to speak out against the Spanish colonial regime and the abuse many suffered under the hands of tyrannical friars, as well as the Spanish crown. I will also examine the history of nationalism in the Philippines, its development from regionalism, some of its earliest roots, and the ultimate effects of Philippine nationalism, as well as the nation-state's independence from colonial rule and how nationalism continues to play a role in the archipelago. One important note is that although nationalism itself is manifest in Europe and Philippines, as well as other places in Asia, there is one key difference. That is, in Europe the idea of modern nationalism sprung up during the Thirty Years' War as a result of what some saw as the overarching reach of the Catholic Church. However, in the

Philippines the modern idea of nationalism<sup>5</sup> was introduced as a response to colonialism and evolved from there.<sup>6</sup>

On my last trip to the Philippines, September-August 2016, I had the opportunity to sit down with a man, JonJon, who I had met back in 2011, who lived in Sagay on the island of Negros, arguably one of the poorest islands in the archipelago. We discussed many things, among which was the current political situation in the Philippines and the international community's response to the war President Rodrigo Duterte had waged on drug dealers and drug users in the Philippines. JonJon expressed to me the contempt that he had for the United Nations, as well as many in the international community for their criticism of how President Duterte was handling the drug problems in the Philippines. He told me numerous times that the Philippines was a sovereign state, and essentially said that the United Nations and the United States needed to keep their figurative noses out of their domestic affairs. JonJon also expressed to me the contempt he had for those who claimed that there were human rights violations being committed by President Duterte because of his handling of the drug epidemic. He said it was nonsense, and said that the

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<sup>5</sup> Nationalism, as mention earlier, lies opposed to regionalism, so far as they remain in their respective spheres. Meaning that nationalism, in its modern interpretation, is understood as being a collective identity that belongs to a nation-state. And although some may take issue with this definition, seeing as the Kurds of the areas around Iraq, Syria, and Turkey can be described as a nation as well, even though they lack the status of nation-state. Thus for the purpose of this paper, nationalism is reserved for the nation-state. And thus we have regionalism, which is similar to nationalism in terms of sentiment, but instead of revolving around the nation-state, it revolves around the lingua franca of a specific region. Thus nationalism is reserved for the Philippine state, whereas regionalism can be used to describe a similar idea, only it is related to a region, or ethno-linguistic identity.

<sup>6</sup> Agoncillo, Teodoro A., *Filipino Nationalism 1872-1970*, (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1974) 1.

United States needed to figure out their own problems, referring to the Black Lives Matter movement and its purpose, and should not be dictating to them how to handle domestic issues. He also told me of how the Philippines is no longer a colony and will not let itself be dictated to by outside authorities who really have no idea of what is going on in his country.

JonJon is not the only one who felt this way. In fact several individuals with whom I discussed this during my visit to the Philippines shared a similar sentiment. All felt that it was an issue that needed to be dealt with, and that they would support their President in his efforts to rid their nation-state of the drug epidemic that had plagued many of their neighborhoods for too long. Moreover, most citizens of the Philippines share a similar sentiment, which is attested to by President Duterte's approval rating being over 80%.<sup>7</sup> This is the Philippines, this is the sense of nationalism that has developed over the course of more than a hundred years, with the majority of the nation-state feeling supportive of the President and his words condemning international encroachments on Philippine sovereignty. Teodoro Agoncillo gave a precise definition of the type of nationalism that was exhibited by JonJon: "Its nature is generally defensive: defensive in the sense that it is used by a people to keep and to protect what they have achieved, such as unity, culture, prosperity, national dignity, freedom, and

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<sup>7</sup> Pulse Asia. "December 2016 Nationwide Survey on the Performance and Trust ratings of the Top National Government Officials and Key Government Institutions." *Pulse Asia Research Inc.* January 9, 2017. Accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.pulseasia.ph/category/ulat-ng-bayan/>.

independence.”<sup>8</sup> This is the nationalism which I refer to when I speak of JonJon, as well as others, and their feelings in regards to the current political situation in the Philippines. Now to understand this idea of Filipino nationalism, I will recount the history of nationalism in the Philippines beginning from the Spanish colonial period up to the present time.

#### SPANISH PERIOD:

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish there was no sovereign state that controlled the whole of the Philippine islands. And while history tells us that there may have been a few confederacies established throughout the islands, there is consensus that there were entities known as barangays, which were administered by their rulers known as datu<sup>9</sup>. However in some instances, like the case with the Sulu archipelago, there were islands ruled by Sultans, and even these sultanates were relatively new, considering Islam did not arrive in the islands until the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> In the pre-colonial Philippine islands there is zero evidence of any unified nation that resembles what we see as the modern Philippine nation-state today. Separation of peoples among the thousands of islands in the Philippines has produced more than a hundred distinct languages; this further incapacitates any conceivable notion of a unified nation prior to colonialism. Perhaps

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<sup>8</sup> Agoncillo, 2.

<sup>9</sup> See Francia, Luis H., *A History of the Philippines*, (New York: The Overlook Press, 2014) 14.

<sup>10</sup> Abreu, 19.

even more important to note is that the idea of the modern nation state, in concordance with the Westphalian system, did not even come about until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. So the notion that an idea such as nationalism, in its modern sense, or the idea of the nation, could have penetrated remote areas (in relation to the West) such as Southeast Asia prior to then is impractical, even though they had their own regions which may have indeed shared a collective identity. Thus the argument here is that nationalism, in its modern sense, did not exist prior to colonialism. Meaning that there was no idea known as Filipino nationalism prior to colonialism, although there may well have been a sense of cohesiveness among various confederacies or barangays. Consequently, it would take colonialism, and the influx of western ideas of liberalism, combined with Filipino desires for reform, to develop a nationalist movement that would encompass the Philippines. When the Philippines successfully gained independence at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however short-lived, it was primarily the Tagalogs who were party to it. Other areas such as Negros were still occupied by the Spanish after Emilio Aguinaldo and his revolutionaries formally declared independence from Spain in 1898. Interestingly enough, those such as Juan Araneta and General Lacson waited until the end of 1898 to declare their intentions of rising up against the Spanish, months after Luzon declared their independence. The leaders of the so-called Negros Revolution and the later Republic of Negros, foresaw the impending American occupation, and following the November 5<sup>th</sup> Revolution, a new government was formed. Shortly thereafter the Negros Provincial Government declared themselves a protectorate of the United States, in hopes

of retaining their newly won independence.<sup>11</sup> Thus, to say that the Philippines was a unified nation at the time of the Cry of Balintawak and the Philippine Revolution against the Spanish in Luzon, is inaccurate. Although it is true that shortly after this declaration regions in the Philippine islands began to unify, thus setting the stage for the development of a Filipino nationalism. And even though the Philippines did experience various revolts throughout the Spanish colonial period, it wasn't until the formation of the Katipunan and the Cry of Balintawak that the Philippines would see a regionalism emerging and hints of its development into a Tagalog oriented Philippine nationalism.<sup>12</sup>

From the arrival of the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the people of the Philippines had little to no success in the limited revolts that transpired against the Spanish. The primary reason for this was that there was no unity among the inhabitants. From the northern tip of Luzon to the Sulu archipelago, the peoples of the Philippines had neither the resources nor the unified desire to oust the Spanish. Upon their arrival in the archipelago, the Spanish-Portuguese sailor Ferdinand Magellan would perhaps unwittingly insert themselves into local affairs, serving as a sign of things to come. The events surrounding Ferdinand Magellan's arrival on the island of Cebu in the Visayas during the 16<sup>th</sup> century illustrates this point. Once Magellan had landed he managed to strike up a rather harmonious relationship with the local datu, who was

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<sup>11</sup> Funtecha, Henry F., "The Struggle Against the Spaniards and the Americans in the Western Visayas, 1897-1901" in *The Struggle Against the Spaniards and the Americans in the Western Visayas, 1897-1901*, eds. Henry F. Funtecha and Malanie J. Padilla, (Iloilo: U.P. in the Visayas Centennial Committee, 1998) 4.

<sup>12</sup> Thus here we see the beginning of the development of Tagalog regionalism into a Filipino nationalism.



known as Rajah Humabon<sup>13</sup>. Rajah Humabon had a rather testy relationship with the neighboring Datu of Mactan, known as Lapu-lapu. Consequently, Magellan, against the counsel of his comrades, decided to do away with this Lapu-lapu. The impending battle would spell disaster for Magellan and his crew,<sup>14</sup> and although this time the natives were able to repel Magellan and his men, it would not last long; and it would take over three hundred years before the Spanish would be defeated again. The story of Magellan and Lapu-lapu illustrates the divisiveness that existed among the different barangays and sultanates in the Philippines at the time of the arrival of the Spanish, and it would take over three-hundred years before a collective sense of Filipino nationalism would begin to emerge and develop.<sup>15</sup> Leading up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catholicism had been firmly entrenched in much of the archipelago, and liberal ideas which had taken hold in Europe and America began to spread making their way to the colonized as well. Furthermore, with the introduction of formal western style education, liberal ideas of democracy and self-governance, which had taken hold in the western world, began to take hold in the Philippines. Up until the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many of the revolts which occurred against the Spanish were rather localized, centering on certain localities and groups of

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<sup>13</sup> The term rajah, a Sanskrit word meaning ruler, prince, or king, is often used interchangeably with datu.

<sup>14</sup> Francia, 53-54.

<sup>15</sup> The story of Lapu-lapu and Magellan is very telling when looked at through the lens of Filipino nationalism. In this account we have two opposing barangays, divided, illustrating what may have been occurring through the rest of the archipelago. Today, there is a statue erected in Mactan in honor of Lapu-lapu and his victory at the Battle of Mactan. Therefore, an example of divisiveness has become a symbol of nationalism in the Philippines and Lapu-lapu is recognized by many as a national hero.

natives. All it would take would be a misstep on the part of the Spanish, which would serve as a catalyst, further uniting much of the Filipino people, at least those of Luzon,<sup>16</sup> to form a nationalist movement that would continue to grow and eventually lead to the Philippine Revolution of 1896.

As described by Teodoro Agoncillo, Philippine nationalism really did not come into being until the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>17</sup> and it wasn't until 1872 that Filipinos began to feel a sense of unity. The event referred to here is popularly known as the 1872 Gomburza Affair.<sup>18</sup> In 1871 the liberal government which the Spanish had installed in the Philippines was replaced by a conservative, Rafael de Izquierdo, who rescinded many of the privileges that had been afforded to the peoples in the province of Cavite, including exemptions from tribute and forced labor. Following this action many of the workers at the Cavite arsenal revolted. Coinciding with these events was the new Spanish government's desire to eliminate those secular Filipino priests who supported the Filipinization of the clergy. As a result, Mariano Gomez, Jacinto Zamora, and Jose Burgos were summarily executed following the revolt that had occurred in the Cavite province of Luzon.<sup>19</sup> This event would act as a catalyst that would stir reformist and nationalist sentiments within the peoples of Luzon. Up to this point many of the revolts

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<sup>16</sup> One may wonder why it was Luzon, and the Tagalogs and Ilokanos, who were the first to form a formidable force to fight the Spanish. One explanation is that the abuses of the friar powers and the Spanish were more severe in this region, thus further heightening tensions.

<sup>17</sup> Agoncillo, 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> Francia, 105-119.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

that had taken place were localized, narrow minded, and limited in scope, also lacking large-scale unification. Later Andres Bonifacio would successfully be able to unite much of Luzon into a revolutionary force to be reckoned with. However, it is important to note that the fractionalization that existed prior to Bonifacio had existed before and during Spanish colonialism, was what prevented the Filipino people from uniting under one flag in order to oust the Spanish. The event known as the 1872 Gomburza Affair would create an atmosphere that would allow for reformists, such as Jose Rizal, to successfully cultivate their liberal ideas, which would later give birth to Filipino nationalism. The people of the Visayas and Mindanao did not respond to groups such as the Katipunan the same way that those in Luzon did, for they were geared toward the Tagalogs. The most well-known pro-independence group that would later emerge, the Katipunan, was largely pro-Tagalog, while at the same time seeking to suppress other regional ethno-linguistic groups, and seeking to assert the Tagalog language and the Tagalog people as the dominant group in the archipelago.<sup>20</sup> It is also important to note that although the Katipunan found success in helping to organize the Philippine Revolution in Luzon, the fact that after the end of the Philippine Revolution the Spanish still operated in the Visayas suggest that they had little influence here. And on the island of Negros the Spanish were not ousted until after the inhabitants launched their own revolution.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Hayton, Bill, *The South China Sea: The Struggle for Power in Asia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) 163.

