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## **Two Current Studies on Philippine Political Development**

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## Review Article

### *Two Current Studies on Philippine Political Development\**

ONE of the current research interests of political scientists is the study of political development in developing countries. This is reflected in the number of books and articles which have been written on the subject both in the United States and in other countries.

The present status of research in political development can generally be described as exploratory. This is due to the lack of a definition of the concept generally acceptable among most political researchers. So far, only two aspects of the concept of political development are acceptable to most political scientists. One is the notion that political development is one of the many processes involved in the modernization of a nation-state. The other is concerned with the factors of political development. Almost all students of political development agree that no single factor can be used to analyze effectively the extent of political development in a given country. Consequently, most definitions of the concept tend to itemize factors of development. For example, Ward and

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\* *THE CITY IN NATION BUILDING*, by Aprodicio A. Laquian. Manila: University of the Philippines School of Public Administration, 1966. 220 pp.

*THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTEREST GROUP: THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION*, by Robert B. Stauffer. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1966. 192 pp.

Rustow list eight characteristics of the modern polity; Emerson has five. Pye identifies four major aspects of political development and Eisenstadt has noted four.<sup>1</sup>

Though the concept of political development remains variously defined, some of its variables have been identified of which four sets regularly recur in the definitions. One standard criterion, influenced primarily by the Parsonian pattern variables, is *rationalization*. According to this standard, political development represents a movement of the political system from particularism to universalism, from diffuseness to specificity, from ascription to achievement, and from affectivity to affective neutrality.<sup>2</sup> In analyzing the extent of political development in a given country, most researchers would identify the process of rationalization in terms of the development of functional differentiation and the communication of the achievement values with the process of political development.

A second type of criterion associated with political development involves *nationalism* and *national integration*.<sup>3</sup> Here, the emphasis is on the process of developing nationality and unity in a nation-state. Most students of political development identify this process as nation-building. A developed polity, it is usually assumed, must, with rare exception, possess national unity in order to maintain political stability while it undergoes the process of political change.

<sup>1</sup> See Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, eds., *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 6-7; Rupert Emerson, *Political Modernization: The Single-Party System*, (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1963), pp. 7-8; Lucian W. Pye, ed., *Communications and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 17-18; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Bureaucracy and Political Development," in Joseph LaPalombara, ed., *Bureaucracy and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics*, April 1965, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> See Gabriel A. Almond, "Political Systems and Political Change," *American Behavioral Scientist*, June 1963, pp. 3-10.

The third criterion of political development focuses on the process of *democratization*. This process involves the development of certain conditions within the political system which would encourage pluralism, competitiveness, equalization of power, and other similar qualities.<sup>4</sup> For example, Frederick W. Frey defines political development as "changes in the direction of greater distribution and reciprocity of power."<sup>5</sup> He, therefore, notes that there is a close relationship between the processes of democratization and political development because both presuppose the existence of certain political conditions within the polity which would encourage the development of secondary groups and a spirit of competition among these groups in promoting their respective interests.

The most frequently emphasized criterion of political development is that of *mobilization* or *participation*.<sup>6</sup> This criterion lays stress on the ability of the political system to mobilize its people for purposes of political participation. Political development, Karl Deutsch has emphasized, involves social mobilization because this complex of processes of social change is significantly correlated with major changes in politics.<sup>7</sup> He considers increases in literacy, urbanization, exposure to mass media, industrialization, and per capita income as direct factors which expand "the politically relevant strata of population," multiply the demands for government services, and thus stimulate an increase in governmental capabilities, a broadening of the elite, increased political participation, and shifts in attention from the local level to the national level.<sup>8</sup>

Within the context of the present status of research in political development I propose to deal with the two most

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<sup>4</sup> James S. Coleman, "The Political Systems of the Developing Areas," in Almond and Coleman, eds., *The Politics of Developing Areas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 533.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick W. Frey, "Political Development, Power, and Communications in Turkey," in Pye, ed., *Communications and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 301.

<sup>6</sup> See Karl W. Deutsche, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review*, September 1961, p. 493.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

## LAPITAN: PHILIPPINE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT 191

recent books on Philippine political development. Professor Aprodicio A. Laquian's work, *The City in Nation-Building* and Robert B. Stauffer's *The Development of an Interest Group: The Philippine Medical Association* are significant books on Philippine political development because they describe certain aspects of the process of Filipino political modernization today. Professor Laquian focuses on the role of urbanization in political development. He maintains that urbanization and nation-building are similar processes because both are quite dependent on technological creativity (Laquian, p. 198). Because of the similarity between urbanization and nation-building, the very factors which are found to influence the former in a given country may be considered to be the same factors which would affect the latter. This hypothesis, if proven valid, may very well revolutionize the study of political development.

