

The Grammar of Class Conflicts in Philippine Electoral Process and the Task of Filipino Philosophy

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Ytinuturo ng katuiran, na huag nating sayangin ang panahon sa pagasa sa ipinangakong kaguinhawahan na hindi darating at hindi mangyari. Ytinuturo ng katuiran ang tayo'y umasa sa ating sarili at huag antain sa iba ang ating kabuhayan. Ytinuturo ng katuiran ang tayo's magkaisang loob magkaisang isip at akala at ng tayo'y magkalakas na maihanap ang naghaharing kasamaan sa ating Bayan.

– Andres Bonifacio,
Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog.

The enlightened members of the higher and middle classes have enough reasons to shiver at the prospects of the 2004 presidential elections, the outcome of which is almost already predictable. Our past elections have established it that our bloated lower classes can easily determine their outcome, and it appears that they have already set their hearts and their minds on a certain likely candidate, while the higher and middle classes are still discerning from their continuously expanding or collapsing lists of presidential contenders. Whereas reflecting the choice of the majority is a democratic ideal, our bloated lower classes' political participation is paradoxical: they wield tremendous electoral power prior to the elections but end having no representational power after. Is this because of some conscious class-based decisions, or is this because some other social classes have wrested this power from

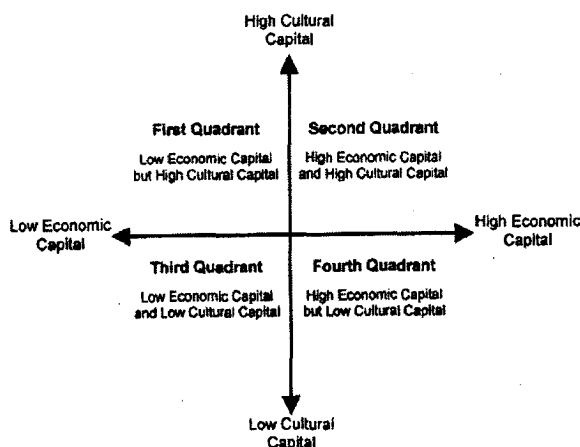
the hands of the lower classes? This study aims to present a framework with which this hypothesized clash of Philippine social classes during the electoral process may be analyzed and addressed by Filipino philosophy.

BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL CLASSES

The traditional and classical social taxonomy that conceptualizes the society as composed of higher, middle and lower classes cannot adequately show the electoral polarization of Philippine society. The reason is that there are definitely members of the higher classes who tend to opt for the less qualified candidates (from the ideal and rational point of view), just as there are members of the middle or lower classes who tend to opt for the more qualified candidates (from the ideal and rational point of view). Thus, instead of conceptualizing the clash of social classes with the traditional and classical social taxonomy, we can make use of a more refined theoretical frame that was developed by the French sociologist and philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1930-2002), oftentimes called a *neo-Marxist* for the reason of his enduring interest on social classes, goes further beyond the theories of Marx when he extends the meaning of *capital*. Whereas for Marx, *capital* is purely equated with economic capital, Bourdieu demonstrates that there are other types of capital other than this purely material wealth. All in all, he talks about four types of capitals: 1) *economic capital*, which pertains to Marx's material wealth, property, stocks, shares, and the like; 2) *cultural capital*, which pertains to knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions as best instantiated by educational or technical credentials; 3) *social capital*, which pertains to acquaintances, connections and networks; and 4) *symbolic capital*, which pertains to accumulated prestige, honor, and cultural mechanisms for legitimation. Among his four capitals, he believed that the economic and cultural ones matter most when talking about the French social classes.¹ Thus, instead of basing his social classification on purely economic matters, as the traditional and classical social taxonomy does, Bourdieu founded his idea of social classes on economic and cultural matters. For instance, what he calls *prole-*

¹ Cf. David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) p. 154.

tariat are the people with very low cultural as well as economic capitals. If we are to plot this in an XY graph, with economic capital assigned to the X axis and the cultural capital assigned to the Y axis, the proletariat would be occupying the third quadrant.



While the dominant classes would be occupying the topmost as well as the rightmost area, for they are (1) the people with low economic but high cultural capitals, (2) the people with high economic and high cultural capitals, and (3) the people with high economic but low cultural capitals.