<sup>21</sup> Romero, Maria Fe, *Negros Occidental Between Two Foreign Powers*, (Enterprise Publications Inc. 1974) 69-99.

Following the events of 1872 there was a rise in anti-Spanish sentiment that would later form Luzon revolutionary groups such as the Katipunan. However, before the rise of the Katipunan and its predecessor, La Liga Filipina, a group known as the *ilustrados*, or the enlightened ones, began to make their mark on the archipelago. The *ilustrados* included individuals such as Graciano López Jaena, Marcelo H. del Pilar, and, most notably, José Rizal.<sup>22</sup> The *ilustrados*, often referred to as propagandists, sought to spread information regarding the injustices inflicted upon the Filipino people and often made their cases in Europe, most notable in the country of the colonizer, Spain. And it was while Rizal was in Europe that he penned novels and essays such as *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Texts such as these acted as critiques of friar power and Spanish colonization in the Philippines, while at the same time unknowingly stirring revolutionary sentiments among some of his readership in the Philippines as well as Filipinos living abroad. However, his work was also aimed at the Spanish populous, hoping to gain sympathy with the masses in Spain. Perhaps one of the most notable reformist organizations was known as *La Solidaridad*. *La Solidaridad* was a newspaper in Spain that acted as the *ilustrados* mouthpiece in their dissemination of reformism and liberal ideas. It was this group of intellectuals, and the newspaper they created, which eventually led to the creation of José Rizal's *La Liga Filipina*, and eventually Andrés Bonifacio's *Katipunan*.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Agoncillo, 9-14.

<sup>23</sup> Francia, 120-121.

In 1891 Rizal left Europe in order to return to the Philippines to continue the struggle for independence. By June of 1892 Rizal had made port in Manila, shortly thereafter he founded La Liga Filipina. Luis Francia wrote of Rizal's creation of La Liga Filipina:

Barely a week after his arrival he founded La Liga Filipina, its aim to disseminate the Propaganda Movement's call for reformist, nonviolent ideals. Among other goals, La Liga Filipina advocated the unification of the archipelago into a political and cultural whole; and the eradication of injustice.<sup>24</sup>

Thus we can see that Rizal wasted no time in the formation of his reformist group upon his arrival in Manila.<sup>25</sup> This group, just like its successor, the Katipunan, advocated for a single political and cultural entity that would encompass the entire Philippine archipelago, although there were startling differences. One advocated for peaceful reforms while the other advocated for complete independence through violence if necessary, setting the stage for Bonifacio's Katipunan and future Tagalog language dominance. Moreover, it is important to remember that most areas outside of Luzon at this time were very disconnected from many of the events taking place around the capitol. And while Tagalogs such as Bonifacio and Aguinaldo were planning for a united

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>25</sup> When describing La Liga Filipina as a nationalist group, nationalist means that the group shared sentiments, or ideas that called for a united Filipino people and a single cultural identity. As described by Francia. However, to call Rizal a nationalist can be deemed inappropriate. Seeing as it wasn't his aim to gain independence, just to institute some reformations. Thus in most cases nationalist movements can also be seen as independence movements. But in the case of Rizal, he can only be referred to as a nationalist so long as it is within the confines of developing a political and cultural whole, and not transcending this sphere into a desire for independence.

Philippines following the expulsion of the Spanish, this wasn't necessarily the thought process of other peoples throughout the archipelago.

Nevertheless, soon after Rizal's arrival in the Philippines he was exiled to Dapitan, a city located at Zamboanga.<sup>26</sup> It was during this time a member of La Liga Filipina, Andres Bonifacio, formed Ang Kataastaasang Kagalagalangan Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan,<sup>27</sup> or the Katipunan, whose primary goal was the establishment of a sovereign Philippine state.<sup>28</sup> And despite the dissenting views of the leadership of La Liga Filipina, such as Rizal, and their condemnation of Bonifacio's "radical views", the Katipunan would later become the archipelago's most prominent nationalist group.<sup>29</sup> Teodoro Agoncillo argued that a main reason for the failure of the reformists, or ilustrados, and the success of Bonifacio is the fact that the language in which many of the ilustrados chose operate in was Spanish, whereas Bonifacio utilized Tagalog, the most dominant language in Luzon. Andres Bonifacio's use of Tagalog allowed him to connect with the Tagalog working class in a way that Rizal and other ilustrados had previously failed to do. Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo utilized Tagalog anti-Spanish sentiment in order to gain support for their movement which would seek to establish a free and independent state. Whereas reformists such as Rizal and other ilustrados wished for only

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<sup>26</sup> It was 4 years later in 1896 that Jose Rizal was executed by fire squad by order of the Spanish colonial government.

<sup>27</sup> Meaning the Highest, Most Honorable Society of the Country's Sons and Daughters.

<sup>28</sup> Francia, 125.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 121-127.

equal rights.<sup>30</sup> And in many cases these ilustrado elites looked upon the masses<sup>31</sup> with contempt the same way the Spanish did, thus further disconnecting them from their cause.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, it can be said that the first real nationalist movement in the Philippines was Bonifacio's Katipunan. However, even this can be misleading, seeing that the Katipunan was largely a Tagalog oriented group.

On August 23, 1896 the Katipunan would issue the Cry of Pugad Lawin, which would come to be more commonly known as the Cry of Balintawak. The following two years would turn much of the peoples of the Philippines against the Spanish in an unprecedented way. And although the nationalist struggle which would take place would encompass the entire Philippines, it may be more accurate to refer to it as being plural nationalist struggles, or even regional struggles, meaning that there was more than one nationalism present during the Philippine Revolution, with each nationalism operating in their respective regions. Therefore, these separate and distinct nationalisms will be referred to as regional nationalism, so as not to confuse them with the overarching Filipino nationalism that would grow from the Tagalog-based regionalism. One notable example of this regional nationalism are the events which took place on the island of Negros some three hundred miles south of Manila.

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<sup>30</sup> Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan often used the works of Jose Rizal in their revolutionary movement. In fact, it could be said that the actions of Andres Bonifacio allowed the Spanish authority to link the Katipunan to Rizal thus virtually signing his death warrant. See Francia, 119-127 and Agoncillo, 9-14.

<sup>31</sup> Masses refers to the Filipino working class, those who did not belong to the Filipino elite.

<sup>32</sup> See Agoncillo, 9-14.

The point in giving a short history of the regionalist struggle of the people of Negros is for the purpose of proving that the idea that the Philippines was a unified nation at the time of the expulsion of the Spanish from Luzon is a misnomer.<sup>33</sup> And that it would take much longer for that to occur. Thus we can say that nationalism is ever developing, and is a process. Furthermore, at the time of the Cry of Balintawak in 1896, the people of Negros were more or less removed from events in Luzon. Powerful individuals who resided on Negros, such as Aniceto Lacson and Juan A. Aranete, felt that the current time was not yet right for a revolution against the Spanish, so they waited.<sup>34</sup> Thus the Philippine Revolution was not a unified ousting of the Spanish throughout the entire Philippine archipelago, as some believe, but rather it was a series of revolutions that primarily began with Bonifacio's and Aguinaldo's uprising in Luzon.

Additionally, squabbles within the Katipunan between Aguinaldo and Bonifacio show that they may have been more concerned with vying for power than garnering a true nationalist force. In March 1897 the Katipunan held their own election as to who would lead the revolutionary government. Scholars have largely agreed that the voting which took place here was indeed rigged in Emilio Aguinaldo's favor, and after the

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<sup>33</sup> At the time of the Philippine Revolution against the Spanish, leading into the American Colonial Period, the Philippines was not as united as has been traditionally portrayed. Several different groups were seeking to establish different forms of government, many of them beholden to American power. Gregorio Zaide discussing this in his text entitled *Philippine Constitutional History*. See Zaide, Gregorio, *Philippine Constitutional History and Constitutions of Modern Nations* (Manila: The Modern Book Company, 1970).

<sup>34</sup> For more information regarding the Negros Revolution and the Republic of Negros see Romero, 69-99. Also see Funtecha, 6-7 and Zaide, Gregorio F., *Philippine Constitutional History*, (Manila: The Modern Book Company, 1970) 32-35.



voting concluded Bonifacio refused to concede. Shortly thereafter, Bonifacio was accused of trying to undermine the revolutionary government and was sentenced to death by Aguinaldo's revolutionary court, and was subsequently executed in May 1897.<sup>35</sup>

Subsequently, Aguinaldo organized his revolutionary cabinet, filling nearly all its members with Tagalogs who hailed from Cavite.<sup>36</sup> Considering these events, it is hard to say that Aguinaldo's government strived to unite the entirety of the Filipino people behind a sense of Filipino nationalism. For at the time it didn't exist. The strongest unity among Filipinos was contained within the Luzon region, primarily among the Tagalogs. Perhaps it would be more accurate to conclude that if modern Filipino nationalism did exist at the time of the Philippine revolution against the Spanish, it was quite different and it would have been limited to Luzon, and primarily to the Tagalogs (a Tagalog regional nationalism). For there appeared to be little effort to extend beyond Luzon except for small Katipunan chapters that were set up in remote places such as Aklan, which chapters experienced marginal success.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it may be a more accurate description to say that by 1898, nationalism had expanded beyond localities and had grown to incorporate larger regions, such as many of the Tagalog, Ilocano, and Kapampangan area surrounding Manila, thus further uniting ethno-linguistic groups that

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<sup>35</sup> Rafael, Vicente L, "Parricades, Bastards, and Counterrevolution: Reflections on the Philippine Centennial," In *Vestiges of War*, edited by Angel Velasco Shaw, & Luis H. Francia, (New York: New York University Press, 2002) 364.

<sup>36</sup> Francia, 132.

<sup>37</sup> Barrios, John, "The Katipunan in Aklan" in *The Struggle Against the Spaniards and the Americans in the Western Visayas, 1897-1901*, eds. Henry F. Funtecha and Malanie J. Padilla, (Iloilo, U.P. in the Visayas Centennial Committee, 1998) 17-25.

had appeared fractured in the past. And although it would appear limited at first, this new Filipino nationalism began to spread into areas in Luzon and the Visayas in the years following Spanish colonialism.

#### AMERICAN PERIOD:

In 1898 the Americans arrived on the scene, and as many Filipinos feared, particularly the peoples of Luzon, the Americans sought to claim the Philippines as a colony of their own. And by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Americans declared that they had gained control of the archipelago and that the war of resistance was over.<sup>38</sup> But the struggle for formulating a cohesive Filipino nationalism had just begun. By the beginning of the American occupation a sense of cohesive Filipino nationalism had just begun to be formulated, and its extension outside of Luzon was just beginning to take hold. It would be during the American period that this sense of Filipino nationalism would began to be espoused by Filipinos throughout the islands.

During the Philippine-American War, which took place from 1899-1902,<sup>39</sup> many elites defected from Aguinaldo's revolution in order to side with the Americans. And seeing as most of the ilustrados class was opposed to the revolution against the Spanish, being in favor of reform instead, this came as no surprise. This defection to the Americans by the educated elite would set up the future of the Philippines, as the

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<sup>38</sup> Francia, 154.