Professor Stauffer's focus is on the role of interest groups in the process of political development. He maintains that the study of interest groups, especially of one that is intensive in nature, can be an important gauge of the process of development in a given country because development means change away from more primary forms of social organization to more secondary associations (Stauffer, p. 2). Moreover, the study of interest groups can be expected to touch on one perennial problem of political development, that of the gap between urban and rural communities. The extension of associations outward from the capital city can also be a valuable gauge of this type of change (Stauffer, p. 3). This is so because "the greater feedback that can be expected to pour in from the provinces" will now arrive to the capital not only through formal administrative channels but through interest group avenues as well (Stauffer, p. 3).

Professor Laquian focuses his study on Metropolitan Manila because this area, he says, is the "dominant force in the evolution of the Philippines as a nation and the present center of economic and social power in the whole country" (Laquian, p. 2). Because he is primarily interested in the process of political modernization in the Philippines, he further limits his field of observation to the traditional

political processes of nomination, election, legislation and administration (Laquian, p. 5). The basic model of community power is used as the method of analysis. This involves an intensive analysis of the participants in the political game, their overt and covert goals and the various techniques they employ toward the attainment of these goals (Laquian, p. 5).

By utilizing the conceptual framework and method of analysis outlined above, Professor Laquian is able to provide some characteristics of politics in Metropolitan Manila and indicate the relevance of these characteristics to nation-building in the Philippines. The first observation which Professor Laquian makes about politics in Metropolitan Manila concerns its participants or actors. Political actors in the area are either national or local government officials, the former tending to outweigh the latter in actual power. This characteristic is attributed to the fact that most major decisions affecting the local area are made at the national level, that laws and traditions in the Philippine polity favor the national government's dominance and the realities of politics in the Philippines enhance this national dominance. However, Professor Laquian also observes that the local politicians of Metropolitan Manila have a much better chance of exerting influence over national actors than do their counterparts in other localities. This is attributed to the fact that Manila politicians can command better leadership criteria and the area has, in proportion to its population, contributed more men to the ranks of national leadership than any other place in the country.

A second observation about the nature of politics in Metropolitan Manila concerns the reasons office seekers have for seeking public office. Professor Laquian observes that social status and prestige are the most important motives for seeking public office in Metropolitan Manila.

Professor Laquian's final observation regarding politics in Metropolitan Manila deals with the factor or factors considered by politicians to be important toward winning an election. He points out that the backing of a political party is the most important asset needed by a political actor if he is to become successful in Manila.

The most important aspect of Professor Laquian's pioneering work lies in his primary hypothesis that the growth of an urban polity is a process closely linked with nation-building. One cannot therefore evaluate the study without considering the validity of this hypothesis.

To test the validity of his hypothesis Professor Laquian makes a survey of the social and political processes in Metropolitan Manila. From this study he extrapolates some findings which provide the general propositions about the nature and processes of political development in the Philippines. This is not inadequate. It makes the empirical area of observation more manageable. However, the primary danger of this particular approach would lie in the tendency of the observer to consider his findings about a sub-system as applicable to the political system in general, without making certain qualifications.

In order to observe the processes of social and political development in Metropolitan Manila, Professor Laquian utilizes three minimum standards which he identifies as the "developmental syndrome" of the study. These standards are unity, rationality and participation (Laquian, p. 19). The presence or absence in a political system of these standards is considered to be an effective index of its state of political development.

No doubt Professor Laquian satisfactorily defends his belief in the primacy of Manila and its metropolitan areas in the political development of the Philippines. After all, Manila is the social, economic, and political center of the Philippines. Many things are initiated in Manila and its environs in the social, economic, and political area, which are eventually adopted in other parts of the Philippine political system. The fact that Manila is the seat of the national government and that Quezon City is the capital of the nation-state, makes the metropolitan area the center of decision-making in the country. Politicians who aspire to run for national positions generally make their debut in Metropolitan Manila. Even politicians who represent other areas in the country have a strong feeling of participation in the political processes of the area.

However, to say that the processes of political development in the Philippines can be observed by surveying the political and economic conditions in Metropolitan Manila would be an oversimplification.

In the first place, Metropolitan Manila, although the recognized socio-economic center of the Philippines, is not the Philippines *in toto* and the people in this area are very different from the people in the rural areas of the country. Because of the tremendous appeal among Filipinos to live in the area of Greater Manila, the urban population has had a tremendous geometrical growth while housing, employment, transportation and governmental services have followed an arithmetical development only. These conditions have certainly influenced the mode of living of its people in a way which has facilitated the development of new attitudes and values such as those mentioned by Professor Laquian in Chapter IV of his book.

