

Filipino Nationalism and the Cold War: Revisiting Developments, Ideologies, and Persistent Challenges

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Abstract: Nationalism is a concept that assumes multifarious definitions and qualities depending on the context where it is being utilized, on the historical period when it was being formed and actualized, and the agenda of any polity that expresses it. It is one not of rigidity but of fluidity, primarily because of the very nature of human experience in history which is open always to changes. But its very nature is anchored on an idea, sentiment, and feeling of making the interest of one's nation as a personal and collective priority. The Cold War Period which coincided with the Decolonization of numerous countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America proved to be the best focal point in revisiting the development of Nationalism that people witness and experience today. Filipino Nationalism is not exception for during the Cold War, contending Schools of Thought trying to elucidate it emerged. The Realist and Pragmatic-Neo-Realistic Schools of Filipino Nationalism continue to occupy public discourse today. With the desire to formulate or just unravel a Filipino Philosophy of Nationalism, the very nature, evolution across historical periods, issues therein, and continuous development to its present form within the Philippine context was presented in this study.

Keywords: Filipino Nationalism, Cold War, Decolonization, Pragmatic-Neo-Realistic

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism is an ideological principle that champions the interest of one's nation above those of others. It holds the view that one's national interest is of top priority in all aspects of human activity in the political, social, cultural, and economic realms. This led people from succeeding generations to desire prosperity and even the superiority of one's nation. With nationalism also comes the idea of pushing for a holistic kind of progress for one's nation, making it self-sustaining and strong in the midst of multifarious challenges which are determinants of genuine development. It enjoins people of a common origin and abode to forge unity and to desire collective success. It is because of this nature of Nationalism that it became a popular and effective slogan for ideologues, politicians, and eventual martyrs of their land.

Nationalism is one concept that proved to be common to all polities of the world, which was conditioned by multifarious ideas, and subjected to various ideological interpretations. It became the rallying point for people of both hegemonic states and those pushed in the peripheries to advance their national and international agenda.

It has assumed various forms based on the "lived experiences" of people. Nationalism never remained in the realm of ideas for as it evolved through the passage of time and changes in space, and occupying the emotions and aspirations of people; it was actualized.

Nationalism is a belief or doctrine that takes various forms, which shaped the history of nations and behavior of their people. In the West, "it is often differentiated with Patriotism which is simply defined as love for one's country whether one's country is thought of in nationalist terms or not. Nationalism involves among other things, a belief about the proper object of nationalism—namely, one's nation. Nationalism gives rise to patriotism."¹ For those endowed with military superiority and a strong

¹ Paul Gilbert, *The Philosophy of Nationalism* (New York: Routledge 2018), 5

desire for greatness based on domination, expansionism and imperialism became readily available options. They have sought to spread their culture and influence over other nations and established colonies out of them which forever altered the socio-cultural landscape of host countries. These nations also searched for additional resources in order to address their needs and the scarcities their nation needed to endure. Scarcity after all, is an inescapable challenge for all places, brought by environmental limitations and continuous human consumption devoid of sustainability. In this sense, nationalism can be “condemned either as a bad form of patriotism like jingoism or chauvinism or a sentiment contrasted with it.”² In the view of Realists in International Relations, when a foreign nation rises to greatness, others start to view it as a possible threat to them. This leads nations to strategize and formulate policies for defense and self-preservation or even direct countermeasures to neutralize a potential hegemon.

Colonial powers acted the way they did at the expense of other nations in the name of ‘their’ nationalism. Japan for example, in its desire to promote its brand of socio-cultural system established the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and controlled the Asia Pacific. “Asia for Asians” was their slogan and they held the idea that their empire being of the East, is the rightful leader to bring all other Asian nations toward prosperity. They slowly but successfully imposed this for years in the Pacific until the 1940’s. The slow demise of the once dominant Chinese Empire under the Qing, which they defeated during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the continued dismantling of Czarist Russia after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) provided the red carpet for Japanese expansion in the Asia Pacific.

Nationalism is both defensive and offensive in nature. Nationalism if used to preserve one’s achieved independence, culture, and dignity is defensive. It becomes offensive when Nationalism is used to resist foreign

² Ibid.

intrusion and subjugation of one's people. It served as the people's expression of discontent and desire for freedom and independence after a long period of bondage in their own land especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. This was emphasized by Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo who wrote that for Asia in contrast to Western nations; nationalism is "primarily a response to and a defense against imperialism in any of its manifold forms."³ National independence is the first step on the road to development which is one of the goals of Nationalism.⁴ A sense of Nationalism prompted colonized societies to break the chains used by their foreign masters and champion self-determination and eventual independence.⁵ But they also envisioned the formation of a nation that reflects the people's desire for a better state than the one they endured under a foreign power. It is worth noting that Jose Rizal, one of the foremost Filipino heroes did not hastily champion the concept of a self-governing nation but sought for educating the people and making them self-sustaining to be worthy of independence. He also emphasized the importance of agriculture and fair trade as evidenced in the objectives of the *La Liga Filipina*, an organization he founded after returning from Europe. Likewise, Andres Bonifacio, the leader of the 1896 Philippine Revolution who took up arms to achieve complete independence and self-governance, also advocated social justice for his fellow colonized people.