<sup>39</sup> These dates are tentative, seeing as much of the Philippines was in a rebellious state against the Americans for nearly ten years later. 1902 was the date that the Americans proclaimed the war to be over, when in reality it was still continuing.

educated elite would have significant power during the American colonial period. Considering that the educated elite would side with the Americans and constitute part of the future Filipino political class<sup>40</sup>, it would come as no surprise that the educated elite would play a role in the formation of a national Filipino identity during the American occupation and beyond. With the defection of prominent elites, and the capture or death of many revolutionary leaders, the Philippines entered into a period of passivity in which Filipino nationalism would continue to develop.<sup>41</sup> It was during this time period that the United States would begin a “civilizing mission” aimed at educating the native population and grooming them for independence.

In the midst of the first decade of the American occupation the nationalist ideas of Filipino writers such as Aurelio Tolentino and Juan Abad, as well as the Filipino newspapers *El Renacimiento* and *Muling Pagsilang*, began to speak out against the Americans.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, those who spoke out were subsequently silenced by the Americans in order to maintain a rather submissive Filipino population while at the same time quelling any potential threats to the American interests in the islands. Additionally, during the American occupation English began to be used and taught in schools, which at the time were estimated to have around 227,000 students in primary school.<sup>43</sup> The

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<sup>40</sup> These elites would later make up much of what would become known as the Federalista political party.

<sup>41</sup> Agoncillo, 22-23.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Philippine Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Philippine Statistics 1903-1959* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1960) 23.

Americans saw this as a way of bringing some form of enlightenment to a seemingly uninterested populous. Many Filipino writers at the time were highly critical of the Americans' desires to promulgate their language to the Filipino masses. As Agoncillo notes in his book, a writer by the name of Teodoro M. Kalaw wrote the following: "We were against the use of English, the language of the American conqueror, in the schools. The articles on this subject that I dared not use as editorials, I put under a pen name."<sup>44</sup> Writers such as Kalaw expressed their disdain for the teaching of English in schools. And many Filipino nationalists tried to dissuade Filipinos from enrolling in English public schools, but to no avail. Many Filipinos expressed a thirst for knowledge which was denied them by the Spanish.<sup>45</sup> It is important to note that even at this early date Filipino nationalists saw the effect that formal education could have on the mind of the learner. And the American educational system would later serve as a model for the formation of a Philippine education system that would later develop into what it is today.

The most prominent proponents of Filipino nationalism and independence during the American occupation of the Philippines made up the Nacionalista Party. The party was founded in 1907, shortly after the beginning of the American colonial period. The party emerged as a response, or an opposition, to the Progresista or Federalista Party, whose primary goal was becoming a state of the American Union.<sup>46</sup> Teodoro Agoncillo

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>46</sup> See Agoncillo, 26. Also see Francia, 167.

writes that the party's original founder, Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, belonged to the ilustrado class of Filipinos, who, just like him, were in favor of reform, in this case becoming a new state of the American Union rather than lobbying for Filipino independence.<sup>47</sup> Many of those who were supportive of the Federalista Party consisted of individuals who sided with the Americans, at the behest of the Katipunan and the Philippine revolutionary forces, in order to gain favor with them. And as Louis Francia wrote in his book that the Federalista Party had a very small voter base, which consisted mainly of those who had some degree of fluency in Spanish and/or English, while at the same time excluding the Filipino working class and former revolutionaries, whose desires were aligned with the Nacionalista Party, which was lobbying for independence.<sup>48</sup> The Nacionalista Party was led by Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmena, both of whom were ardent supporters of the Filipino independent nationalist movement and were elected in 1907 to the inaugural Philippine Legislature. It was at this point that the Nacionalista party began their period of dominance in the Philippine Assembly and Philippine politics.

In the following years Filipino Nationalists would experience some gains, as well as some losses as they sought to establish a free and independent state. During U.S. President Taft's administration he instituted what would become known as the process of Filipinization. This process would continue under President Wilson and his newly

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<sup>47</sup> Agoncillo, 26.

<sup>48</sup> Francia, 167.

appointed governor general Francis Burton Harrison. The process of Filipinization, also known as the Philippines for the Filipinos initiative, was a policy that would transition many positions of power within the colony from Americans to native Filipinos. And during Governor Harrison's tenure Filipinos would make up the majority of the Philippine Commission,<sup>49</sup> and would also be members of many different executive departments.<sup>50</sup> The Filipinization process instituted by the Taft Administration, and continued by U.S. President Wilson would offer hope for many who wanted independence. It was during this time that Manuel Quezon lobbied for that passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916, which managed to wrest many powers away from the governor general. This bill would eliminate the Philippine Commission and establish a Philippine Senate in its place. With the passage of this bill there was an outcry among many colonial administrators, who complained that the Filipinos were gaining too much autonomy and power; conversely, the passage of this act alleviated concerns of many nationalist Filipinos while at the same time drawing the ire of other groups who believed it did not go far enough.<sup>51</sup> The Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916, also known as the

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<sup>49</sup> The Philippine Commission was a Philippine legislative body that operated before the Philippine Assembly and continued until 1916 with the passage of the Philippine Autonomy Act. It was at this point that the Philippine Commission was abolished and replaced with a bicameral legislature that would consist of the Senate, and the Philippine Assembly, an upper and lower house. See Zaide, Gregorio F., *Philippine Constitutional History* (Manila: The Modern Book Company, 1970) 54-56. Also see Francia, 168.

<sup>50</sup> See Francia, 167-169 and Agoncillo, 27-28.

<sup>51</sup> Agoncillo, 27-28 and Francia, 168.

Jones Bill stated the U.S. desire for the Philippines to become an independent nation-state, but it did not specify a date by which independence was to be granted.<sup>52</sup>

Although it did appear that the Nacionalistas, headed by Quezon and Osmena, were making significant grounds in securing independence, they encountered a roadblock with the incoming Harding Administration. President Warren G. Harding had appointed General Leonard Wood and Governor General Cameron Forbes to determine whether or not the Filipinos were ready for independence, their findings were in the negative, and President Harding would appoint Wood as the new governor general, to the ire of Quezon and other Nacionalistas. And it was during the governorship of General Wood that Manuel Quezon would make one of the most memorable statements in Filipino history, “I would rather see a government run like hell by Filipinos than one run like heaven by Americans.” This would mark a tension that would exist between Wood and Filipino nationalist leaders that would continue until Wood’s death in 1927. His replacement, Henry Stimson, would later manage to reestablish amiable relations with the Philippine leaders.<sup>53</sup>

The Great Depression of 1929 would lead to the emigration of many Filipinos from the Philippines to the United States, and in the midst of this economic collapse Osmena and Manuel Roxas, a newly elected Senator at the time, traveled to the United States in order to lobby for the passage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting bill. The bill was

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<sup>52</sup> Francia, 168.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 170.

eventually defeated by an unlikely alliance of reformists and nationalists (who wanted immediate independence) led by Quezon.<sup>54</sup> In 1935 a similar bill would be passed, this one supported by Quezon, which would grant the Philippines independence in a ten-year time frame, in which time a transition of power would begin and the Philippines would be granted commonwealth status by the United States, allowing for the writing of the 1935 Philippine Constitution.<sup>55</sup> Thus independence was on the horizon for the Filipino people and for the Nacionalista Party, but despite this achievement the concessions made in order to gain independence would begin to be scrutinized by many nationalists up to the present day.<sup>56</sup>

Following 1935, and the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth, another debate began to take shape in the Philippines. The debate over a national language had begun to take center stage as an issue that would continue throughout the post-1935 period until the present day. Although we will return to this point and the issue of language at a later point of this essay, it is important to note that at the time of the establishment of the Institute of National Language, there was a fiery debate between

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<sup>54</sup> The Hare-Hawes-Cutting bill would have granted independence to the Philippines after a certain grace period. The bill was defeated in 1933 by Manuel Quezon in the Philippine Senate. Francia argues in his book that the primary purpose for Quezon's opposition to the bill was that it was not his name attached to it, thus limiting his ascension and promoting Osmena. Quezon did cite a provision which allowed U.S. military bases to remain a reason for the opposition. But this is later refuted by his support for the Tydings-McDuffe Act, which had his name attached to it, and did essentially the same thing as the Hare-Hawes-Cutting bill. See Francia, 171-172.

<sup>55</sup> See Francia, 172-173, and Agoncillo, 31-33.

<sup>56</sup> Making reference to concessions in regards to American military bases, and American influence in the Philippines.



Tagalogs and Visayans as to what the national language should be. Eventually Tagalog, was chosen.<sup>57</sup>

The remaining years in what has been termed as the American period would include both successes and failures regarding the establishment and the success of a new Philippine nation-state. And with the beginning of a trade war between the United States and Japan at hand, the Philippines began to see a diminishment of supplies. Thus on January 2, 1942, Japanese ground forces began their occupation of Manila.<sup>58</sup> This began a period of Japanese occupation which would instill hope in some and fear in others, but it would eventually leave most longing for the days of General Douglas MacArthur and the Americans.

#### 1941 TO PRESENT:

The Japanese occupation of the archipelago, which began on January 2, 1942, was seen by some as a welcome change and as an opportunity to rid themselves of Western oppression. Nationalists saw this as a potential opportunity to establish a free and independent state, unattached to its Western colonizers. However, forty years of American occupation had allowed for the creation of a generation of pro-American Filipinos, thus leaving a significant swath of Filipinos being opposed to the Japanese

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<sup>57</sup> Pilipino was chosen as a means of being more inclusive to non-Tagalog speaking regions, which make up the large majority of the nation-state, but in all reality Pilipino is just Tagalog under a different name. See Francia, 176, and Agoncillo, 33.

<sup>58</sup> Francia, 180, and Agoncillo, 34.

occupation. Individuals such as Philippine President Manuel Quezon, who had been favorable to the Americans, fled, fearing that a Japanese occupation would spell doom for him and others like him, thus allowing for the Japanese to instill what Luis Francia termed “puppet government”.<sup>59</sup> During this time Filipinos experienced many abuses, many of which were similar to those inflicted upon them during the Philippine-American war. The only difference is that where the Americans were successful the Japanese failed. Meaning that a main goal of the American colonizer in the Philippines was to “civilize” them, teaching them through American forms of education, and in the midst of this they were able to erase any atrocities the Americans had committed from the minds of many Filipinos; the Japanese failed in this regard.<sup>60</sup> Following the events at the beginning of the Japanese occupation there was a resurgence in Filipino nationalism. Teodoro Agoncillo describes the form of nationalism that was aroused by Japanese atrocities:

For three years, the Filipinos suffered untold misery, hunger, disease, and brutality. For the third time Filipino nationalism was aroused to the point of ferocity. But the nationalism thus aroused differed from that of 1896 and 1899 in that the latter’s reaction was toward independence and freedom, while the former’s purpose was to make the return of the Americans possible.”<sup>61</sup>

Agoncillo speaks to the aforementioned facts, that is that the Americans were so successful in their design to educate, and indoctrinate the Filipinos, so that when they saw their brothers and sisters fall victims to the brutality of the Japanese it made them long for

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<sup>59</sup> Francia, 181.

<sup>60</sup> For a larger explanation on the Philippine education system during the American colonial period see Part III of this paper.

<sup>61</sup> Agoncillo, 34.

the days of the Americans, while simultaneously either ignoring or remaining in ignorance, of similar atrocities committed by the Americans during the Philippine-American War. Nevertheless, these events during World War II were able to unite peoples who had previously been divided. Meaning that prior to the Japanese occupation there were two factions of peoples, reformists, and nationalists. During the war the two factions morphed, one longing for the Americans to return, others wanting immediate independence following the war. The common thread that bound them together was their hatred for the Japanese,<sup>62</sup> thus further uniting a larger swath of the Filipino people than had previously been unified during the Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War.