Similarly, we can conceptualize the Philippine society as consisting of four basic social classes. The first quadrant (Q1) is composed of people with low economic but high cultural capitals, like the academicians, artists and writers, it is the quadrant where most Filipino philosophy professors belong. The second quadrant (Q2) is composed of people with high economic and high cultural capitals, like the old rich who successfully converted their economic capital into cultural capital. The third quadrant (Q3) is composed of people with low economic and low cultural capitals, corresponding to our ordinary understanding of the *masa*, the class of the dispossessed Filipinos. Lastly, the fourth quadrant (Q4) is composed of people with high economic but low cultural capitals, like our "big-business owners and financiers whose economic wealth is not matched by their cultural capital."² Within Bourdieu's framework, then, the

² Swartz, p. 159.

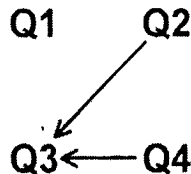
hypothesized clash of Philippine social classes during the electoral process would appear more complex than a two-cornered struggle.

THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE AMONG THE FOUR QUADRANTS

Ideally, in a democratic society, the electoral process is an exercise of rational choice. Assuming, of course, that people “people participate through the ballot on the basis of rational principles such as democracy, party programs, efficiency, constitutional agenda – all of which try to affirm one’s membership in and identification with a rational and modern state.”³ But the electoral process in the Philippines deviates from this ideal, and our social and political scientists have identified at least six major reasons why, namely: (1) patronage politics, (2) political dynasties, (3) market votes, (4) political subversion, (5) pre-election fraud, and (6) post-election fraud. The following sub-sections will tackle these reasons in more detail.

Patronage Politics

Patronage politics is the persistence of the old feudal mind-frame in the new capitalist democratic order. In this set up, the economically powerful landlords/patrons run for electoral posts and expect support from their tenants/clients who are supposed to be culturally obliged to render them economic and extra-economic services. The limited economic activities brought about by the new capitalist democratic order proved to be insufficient to erode the traditional ties between the landlords/patrons and their tenants/clients. Viewed from Bourdieu’s social classification, the syntax of patronage politics would be:



³ Myra S. Alejo, Maria Elena P. Rivera, and Noel Innocencio P. Valencia, *[De]Scribing Elections: A Study of Elections in the Lifeworld of San Isidro* (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 1996) pp. 91-92.

Its perpetrators are the people from Q2 and Q4, the economically powerful members of the society, who primarily victimize the people from Q3, the masses. The people from Q2 and Q4 capitalize on their economic power concealed as cultural obligation to manipulate the masses who are both economically and culturally powerless. People from Q1 appears to be safe from patronage politics probably because, firstly they are physically outside of the landlord-tenant, or patron-client, relationship; or secondly they can abstract politics from the same feudal relationship due to their higher cultural capital. It appears that the imbalance of economic power is the root cause of patronage politics.

Political Dynasties

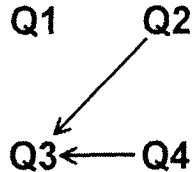
In more mature democratic societies, political power is seen primarily as symbolic power, understood from Bourdieu's perspective. But in the graft riddled Philippine context, political power converts easily to economic power, through government favored transactions and business protections. Hence, political families are interested in perpetuating their electoral posts. Antonio Lopez, in his essay *Keeping it All in the Family*, explains:

In election after election in the Philippines, many of the same names appear as candidates – at least the same family names. The big clans possess a great deal of clout. Their political and business power feed on each other. The more influence, the more wealth; the more wealth, the more influence. And the more difficult to dislodge members of such families from their posts.⁴

This practice finds its paragon in Ferdinand Marcos' political desire for self-perpetuation. After his ouster, as a precaution, our New Constitution sets limits on the number of consecutive terms our elected officials may have. But this precautionary measure is easily circumvented by the elected officials' endorsement of their spouses, children, siblings and other relatives to run for their temporarily expiring posts. Political dynasties do not directly influence people's electoral choices, but use other forms of electoral irregularities to achieve their desire for perpetuation. Basically, political dynasties

⁴ Antonio Lopez, "Keeping It All in the Family," in *Asiaweek* at <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0508/cs6.htm>.

thrive on the economic and cultural powerlessness of the people from Q3. Viewed from Bourdieu's social classification, then, the syntax of political dynasties follows the same syntax of patronage politics.