The contending views on Nationalism of the East and West evolved during the Cold War which eventually followed the Second World War. This period opened the door for the self-determination and decolonization

³ Teodoro Agoncillo, *Filipino Nationalism 1872-1970* (Quezon City: R. P. Garcia, 1974),

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⁴ Paul Sigmund, *The Ideologies of the Developing Nations* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 5

⁵ Self-determination primarily refers to the developed desire of people to establish themselves as a distinct nation or polity with their own socio-cultural systems. Independence pertains to political emancipation characterized by gaining sovereignty, the power to govern themselves devoid of external domination and recognized by the community of nations.

of subjugated nations. The Cold War was an ideological conflict between the two spheres of influence that emerged in the middle of twentieth century: The United States and her Western Allies and that of the Sino-Soviet bloc. The two hegemonic blocs while being restrained by circumstances and choice in engaging in a “hot war,” enabled proxy wars that involved countries under their spheres of influence. Despite the wave of decolonization, this period was characterized by many as one of Neo-colonialism and Dependency between the former colonial powers and their erstwhile colonies. The Theory of Dependency became a popular framework in the 1950’s to analyze the state of the so-called Third World, starting with Latin America. It was also during this period that the Philippines obtained its current state of political independence after what others call a “training in self-governance” facilitated by the Americans which colonized the archipelago from 1901 to 1946.

The Cold War’s end was proclaimed after the Fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Soviet Union but the current state of world affairs seemed to be a resumption or even a continuation of that period. With the hegemons of the Cold War still wielding influence and dictating the course of world events and countless states still vulnerable, the narrative of the period proves to be worth revisiting. The Cold War indeed is a period of reflecting on, and recalibrating views of Nationalism for Filipinos and other previously colonized people. Writing in *Contributions of Herder to the Doctrine of Nationalism*, Carlton Hayes posited that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “Nationalism may also be regarded as an intensification of national feeling and consciousness, both preceding and following the establishment of national states. As such it has involved the elaboration and propagation of a philosophy, a doctrine.”⁶

Nations are caught in the web of history which subjected them to different destinies that could be of progress, stagnation, or demise. Ancient civilizations have already endured this and the outcome depended on the

⁶ Carlton, J.H. Hayes, *Contributions of Herder to the Doctrine of Nationalism*, *The American Historical Review* 32:4 (1927), 719

nature and quality of their responses to the challenges posed to them as propounded by British historian and philosopher, Arnold Toynbee. It takes various forms as people navigate their aspirations across historical periods. It is indeed fitting for the people of our time to reflect and revisit collective experiences of the past to understand the present and gauge the future; for the task of nation building and the process of 'becoming' are both constant processes. In both, the people's brand of Nationalism indeed plays a vital role. Nationalism served as a framework, an ideology, and a philosophy for national survival and progress as challenges that require appropriate responses continue to linger.

In view of these realities, this study was calibrated to seek answers to the following questions: First, how did Filipinos develop the concept of Nationalism? Second, what forms of Filipino Nationalism emerged during the Cold War? And lastly, what legacy did the Cold War leave for the present state Filipino Nationalism?

It is indeed necessary to revisit the period when the Philippines was at its crossroads, when its people were seeking the appropriate solutions to the challenges posed to them by both avoidable and unavoidable circumstances. It was a time when Filipinos tried to give answers to the questions of the genuineness of their newly recognized independence, identity, and aspirations. It opened the doors for the development of Filipino Nationalism which serves as a guiding principle, a philosophy to determine the course of their "becoming," and the appropriateness of their responses to whatever challenges that could beset their nation and the ultimate quest for national survival.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FILIPINO NATIONALISM

Before the contact with the West, there was still no concept of a singular Filipino nation as we know it today. The archipelago then, is composed of kingdoms called barangay or datuships; viewing themselves as having their own sovereignty. Barangays treated each other as external and

independent polities, having their own economic relations with other Asiatic kingdoms and empires including those of the Thai, Champas, and the Ming Chinese. The development of various ethnic cultures showing their individualities, was deeply conditioned by geography and formed what is now viewed as indigenous. The sultanates of what is now Mindanao on the other hand many elements of their culture from missionaries responsible for spreading Islam in Southeast Asia in the fourteenth century. These were enculturated to the traditions of the islands prior to the coming of Muslim missionaries from Arabia and present-day India. This offers an elucidation for the strong sense of individuality that paved the way for many separatist movements in Muslim Mindanao aimed at establishing a separate nation. Their general laws, basis for governance and social cohesion all emanated from the doctrines of the said faith. It is because of this set up that even when the Filipino nation was formed, Filipinos have shown strong regionalist attitudes.⁷ The current regional divisions and provinces formed on the basis of geographic and ethno-linguistic factors somehow reflect these distinctions set in the past.