By July of 1945 General Douglas MacArthur had returned and the Japanese occupation had ended, once again leaving the archipelago in the hands of the Americans. And on July 4, 1946, as a symbolic gesture to the Americans, the Philippines declared their independence. And with this independence the door was left open in order to allow the Americans to continue to benefit off of investments, as well as military contracts, etc. It was this continued American neocolonialistic attitude toward the Philippines, and the Philippine elites' acceptance of it, that continue to stir up nationalistic sentiments in the nation-state.<sup>63</sup> Many Filipinos in the 1950's and even up to today continue to be troubled

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>63</sup> Jenkins, Nash, "Six Arrested After Protests Outside U.S. Embassy in Manila," *Time Magazine*, September 15, 2015, <http://time.com/4035768/philippines-protest-us-military-embassy/>.

by the amount of leverage the Americans continue to hold over their nation-state,<sup>64</sup> although in many circumstances it appears to have diminished over the years, despite the Philippines remaining a close ally of the former colonizer.<sup>65</sup>

Following World War II and the American occupation, the Philippines saw a resurgence in Huk, or communist activities. During World War II the Huks had fought against the Japanese. And now after the war, they continued to operate at the behest of the staunchly anti-communist President of the Philippines, Manuel Roxas. And while the Huks, as well as other groups such as Moro insurgent groups did play a role in this period, they were unconcerned with the overarching idea of a united Philippine nationalism, instead advocating for a Islamic Philippine nationalism; thus with the Moros concerned with gaining independence for the nation's Islamic populations, and the Huks failing to receive any significant support, although they would continue to be a thorn in the side of the Philippine government. Therefore, this discussion will focus elsewhere on Philippine responses to the Tagalog elite, and the imposition of the idea of being Filipino.

Moreover, when we view this period as well as other periods in Philippine history, such as the Spanish colonial and American colonial periods, it becomes clear that over the course of nearly four hundred years the inhabitants of the Philippines had been consistently told that they were Filipinos, a single people.<sup>66</sup> The idea that the Philippine

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 71-74.

<sup>66</sup> We use this term because it is the term used today to describe the native inhabitants of the Philippines as a collective group, although they were called by different names at different times.

islands existed as a collective whole or nation, was not introduced until the Spanish, and after the Spanish, it was the Katipunan's desire to maintain this imagined community<sup>67</sup>, followed by the Americans, and up to the present day Philippine Government. After being told for generations that they were Filipinos by numerous colonial powers the people began to believe. Thus we have the result of a competing nationalism and regionalism. The allegiance to the state, or being Filipino, and the allegiance to one's language, culture or ethnic group. Now the challenge that the Philippines faced was whether or not these competing identities could co-exist. Evidenced by the past eighty years, since the Philippines gained commonwealth status, it is possible. Thus there are individuals who identify as Filipino and Negrense, or Filipino and Ilocano, or Filipino and Cebuano. Now how do the inhabitants of this archipelago determine which identity supersedes the other? Filipinos see no conflict in these differing identities, one identity unites them to the nation, while the other binds them to their region. This has occurred because of the construction of what Benedict Anderson called "imagined communities". In the Philippines this imagined community of Filipinos transcends ethno-linguistic groups and islands, allowing for the inhabitants of the archipelago to unite as a single nationality. Regional language communities may have existed prior to colonialism, but it was the Spanish and then the Americans that took them and were able to lay down dividing lines thus separating the several different linguistic groups into what they defined as distinct languages. So it was colonialism that created these varying language

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<sup>67</sup> Referencing Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. See Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 2016).

communities, and as a product one region, or lingua franca, began to exercise dominance around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Anderson explains the phenomena of “imagined communities” as relating to the development of the printed word. And although that did play a significant role, it is education coupled with print, and the propagation of a national language which allowed this idea to solidify in the Philippines.

## PART II: LANGUAGE

The purpose of addressing the history of language in the Philippines here is the fact that language plays an important role in the development and maintenance of nationalism, as well as a constructed national unity. The Philippines is a nation-state that is comprised of over a hundred different languages, and thousands of islands. The archipelagos' dominant four ethno-linguistic groups make up over 60% of the languages spoken in the nation-state: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, and Hiligaynon/Ilonggo<sup>68</sup>. According to the 2010 Philippine census, 24% self-identify as Tagalog, 21% as Cebuano or Bisaya, 9% as Ilocano, and 8% as Hiligaynon,<sup>69</sup> with many more languages that are identified as regional languages by the Philippine Department of Education.

In a majority of the various regions throughout the Philippines, Tagalog-based Filipino is not the dominant language. The dominant language spoken in a region is the regional language. To illustrate this I will explain the linguistic situation and complications that occur on the island of Negros. The provincial center on the island of Negros is located in the City of Bacolod. Prior to President Aquino's signing of Executive Order 183<sup>70</sup> Negros was divided into two parts: Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental. Hiligaynon was the primary language in Negros Occidental, whereas in Negros

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<sup>68</sup> From this point when the Hiligaynon/Ilonggo language is referenced I will refer to it as Hiligaynon, while at the same time addressing the inhabitants of Negros as Negrense.

<sup>69</sup> Government of the Republic of the Philippines, *Demography: Philippine Yearbook 2013*, Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013, [https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2013%20PY\\_Demography.pdf](https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2013%20PY_Demography.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> Office of the President of the Philippines, *Executive Order No. 183, s. 2015*, Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 2015, <http://www.gov.ph/2015/05/29/executive-order-no-183-s-2015/>.

Oriental, the primary language was a Negrense dialect of Cebuano. During my first trip to Negros I noticed the complexity of the language distribution. As I traveled from Bacolod up north into the mountains of Calatrava, a barangay of Minapasuk, I noticed a mixture of Hiligaynon and Cebuano. And the closer I would go to the Municipality of Calatrava, the more Cebuano words I would hear in my conversations with the inhabitants. However, as I would leave Minapasuk headed toward Sagay I would notice that there would be less Cebuano words used by the inhabitants. What the native inhabitants would call this is sak-sak sinagol, meaning a mixture, in this case varying mixes of Hiligaynon and Cebuano. Furthermore, the amount of Filipino used by the native inhabitants is miniscule. Filipino is rarely used outside of educational edifices, and when it is used it is used by individuals who are either not Negrense, or do not know how to speak Hiligaynon. In fact, many individuals on the islands do not even know Filipino. And the vast majority of laborers that work in the haciendas farming tubo<sup>71</sup> have very little formal schooling and have a relatively weak grasp of Filipino, and are inclined to stick to their mother-tongue. Thus it is apparent that largely the use of Filipino is limited to those who are either Tagalog born or have been able to complete their formal schooling. Most non-Tagalogs who do not have the opportunity to complete or attend school do not learn Filipino, thus hindering many non-Tagalog-based Filipino speakers from moving up economic classes and improving their circumstances. In fact the national language can serve as a boon allowing them to better themselves, or as a roadblock, preventing someone from improving economically. However, the interesting point here is that

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<sup>71</sup> Tubo is a Hiligaynon word which refers to the sugar cane crop.



despite all the issues that many non-Filipino speaking working class people face, they still feel a sense of national unity with their fellow Filipinos, however, at the same time they know that they are different, acknowledging that they belong to their regional group. Thus arises the potential struggle between nationalism and regionalism.

#### SPANISH PERIOD:

At the time of the arrival of the Spanish, the Philippines consisted of hundreds of languages. The same is true today, but at the time many of the inhabitants remained on the coast, while some kept to the inland. Furthermore, before the arrival of the Spanish and the Catholicization of the archipelago, the inhabitants even had their own writing system which was known as baybayin. This baybayin script was almost entirely eliminated by the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the Latinization of the Philippine scripts by the Spanish.<sup>72</sup> Vicente Rafael, in *Contracting Colonialism*, notes that the colonizers originally tried to learn and adapt to baybayin script, but found it inadequate for their purposes. Whether or not this was because of some impotence on the part of the script or on the part of the Spanish colonizers is left to debate in the text.<sup>73</sup> However there are a few groups that still practice the pre-colonial writing system today.<sup>74</sup> The Spanish colonial period consisted of an educated Filipino elite learning the language of the

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<sup>72</sup> For more information on the pre-colonial Philippines see Francia, 22-48

<sup>73</sup> Rafael, Vicente, *Contracting Colonialism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) 39-54

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

colonizer, and many Spanish friars learning the local vernaculars. However, the majority of the natives did not have the opportunity to learn Castillian<sup>75</sup>. And in most cases the natives learning of Castillian was perhaps deemed at least unnecessary by their colonizers, seeing as most friars were to learn the local vernaculars. The Spanish Crown saw the use of local languages and dialects as a means of speeding up the conversion process, or Catholicization, of the native inhabitants of the Philippine archipelago.<sup>76</sup>

The conversion process to Catholicism, from indigenous beliefs and in many cases Islam, was a main product of Spanish colonialism. The Spanish Crown, along with the Spanish friars, did not seek to impose a new language on the inhabitants of the isles, but a new religion. And it was an over-zealous desire to proclaim Catholicism throughout the archipelago which led the friars to learn local vernaculars, perhaps slowly uniting the isles in terms of religion, but leaving them divided in terms of language. However, the learning of Castilian Spanish by some of the Filipino elite, primarily Tagalogs, led to the beginnings of a unified Philippines-although it would take hundreds of years before this would occur. Thus with the maintaining of the local vernaculars among the natives, an archipelago defined by regionalism would continue throughout the Spanish colonial period. And the idea of a unified Philippines would escape the native inhabitants until the Spanish colonial period drew to a close. And since the ilustrados utilized Castilian

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<sup>75</sup> The term used to describe Spanish in the Philippines. Makes reference to Castillian Spanish, or the old Spanish of European Spain.

<sup>76</sup> Tupas, Ruanni, and Beatriz P. Lorente. "A 'New' Politics of Language in the Philippines," in *Language, Education, and Nation-building*, by Peter Sercombe, & Ruanni Tupas (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 165-180.

Spanish and most other Filipinos did not, no unifying sentiment could be constructed. However, Emilio Aguinaldo and Andres Bonifacio would be able to develop a sense of regional unity by utilizing the local Tagalog vernacular, and to a small extent Ilocano, thus creating a Luzon based nationalism, built around Tagalog. Therefore, to say that a true Filipino nationalism existed at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century would be inaccurate. This idea of nationalism, which could be more properly defined as a form of overarching regionalism based around Tagalog language dominance, would be an idea that some, including the prominent group known as the Katipunan, sought to impose on the rest of the archipelago.<sup>77</sup> This idea of Tagalog supremacy is not a new one, and it is supported by the fact that many of the revolution's supporters referred to Bonifacio as King of the Tagalogs,<sup>78</sup> as well as the inherently Tagalog nature of the Katipunan; it is also supported by the significant backlash of the Visayans during the period in which the Philippine legislature debated the formation of a national language, which event will be addressed later.

The period of time at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is of significant interest to those who study national language politics in the Philippines. This period of time would set the stage for the formation of a Philippine national language hierarchy which would continue to be dominated by the Tagalogs. And it wouldn't be until later, during the American

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<sup>77</sup> Hayton, 163.

<sup>78</sup> Francia, 131. For more information on the Tagalog orientated nature of the Katipunan see Hayton, 163 and Gonzalez, Andrew B., *Language and Nationalism: The Philippine Experience Thus Far* (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1980) 9.

period, that a significant backlash would emerge from the Visayan region of the archipelago.

#### AMERICAN PERIOD:

With the ushering in of the American Colonial period ilustrados and reformists abandoned Aguinaldo's revolution in order to gain favor with the Americans, and although many of them were well versed in Spanish, they were nearly all from Luzon.<sup>79</sup> These individuals would continue to use Spanish, however, at the same time the language was fading, slowly being replaced by English. It was documented in 1900 by the Americans that less than 500,000 Filipinos could speak the Spanish language.<sup>80</sup> And it was during this time that English began to be used more widely, and although traces of the Spanish language obviously remain today, after World War II the Spanish language had been eradicated,<sup>81</sup> with the exception of remnants that were adopted into local vernaculars, as well as the Spanish-based creole language known as Chavacano. Furthermore, it was the elevation of Tagalog reformists into an amicable relationship with the Americans, as well as this new found Tagalog-based nationalism, that helped to set the groundwork for Tagalog to continue to infiltrate and further cement itself in the Philippine language hierarchy; its beginnings would occur with the Tagalog press in

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<sup>79</sup> Most prominent ilustrado reformists were Tagalog, however, some were Ilokano.