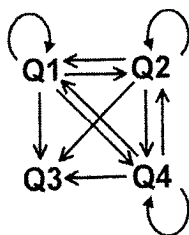


Their perpetrators are the people from Q2 and Q4, the economically powerful members of the society, who primarily victimize the people from Q3, the masses. The people from Q2 and Q4 capitalize on their economic power to finance and energize other forms of electoral irregularities to manipulate the choices of the people from Q3. Imbalance of economic power and the desire of those who are already economically powerful to expand further their wealth are the root cause of political dynasties.

Market Votes

As our society progressed economically, the more traditional clouts of the landlords-patrons and the political dynasties were little by little eroded by the emergence of other non-traditional economic activities that freed many people from direct economic relationships with these traditional politicians. However, this gradual erosion of the traditional political clouts is not bringing us to a more rational electoral process. Side by side with economic progress came the expansion of communication and broadcast media, and their political by-product: the media personalities-turned-politicians who free-ride on the waves of market votes. The political scientist Joel Rocamora asserts: "Because electoral choice remains limited to individuals, many candidates whose only "qualification" is massive media exposure – actions stars, comedians – are elected to positions as high as the senate and the vice-presidency."⁵ Viewed from Bourdieu's social classification, the syntax of market votes would be:

⁵ Joel Rocamora, "Introduction: an Election in the Lifeworld of San Isidro," in Myra S. Alejo, Maria Elena P. Rivera, and Noel Innocencio P. Valencia, *[De]Scribing Elections: A Study of Elections in the Lifeworld of San Isidro* (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 1996) p. xxvii.



Its perpetrators are the people from Q1 (who may have professional linkages to the media production) and the people from Q2 and Q4 (who may have ownership control over the media), who through their cultural and economic hegemony victimize people from practically all the four quadrants. Because of the subtle and continuous operation of the media, market votes are the most complex, the most powerful and the most pervasive form of electoral irregularity that can victimize even the people from the more democratically mature societies. Marvin Bionat, in his book *How to Win (or Lose) in Philippine Elections*, writes:

At least in the Philippines, no porn star has been elected to Congress yet, unlike in Italy where a candidate from the Party of Love – composed of porn celebrities – won. In Peru, go-go showgirl Suzy Diaz attracted media attention and a fairly large following when she ran for Congress, campaigning in her sultry work outfit in 1995. In Australia, a dominatrix who called herself Madame Lash made waves when she ran for senator in February 1996. She pledged to legalize marijuana and to end all forms of censorship. Perhaps sooner or later the Philippines will catch up.⁶

Though people from Q1, Q2 and Q4 are the perpetrators of market votes, people from Q2 and Q4, who control media ownership, appears to have the upper hand advantage over the rest of the quadrants. The former senator Orlando Mercado, in his paper *Media and Politics*, clarifies:

I believe it is pertinent at this juncture to advert to the fact that Philippine media at present is owned by big business groups and families with their own political and commercial

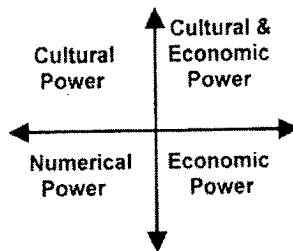
⁶ Marvin P. Bionat. *How to Win (or Lose) in Philippine Elections: the Dynamics of Winning or Loosing in Philippine Electoral Contests* (Pasig City: Anvil, 1998) pp. 76-77.

interests to promote and to protect. If we examine the current ownership background of some 23 or so print media institutions in the country, one will see the whole range of powerful interest groups existing in Philippine society: the Sorianos, Zobels, Lopezes, Elizaldes, Yaps, Gokongweis, the Belmontes to name but a few, are not only economically prominent families but also politically powerful owners of media.⁷

Without any direct access to the production of media, people from Q4, on the other hand, appears to be the most disadvantaged among the four quadrants.

Political Subversion

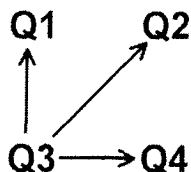
From the perspective of Bourdieu's social classification, the people from Q3 may appear powerless. But in the actual Philippine world, since a huge portion of our bloated lower classes belong to this same quadrant, these people indeed hold tremendous electoral power in terms of their sheer number. Thus, we can more accurately picture the electoral class conflict as a struggle between four types of forces, represented below as:



Political subversion is a result of the frustrations of the people from Q3 over their perceived powerlessness, and over traditional politics' failure to represent their interests. Instead of choosing the rationally most qualified candidates, they choose the other less qualified candidates as their subversive action against the system that is anyway insensitive to their plight. Joel Rocamora says: "See if you