Even without the concept of a Filipino nation during this period, the people by nature had a sense of belongingness and affinity to their respective communities and barangays. But the geographic proximity, continuous contacts, and inter-marriages between people of these kingdoms naturally gave way to socio-cultural similarities which are important elements in forging a collectivity called nation which would reach fruition by the late nineteenth century. This reality reflected the assertion of German philosopher viewed as a pioneer in the Philosophy of Nationalism, Johann Gottfried Herder, that environment and inherited culture that would provide eventual national distinction.⁸

⁷ See Florentino Hornedo, "Nationalism vs. Regionalism in the Philippines," in *Pagmamahal and Pagmumura: Essays* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila-University School of Arts and Sciences Office of Research and Publications, 1997) 54-55

⁸ *Ibid.*, 723.

It was the colonization of the archipelago by Spain, and the eventual formation of the Philippines named after the then Crown Prince of Spain; which gave the early political cohesion and geographic organization that we know today. Either by brute force or by the beauty of the Gospel and the exploits of Spanish religious missionaries, unity was achieved in most parts of what constitutes the Filipino nation. The superiority of the Spaniards in the archipelago became a natural consequence of conquest. Multifarious accounts of abuses coupled with misfortunes brought by natural disasters and scarcity of resources, provided the impetus for rebellions which were localized, and mostly rooted on personal resentment towards foreign officials assigned in their communities. At this point, the rebellions failed to stage a full blown revolution which seeks to overthrow the colonial system in its entirety.⁹

The coming of liberal ideas and the reforms of the Bourbon and Bonaparte dynasties in Spain benefitted the colony. The natives advocated for the secularization and Filipinization of the clergy, desired rights equal to Spaniards, and coveted more representation in the Spanish Cortes. It was in 1872 when the natives started to seriously regard themselves equal to the colonizers as a result of the execution of three Filipino priests who desired to reform the Church in the Philippines. They were unjustly implicated in a mutiny at an arsenal in the province of Cavite. Filipino Nationalism indeed, is a result of colonialism and native discontent. It was during this time when the natives started to seriously regard themselves as Filipinos.¹⁰ While Herder detested the subjection of distinct peoples under a despotic empire and emphasized the idea that the most natural state is “one people with one character;” ironically, it was Colonialism that brought

⁹ Revolution which seeks to overthrow both personalities and the systems they lead involves a large portion of the populace, formulated by careful planning, ripened by circumstances that takes years to unravel, and had lasting effects. It could be peaceful or violent in application. Rebellions on the other hand are temporary and localized.

¹⁰ Prior to 1872, the term Filipino was strictly used for the insulares or the Spaniards born in the Philippine archipelago

forth Nationalism to the once separated polities experienced by the pre-colonial people of the archipelago.

Before the Filipinos' eyes, their fellow Hispanized colonies declared their respective independence. A full blown revolution was waged in 1896 which became successful coinciding with the involvement of the United States in Spanish affairs in the Caribbean. The Filipinos in 1896 have actualized "Offensive" Nationalism to extricate their colonizers. They declared independence in 1898 and eventually established the First Philippine Republic, the first in Asia. The Americans while quarreling with Spain over Cuba and befriending the Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo, started their own colonial design for the Philippines to establish the United States as a new superpower in the Pacific. The Americans also collaborated with the Filipino elites who were in many instances at odds with the mass base of the Philippine Revolution. They were eventually given opportunities to preserve their economic and political stature during the American Colonial Period.¹¹

Following the unveiling of American covert interests was the bitterly fought Philippine-American War which in the perspective of the American Colonial Government was a mere insurrection. This paved the way for Filipinos to actualize "Defensive Nationalism" to protect the achievements of the revolution— independence and native government. For the Filipinos, it was a full blown war between two sovereign states which persisted until the 1920's under the leadership of other revolutionaries.¹² Twenty thousand Filipinos died in the conflict with two hundred thousand more succumbing to the cholera outbreak.

The Filipinos now under American rule, once again fought for independence which they already obtained in 1898. Nationalist writers Teodoro M. Kalaw and Aurelio Tolentino used literary masterpieces to

¹¹ See Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1996) and Malolos: Crisis of the Republic (Quezon City: UP Press, 1997).