<sup>80</sup> United States Philippine Commission (1899-1900), *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1900 ... , Parts 1-2* (Washington, D.C.: The Division of Insular Affairs, War Department) 1901, 88.

<sup>81</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 30-31.

Luzon, specifically the Manila area, with the language debate between the pro-Tagalog and anti-Tagalog forces heating up around 1934.

As has been documented, many Philippine reformists, who themselves were opposed to Aguinaldo's Philippine Revolution in the beginning, sided with the Americans upon their arrival,<sup>82</sup> thus gaining favor and allowing themselves to be positioned in places of power and authority. This allowed for many Luzon based families to ingratiate themselves with the Americans, with many families setting themselves and their families up to become dominant families in Philippine politics for generations, many of them originating from Luzon and having ties to the Tagalog language. These prominent families began to utilize English, thus marginalizing the Spanish language in many aspects of governance and education. And it was during the American period that English took Spanish's place in education, and government, with the Americans seeking to disseminate the language to population, believing that this was part of the "civilizing mission" that they had undertaken.

However, perhaps the most important issue of language in the Philippines during this time period was the debate that took place over what was to be the national language of the Philippines. In 1935 the Philippines had been granted commonwealth status by the Americans, and thus the Philippine islands had an increasing amount of autonomy which would allow for the national language issue to be addressed. The 1934-1935 Philippine Constitutional Convention had at least two delegates who spoke on the need for a national language, both Felipe E. Jose and Eugenio Baltao insisted that Tagalog was the

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<sup>82</sup> See Agoncillo, 22. Also see Francia, 145.

language of the people of the Philippines and as such it should be the national language. Ironically Felipe E. Jose, although a Tagalog himself, represented Baguio, a primarily Ilocano speaking area.<sup>83</sup> The primary adversaries to the support of Tagalog as the national language were the Visayans, and as Andrew Gonzalez notes in his text on Philippine language and nationalism, it was by an accident of history that this became the case.<sup>84</sup> It is well documented that during the American period the Visayans outnumbered the Tagalogs.<sup>85</sup> And as Gonzalez notes, Visayans largely saw themselves as a single ethnic group, although they utilized numerous languages.<sup>86</sup> This unity among Visayans was able to muster a formidable opposition to those who believed in a Tagalog-based nationalism and a Tagalog-based national language. And after intense debates and scrutiny, with several proposed amendments addressing the need for a national language being struck

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<sup>83</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 44-45.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-47. The capital of the Spanish Philippine Government was located in Manila. Because of these circumstances Tagalog, the lingua franca of the Manilan natives, would eventually become the dominant language in the Philippines. Had the Spanish capitol been established in Baguio it would be expected that Ilokano would have become the basis for a national language instead of Tagalog.

<sup>85</sup> In 1916 Cebuano speakers numbered nearly 1.85 million, while Visayans as a whole (including Cebuano, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, and Waray speakers) numbered upwards of 3.7 million, while native Tagalog speakers numbered just shy of 1.8 million. And by 1948 native Tagalog speakers numbered around 3.73 million while Cebuano speakers numbered around 4.76 million, with a total of at least 8.2 million Visayans (including Cebuano, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, and Waray). See Philippine Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Philippine Statistics 1903-1959*. (Census, Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1960) 13. Also see Beyer, H. Otley, *Population of the Philippine Islands in 1916* (Manila: Philippine Education CO., Inc., 1917) 23-26.

<sup>86</sup> The area referred to as the Visayas encompasses Leyte, Cebu, Bohol, Negros, and Panay, as well as smaller islands within the middle islands' region. The primary languages of the Visayas are Cebuano, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, and Waray, with smaller vernaculars on the linguistically diverse island of Panay such as Kinaray-a, Aklanon, and Capiznon. Many of the languages of the Visayas share similar linguistic elements, further differentiating them from Tagalog, and the languages of Luzon.

down, the following became the basis for the years to follow: “The National Assembly shall take steps toward the development and adoption of a common national language based on one of the existing native languages, and until otherwise provided by law, English and Spanish shall continue as official languages.”<sup>87</sup> For the immediate future the issue was resolved, but in all actuality it was merely postponed, left for a later legislative body to address.

The years following the drafting of the 1935 Constitution would prove contentious, and with the passing of Commonwealth Act No. 184, or the National Language Law, a National Language Institute was established with the purpose of finding a basis for a new national language.<sup>88</sup> Assemblyman Norberto Romualdez, who ironically was a Visayan himself, advocated for Tagalog as the national language. And in order to maintain a guise of impartiality he pushed for the formation of the National Language Institute, which would shortly thereafter choose Tagalog as the basis for the national language.<sup>89</sup> The years to follow would push for the teaching of Tagalog in public schools, the establishment of Tagalog as an official language, and the establishment of a national language by the date of independence,<sup>90</sup> which would be ten years from when the Philippines was granted commonwealth status by the Americans. In 1937 President

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<sup>87</sup> See Zaide, 340. Also see Zaide 324-346 for the entire 1935 Constitution.

<sup>88</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 60-61.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-71.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

Manuel Quezon, by way of executive order,<sup>91</sup> proclaimed that the national language would be based on Tagalog.<sup>92</sup> These activities were met with vehement opposition, most notably by Visayan groups, who cited their numerical superiority to Tagalogs.

Individuals such as Vicente Sotto and Vicente Pacis, were vocal critics of the National Language Institute and President Quezon for imposing Tagalog on them. These tensions continued up to the beginning of World War II, where under the Japanese Tagalog would continue to be developed with the purpose of making it the national language.

The period of time including the American Colonial Period was in many ways a starting point for the idea of language as nationalism. It was during this period that the desires which were espoused by elites and individuals such as Aguinaldo and the Katipunan, to make Tagalog the national language, really began to bear fruit. And even though the National Language Institute and pro-Tagalog forces were met with primarily Visayan opposition, it was not enough to stop its implementation and formal declaration. Thus an imposed Tagalog regionalism, built upon the guise of Philippine nationalism, and a singular national language, began to be imposed upon the rest of the archipelago. However, the battle over the national language was far from over, as the debate and struggle over a national language would continue on through World War II, and up to the present day.

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<sup>91</sup> Executive Order 134, 1937.

<sup>92</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 71.



## 1941 TO PRESENT:

The Japanese occupation brought along with it many challenges to the people of the Philippine Islands. Another turnover in colonial control would almost certainly bring along with it more violence, as had accompanied the Spanish and American periods. Only this time the world was in the midst of a world war. Many Filipinos rejected the Japanese occupation and stated their preference for the Americans.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, the issue of language in the Philippines continued under the Japanese. Upon arrival the Japanese encouraged the promulgation of Tagalog as a basis for the Philippine national language, and sought to induct the Filipino people into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.<sup>94</sup> And as a result of the Japanese policy, the Philippine Supreme Court handed down its first ever Tagalog written decision in 1942.<sup>95</sup> This decision was received with joy by many proponents of the pro-Tagalog movement. And it appeared that with the arrival of the Japanese it was no longer required that pro-Tagalog forces skirt around the language issue to appease the Visayans.

Jorge Vargas, a Negrense himself, was appointed Chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission by the Japanese, and it was during his tenure that he “expressed great satisfaction over the fact that the declared national language of the Philippines [had] been given official recognition by military authorities.”<sup>96</sup> It may seem odd that someone

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<sup>93</sup> This will be discussed in Part III.

<sup>94</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 77-78.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

who was a Visayan would be a proponent of the use of Tagalog as the national language. And although the majority of Visayan elites and politicians vigorously opposed the implementation of Tagalog as the national language, there were some exceptions. It was even noted on one occasion that Claro M. Recto, a Philippine Senator and a Tagalog, stated that he was an “enthusiastic advocate of the use of Tagalog as the most practical medium of national expression and as an effective means for national cohesion.”<sup>97</sup> The national cohesion which Senator Recto talked about is the same idea that many Filipinos have cited when discussing the language issue in their country. It was a national fragmentation which many Filipino elites feared, especially the pro-Tagalog forces. They were afraid that if Tagalog remained unpropagated as the national language, many of them would lose their power, and they would lose the nation-state they were trying to build from colonialism. And it was colonialism which was the model for the new nation they wanted to build.<sup>98</sup> A nation-state of imposed borders, and an imposed national language, in order to create a new nation, which could withstand potential fragmentation into the various Philippine ethnic groups. Thus propagating the use of Tagalog as a national language would allow many elites to maintain their status and power in the Philippine social and political hierarchy, while at the same time allowing for a new socially constructed nation, which in reality would result in the acceptance of an imposed Tagalog language. Overtime many would simply accept this new reality as the norm.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Meaning that the territory controlled by the Spanish, and later by the Americans, was to be incorporated territory into their new state.

President Jose P. Laurel, during his 1943 inaugural address, would indicate that it was his hope that one day Tagalog would become the mother-tongue of all Filipinos, to be spoken in the home, and not just the schools and government edifices:

The home, more than the school, should be the nursery of the mother tongue. The Government will take the necessary steps for the development and propagation of the Tagalog language as ordained in the Constitution not only through the medium of the Institute of National Language and the encouragement of vernacular literature, but also by making its study compulsory in all schools and eventually prescribing its use in official correspondence as well as in public ceremonies. But the home must do its share so that our children may learn from the cradle those folk-songs and folk-lore transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation and which form the repository of our common imperishable tradition.<sup>99</sup>

To push for the usage of the Tagalog language as the mother tongue in the homes of all Filipinos could mean the decimation of regional languages as well as regionalism, thus imposing a Tagalog regionalism upon the rest of the Filipinos, allowing for a new Tagalog nationalism to be born, which would encompass the entirety of the Philippine archipelago. Andrew Gonzalez writes that the Second Philippine Republic, or the time from 1943-1945, would mark the time in which the most vigorous effort was exerted to propagate the Tagalog language to the masses.<sup>100</sup> But due to the shortness of the Japanese occupation and the Second Philippine Republic, the propagation of Tagalog as the national language failed to reach areas outside of central Luzon. However, it did solidify Tagalog as the choice for the basis of a Philippine national language.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 85.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 96.

Following the Japanese period the Americans were reintroduced to the archipelago, and in 1946, as per the agreement with the Americans, the Filipinos were finally granted their long awaited independence and Manuel Roxas assumed the office of the Presidency. Unlike his predecessor, President Roxas chose to focus on issues other than language. While Tagalog was recognized as the national language, many of the post-war Presidents and administrations continued to use English in their speeches, thus consigning Tagalog to a secondary position; and in 1959 Tagalog as the national language was renamed Pilipino in an effort to separate the language from the ethnolinguistic group.<sup>102</sup> Andrew Gonzalez recounted the event:

On 13 August 1959, during the celebration of National Language Week (13-19 August), Secretary of Education Jose E. Romero issued Department Order No. 7, mandating that the national language would henceforth be referred to as Pilipino “to impress upon the National Language ‘the incredible character’ of Filipino nationhood.” One should carefully note that from 1939 on, when the effectivity of Tagalog as the national language was supposed to take place, the literature henceforth stopped using Tagalog as the name, undoubtedly to forestall any resentments on the part of non-Tagalogs. The language was referred to as the Filipino national language (*wikang pambansang Pilipino*) or simply the national language (*wikang pambansa* or even *wika*). As subsequent debates will show a distinction between Tagalog (a local, vernacular spoken in Luzon) and Tagalog-based Pilipino became necessary for public relations purposes (so as not to antagonize the non-Tagalog). The use of the name Pilipino was a further step in this direction of superregionalizing and in effect nationalizing what was once a regional vernacular or what was then a current term, *dialect*.<sup>103</sup>

Thus the renaming of the Philippine national language was in effect done as a ruse that would hopefully quell any resentment over the fact that the Philippine national language

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 97-106.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 102.

was Tagalog, or perhaps more accurately the Manila dialect of Tagalog, or the Manila lingua franca. Over the next ten years debates would continue over what Pilipino actually was. Some thought it should be a Tagalog-based national language similar to the lingua franca of Manila, with influences from both Spanish and English, while others thought it should be constructed as similar to pure Tagalog as possible.<sup>104</sup> It was during this time when some opposition reemerged demanding that English be used until the confusion regarding the national language could be addressed.<sup>105</sup> In the late 1960's to early 1970's, at a time when Pilipino was seen as being widely recognized as the national language, locales outside of the Manila area continued to use English in their papers, whereas Pilipino was used in the Manila area. Many saw Pilipino simply as a Manila-based lingua franca formed around Tagalog, which many used as a criticism of the national language.