Secondly, if one accepts the importance of innovators in the political development of a country, one must recognize the fact that innovators in the Philippines tend to concentrate in Metropolitan Manila. Consequently, almost all innovations are first introduced and often remain in the area until they are introduced to the rest of the people in the rural areas. This phenomenon would certainly create an uneven stage of political development in the different parts of the country. Greater signs of development may be observable in Metropolitan Manila but they decrease as one moves away from the urban center. This developmental phenomenon may be observed in the degree of political participation and even perhaps in the intensity of rationalization of politics and administration found in the governmental units incorporated in Metropolitan Manila in contrast to other government units outside of the center. Generally speaking, political participation measured in terms of the percentage of qualified people who actually vote is higher in Greater Manila than in other areas of the Philippines. This may be attributed to the type of voters in Metropolitan Manila, the fact that voters in this area have a higher socio-economic background as compared with the voters in the other regions of the Philippines. Further-



more, political issues play a relatively important part in the election campaigns in the area in contrast to that in the other areas in the Philippines. This can very well be explained as a part of the whole process of the rationalization of politics in Greater Manila. While it is true that the process of rationalization of politics in Manila is fairly slow, one may observe that the process is even slower in other parts of the Philippines.

Finally, if one assumes that political development gets a definite boost from an urban-metropolitan area, one can very well envision a slow process of political development for the Philippines as a whole because though urban centers are developing in other parts of the Philippines, these urban centers do not have the same status and characteristics as Metropolitan Manila. These urban centers will develop the status and characteristics of Manila only when a definite decentralization of governmental decision-making shall have taken place and when industries shall have begun to rise there. In spite of the possible development of the provincial cities, Manila and its environs will most likely remain a unique area never to be duplicated by the other urban areas of the Philippines.

Professor Stauffer's book on the Philippine Medical Association is an intensive study of an interest group and of how strategically it is situated in the development of the Philippine political system. The advantage of the study is stated thus by Professor Stauffer:

A careful examination of an interest group's changing methods for handling external relations can tell a great deal about changes in the larger political system. If the assumption is sound that an interest group will have a good feel for where the keys to power lie, then any change in seeking access on the part of the group's leaders will point to a shift in the locus of power nationally. If the interest group over a period of time comes to devote more of its attention to the legislature and to individual legislators, this is important to know (Stauffer, pp. 4-5).

The study of interest groups being advanced by Professor Stauffer is not meant to be a substitute for other tools for measuring the extent of political development in a given country. It is a useful supplement. Furthermore, its utility is limited

by the nature of the political system being studied (Stauffer, p. 5).

The Philippine Medical Association was made the focus of the study for the following reasons: first of all, physicians are held in very high esteem in the Philippines and have long been in positions of influence. Secondly, the physician, to an even greater degree than other professionals and individuals with skills, is thrown into a headlong conflict with traditional beliefs and practices. Therefore, the assumption can be made that a medical association in a developing society such as the Philippines would necessarily be drawn into change-provoking situations and led into policy debates on how to respond to these situations. Thirdly, the medical profession in the Philippines has created an association for its interests that has had sufficient time span, magnitude, and national importance to warrant research. Finally, by concentrating on the study of the medical profession, Professor Stauffer is able to test Pye's hypothesis that individuals in transitional societies who have received modern skill training can, by developing a sense of professionalism, find a new identity through high achievement in their professions (Stauffer, pp. 6-9).

Professor Stauffer observes that the Philippine Medical Association [PMA] shares the experiences of most associations found in modernizing nations. During its early development, it was an organization closely affiliated with professionals who worked for the government in one capacity or another. Its channels of communication with its members were largely limited to circles related to government agencies and its facilities were supplied by government-financed institutions. This close association with the government was highly useful in making possible the creation of an organization to promote the medical profession and the work of modern medicine in the Philippines.

After World War II, the close relationship between the PMA and the government was broken and a new and aggressive group drawn largely from private practice has since then taken over its control. During the same post-war period the PMA saw its internal deliberative machinery overhauled and radi-

cally improved. Full geographic representation on the key committees of the organization was institutionalized, and the association began to draw throughout the nation for its leaders.

The increase in the number of active members in the PMA coupled with the development of a national organization necessitated the improvement of communications within the organization. The association paid more particular attention to its member medical societies, which were located all over the Philippines. The *Journal of the Philippine Medical Association* was increasingly used to carry organizational messages to the rank-and-file until the time that a new bulletin was begun in 1961. There were also periodic visits made to member societies. Most important, however, was the recognition that regional vice-presidents should play a much larger role in unifying the various units of the association.

Another significant observation made by Professor Stauffer concerns the external affairs of the association. During the early years of the association and in the reconstruction days immediately following World War II, the organization tended to rely completely on the chance contacts it might have had with individuals in power in the national government. There was no particular reason to develop complicated systems of influencing the influentials then because the association's goals were largely those of the government.