⁷ Orlando S. Mercado, "Media and Politics: Seeking a Better Relationship Between Journalists and Politicians in the Philippines," In Carolina G. Hernandez & Werner Pfennig, Eds. *Media and Politics in Asia* (Quezon City: UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1991) p. 44.

like Ramon Revilla in your senate, guys. And while we are at it, a fine example of a sharply wielded “weapon of the weak,” is it not?”⁸ Viewed from Bourdieu’s social classification, the syntax of political subversion would be:



The perpetrators of political subversion are the people from Q3, who makes a seemingly irrational electoral voice and with their sheer number rig the result of elections to the dismay of people from Q1, Q2 and Q4.

Pre-Election Fraud

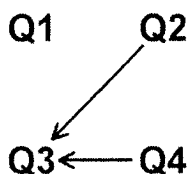
Patronage politics, political dynasties and political subversion, though all irregular, are in themselves not fraudulent. They are all subtle in deviating from the ideal electoral process and do not violate any electoral code. But aside from these irregularities, our politicians also resort to fraudulent and illegal mechanisms to rig the electoral outcome. Election fraud may be grouped into (1) pre-election fraud, and (2) post-election fraud. Pre-election fraud, as the name implies, refers to the fraudulent and illegal mechanisms done prior to the actual casting of ballots. In the Philippines, the three most common pre-election fraud are (1) vote buying, (2) intimidation, and (3) the tampering of the voters’ list. Vote buying in the Philippines has evolved into a highly refined practice where buyers are assured that they receive the priced merchandize. Bionat describes this:

On election day, buying may take the form of a 100-peso bill attached to a sample ballot. To ensure strict compliance with the deal, some leaders may require the use of a carbon paper, tinfoil or paraffin to be submitted as proof before money changes hands. Others require putting an agreed symbol on

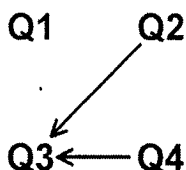
⁸ Rocamora, p. xxvii.

the ballot to serve as identification during the reading of the votes. In Marawi, leaders allegedly collect the voters' ID of those already paid to prevent them from selling again to other groups. Alternatively, voters are made to swear on the Koran, pledging their votes for the paying candidates.⁹

Since vote buying is perpetrated by the people from Q2 and Q4 who capitalize on their economic power manifested as business transaction to manipulate the masses who are both economically and culturally powerless, viewed from Bourdieu's social classification, the syntax of vote buying follows the syntax of patronage politics and political dynasties.

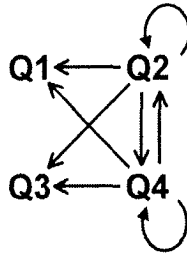


Intimidation is the use of threats to coerce people to support or not to support a given candidate. Intimidation may be premised on threats of physical harm that can go as far as death of the voter including his/her family, or more commonly it may be premised on threats of withdrawal or cessation of a currently enjoyed economic relationship, like tenants threatened to be evicted of their land, or workers threatened to be dismissed. Since intimidation is perpetrated by the people from Q2 and Q4 who capitalize on their economic power manifested as physical or economic force to manipulate the masses who are both economically and culturally powerless, viewed from Bourdieu's social classification, the syntax of intimidation follows the syntax of patronage politics, political dynasties, and vote buying.



⁹ Bionat, p. 105.

The third most common pre-election fraud is the tampering of voters' lists. This mechanism intends to pad the number of supporters of a given candidate and shave the number of supporters of his/her opponent. This can be effected only through a connivance, premised on graft and bribery, with some personnel of the Commission on Elections. Tampering of voters' lists may be done by directly manipulating the contents of the voters' list, or indirectly by scrambling the precinct assignments to confuse the voters of an area that is known to be a supporter of an opponent. Tampering of voters' lists is a clandestine operation and is therefore capable of victimizing more people. Viewed from Bourdieu's social classification, the syntax of tampering of voters' lists would be different from the first two most common pre-election frauds:



The perpetrators of tampering of voters' lists are the people from Q2 and Q4, who with their economic power can finance a clandestine machinery in connivance with some personnel of the Commission on Elections to rig the electoral process.