¹² Emilio Aguinaldo, the President of the First Philippine Republic was captured by the Americans in 1901. But some generals of the Philippine Revolution continued to fight the war like Simeon Ola of Guinobatan, Albay.

attack the American colonial government. The Americans in order to effectively control the Filipinos resorted to their own version of educational reforms, imposed the teaching and usage of the English language, and facilitated the entry of all things American. Historian Renato Constantino once wrote that the effective way to colonize people is to colonize their minds. To horrify and discourage Filipino nationalists, the American colonial government imposed laws on Sedition, Brigandage, and banning of the Filipino flag. In the 1930's, the Americans in their own domestic sphere battled the effects of the "Great Depression" and realized the impracticality of maintaining a colony. Philippine sugar and coconut while offering cheaper sources of raw materials for their manufactured goods, proved to be detrimental to the interests of American farmers. It was only then that the American Government seriously accommodated the Filipinos' demand for the recognition of their independence.¹³ Political giants like Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, and Manuel Roxas led the said initiative of peacefully seeking recognition of Philippine Independence and a chance at self-governance. All three served as Presidents of the preparatory, Commonwealth Government.¹⁴

The specter of Japanese imperialism reached the Philippines and other parts of the Asia Pacific in 1941, under the banner of "Asia for Asians" and the "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere." In general, most Filipinos did not collaborate with the Japanese. They fought a good fight and undoubtedly sided with the Americans to fight their common enemy

¹³ What the United States can do and what it actually did in 1946, was not a granting of Philippine Independence but a recognition of it. This is evidenced by the text of the Treaty of Manila or the Treaty of General Relations which included the provision of formal relinquishment of American sovereignty over the country. The Philippines was formally granted independence on June 12, 1898.

¹⁴ The US Congress produced major independence legislations on Philippine Independence. The first was the Hare-Hawes Cutting Act which was lobbied by Osmeña and Roxas and the Tydings-McDuffie Act championed by Quezon, which superimposed the earlier legislation in 1934. Both independence legislations provided for a preparatory period with American supervision before full independence and the need to draft a Constitution. The Second World War affected the implementation of the independence measures, but it was Roxas in 1946 who inaugurated the return of Philippine Independence.

without hesitation. The United States at that time, is already in the process of recognizing Philippine independence with the Commonwealth Government in operation. Whatever alternatives the Japanese offered to the Filipinos proved to be futile. The Filipinos have rejected the Japanese recognition of their independence “in paper” in 1943. The Second Philippine Republic established as a tool to bring the Filipinos to the Japanese side, did not serve its purpose. Collaboration with America during the war can be viewed as a pragmatic alliance for the Filipinos, for in the first place, they have been recipients of American training in education and government since Spain left. The eventual victory of the Allied Powers led by America opened the door for the realization of the planned recognition of Philippine Independence and the establishment of the Third Philippine Republic in 1946.

It should be noted that during the aforementioned periods of Philippine History, “Filipino Nationalism has had a xenophobic strain” directed towards the colonizers of the country.¹⁵ But it was America who collaborated with the Filipinos and gave them a taste of self-governance, continued to wield influence and control on Philippine politics and society. The Cold War provides the chronicle of the so-called Philippine-American “Special Relations” and the continuing development of Filipino Nationalism.

FILIPINO NATIONALISM DURING THE COLD WAR

The Cold War is an international struggle waged by means short of war. It was a more than forty-year saga of ideological conflict which constantly posed the threat of an armed conflict and possibility of nuclear war which shaped state dynamics then and left indelible marks on the present global political landscape. It pertains to the period dominated by the opposing ideologies of Communism championed by the Soviet Union and China

¹⁵ Jose Abueva, *Ibid.*, 93

together with their satellites, and of Capitalism held by the United States of America and her allies to control various regions of the world. It commenced as soon as the Second World War ended. A temporary state of peace and cooperation between allied countries during the war and the pacification of the defeated; was soon transformed to one of intolerance and emphasis on the differing world powers' interests. The major powers established their spheres of influence, making developing nations within, their political pawns.

It had lasting effects on the history of nations and its legacy in various countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America continues to be seen and felt to this day. In Asia in fact, it was said that there were two cold wars: the US-Chinese Cold War and the US-Soviet Cold War.¹⁶ The Cold War Era showed “how a multipolar system became and operated as a bipolar one, what impact nuclear weapons had on decision making, or how global superpower hegemony related to the world’s states and peoples.”¹⁷ It caused among many, the division of the Korean Peninsula which is still in effect, which was also experienced by Germany and Vietnam.

The Cold War’s narrative is an “admixture of ideology, global reach, and nuclear weapons.”¹⁸ The involvement of countless nations in this conflict gave an opportunity for people to recalibrate and form their respective notions of Nationalism which was especially evident in developing nations. The Philippines was at the center of this ideological conflict. It is situated within the American sphere of influence but is geographically located in a place where the domino effect of communist expansion constantly posed a threat.¹⁹ The Cold War situation in the country served as a cradle for differing notions of Filipino Nationalism

¹⁶ Tadashi Aruga, “Chapter 1: The Cold War in Asia,” URL: https://www.jcie.org/researchpdfs/Okinawa/1992_20AnnivOkinawa1.PDF

¹⁷ Howard LeRoy Malchow, *History and International Relations: From the Ancient World to the 21st Century* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016) 246

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 247

¹⁹ Domino Effect refers to the idea that when one country in a region falls under Communism, its neighboring countries could follow and gradually experience the same fate.

conditioned by both the individual and collective experiences of prominent leaders.