At about the time when Magsaysay became president of the Philippines, the political techniques utilized by the PMA were developed as a result of the extraordinary concentration which the government directed toward the rural population. The PMA began to direct an increasing share of its resources toward influencing Congress and toward seeking professional-legal assistance in preparing briefs for presentation before the health committees of each House. The Association also succeeded in establishing excellent working relationships with the Congress to the point that its advice was generally sought on practically every legislation that affected public health or the medical profession. Furthermore, the Association also became completely self-reliant in drawing up its own legislative program for submission to Congress.

Relations with the executive branch of the government in the early years of the PMA consisted simply of sending delegations to the President's office to seek some remedial action or other favors. These visits to the President have all but ceased. However, the practice of inviting the nation's President to address one of the sessions of the association's annual convention is still an effective device by which the PMA confronts the nation's leader with its demands.

There is no doubt that the PMA has been most closely and traditionally associated with the Department of Health but the relationship between them remained on a non-institutional basis probably because of the early conflict between private practitioners and government doctors. Until now, the PMA has had only limited formal representation on Department of Health committees, and joint consultation seems to happen only on a basis of personal relations. On the other hand, the PMA has a powerful voice, sanctioned by law, in the Board of Medical Examiners and in other regulatory boards.

The PMA has also improved its communication lines with the public at large. Its involvement with the public is largely that of an instigator of change. The PMA in its anti-quackery and anti-superstition drives has attempted to push against these traditional forces at the local level. The Association is increasingly realizing the close relationship between its interests as an organization and the direction of economic development in the Philippines. In other words, the Association is now demanding that its members participate more actively in the affairs of their respective communities so that they can insure the implementation of social and economic changes in the country.

The approach taken by Professor Stauffer to observe the process of political development in the Philippines seems valid. Focusing intensively on a single interest group can produce useful information about the process of development in a given country. This, however, depends on the nature of the interest group selected. It must be one which plays an influential role in national affairs and with a professional background of some stature in society.

## *LAPITAN: PHILIPPINE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT 199*

The selection of the Philippine Medical Association as the focus of the study is appropriate. The internal and external posture of this association is certainly a very interesting field of observation. Professor Stauffer's conceptual framework could provide other political scientists a vantage point whence to observe the development of other interest groups in the Philippine polity.

One aspect of this study should be evaluated more closely: the use of the number, types, and dates of organization of interest groups as a gauge of political development in a given country. Professor Stauffer realizes that the unit of measurement is rather crude and should only be used in addition to other more commonly used standards. However, one should raise the point that the increasing number of interest groups in a particular country may very well be explained as a part of the entire process of the rationalization of politics in the country. This is so because the development of interest groups and their role in making demands on the polity is generally considered to be a part of the movement from particularism to universalism and from diffuseness to specificity. If this is so, then one can properly consider the number, types and dates of organization of interest groups as a crude gauge of the development of rationalization in the country and if combined with the evaluation of other standards, these data may effectively show the extent of the process of political modernization in the country. In other words, the existence of pressure groups in a political system can to some extent represent political rationalization of the polity. In order to observe the latter phenomenon more fully, however, one must look for other standards of development.

One must therefore go back to the thinking of the students of political development. The point of general agreement is the fact that there is no single variable which can be used to analyze effectively the process of political development in a given country. The acceptable approach is to admit the fact that there is a multiplicity of factors which affect the political development of the country. The question should be asked, therefore: To what extent is this general principle in

the study of political development reflected in the two studies under consideration. The answer would be that the two studies reflect this principle to a large extent. Professor Laquian indicated this multi-factor analysis consciously in his study; the multiple factors are less obvious in Professor Stauffer's study.

When one attempts to look more closely at Professor Laquian's work, one would clearly find the operation of a multi-factor standard of analysis in his use of the standards of rationalization, national integration, democratization, and mobilization. He considers these processes, which he has observed to be taking place in Metropolitan Manila, as processes which are gradually operating also in other parts of the Philippines.

Professor Stauffer, perhaps less consciously, applies this multi-factor standard of analysis in his intensive study of the Philippine Medical Association. He observes increased rationalization in the internal and external operations of the Association, democratization in the increase of the participation of its member units in national decision-making, mobilization in its attempt to recruit more members and to communicate with different branches of the government and with different levels of society and in its integration of its membership into one national association.

Finally, a statement should be made about the significance of these two studies toward our understanding of the direction of Philippine political development. Pioneering studies like the ones done by Professors Laquian and Stauffer point to a very fertile research area in Philippine government and politics. They suggest new foci of observation for the political scientist. The authors of these two studies either consciously or unconsciously, have established the generally acceptable principle that the process of political development is a complex phenomenon, the analysis of which involves multiple factors.

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