In 1973, following President Marcos' declaration of martial law, another constitutional convention convened and debate over the national language ensued. Prior to the convention, in 1970, anti-Tagalog sentiment had reached a high, and after months of debate the language provision of the constitution was adopted as follows:

This Constitution shall be officially promulgated in English and in Pilipino, and translated into each dialect spoken by over fifty thousand people, and into Spanish and Arabic. In case of conflict, the English text shall prevail. The Batasang Pambansa shall take steps towards the development and formal adoption of a common national language to be known as Filipino. Until otherwise provided by law, English and Pilipino shall be the official languages.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 108-122. Although one may argue that pure Tagalog may have been non-existent at this point, fused together with influxes of Spanish and English, the Tagalog spoken of here would be that with as little western influence as possible.

<sup>105</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 107-122.

<sup>106</sup> Government of the Republic of the Philippines, *1973 Constitution of the Republic of*

According to the 1973 Constitution it would appear that both Tagalog and anti-Tagalog forces were able to gain some grounds while offering some concessions. The constitution essentially set back years of development of Pilipino as a national language, with Tagalog as its base, by stating that steps would be taken “towards the development and formal adoption of a common national language to be known as Filipino.”<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the constitution stated no basis for the language to be known as Filipino, while during the convention many stated that it should be based around the numerous Filipino languages, while others said other languages should be incorporated, but one should be the nucleus of the new national language to be known as Filipino.<sup>108</sup>

Following the convention, the new national language known as Filipino continued to be propagated without any real change to the existing Pilipino. And although Tagalog would win out as a basis for the national language, its dissemination would continue to be limited. And in 1983, with the ousting of President Marcos, a new constitution was written in which the national language was identified as Filipino and the regional languages as official languages for their respective regions.<sup>109</sup> By this time Tagalog had been used as an unofficial and official basis for the national language, and it

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*the Philippines*, 1973, Accessed February, 21, 2017, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/1973-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-2/>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 141.

<sup>109</sup> For the full text of the section see Government of the Republic of the Philippines, 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, 1987, Accessed February, 21, 2017, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>.

would continue to be used as such, and will continue to be used as such in the future. The real debate is the extent of which the Filipino language will be used.

Today we see Tagalog-based Filipino as a medium of instruction in the classroom of Philippine public schools in many of the humanities and social sciences, with English being used in the hard sciences. However, outside of schools Filipino has failed to gain the traction that President Laurel wished for. Outside of the Manila area, the lingua franca of the various regions have continued as the dominant languages. On a recent trip I took to Negros I had the opportunity to attend a primary school in Barangay Cansilayan, Murcia. During my visit I saw how Filipino was used as a medium of instruction, as well as topic of language study. Thus the regional vernacular, in this case Hiligaynon, was almost always used in informal situations, while Filipino and English were used in formal classroom settings during the instruction of the prescribed subject in which they were the required mediums of instruction. However, outside of school one will rarely hear the national language, Filipino. Most Negrenses will converse in their vernacular, thus consigning Filipino and English to usage in schools and some government edifices. Thus Tagalog-based Filipino has struggled to take hold in areas such as Negros, although with many more young people graduating high school the language situation will continue to evolve. Even the current President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, who is of Visayan origin, can be heard speaking the various regional vernaculars while attending different events. In one instance I had the opportunity to view a video of him speaking in the vernacular of the Western Visayas Region, Ilonggo/Hiligaynon, during a campaign event

and the response was tremendous.<sup>110</sup> They appeared to be extremely pleased with his usage of their regional language. And although one's national identity, being Filipino, in many cases appears to transcend their regional identity, regionalism and the identity that corresponds to an individual's language and locality is not far behind, and in many cases it can be activated in various situations allowing it to transcend one's national identity. Thus the argument can be made that those who prescribed to President Laurel's form of nationalism have been disappointed; conversely, it can also be seen as a success in many regards. The ethnic fractionalization that has been discussed previously has been avoided thus far, and the Philippines appears to be a nation-state united by a bond that transcends language. Furthermore, the Philippines appears to be a nation-state united, not by language, but in spite of it.

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<sup>110</sup> Prattlerman, Louis John, "President Duterte in Iloilo speaking Ilonggo .. very funny!!!" *Youtube*, 2016, Accessed February 21, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIX9dEjHtGI>. Although the event is political, it demonstrates the appreciation that different ethno-linguistic groups have when a figurehead uses their vernacular.



### PART III: EDUCATION

Education in the Philippines most certainly existed prior to the Spanish Colonial regime, but the focus in this chapter will center on the history of formal education during the Spanish Colonial period up to the present day. Here, formal education systems will be the focus, their developments and how nationalism and language have been disseminated in Philippine public schools. And although the primary focus of this section will be on primary education and its impact on language and Philippine nationalism, secondary and tertiary education will also be addressed although not in as great detail. How education was or was not used by the colonizers in order to, as Renato Constantino put it, “capture their minds”<sup>111</sup> will also be a point of discussion.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, education appears to have been informal. However, there is some evidence that formal education did exist in some parts of the Philippine archipelago prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Encarnacion Alzona, a prominent Filipina historian writes that there were traces of schools where “reading, writing, reckoning, religion and incantation, and fencing for self defence” were taught. She notes that on Panay there were schools that taught the Philippine Sanskrit or baybayin form of writing as well as arithmetic.<sup>112</sup> And although accounts similar to this

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<sup>111</sup> Constantino, Renato, "The Miseducation of the Filipino," In *Vestiges of War*, edited by Angel Velasco Shaw, & Luis Francia, 177-192, (New York: New York University Press, 2002) 178.

<sup>112</sup> Alzona, Encarnacion, *History of Philippine Education, 1565-1930*, (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1932) 10.

are accepted as truth by Philippine historians, the evidence available does not address how widespread these institutions were prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

Philippine formal education as it exists today is a product of colonialism. Meaning that the colonizers, most notably the Americans, helped mold and determine how the formal Philippine education system would function and operate. And today this education system is left intact, continuing to operate according to predominately American ideas of education. Through addressing formal education in different periods of Philippine history, and its impact on language and nationalism, a better picture can be painted of how education has helped to perpetuate the idea of Tagalog-based Philippine nationalism in the Philippines.

#### SPANISH PERIOD:

With the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines it appeared that one of their primary goals was to convert the natives to Catholicism. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century missionary schools were established in which natives had the opportunity to learn about Catholicism and in some instances learn Castellán Spanish.<sup>113</sup> However, friars belonging to the Spanish Catholic Order took it upon themselves to learn the local languages as a more efficient way of catholicizing the natives. The Spanish didn't see the usefulness of teaching the natives Spanish if they could learn the native tongue, allowing for a quicker and more efficient conversion process. Nevertheless, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Spanish had set up some secondary and tertiary schools in the archipelago, although

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 15-19.

universities really didn't begin to expand until the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; prior to then there were only two universities established in the entire Philippine archipelago.<sup>114</sup>

It was not until 1863 that education became more widespread in the Philippines. The order which brought about more widespread public education in the Spanish Philippines was issued on December 20, 1863, and was implemented only two years later in 1865.<sup>115</sup> In these public schools, the Spanish language was taught, but the continued use of the local vernacular would inhibit many from becoming proficient in the Spanish language. And it would not be until during the American and post-war period that Tagalog would begin to be taught as a national language in schools throughout the nation-state. Thus individuals in various regions would stick to the local vernacular, and in some cases have the opportunity to learn Spanish Castellan. It was during this time that we would see numbers varying from as high as 390,000 pupils, to as low as 180,000.<sup>116</sup> However, it was also during these early years of Spanish Philippine public education that many prominent ilustrados, such as Jose Rizal, would gain their education. This would perhaps contribute to the rise of the Philippine educated elite. Without this Spanish sponsored public education program in the Philippines it would be accurate to say that individuals such as Jose Rizal perhaps never would have risen to prominence. Therefore, the Philippine revolution may not have occurred so soon if it weren't for the Spanish

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>115</sup> Bazaco, Evergisto, *History of Education in the Philippines* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1953) 222.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 225-228

implemented Philippine public education system. Thus the Spanish implemented public education system would further lay the groundwork for what would follow later.

As a result of their Spanish education many ilustrados, nearly all of which were reformists, not revolutionaries, began to advocate for many liberal ideas to be afforded to the Philippine people. But the anti-Spanish sentiment had grown to a point in the 1890's that a non-violent reformation seemed impossible. So what changed after 1860 that allowed for a more unified anti-Spanish sentiment, leading to a more unified Luzon, allowing for the overthrow of the Spanish, when before this time, for the previous three hundred years, the Spanish had not been confronted with a serious inside threat? And although there are many reasons for this, such as a more globalized world and newspapers and print, as is Anderson's argument, one important point is the fact that a more accessible education was able to produce a more educated Filipino, who now had the ability and knowledge to foment such a revolutionary movement. And thus education would become the Spanish's demise, while the Americans would be able to successfully utilize education to produce a generations of pro-American Filipinos.

#### AMERICAN PERIOD:

Perhaps the most successful part of American colonialism in the Philippines, was their ability to successfully indoctrinate generations of Filipinos into being pro-American. And while an educated Filipino elite helped lead to the demise of the Spanish in the Philippines, it also helped propagate the success of the Americans far after their colonial period had ended. Even today in the Philippines the Americans are seen as liberators.

Thus education can have a significant impact on a populous. This is a reason why throughout history only the elite were educated, so as to allow them to keep down a class of people who most certainly would oppose their most sincerely held agenda. Therefore, during the American period education was introduced to most of the Philippine populous, but it was tightly controlled by the Americans until 1935, allowing the Americans to produce a generation of pro-American Filipinos.<sup>117</sup>

With the arrival of the Americans in the Philippine Islands at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Americans seized control of the education system.<sup>118</sup> Individuals who would come to be known as Thomasites were tasked with the job of disseminating American propaganda to the Filipino youth, with the hope that they would be able to indoctrinate a generation, therefore making them pro-American and better equipped, at least according to their standards, to take over once they were gone. These new American teachers were instructed to teach the Filipinos English, and thus “ensur[ing] a steady supply of English-proficient civil and military personnel.”<sup>119</sup> It was the hope of Governor Taft and the Americans that through indoctrination and supplying Filipinos with an American style education, they would be able to establish connections and linkages between themselves and the Filipinos, thus enabling them to exercise control over the

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<sup>117</sup> Constantino, 180.

<sup>118</sup> Alzona, 189.

<sup>119</sup> Francia, 165.