During the Cold War, various scholars tried to analyze the relationship between former colonial powers and the newly decolonized independent nations. They have seen a patron-client relationship between them, with the latter showing reliance on the former, especially in the fields of economy and security. The 1950's gave birth to Dependency Theory. It characterized the former colonial powers which maintained their influence and grip in a neo-colonial fashion as the countries at the "Center" and their former colonies as the "Peripheral" countries. The countries in the periphery of the world could not develop as long as they remained enslaved by the rich nations of the center.²⁰ "The economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected."²¹ Dependency theorists maintained that under capitalism which advocates free trade, the rich and poor alike could grow but would not benefit equally.²² While it is true that foreign relations are conducted primarily to advance one's national interest; relations between those in the Center and the ones in the Periphery are not of equal footing.

The dependency paradigm also suggests that the countries at the Center coerced various dependent social classes and dependent military organizations to put into reality their agenda.²³ It suggests modern imperialism that is, neo-colonialism in action enabled by "abiding agents--the transnational corporations, and their local allies among the elites."²⁴ This described the Cold War situation of the Philippines whose independence was recognized by the world only in 1946 and whose

²⁰ Andres Velasco, Dependency Theory, *Foreign Policy* 22 (Nov.-Dec, 2002): 44

²¹ Louis Perez, Jr., Dependency, *The Journal of American History* 77, 1 (Jun, 1990): 136

²² Velasco, *Ibid.*, 45

²³ Perez, *Ibid.*

²⁴ Randolph David, Philippine Underdevelopment and Dependency Theory. *Philippine Sociological Review* 28, 1/4 (1980): 81-87

relations with America was defined by its post-war necessities of reconstruction and economic aid and by onerous agreements the country was subjected to.

The moment the Philippines gained recognition of its independence, it was placed in a very peculiar situation. Filipinos finally regained the power to govern themselves barely a year after the end of the Second World War but were a people with a ravished land, in search of direction, bankrupt, and in dire need of socio-economic assistance. They relied on their immediate colonizer, America for solace. Such dire Philippine situation offered an opportunity for its former colonizer to engage in neo-colonialism.

It responded affirmatively to the Filipinos' call for help, but such commitment required concessions. It is a reality in Foreign Relations, that states act only for their own interest. The United States knew this principle so well and pushed for onerous security and economic agreements meant to primarily strengthen their presence in the Asia Pacific. After all, the Philippines has one of the most strategic locations in the world, offering a gateway to the vast Asian market and is proximate to the powers threatening American world stature. Such agreements included: The Military Bases Agreement, Treaty of General Relations, and the imposition of the Bell Trade Act. A Rehabilitation Act was passed to aid the recovery of the Philippines but a separate Parity Rights provision demanded by the United States in exchange for aid, overshadowed Philippine gains. Parity Rights placed American citizens and enterprises to equal stature as Filipinos in the utilization of the country's natural resources. The leaders of an independent Philippines in their people's despondency, desired the much needed aid which America offered to finance reconstruction, rehabilitation, and industrialization expected of a self-governing nation. Such situation was painted as one of "Special Relations" between the two countries.

These Cold War realities of the Philippines led succeeding post-war leaders to champion a foreign policy with the following thrusts: "national

security, economic stability, and political and cultural relations with the free world”²⁵ as emphasized by Ramon Magsaysay, President from 1953 to 1957. Then Senator Raul Manglapus went further to state that here has been built a constitutional structure patterned on that of the United States.²⁶ This state of Philippine affairs made the Cold War the period that gave birth to differing views on Filipino Nationalism that are still evident in our midst. All claiming that the interest of the Filipino as the nucleus of their perspectives, they have shown distinctions on their strategies for national survival, especially with respect to relations with other nations. Foreign Policy after all is an extension of Domestic Policy.

America, the one at the Center continuously subjugated the Philippines, one of the countries in the Peripheries of the world economy and politics for sources of raw materials, continued supply of cheap manual labor, additional markets for their processed goods, and continued availability of territories to host its military bases in exchange of aid to finance its post-war reconstruction efforts.²⁷ This gave Communist insurgents and militant farmers the backdrop for them to continue their struggle especially in the provinces of Central Luzon. This struggle that continues to this day, proved to be one of the longest insurgency in Asia.

The 1960’s was an important decade to consider in discussing the development of Filipino Nationalism. The rise of economic nationalism among Filipinos especially businessmen who found it difficult to compete with foreign enterprise and the issue of military bases jurisdiction

²⁵ Ramon Magsaysay, Roots of Philippine Policy, *Foreign Affairs* 35:1(1956), 29

²⁶ Raul Manglapus, The State of Philippine Democracy, *Foreign Affairs* 38:4 (1960), 623

²⁷ The continued use of lands in Subic and Clark as US Military Bases only ceased after the historic vote of the Philippine Senate in September, 1991 to reject a treaty of renewal which could have granted America ten more years. But it is also worth noting that the vote happened months after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption which greatly damaged the said military bases. The Cold War also has “officially” ended in 1989 which lessened the intensity of ideological conflicts in the region which somehow reduced the necessity of maintaining military bases which is indeed costly. The United States in the 90’s was also facing so many military challenges at that time, with the Gulf War being waged after Iraq invaded Kuwait in late 1990.

