

PHILIPPINE SOCIETY AND CULTURE: MECHANISMS FOR STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNITY

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PROLOGUE

The present paper was originally prepared for a volume Policy Directions for the 1980's (edited by Felipe Miranda and Mahar Mangahas, 1981) under the title "National Integration"). The volume never saw print because of its controversial nature, i.e., it was critical of many of the policies of the Marcos administration. The paper, while it was not as critical as the other papers prepared for the volume, raised a few issues which somehow brought to the attention of those then in power, the need to address such issues in order to alleviate at least the conditions of those for which the issues had been raised.

The paper was later presented to the 10th National Conference on Local History (MSU-General Santos, October 27-29, 1989). While it may not properly be of local history focus, its main thrust is directed at the Mindanao (and Sulu) problems. Current developments have impelled the revival of this paper. One of these is the signing into law of the Organic Act (H.B. No. 22929, S. No. 907: Republic Act 6734: signed into law on August 1, 1989; Accepted in a Plebiscite on November 19, 1989) creating an Autonomous Muslim Mindanao.

I. INTRODUCTION

The one single factor that makes the Philippines a classic case of socio-cultural "diversity" is its island topography. More than seven thousand islands, indeed, are no small evidence of the potential forces that make islanders "insular" in their perceptions, and consider the other islanders as source of "conflict" among them. The "isolation" of island inhabitants contribute to the very diverse perceptions of phenomena that obtain in these islands. However, the seas that separate these islands are to be thought of not as barriers towards unity or the development of one single perception of similar phenomena. For countless ages, indeed up to the present, the seas have played an important role as the main avenue, in the continuing contacts between cultures, which at certain periods of their history saw a levelling off of some culture aspects.

Despite these interconnections and the levelling off of cultural elements, diversities between the peoples of various islands still obtain. These are seen primarily in the ethnic and linguistic groupings that exist in the entire archipelago. Perceived in more compact forms as an ethnolinguistic phenomenon, while the distinctions may be very minimal, considering the intelligibility of these languages spoken by various ethnic groups in the country, the potential of confrontation is never eliminated. The "separateness" of one ethno-linguistic group from other groups is never a potential phenomenon but a real one.

And in the large super-ordinate type of groupings, like the Military, the conflict that occurs between and among its members is understood to be due to diverse socio-cultural origins or ethno-linguistic orientations.

Historically, the confrontations or conflicts between the "civilized" lowlanders and the "wild" highlanders, between the "cosmopolitan" Tagalog and the "rural" Ibanag, between Bulacan Tagalog and the Tayabas Tagalog, between the Waray and the Ilongo, between the Maranaw and the Maguindanao, between one who comes from Luzon and another one who comes from the Visayas, have all been stereotyped in the conflict between socio-cultural (ethnolinguistic) groups. These confrontations would have implications in the political and economic dimensions. Recently, the conflict of two very basic concepts, namely *pawis* and *papel* has also dramatized the distinctions between the logical owners of the land, those who till the land by their sweat (*pawis*) and "legal" owners, those who have titles (*papel*) to the land.

Also, in historical perspective, the conflict that was generated at contact between the "pagan" inhabitants and the Muslims upon the latter's arrival, which continues even to the present period, as well as that between the Christians and the "pagan" peoples of the Philippines may not be as serious as the conflict between the Christians and the Muslims, which has persisted since their initial encounter during the second half of the 16th century. The seriousness of this conflict has somehow brought the Philippines almost to the brink of *disintegration*. As a result of the severity of the conflict, both the Christian and the Muslim peoples of the country have, on their own, embarked on a search for mechanisms and processes of unifying themselves within the realities of diversity.

The purpose of this paper is to explore mechanisms and processes within which the concept of "unity in diversity" can be made operative in the Philippine situation.

The principle of divide and rule during the Spanish colonial period was the most effective mechanism used by the colonial government in controlling the Indios. One ethno-linguistic group was used by the colonial government to fight another group—the Macabebes against the Igorots, the Cebuanos against the Warays; but the most unconscionable among all the Spanish colonial government's policies was the use of the Christianized Filipinos in the attempt to subjugate the Muslim Maranaw, Magindanaw and Tausug in the Southern Philippines. From the historical point of view, this is an undisguised cause of the present conflict between the Christian Filipinos and the Muslim Filipinos, the Spanish colonial government having engendered it without realizing that in the next century this conflict would persist with bitterness.