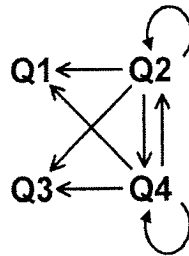
POST-ELECTION FRAUD

Post-election fraud, as the name implies, refers to the fraudulent and illegal mechanisms done after the actual casting of ballots. In the Philippines, this would be the tampering of ballots and the tampering of election returns. Wilhelmina Paras, in her essay *Why Do People Cheat in the Elections?*, mentions election law specialist Romeo Macalintal's favorite anecdote, as she quotes:

"In 1988, my client was close to winning a mayoral race. There was one precinct's return that would ensure his win. Evidently his opponent knew this. He hired a magician, one who 'eats fire.' When a teacher opened the precinct's returns,

the magician lit a match and blew fire onto the ballots. We managed to save about half of them.”¹⁰

We do not have to go as far as employing magicians to rig the counting and tallying of votes, for with our notoriously slow manual system there is plenty of time for non-magicians to rig up the electoral outcome. Just think of our famous *dagdag-bawas*. Post-election fraud can again be effected only through a connivance, premised on graft and bribery, with some personnel of the Commission on Elections. It is likewise a clandestine operation that is capable of victimizing more people. Viewed from Bourdieu’s social classification, the syntax of post-election fraud follows the syntax of the tampering of voters’ lists.



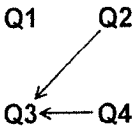
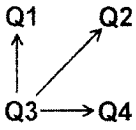
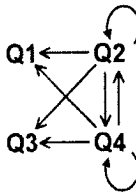
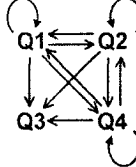
Just like in the tampering of voters’ lists, the perpetrators of post-election fraud are the people from Q2 and Q4, who with their economic power can finance a clandestine machinery in connivance with some personnel of the Commission on Elections to rig the electoral process.

The Different Syntactic Structures of Class Struggles

To sum up our analysis of the reasons why Philippine elections deviate from the ideal democratic electoral process, we present the following points. First, there are at least eight specific electoral irregularities that rig our electoral outcome, they are: (1) patronage politics, (2) political dynasties, (3) market votes, (4) political subversion, (5) vote buying, (6) intimidation, (7) tampering of voters’ lists, and (8) post-electoral fraud. Second, these eight specific electoral irregularities follow only four syntactic structures, which for lack

¹⁰ Wilhelmina Paras, “Why Do People Cheat in the Elections?,” in *Asiaweek* at <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0508/cs3.html>.

of names we may call syntax # 1, syntax # 2, syntax # 3, and syntax # 4. The chart below presents these syntactic structures, their code names, their specific electoral irregularities, and the kind of power contained in their syntactic structures.

SYNTAX	CODE NAME	PRACTICE	POWER-CONTENT
	Syntax # 1	Patronage Politics	Economic Power concealed as Cultural Obligation
		Political Dynasties	Economic Power using other Electoral Irregularities
		Vote Buying	Economic Power manifested as Business Transaction
		Intimidation	Economic Power manifested as Physical and Economic Force
	Syntax # 2	Political Subversion	Numerical Power
	Syntax # 3	Tampering of Voters' Lists	Economic Power concealed
		Post Election Fraud	Economic Power concealed
	Syntax # 4	Market Votes	Economic Power and Cultural Power

At this point this study's aim to present a framework with which the hypothesized conflicts of Philippine social classes during the electoral process may be analyzed is achieved. From here, this study may be seen from two perspectives, one modernist and the other postmodernist. From a modernist point of view, this study

may be taken as an analysis into the idealized grammatical structures that underlie the actual class conflicts in Philippine electoral process. This follows the linguistic canon established by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857-1913) when he made the historic distinction between *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech). *Langue* is supposed to be the structure, or the template, of language that ideally exists outside a particular language's everyday usage, which is the *parole*. *Parole*, on the other hand, is the chaotic and unwieldy mass of everyday utterances that is unfit to be the object of a science such as linguistic. From a modernist point of view, this study deals with the *langue*, and therefore not the *parole*, of Philippine electoral process.

From a postmodernist perspective, however, this essay, though based on secondary empirical studies on Philippine electoral process, does not claim to be an empirical study in itself. The philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas (born 1929) believes that one way for philosophy to continue to exist in a postmodern world where metaphysical speculations have become things of the past is for philosophy to become a supplier (*Zuarbeiter*) of ideas useful as hypotheses for social sciences in particular and for other specialized areas of inquiry in general.¹¹ Though Habermas specified that philosophy's being a *Zuarbeiter* is limited only to 'ideas useful as hypotheses' this may be expanded a little to mean concepts, paradigms, theories, and interpretive frames. From a postmodernist perspective, this paper exactly does this Habermasian proposal and simultaneously invites the social and political scientists to validate or negate its theoretical groundwork.