emphasized due to various attacks on Filipino civilians by American uniformed personnel; gave birth to new interpretations of Filipino Nationalism. During this period as well, neighboring Asian countries strongly expressed indignation towards the Philippines' so-called "Special Relations" with the United States which was exacerbated by the country's support for America's wars in the region particularly the one in Vietnam.²⁸ The Philippines' fellow Asian countries which experienced colonialism as well and adopted a neutralist stance during the Cold War viewed Filipino diplomats with contempt and described them as "little brown Americans." Staunch neutralist countries with whom the Philippines would interact in Bandung in 1955 had difficulty understanding or appreciating the seemingly schizophrenic nature of the Filipino nation trying to portray itself as a regional bridge with Western philosophy and culture.²⁹

While criticisms of the dependent stature of the Philippines in relation to the United States was already gaining ground during the 1950's, it took more blatant events to push for a discourse about the fitting version Filipino Nationalism should assume. The Rise of the Realist and Pragmatic-Neo Realist Schools in the discourse about Filipino Nationalism transpired during this period. These contending views actually reflect the differentiation in understanding Nationalism which is also evident today.

REALIST NATIONALISM

This School of Thought emerged as a result of describing the state of the nation as it is, in its truest, evident, and blatant form without euphemistic strategies and speculative interpretations. During the Cold War, then Senator Claro M. Recto served as the "leader" of this nationalist movement which included then Senators Lorenzo Tañada, and Jose P, Laurel. His

²⁸ Rene de Castro, Historical Review of the Concept, Issues, and Proposals for an Independent Foreign Policy for the Philippines: 1855-1988, 1989, <https://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-27-1989/decastro.pdf> Accessed: 13 May, 2022

²⁹ Ibid., 14

perspectives were shared by social critic Renato Constantino and historian Teodoro Agoncillo.

Recto in his speeches and writings³⁰ presented the view that based on the historical experience of all former colonial subjects, Nationalism for developed (the ones at the Center) and developing countries (the ones in the Peripheries) usually are in contradiction. He described Nationalism as a principle in crisis because of the prevalence of Neo-colonialism which placed countries like the Philippines under the indirect rule of former colonial rulers through an exertion of control in their culture, economy, and politics. He also presented a criticism of his fellow Filipinos, who were recipients of American education and mind-conditioning calling them “victims of their own distorted ideas.” Recto often discussed the presence of False Nationalists in their midst which he classified into: “Barong Tagalog Nationalists,” the “Internationalist Nationalist,” and the “Hypocritical Nationalists.”³¹

Recto called for an “Independent Foreign Policy” which emphasized: reviewing the so-called “Special Relations” between the Philippines and America, the view that the bases are magnets for attacks, the need to forge solidarity with Asian states, the concept of self-reliance, neutrality and non-alignment, and the need for a strong and credible state. The same special relations jeopardized the reality of Philippine Independence downgrading it to a mere ‘nominal independence.’ He dismissed the sentimentality of Filipinos towards the country’s relations

³⁰ See Teodoro Agoncillo, *Recto Reader: Excerpts from the Speeches of Claro M. Recto*, (Manila: Recto Memorial Foundation, 1965) and Renato Constantino, *The Making of a Filipino: A Story of Philippine Colonial Politics*, (Quezon City: Malaya Books 1969)

³¹ Recto described “Barong Tagalog” Nationalists as the ones whose nationalism is confined only in the faithful use of national symbols like the singing of the National Anthem. Such kind of nationalism does not go beyond the symbolisms. The Internationalist Nationalists on the other hand, are the ones who seem to champion national interest but puts importance the interest of the benefactor country responsible for providing aid for their survival (dependency). Lastly, the Hypocritical Nationalists are those who use nationalism as a slogan but in reality, undermines national interest for their adherence to forces which they viewed superior over the Republic and the Constitution.

with America, stating a Realist fact in international relations that all states act solely on the basis of their national interest. International affairs indeed is a struggle for power among self-interested states and is generally pessimistic about the prospects for eliminating conflict and war.³² It is for this reason that he championed self-reliance for the Philippines, to make its independence genuine.