During the American colonial rule, the same principle was used — the "civilized" lowland population pitted against the "wild" highlanders and the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu, despite the creation of administrative agencies* purportedly established to give

*These administrative agencies were: The Moro Province, 1903-1914; The Department of Mindanao and Sulu, 1914-1920; Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, 1916-1928; and the Commission for Mindanao and Sulu, 1936-1941.

essence to the underlying American expansionist aim of engendering democracy among the benighted peoples of the world (!). The mandates of each of these agencies embody instructions for effecting the integration of non-Christian peoples into the main stream of American colonial communities. Although the Bates Agreement of August 20, 1899 recognized "the rights and dignities of His Highness the Sultan and the datos... the Moros shall not be interfered with on account of their religion; all their religious customs shall be respected; and no one shall be prosecuted on account of his religion" (Article III), it effectively laid down the beginning for integration into the main stream of colonial life. Article X of the same Agreement also mandated that "any slave in the archipelago of Jolo shall have the right to purchase freedom by paying to the master the usual market value," an early attempt to develop a sense of equality among the subject peoples.

The Moro Province, established on June 1, 1903 by Philippine Commission Act No. 787, was run by a Legislative Council which was empowered to establish flexible school systems to fit the actual needs of the Muslim and non-Christian groups. The Moro Province was transformed to the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (1914-1920), which carried on the unifying and integrating functions of the Province. Side by side with this Department was the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, under the Department of Interior (1916-1928). This Bureau adopted a conscious policy of unification and integration. Among the instructions given the first head to direct the Bureau's affairs was "to endeavour to make yourself in good faith the unifier, tearing down as rapidly as possible the walls which have isolated the non-Christians from the Christians."

Measures adopted to achieve the objectives of the Bureau included the "extension of the public school system and the system of public health throughout the region inhabited by non-Christian peoples," a tacit recognition of the unifying effect of education and the promotion of health among the peoples. While the Department of Mindanao and Sulu is confined primarily within the geographic limits of two islands, the Bureau of non-Christian Tribes was not limited to a geographic region, and its charter so states that

It shall be the duty of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes to continue to work for advancement and liberty in favour of the regions inhabited by non-Christian Filipinos and to foster, by all adequate means and in a systematic, rapid, and complete manner the moral, material, economic, social and political development of these regions, always having in view the aim of rendering permanent the mutual intelligence between the complete fusion of all the Christian and non-Christian populating the provinces of the archipelago.

This provision of the charter of the Bureau led to the abolition of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu. The establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1936 led to the abolition of the Bureau and the establishment of the office of the Commissioner of Mindanao and Sulu on October 24, 1938. The Commissioner functioned only with delegated powers from the President of the Commonwealth.

The period after World War II saw the full recognition by the National Government of the need to unify and integrate the people, not only as a reaction to the divisive effects of the unrest in Central Luzon and the growing "disenchantment" of the ethnic as well as the Muslim peoples of the country over National Government's programs in these areas. Thus, in 1957, Congress enacted Republic Act No. 1888, which aimed

to effectuate in a more rapid and complete manner the economic, social, moral and political advancement of the non-Christian Filipinos or national cultural minorities and to render real, complete and permanent the integration of all said national cultural minorities into the body politic,...

This Act was amended by Republic Act No. 3852 on May 4, 1964. This law opened the floodgates of opportunities to all the national cultural communities of the country. The provisions of the law were administered by the Commission on National Integration, which was a creation of the law itself. The law was in effect until 1975 when all these functions were distributed among the various government agencies involved in national programs.

In 1967, the Office of the Presidential Assistance on National Minorities (PANAMIN) was created as a cabinet rank without portfolio. The creation of this office further dramatized the concerns of the National Government for unity with and integration of the National Cultural Communities into the main stream of national consciousness. Upon the abolition of the Commission on National Integration (CNI), the PANAMIN took over some of its important functions—e.g., responsibilities over the ethnic groups who are not Muslims. The latter's welfare and needs have been taken over from the CNI by various agencies specifically involved in the development programs in Mindanao and Sulu.

On June 13, 1961, Republic Act No. 3044 created the Mindanao Development Authority (MDA), whose function was to accelerate the development of the region, another mechanism by which integration and unification have been envisioned to be effected. In the wake of this Act, another law was enacted by Congress to further accelerate the integration of the peoples of Mindanao and Sulu. This is the Act creating the Mindanao State University (MSU), another proof of "governmental determination to assist national minorities through its various instrumentalities." The MDA concentrated its activities in the field of economic development, while the MSU was designed primarily to upgrade the educational opportunities of the peoples of Mindanao. The MDA, however, was replaced by the Southern Philippines Development Administration (SPDA) in 1975, taking over all its projects, which are undertaken in collaboration with both public and private enterprises.