From its modernist and Saussurian sense, this essay, after foregrounding the different syntactic structures of class conflicts, is ready to speculate into what Filipino philosophy can and should do to contribute towards the transformation of our irregular electoral practices into what would be a rational and ideal electoral process. However, from its postmodernist and Habermasian sense, the essay's empirically uncorroborated theoretical groundwork logically ends here. Hence, the speculations on the task of Filipino

¹¹ Cf. Jurgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-in and Interpreter," in Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman & Thomas McCarthy, Eds., *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987).

philosophy that follows is strictly emanating from this essay's modernist strain. At best, from its postmodernist strain, the following section may be taken as a stretching of philosophic creativity towards a region that it should not thread yet.

THE TASK OF FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY

Before going into the speculations on what Filipino philosophy can and should do in the face of our irregular electoral practices, it would be interesting to examine first a debate among political scientists concerning the necessity for any systematic intervention. Jennifer Conroy Franco, in her book *Campaigning for Democracy*, explains that for this question the political scientists are divided into two camps: those inspired by empirical democratic theory and those inspired by pluralism and Marxism.¹² The political scientists from the empirical democratic camp "assume that regardless of how "unfree" and unfair national elections actually are, they necessarily promote democratization system wide."¹³ The political scientists from the pluralist and Marxist camp, on the other hand, "assume that less-than-democratic elections inherently reinforce existing authoritarian holds, making progress in democratization highly unlikely, if not impossible."¹⁴ Consequently, the political scientists from the empirical democratic camp think that even when left in their own logic irregular electoral practices will eventually mature into a rational and ideal electoral process; while the political scientists from the pluralist and Marxist camp advocate systematic intervention to rectify and remedy our irregular electoral practices. The problem with the empirical democratic camp is that they are not certain how long these electoral irregularities will persist, while the problem with the pluralist and Marxist camp is the radical tendency to equate intervention with the deconstruction of the whole electoral process.

Our speculations, then, on what Filipino philosophy can and should do, may navigate through the middle route between the two

¹² Jennifer Conroy Franco, *Campaigning for Democracy: Grassroots Citizenship Movements, Less-than-Democratic Elections, and Regime Transition in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Institute for Popular Democracy, 2000) p. 12.

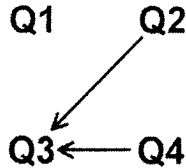
¹³ Franco, p. 12.

¹⁴ Franco, p. 12.

camps who are at loggerheads with each other. Intervention is necessary to hasten our electoral process' transformation and maturation, but this may not go as far as deconstruction. In the following sub-sections, therefore, conceptualize how this philosophic intervention may proceed for each and every syntactic structure.

***On Syntax #1: Patronage Politics, Political Dynasties,
Vote Buying and Intimidation***

Patronage politics, political dynasties, vote buying and intimidation, all appear to thrive on the imbalance of economic power between the people from Q2 and Q4, and the people from Q3.



The common thought that these four electoral irregularities persist because of the irrationality and ignorance of the masses is therefore not very accurate. These electoral irregularities persist not primarily because of the knowledge, or cultural, gap but because of the yawning economic gap between the Philippine higher and lower classes.

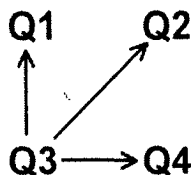
There are at least two ways for Filipino philosophy to address these four electoral irregularities. First would be a theoretical/educational intervention consisting of integrating into our philosophy subjects a systematic and sustained discussion on the class conflicts and irregularities of the Philippine electoral process. By exposing the children of the people from Q2 and Q4 to such subjects, we can hopefully alter their political consciousness and prevent the emergence of the next generation of perpetrators. This would be a promising intervention, considering that the children of the people from Q2 and Q4 are actually within our influence as they go through college, and considering that they have never exposed to any thorough education in contextualized political philosophy, for even their political science course is stuck with the mere explication of the Philippine Constitution. Our current general educational sub-

jects of critical thinking, ethics, and political philosophy can be utilized to carry this theoretical/educational intervention.