Philippines in a less aggressive manner, and potentially make the Philippines an importer of American goods and services.<sup>120</sup>

Renato Constantino, discussed the importance of the colonizers capturing the hearts and minds of the colonized by attributing the Americans success in this regard to being able to successfully disseminate American propaganda in the Philippine education system. Furthermore, he concludes that it is through education that one can truly obtain the ability to pacify or indoctrinate a people.<sup>121</sup> In order to more successfully do this the Philippine Normal School was established shortly after the arrival of the Americans, its purpose being to train Filipino teachers on the process of instruction in primary schools.<sup>122</sup> These training schools for Filipino teachers ensured a transition from American teachers to Filipino teachers, in a way that would not undermine American interests. After several years it was not American teachers propagating English and American exceptionalism, it was the Filipino. However, American colonial administrators continued to maintain a tight grip on the education system until post-1935. Up until this point the colonial administration had been transitioning many important positions of power to the Filipino elite, but continued to retain its hold on the education system, thus ensuring that they would be able to indoctrinate an entire generation of Filipinos before handing over control. And in 1935, with the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth, a generation of Filipinos had been produced who were pro-

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>121</sup> Constantino, 178.

<sup>122</sup> Alzona, 214-217.

American and were willing to disseminate western values and ideas because they themselves ascribed to these same ideas.

To this day the Philippine Department of Education, or DepEd, has been controlled by the Philippine central government, with local offices established throughout the island all being accountable to Manila. The 1935 Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, section 5 under the General Provisions section of the constitution states the following:

All educational institutions shall be under the supervision of and subject to regulation by the State. The Government shall establish and maintain a complete and adequate system of public education, and shall provide at least free public primary instruction, and citizenship training to adult citizens. All schools shall aim to develop moral character, personal discipline, civic conscience, and vocational efficiency, and to teach the duties of citizenship.<sup>123</sup>

Thus the 1935 Constitution enshrines the power of disseminating education with the federal government, thus allowing for the Philippine government to exercise a tight grip over education, similar to the way the Americans did. Furthermore, during the period following the establishment of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, debate over a national language would ensue. Because of the inability to formally decide on a national language, the Institute of National Language was established under the guise of being impartial.<sup>124</sup> Because of these events English would continue to be used in schools as the

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<sup>123</sup> See Zaide, 340 or Zaide, 324-346 to view the 1935 Constitution in its entirety.

<sup>124</sup> Many pro-Tagalog forces who had been met with opposition in the 1934 Constitutional Convention were determined to make Tagalog the bases for a Philippine national language. They realized that it would be an impossible task with the Visayans blocking them in the committee. Therefore, under the guise of impartiality the Institute of National Language was established, and shortly thereafter Tagalog would be chosen as the basis for a Philippine national language.

primary formal<sup>125</sup> medium of instruction. Shortly thereafter President Quezon made known his desire to replace English with Tagalog as the primary medium of instruction in primary schools.<sup>126</sup> Although some saw through this attempt at establishing Tagalog as the dominant language, these events would consign the other regional languages to a state of subservience to Tagalog, thus establishing Tagalog language dominance in the Philippines.

1941 TO 2009:

With the INL's selection of Tagalog as a basis for the new national language, the years leading up to World War II would produce teachers trained to teach Tagalog in the classroom. And with the Japanese acquisition of the Philippines in the following years, the development and dissemination of a Tagalog-based national language was quickened. However, during the Japanese occupation the dissemination of a Tagalog-based national language was limited due to the lack of teachers available, thus during this time English continued to be used as a medium of instruction. Nevertheless, the local vernacular was used as often as possible, with the Japanese language being introduced into the education system in 1943 and Tagalog often being introduced in fifth grade and onward.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> The terms formal and informal must be separated when discussing mediums of instruction in the elementary and primary school classrooms in the Philippines. Meaning that although the formal medium of instruction may be one language, on many occasion informal classroom conversation is conducted in the local vernacular. Upon my observance of elementary classes on the island of Negros this was what I had discovered. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this section.

<sup>126</sup> Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 75.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-80.



Furthermore, to further solidify the importance of Tagalog, it was stated in the 1943 Constitution that “The government shall take steps toward the development and propagation of Tagalog as the national language.”<sup>128</sup> It was this period of time that represented the most aggressive approach at disseminating Tagalog, as a national language. The Japanese-appointed-President Jose Laurel, along with many other pro-Tagalog Filipinos, knew very well that the best place to propagate a new national language is in the education system. Here they would be able to successfully disseminate Tagalog as the national language, and if strictly enforced, in a generation or two it could truly become the mother-tongue of nearly all Filipinos. However, the end of the Second World War and the defeat of the Japanese would lead to President Laurel’s removal from office. And although Tagalog-based Filipino would continue to be taught and used in schools, it would not overtake English, which had been around for nearly fifty years, as well as the other regional languages which had been around just as long as Tagalog; this was because issues other than the national language question became more urgent after the need of the Second World War.

Before the Philippines was formally granted independence by the Americans in 1946, President Sergio Osmeña’s reelection bid failed and Manuel Roxas became the Philippine President who would oversee the next era in Philippine history. The 1935 Constitution continued to be the governing document from this time forward, and as was outlined in the Constitution, Tagalog, as had been previously designated by the INL,

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<sup>128</sup> Zaide, 357.

would continue to be recognized as the basis for a Philippine national language, but over the following years Tagalog would be limited in its dissemination.

Beginning with the inauguration of the Third Philippine Republic, Tagalog, the national language, began to be taught as a subject of study in schools, and the vernaculars were used as mediums of instruction for grades one and two while English was to be used from grade three and onward.<sup>129</sup> However, the failure of the dissemination of Tagalog lied with the fact that instead of teaching the language with the purpose of later using it as a means of instruction or communication, it was taught rather as an area of study, with students being taught the language instead of in the language.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, in 1959, the Tagalog-based national language was renamed Pilipino by the Department of Education in an effort to subdue those who remained opposed to its imposition.<sup>131</sup> The term Pilipino was believed to be a more unifying name for a national language rather than calling the language Tagalog, which would identify more closely with Tagalog regionalism.<sup>132</sup> This period of time following the renaming of the national language as Pilipino began what is referred to by Andrew Gonzalez as the National Language Wars.<sup>133</sup> The renaming of the national language in 1959 resulted in a revived

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<sup>129</sup> Tupas and Lorente, 170-171.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>131</sup> See Gonzales, *Language and Nationalism*, 102.

<sup>132</sup> Gonzalez, *The Language Planning Situation in the Philippines*, 487.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 488.

resistance to a Tagalog-based national language, and its imposition and use in public schools.

The years leading up to the ratification of the 1973 Constitution were contentious. President Marcos had declared martial law, and a new constitution was to be penned. And in 1973, due to the contentious nature of Tagalog based Pilipino as the national language, Pilipino was abandoned as the national language and Filipino<sup>134</sup> was meant to take its place. However Pilipino, along with English, would continue on as official languages in the archipelago, and in June 1974 the Bilingual Education Policy was set forth.<sup>135</sup> The new bilingual education program would change the way information and knowledge was to be presented in schools. From 1957-1974, the vernacular was used in grades one and two while the students developed a grasp of the English language and Tagalog-based Pilipino. However, following 1974 the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction in education was done away with.<sup>136</sup> The next thirty-five years required English to be the medium of instruction in Math and the Sciences, whilst Tagalog-based Pilipino was to be used as the medium of instruction in courses encompassing the Humanities and Social

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<sup>134</sup> Filipino, as constructed, was meant to be based on the Manila lingua franca, which is the Tagalog language with the influx of several Spanish and sometime English vocabularies used as a way to simplify the language. Originally, Filipino was supposed to begin as Tagalog-based but then expand to include and incorporate the other existing languages of the Philippines, in essence making Filipino a mixture of the various Philippine languages. During the hearings on establishing Filipino as the new national language, some felt it important to develop a language with the whole Filipino people in mind, not only Tagalog. They felt this was the only way to achieve national unity and solidarity. See Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 140.

<sup>135</sup> Tupas and Lorente, 169-172.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

Sciences. Thus Tagalog began to reassert itself as the most dominant Philippine language. And although pro-English forces felt that they had won a great victory with the abandonment of Tagalog-based Pilipino as the national language,<sup>137</sup> their victory would be short lived. The inserting of Pilipino into the education system would allow for a greater propagation of Tagalog and Tagalog language dominance in education, and thus all Filipinos attending public school would be subject to the new curriculum. And in 1987 with the ousting of President Marcos, a new constitution was written and implemented and Filipino was proclaimed the new national language, while at the same time taking Pilipino's place as a medium of instruction in schools.

It would appear that after repeated attempts by pro-Tagalog forces to establish their dominance through a Tagalog-based national language they had finally succeeded. This national language, known as Filipino, became one of the two dominant languages in the Philippine public education system. And it would also seem that over the years that dissension among other ethno-linguistic groups such as the Visayans, has significantly decreased. Thus over the last forty years opposition to Tagalog-based Filipino has all but disappeared. The Department of Education has used similar methods that the Americans used to propagate English and American culture, in their propagation of Tagalog and a Tagalog language-based nationalism. And just as the Filipinos became pacified toward the Americans after a generation of indoctrination, so has much of the Filipino people adopted a Tagalog-based Philippine nationalism. However, despite all of this, other regionalisms have not disappeared. Ethno-linguistic groups such as the Visayans are still

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 173.

very proud, and continue to use their regional languages in their everyday lives. Often Filipino and English are not used outside of schools and government buildings, especially among middle to lower class Filipinos who are not ethnically Tagalog and reside outside of areas where Tagalog is the primary language of conversation. And although Filipino, through education, has managed to become entrenched as a Tagalog-based national language, the other regional languages and identities continue to thrive. However, they are secondary to one's identity as a Filipino, and a member of the Philippine nation-state.

#### A NEW LANGUAGE POLICY, MTB-MLE:

2009 began a new era in Philippine language policy, when the Bilingual Education program which was established in 1974 was supplanted when the Department of Education began the implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education, or MTB-MLE. This new program would allow for the use of the local vernacular, or mother-tongue, in a more official or wide ranging basis, encouraging the use of the mother-tongue in primary schools from grades one to three, after which it would be eliminated as a field of study and as a medium of instruction. The change occurred based upon the idea that one's mother tongue is the most effective medium of instruction and means by which pupils learn.<sup>138</sup> Some may argue that the recognition and usage of regional languages in education may combat the dominance of a Tagalog language-oriented nationalism. However, it is important to remember that the usage of the regional language halts once a pupil moves on from grade three.

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<sup>138</sup> Tupas and Lorente, 165.

During my most recent trip to the Philippines I had the opportunity to attend Cansilayan Elementary School, a primary school on the outskirts of Murcia. The Municipality of Murcia is approximately a forty minute jeepney ride from Bacolod's Libertad Public Market. After arriving in Murcia, the travel time takes anywhere from fifteen minutes to half an hour depending on whether you have a single motor or have to hire a tricycle. The area on the outskirts of Murcia leading to Barangay Cansilayan is covered in sugarcane, as is most rural areas on the island, as well as areas immediately outside of the main urban area of Bacolod. Nearly all of the land on either side traveling toward Cansilayan is covered in the crop, along with a few nipa huts and bamboo shacks covered with various types of metal roofing. Upon arriving in Cansilayan and entering the school I discovered an extreme amount of patriotic nationalism that seemed to exude from the school. Before school began the faculty and the students held a flag ceremony where the Philippine National Anthem was sung by the students in Tagalog-based Filipino. Following the singing of the Philippine National Anthem the students participated in the singing in Filipino of various other Philippine patriotic songs.<sup>139</sup> And despite the reinstitution of mother-tongue based education, there is still an extreme emphasis on being Filipino. In classrooms a picture of President Duterte is hung front and center in the room. Meanwhile, during my observation discussions took place in the

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<sup>139</sup> The hymn *How Great Thou Art* was also being played over the loudspeaker prior to the playing/singing of the Philippine National Anthem. It is important to understand the strong Catholic undertones that exist throughout Filipino life and culture. These religious notions are noticeable in the Philippine educational system, and have been adopted into Filipino life, however, many traces of the pre-colonial Philippines are prevalent in Philippine society, meaning that many pre-colonial Philippine beliefs and customs have been incorporated into Catholicism in the archipelago.

classroom revolving around different areas of the Philippines, albeit the conversation is in Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, the students discussed with their teacher about how they would be able to help other provincial areas in the Philippines through imports and exports to and from different regions. Thus there is a sense of unity among Filipinos that is propagated in the classroom, thus reinforcing the notion or idea that the Philippines is a nation-state in which all its peoples belong together.