Renato Constantino in *The Nationalist Alternative*, shared the same view and branded Grants and Loans from America as being denominated “foreign aid.” He argued that any aid coming from countries like the United States are designed to benefit more the giver in the long-run. Self-reliance and control by locals of their own resources to supply for their needs must be sought and that aid must be accepted only when one’s own resources were already depleted, Constantino emphasized. He also lamented that the American “education and cultural domination were subtly instituting a form of thought control in the name of democracy and altruism.”³³ This, he wrote, led to very little original thinking in many fields. The “academic and technocratic policy makers were prisoners of American methods and norms.”³⁴

It is worth noting, that the on-going trend in Philippine scholarship of developing “Filipino Literary Theories,” the “Filipino View or Perspective of History,” and a “Filipino Philosophy” started gaining ground during the Cold War. This was championed by Leonardo Mercado SVD, Zeus Salazar, and the previously mentioned nationalist writers, Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino who shared Recto’s brand of Nationalism. This movement posed a critique of Western perspectives and methodologies which dominated for some time Filipino academic circles. Agoncillo for example, lambasted the usage of the term “Insurgent Records” on the compiled documents relating to the Philippine-American

³² Stephen M. Walt, *International Relations: One World, Many Theories*. *Foreign Policy*. No. 1 (1998), 31

³³ Renato Constantino, *Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1974), 42

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49

War which was turned over to the Philippines by the United States in 1957. This contention is anchored on the fact that America faced a newly proclaimed independent and self-governing nation during the turn of the century, not a group of people in rebellion against an established authority which the word “insurgency” implies. An advocacy of understanding various phenomena witnessed and felt by Filipinos using their own lenses persisted. Mercado in his book: *Research Methods in Philippine Context*, wrote that as early as 1965 there have been a trend towards indigenizing the social sciences. He actually emphasized also two indigenized methods in doing philosophy namely: Metalinguistic Analysis and the Phenomenology of Behavior.³⁵ This is a natural result of Realist Nationalism which cannot be limited in the corridors of power for the very nature of Nationalism transcends politics, economics, and culture.

The scholars behind this movement inspired the militancy of various sectors of the Filipino youth that time, who shared a Realist form of Nationalism and adopted a far-left Marxist thought, like Jose Maria Sison and Nilo Tayag, who both founded the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth) in 1964.

NEO-REALIST NATIONALISM

Another School of Thought emerged that offered a slightly different form of Filipino Nationalism. Neo-realist Nationalism is based on the notion that taking too much risks by changing the set policies of the government would be more detrimental than beneficial for the country. A safer, more practical approach is the one desired at least for a certain period of time. This placed more emphasis on safer options like negotiations, forging alliances for maintaining peace, and dialogue. It may compel states to accommodate conditions of interdependence by adjusting their responses and avoiding

³⁵ See Leonardo Mercado, *Research Methods in Philippine Context* (Manila: Logos Publication, 2008), 39-40

provocative action, but the competition continues nonetheless.³⁶ A known adherent of this view, is Diosdado Macapagal, President from 1961 to 1965.

Macapagal while sharing the “national interest” polemics of Recto, belonged to a tradition of championing pragmatic collaboration with America, of dismissing neutralism and non-alignment chosen by some Asian nations, and rejected ties with communist states. Macapagal emphasized that: “the cornerstones of Philippine Foreign Policy are (1) continuing partnership with the United States, (2) adherence to the United Nations, and reliance on collective security.” In its historical perspective and in the light of incontestable precept and example, our policy includes (4) resistance to communist expansion, (5) effective relations with our Asian neighbors, and (6) expanding relationship with the rest of the free world.”³⁷ During the Laotian Crisis, America favored neutralism in Laos by supporting the government of Souvannah Phouma, but Macapagal endorsed the anti-communist General Phoumi Nosavan. This move proves that a neo-realist approach was never meant to amplify a mendicant stature of the country in relation to the United States.

Macapagal wrote in his memoir that the “collaborative effort with America on security did not mean supporting the United States on other matters whenever a different course was necessitated by our national interest.”³⁸ The same principle applies to the economic aspect. As proof, Macapagal recalled in his writings his decision to abrogate the Treaty of General Relations which gave America continued supervisory powers in the conduct of Philippine Foreign Relations in countries yet to establish formal ties, his order to review American military bases jurisdiction in the country, and his moves to shift diplomatic ties to the Asian region especially in South

³⁶ Leszek Buszybnski, Realism, Institutionalism, and Philippine Security. *Asian Survey*, 42: 3 (2002), 484

³⁷ Diosdado Macapagal, *Our Foreign Policy, The Common Man and Other Speeches*. (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1961) 95-96

³⁸ Diosdado Macapagal, *A Stone for the Edifice: Memoirs of a Philippine President*, (Quezon City: MAC Publishing House, 1968), 312

Vietnam, Malaya (now Malaysia), Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand, and Japan, among others.

Macapagal have shown a strong stance against international communism out of a genuine fear for foreign communist infiltration that later on affected the Philippines' close neighbor, Indonesia. This is in contrast with the view of Realist Nationalism's adherents. It was a logical result of American influence infused in the so-called "Special Relations." Macapagal treated local Communist insurgency more as an issue of systemic social injustice without disregarding its impact on national security. He was not keen at engaging Filipino Communist movements by force. Macapagal instead collaborated with Congress to produce the Land Reform Code of 1963 "to neutralize the insurgency movements of the Communists among the Filipino farmers with their battle cry of "Land for the Landless."³⁹

It should not be noted as well, that Macapagal's nationalism was evidently seen in his logical and historically grounded decision in 1962, to officially declare June 12, as the day Philippine Independence should be celebrated. He emphasized that the moment the people first declared their intention to form and constitute a nation not the one imposed by a foreign state is the rightful Independence Day. From 1946 to 1961, the Philippines had the tradition of celebrating independence every July 4, the day the United States recognized it which also coincided with the American celebration of its own. This came after Macapagal decided to forego his planned state visit to the United States as a result of the rejection in the American Congress of Philippine War Damage claims.