The second way for Filipino philosophy to address the four electoral irregularities falling under syntax # 1 would be a more drastic praxiological intervention consisting of working from the economic empowerment of the people from Q3. This would be a more difficult intervention, not only because of its being praxiological in nature, but also because we do not have any direct access to the people, including their children, from Q3. Unlike the children of the people from Q2 and Q4 who are within our influence as they go through college, the children of the people from Q3 do not have the opportunity to go through college. It would be preposterous for us, Filipino philosophy professors, to represent the interests of the people from Q3, considering the cultural and economic gap between us and the masses. The task of economic empowerment would not prosper through proxies. Hence, Filipino philosophy should look for ways and means to see to it that the people from Q3 can have their own representatives and leaders to guide them towards economic, and subsequently cultural, empowerment. The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) talks about the need for organic intellectuals to lead the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic projects of each class. The praxiological task of Filipino philosophy should focus on how to cultivate the emergence of organic intellectuals among the people from Q3. In a society, where there are more and more people who are economically, and subsequently culturally, powerful, patronage politics, political dynasties, vote buying, and intimidation will no longer prosper.

On Syntax #2: Political Subversion

Political subversion emanates from the unrationalized numerical power of the people from Q3.

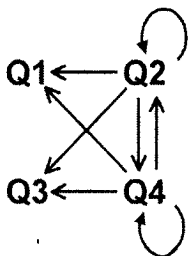


In this sense, political subversion is like a bolt of lightning that is so powerful and awe-inspiring, but when left unharnessed would remain useless, wasteful and even destructive. In itself, political subversion clearly demonstrates how the people from Q3 can be very politically powerful in a democratic society. The only problem here is that some people allowed their frustrations to overrule their rational choices and that others allowed themselves to be swayed by the manipulations done by the other classes and individuals.

Filipino philosophy can address this electoral irregularity by looking for ways and means to harness and rationalize this tremendous flash of political power. But again, this would prove to be a very difficult praxiological intervention considering that we do not have any direct access to the people from Q3, including their children. Just as for syntax # 1, the praxiological task of Filipino philosophy should focus on how to cultivate the emergence of Gramscian organic intellectuals among the people from Q3, who will then assume the task of ordering and rationalizing their own people's political power. The people from Q3 will then have their own politicians who can pursue and represent their real class interests.

On Syntax #3: Tampering of Voters' Lists and Post-Election Fraud

Tampering of voters' lists and post-election fraud are clandestine operations that are energized by the economic power of the people from Q2 and Q4.



Filipino philosophy can address these electoral irregularities in at least two ways. First would be a theoretical/educational intervention consisting of integrating into our philosophy subjects a systematic and sustained discussion of the root cause of the Fili-

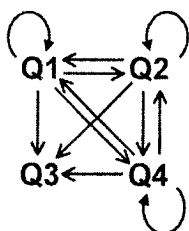
pino political will-to-power that easily degenerates into will-to-fraudulence. Just like for syntax # 1, by exposing the children of the people from Q2 and Q4 to such subjects, we can hopefully alter their political will-to-power and political consciousness and prevent the emergence of the next generation of perpetrators. As mentioned already in our discussion on political dynasties, the obsessive Filipino political will-to-power may be rooted on our distinctive concept of political power. Whereas, in more mature democratic societies, political power is seen primarily as symbolic power, understood from Bourdieu's perspective, in the graft riddled Philippine context, political power converts easily to economic power, through government favored transactions and business protections. Furthermore, with our predominantly feudal mind-frame there is a tendency to exaggerate even the symbolic power aspect of our political leaders. Whereas, in the more mature democratic societies, the political will-to-power is fueled only by the desire for symbolic power, ours is energized by the desire for economic power and symbolic power that borders fetishism. By systematically critiquing our culture of graft and corruption and our fetishism for political symbolic power, there is a chance to substantially alter our very fiery political will-to-power. Politics is ought to be a bid for public service not a quest for economic and excessive symbolic powers.

The second way for Filipino philosophy to address the electoral irregularities of tampering of voters' list and post-election fraud would be something extra-philosophical and down to earth consisting of lobbying as an association of professionals for the computerization of voters' list and counting and making them transparent through posting them in the world wide web. Our incumbent political leaders may not be too serious about implementing this measure for the reason that this would be an effective tool in eliminating, or at least minimizing, the clandestine operations of tampering of voters' lists and post-election fraud, which would contradict any of their misguided intentions for the coming elections. With the conflicting interests, there is a need to lobby for this measure.