Upon observing a third grade class, I soon discovered that many of my preconceived notions regarding MTB-MLE were incorrect. I was under the impression that certain languages were strictly used depending upon the various subject matters. English for math and the sciences, and Tagalog-based Filipino for the humanities and social science, at least this is supposed to be the case for post-grade three. But in regards to MTB-MLE it was unclear; the guidelines laid out by the Department of Education are rather vague. However, it soon became apparent that throughout the education of the pupil from grades one to three the primary medium of instruction is the mother-tongue, while at the same time English and Filipino are subjects of language study. Furthermore, English is gradually used more and more in math and the sciences, while Filipino is increasingly used in the humanities and social sciences. All this is done with the expectation that by grade four the student will be able to learn properly when instructed in English and Filipino. This is the goal. And by this time it is expected that the mother-tongue will be phased out, at least formally<sup>140</sup>. The mother-tongue appears to be used

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<sup>140</sup> Meaning that although the mother-tongue is no longer to be used in the classroom, it is often still used in informal classroom settings, such as when a lesson is no longer being presented and there is informal classroom conversation.

informally throughout Philippine public schools. This is not all, the mother-tongue is also a subject of study up to grade three. Similar to how English is a subject of study in American schools. The issue is that the mother-tongue is virtually abandoned by grade four in lieu of two foreign languages, English and Filipino. All of these factors play into the propagation of Filipino nationalism, and nationalism that is Tagalog language based. Thus we see in post-grade three the use of Tagalog-based Filipino in subject matters previously mentioned. And even with the continued usage of English in schools, Filipino nationalism persists. And thus it seems that the anti-Tagalog sentiment that existed during the twentieth century was a resistance to the imposition of Tagalog language dominance in the islands, and was eventually subdued by the continued recognition and use of English as an official language of the Philippines. But despite these perceived victories by anti-Tagalog forces, Tagalog still became the basis for a national language, and is still used as a basis for Philippine nationalism. Thus it appears that the anti-Tagalog forces succumbed to a head fake propagated by pro-Tagalog forces. Thus after nearly forty years of implementing a bilingual education program, centering on English and Tagalog-based Filipino, the state then allowed for a relatively low usage of the mother-tongue.<sup>141</sup> By this time it was well known that an individual's first language allows pupils to learn

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<sup>141</sup> Not all languages are included in MTB-MLE, only the major regional languages were originally included. As of 2016 the Philippines employs the usage of 19 languages in the MTB-MLE program: Tagalog, Cebuano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Ilokano, Bikol, Ybanag, Sinugbuanong Binisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray, Bahasa Sug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, Chavacano, Ivatan, Sambal, Akianon, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Sinurigaonon. See DepEd, "Mother Tongue-based learning makes lessons more interactive and easier for students." *Republic of the Philippines Department of Education*, October 10, 2016, Accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.deped.gov.ph/press-releases/mother-tongue-based-learning-makes-lessons-more-interactive-and-easier-students>.



more efficiently. However, it is also true that the Philippines has become a nation that is extremely united.

Over the course of the last forty years the implementation of the Bilingual Education Program has essentially eliminated much of the vocal opposition to a Tagalog-based national language, and by extension Tagalog-based nationalism. This has become the norm in the Philippines. Filipinos often recognize their difference with other regions, but by far see themselves as one people, acknowledging the importance of the use of Filipino in their nation-state. Thus through the usage of education as a means of propagating a Tagalog-centered regionalism, a Filipino nationalism was created with Tagalog regionalism and the Tagalog language at its core. Thus the Government of the Philippines has continued its use of Filipino in order to maintain a national unity<sup>142</sup> in a nation-state whose borders were a colonial creation.

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<sup>142</sup> See Symaco, Loraine Pe. "The Philippines: Education Issues and Challenges." In *Education in South-East Asia*, by Loraine Pe Symaco, 191-212, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015) 197.

## CONCLUSION:

Nationalism in the Philippines is a construct of its colonial past. Without colonialism the Philippines would be a different entity entirely. Perhaps it would be several different nation-states made up of the dominant ethno-linguistic groups in the different regions of the archipelago. But it is because of its colonial past that it has become what it is today. The nation of the Philippines was developed by the Spanish and in turn adopted and transformed by the Americans, further subjugating the people of the islands, and bringing the Moros of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago into its sphere of quasi-control. Furthermore, the ideas of education used by the Americans that were used to produce pro-American Filipinos were adopted by the Philippines in their post-colonial or neo-colonial world. Thus through language, Tagalog-based Filipino, and education has the nation-state of the Philippines been able to mold and develop its national unity.

Nationalism is a project. Constantly changing and evolving. The Philippines is no exception to this. The idea of Philippine nationalism has changed and evolved over the course of its existence. However, unlike many descriptions of nationalism, the idea of a Philippine nation was imposed on the people of the archipelago by colonial powers, and because of this Philippine nationalism was allowed to develop from a Tagalog regionalism. The Philippines is made up of thousands of islands and hundreds of languages, with more than a dozen being identified as the lingua franca of their respective regions. The Spanish period and the abuse of friar power, being most severe in Luzon, allowed for a Philippine revolution that was heavily Tagalog-based and Tagalog-oriented. Andres Bonifacio, a Tagalog himself, was the original founder of the revolutionary

movement, who being heavily influenced by the Philippine reformist Jose Rizal, was strongly pro-Tagalog. Thus it is apparent that his revolutionary movement would be heavily Taglacized as well. It is also well known that the Katipunan were pro-Tagalog, and when the Spanish were defeated, they intended to maintain the colonial creation that was the Philippines by bringing the other islands and ethno-linguistic groups into their sphere of influence.

Following the Revolution when the Americans took over, many individuals defected to the Americans hoping that this would enable them to maintain some kind of power in the new regime. And seeing as a majority of these defectors were ethnically Tagalog, it should come as no surprise that Tagalog would later become the basis for a Philippine national language. However, this was not without opposition. For more than fifty years individuals that were predominantly Visayan in origin opposed these measures, arguing that Visayan<sup>143</sup>, then English<sup>144</sup>, should be the basis for a national language. Despite this opposition to Tagalog, in 1936, 1945, 1959, 1973 and 1987, it was affirmed and was reaffirmed as a basis for the Philippine national language. This language would be taught in schools, and in 1974 a bilingual education policy was created so that it would become a primary medium of instruction in public schools. And

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<sup>143</sup> Visayan here refers to the languages of the Visayan region of the Philippines, most notably Cebuano, Hiligaynon/Ilonggo, and Waray. All three being closely related languages, similar to the romance languages Spanish and Italian in similarity. However, Cebuano was by far the most dominant Visayan language then as well as now. Many contend that Cebuano speakers outweighed Tagalog speakers at the time of the national language debates (1934-1975).

<sup>144</sup> The anti-Tagalog forces pushed for English as the national language because they felt that utilizing one of the regional languages, in this case Tagalog, would cause further divisions among the ethnic groups and may spur a competition of ethno-linguistic dominance.

since this time the education system, and the Philippine media, have adopted the new national language. The issue here is that many times when a national language was to be decided on, often during constitutional conventions, the text would not specify which language would be the basis. For example in the 1987 Constitution the following was written: “The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages.”<sup>145</sup> This section is consistent with others in the previous Philippine Constitutions. Never has a Philippine constitution formally chosen Tagalog as the basis for a national language. However, shortly after the inception of the Institute of National Language, the Institute chose Tagalog as the base for the Philippine National language. And since 1937, despite all the subterfuge, Tagalog has remained the basis for a Philippine National Language, although there is no specifying it in the Philippine Constitution. Nevertheless, it has persisted.

Thus the history of the Philippines in combination with the history of the Philippine national language and its propagation in Philippine public schools has made this for certain that is that the Filipino language and more importantly Filipino nationalism, both being significant, are in fact nothing but constructions of a Tagalog hierarchy. And it has been through education and language that a Tagalog regionalism, through language, has been imposed on the other regions of the Philippines to the point of tacit acceptance. And thus Tagalog has been established in a position that elevates itself

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<sup>145</sup> Government of the Republic of the Philippines, "The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines," 1987, Accessed March 16, 2017, <http://www.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>.

above the other languages and encourages them to learn, and in fact requires them to learn Tagalog-based Filipino in order to be successful economically. However, as a result of all of this many non-Tagalog Filipinos have grown to accept Tagalog's place in Philippine society. In fact most recognize and even acknowledge Tagalog's dominance in the islands and take upon themselves the identity of being Filipino, while at the same time recognizing their regional identity, i.e. a Filipino Negrense. Thus over the course of many generations the project of nationalism in the Philippines has evolved from a Tagalog regionalism to the point where it appears to have become what it originally pretended to be, that is, a Filipino nationalism, not just for the Tagalogs, but for the whole nation. The moment this became true is the moment that non-Tagalogs began to accept Tagalog-based Filipino as the language of the nation. And while there are certainly disadvantages for non-Tagalog Filipinos, they recognize that only through the learning and acceptance of Tagalog-based Filipino, can they hope to succeed in their new nation.

## EPILOGUE:

Throughout my paper I sought to expose the relationship between the formulation of the Philippine National Language, education, and their relationship to colonialism and the Tagalog elites. And although many important aspects of this discussion were addressed in my paper there were issues which could have been addressed in greater detail, and explained with greater clarity. Some issues that arose during my defense were as follows:

- (1) Atrocities committed during the Philippine-American War and the process of forgetting, which led to the Filipinos longing for the days of the Americans during the Japanese occupation.
- (2) The development of the modern idea of nationalism as a result of the Thirty-Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia.
- (3) Language supremacy and language power structures. Today Tagalog-based Filipino is the dominant language in the Philippines, and it seems as though this will not change anytime soon. However, Tagalog-based Filipino also contains significant influences from English and Spanish as a result of the nation's colonial past. During the 1980's Filipino began to be used more widely in media and by political figures, further securing its dominance.
- (4) The existence and writings of anti-Tagalog language writers during Philippine history.
- (5) The differences among Philippine and more specifically Visayan languages, as well as the sliding nature of all languages. When I discuss the languages of the Philippines I mean that they are mutually incomprehensible, but to a foreigner not familiar with the languages, one might view the Visayan languages as a single language. But to the individual who is proficient in one of these languages, they will notice that although there may be some noticeable similarities, they are indeed distinct. When we view language we

see that there is no distinct languages. All languages are composed of other languages. For example, in my experience I was exposed to a mixture of Hiligaynon/Ilonggo and Cebuano, in a form of language the natives called sak-sak sinagol, meaning a mixture. But who is to say that this form of language is not the primary and standard Cebuano and standard Hiligaynon/Ilonggo are the forms of speech being influenced. Thus we have language constantly sliding and changing as they develop and make contact with other languages and dialects. (6) Standardized Tagalog and Philippine language engineering. (7) An addition to the intro and elsewhere regarding the addition I feel I am making to the field by seeking to bring education into the discussion of language and Filipino nationalism. Certainly, these issues, and others, will be addressed in the future I seek to make further edits to this paper.

Future research that would aid me in this discussion as well as expand on this discussion include the following: exploring the limits of social mobility to non-native Tagalog speakers, purposes behind shift in language policies, the background of Manuel Quezon and the establishment of the Institute of National Language, as well as Philippine sociolinguistics and current opposition to Tagalog-based Filipino. Also of interest is the examination of the current MTB-MLE program and discover if this program has in fact benefited students in socio-economic mobility or not, and whether or not this program has spurred or tampered opposition to the current Philippine national language. Thus my thesis defense brought to my attention some needed edits as well as more possibilities for future research as I seek to expand upon this work on language and Filipino nationalism.

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