³⁹ Rolando dela Rosa, *Foreword in Diosdado Macapagal, Constitutional Democracy in the World*, (Manila: Santo Tomas University Press, 1991): vii

THE COLD WAR'S LEGACY AND THE CURRENT STATE OF FILIPINO NATIONALISM

Macapagal's successor, Ferdinand Marcos who served from 1965 to 1986, would recalibrate Philippine Foreign Policy, shifting from ideology to economy as its main consideration and opened diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, and the Eastern European bloc. This was an adoption of Recto's views at a time when the Philippine economy required additional or alternative trade partners amidst a weakening Western market in the 1970's. But the United States' influence on Philippine affairs continued to hold ground to this day. American influence regained strength during the latter years of the Marcos Administration which ended in 1986. Filipino politicians have expressed in so many ways independent posturing, making for themselves a nationalistic image. Worth noting were the Senators who voted in 1991 to reject the extended stay of US military bases in the country. But succeeding treaties which included the Visiting Forces Agreement proved to be a manifestation of the continued reliance of the Philippines on America to ensure its regional and internal security especially in light of the War on Terror.

Succeeding Administrations in the name of forging an Independent Foreign Policy and Asian Regionalism, tried to adopt a Realist view by veering away from the United States and attempting to side with other powers such as China. Deeper analysis show that such move is a mere posturing or worse, a mere changing of neo-colonial powers.

The differing versions of Filipino Nationalism from Recto and Macapagal still echoes in the chambers of Congress and the minds of the people who chose to be vocal in their desire to champion national interest. This reality leaves the door open to discover, rediscover, and even formulate new perspectives on the issue and open the discourse to bigger audiences and multifarious disciplines. They say that "history repeats itself," but an in-depth study of the Cold War Period would reveal an

unending line, and the maintenance of the status quo. Are we moving towards the discovery or formulation of Filipino Philosophy of Nationalism? Or are we stranded as a nation desiring to become nationalists still looking for strong foundation and values?

CONCLUSION

Filipino Nationalism that emerged prior to the Cold War was fixated on the goal of determining national identity and commonality, establishing national cohesion, and attaining self-determination, genuine independence, and self-governance. The Philippines have assumed both the Offensive and Defensive Mode of Nationalism across various historical periods but the Cold War ushered in a totally different situation. It was also a Period of Decolonization for most countries in Asia and Africa but Dependency brought by the neo-colonial framework of former colonial powers dominated the scene. Nationalism during this particular period became a framework to challenge the neo-colonial state of the country and assert the need to make Independence genuine. Filipino Nationalism is one held by the oppressed, the subjugated, and whose potentialities of greatness was aborted by colonialism and continuous neo-colonialism.

All views on Nationalism proclaim the primacy of national interest and desire for collective development. This has not changed and is proclaimed by all nations. But the latest perspectives on Filipino Nationalism offered by Recto and Macapagal while stemming from the same idea, feeling, and sentiment and formed in the same historical milieu, addressed Neo-colonialism differently. Blatant differences can be seen in their views of how to deal with America who served as both a benefactor and exploiter and the communist realm which offers a diversification and presentation of alternatives for the country's political and socio-economic landscape. Recto and Macapagal differed in pin pointing who the real threat to Philippine security and interests is. They saw opportunities from the two opposing forces in the bipolar world during the Cold War.

Both Recto and Macapagal were products of the same historical circumstances, but their political choices and destinies differed which contributed to their distinct views of actualizing Filipino Nationalism. But it was indeed Macapagal who had the upper hand for he was given the actual opportunity to try the viability of his pragmatic Neo-Realistic line of Nationalism. He served as President of the Philippines which entailed being the top diplomat and policy maker of the country during his tenure from 1961 to 1965, an opportunity Recto tried but failed to achieve. Recto served as a legislator but never the implementer of his ideas.

But Recto's view did not totally fail for it attracted a considerable number of Filipinos and to this day, his calls for an Independent Foreign Policy are reverberated in all forms of media and the parliament of the streets. Former President Marcos for some time adopted the independent posture seen in Recto's philosophy but in the end was still caught in the web of American neo-colonial machinations. Macapagal's pragmatic, balancing, and claimed to be safer approach; seemed to be the one adhered to by leaders of the recent decades. While trying to adopt a Realist view of conducting foreign relations for one, they still adopt by either choice or force, the adherence to a more pragmatic Neo-realist approach.

Filipino Nationalism being manifested today, indeed took shape during the Cold War. Filipinos today face the challenge of deviating from the seeming decades-long stagnation of Nationalism in the country.

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