On Syntax #4: Market Votes

Benedict Anderson, in his book *Imagined Communities*, argues that the nation only exists in the mind of the people, for there is no

way for any single individual to directly perceive the totality of any nation's membership and processes.¹⁵ In this sense, the media is a necessary institution for the collective imagination of any nation. Along this line of thinking, modern democracies depend on the media for the identification of their possible political leaders. Market votes, as dependent on the media, are therefore not inherently irregular. They become irregular only when some social classes or individuals manipulate another social classes' perceived electoral immaturity of having the penchant for electing any media famous candidate, creating in the process the most complex among the four syntactic structures:



We can distinguish, then, two types of market votes: the politically immature and the politically mature market votes. The immature market votes tend to favor the media famous contender, irregardless of the basis of his/her fame. The mature market votes, on the other hand, tend to favor the contender who is presented by the media as famous for his/her dedication and skills for public service. However, considering that the Philippine media is predominantly controlled by the people from the Q2 and Q4, there will always be a social inequality with regards to media representation. Furthermore, with the emergence of a new breed of political workers, the spin-doctors and public relations consultants, what we see, hear and read from the media might not always reflect the real score. Thus, even the culturally empowered people from Q1 and Q2 are not immune to manipulative powers of market votes.

There are at least three things that Filipino philosophy can do to address this most syntactically complex electoral irregularity. First would be a theoretical/educational intervention consisting

¹⁵ Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).

of integrating into our philosophy subjects the cultivation of the critical attitude in general and the critique of our media institutions and discourses in particular. Just as our previously speculated theoretical/educational intervention, this would have an impact only among the children of Q1, Q2 and Q4.

The second way would be to look for ways and means for intended cultivation of critical attitude and critique of our media institutions to reach the consciousness of the people from Q3 and their children, who are the most disadvantaged social class in terms of the sinister effect of market votes. Again, a good way of doing this would be the same praxiological strategy of cultivating the emergence of the Gramscian organic intellectual from among the people of Q3, who would then assume the task of propagating the critical attitude towards media among his/her own people.

The third way that Filipino philosophy can do to address the problem of market votes would be another theoretical/educational intervention consisting of integrating into our philosophy subjects a the emphasis on political parties, instead on personalities. By exposing the children of the people from Q1, Q2 and Q4 to such subjects, we can hopefully alter their political consciousness. In the more mature democratic societies, it is the political parties who work out their platforms, and who do the pre-selection of candidates, which ideally should be based on the candidates qualities for public service, instead of the more selfish criteria of his/her potential for winning. By instilling the mentality of professionalism in the political parties, the future members of our political parties will play the crucial role of pre-eliminating any possible candidates who may just be exploiting their record for media exposure. Filipino philosophy can construct the political ideal that ultimately the members of any political party would be willing to sacrifice their own party's bid for power for the sake of the good of our nation.

CONCLUSION

Concerning the analysis of the Philippine electoral process, this paper has presented the following findings. First, each and every social class wields its own form, or mixture, of power that make our electoral process a locus of conflict and struggle. Second,

these conflict and struggle is determined by the differences or gaps in terms of the economic and cultural capitals of our different social classes, and that the economic gap appears to be the foundational cause of these conflict and struggle. Lastly, though there is a greater number of specific forms of conflicts, struggles and other electoral irregularities, their syntactic structures appears to be limited to a smaller number, making their rectification easier.

Concerning the speculation on what Filipino philosophy can and should do, this paper has presented the following findings and recommendations. First, the task of theoretical/educational and praxiological tasks of Filipino philosophy are long ranged. Second, the theoretical/educational task of Filipino philosophy has a limited impact for this can only reach the children of the people from Q1, Q2 and Q4. Third, the praxiological task of Filipino philosophy has to focus on the cultivation of the Gramscian organic intellectual among the people from Q3, who would then assume the theoretical/educational task for the children of Q3. Fourth, since Filipino philosophy has no direct access to the people and children from Q4, Filipino philosophy may need to establish tactical alliances with other organizations who have already functional contacts with this same quadrant, like the religious and non-governmental units. Fifth, if Filipino philosophy indeed desire to be of service towards the transformation of our immature electoral process, it has to position itself as a critical philosophy to effectively deliver its required theoretical/educational and praxiological tasks. And lastly, if indeed Filipino philosophy desires to be of service to the transformation of the immature Philippine electoral process, the dedication, determination and commitment of the Filipino philosophy professors are first and foremost required. □