In 1973, Executive Order No. 411 created a Presidential Task Force for the Reconstruction and Development of Mindanao and Sulu, in the wake of the hostilities between the forces of the Government and the secessionist groups as a result of the declaration of Martial Law in late 1972. The Reconstruction and Development (RAD)

program that was formulated called for a consolidation and acceleration of existing programs and projects in Muslim Mindanao. This included a wide range of projects in the areas of infrastructure, food production, industrial development, health services, education and manpower training and institutional buildup of local governments. Special projects were also drawn within the purview of the RAD program, namely the Special Program of Assistance to the Rehabilitation of Evacuees, the establishment of the Philippine Amanah Bank, the reopening of barter trade with North Borneo. All these were designed to effect the unification and integration of the peoples of Southern Philippines into the national community. However, government efforts have not been spared to also bring integration of cultural minorities in other parts of the country. These are reflected in the intensified programs/projects of the PANAMIN.

Other integrative and unifying activities of government are being pursued under various departments, like land reform, the creation of regional autonomous governments (Regions IX and XII), intensification of economic development in depressed areas, etc.

II. MECHANISMS TO EFFECT NATIONAL UNITY

Definitive mechanisms which contribute to national solidarity and consciousness have been identified for this paper, namely: one—education, functional literacy programs (which properly fall under education, but will be treated separately) and mass communications; and two—military and land reform — which will be properly treated in separate papers, but will be discussed in this paper on the culturally integrative nature of these mechanisms.

The Military is a very important national agency where integration can be fully achieved. Considering that it draws all its personnel from all regions of the country, it can by its own programs and projects develop internal mechanisms that will create the highest level of consciousness for national unity and integration. Perhaps the Japanese model can be adopted here with modifications to suit the cultural givens in the Philippines. During the period of Restoration in Japan (Meiji Era, 1868-1912), the military became the central agency for the creation of national pride and national integration. Conscripts from various regions and islands, having finally settled in various military camps, were given intensive work on Japanese culture and history, showing them that despite their varied origins they belonged to only one race and have descended from a common ancestor. The Japanese since then have proved to the world that unity and solidarity are the main ingredients of national survival and success (Sources of Japanese Tradition, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960, pp. 700; 759). Conscription broadened the horizons of peasant youth who served in various parts of the country they would not otherwise have seen (Ibid.)

Land reform as a mechanism for national integration has become a very important issue, upon which the current Government has attached its promise for the millions of landless Filipinos. The traditionally very high value attached to possession of land,

particularly for those whose value systems are identified with the land, and literally millions of them are peasants/tenants who do not have claims to the land they till, can not be overemphasized. Their rituals, their belief systems, their whole world view are all tied up with the source of their economic well-being, i.e., land.

By intensifying the land reform program of the government, every peasant, sharecropper, and all workers on the land will then possess a piece of land. Thus, while government assists in increasing their economic well-being, it indirectly strengthens their spiritual and moral fiber; the validity of their belief systems and world view is given a firmer ground on which to be engendered. The fact that Government comes to their assistance is a manifestation of their deep beliefs that their prayers are heard and their needs filled. The Tagalog saying "*Salamat sa Panginoon, pinakinggan din ang aming dalangin*" is significant in this context.

Education and culture are two most important considerations in the total program of national unification. Because one can not be divorced from the other, each would constitute a central fulcrum for embarking on programs and projects that can be launched. Certainly, the educational system that is developing in the Philippines, from one that has been centrally colonial in nature, must consider the culture into which it should operate. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), indeed, shows the way to this end. The premier government agency mandated to be in the forefront of effecting national integration and raising national consciousness and pride, its role in implementing national programs and policies, though ineffectual in some cases, need be given full support. It carries the heaviest burden in the total development of people from the time they are in school age to the time they are seekers of livelihood. Through its programs and projects, the people's consciousness of national life is raised to the highest level of national pride.

Operating under the general umbrella of the DECS special programs, like functional literacy, may be the most important mechanism for developing national consciousness for national unity. Modules must be developed to achieve the objectives of education indicative of the continuing concern of Government for national identity.

Properly belonging to the general educational responsibilities of the DECS, functional literacy programs are aimed primarily at the most disadvantaged, particularly among the ethnic groups in all regions of the country, to raise the level of perception relative to national aspirations, without however eliminating their individual identities as cultural groups. This mechanism is intended to reach those that cannot be reached through the medium of formal education. Massive functional literacy programs must be undertaken for these most disadvantaged groups.

Outside the regular function of the educational system which can reach the greatest mass of people particularly between the ages 7 and 25, mass communications through all the media—print, radio and television—are the most important means to reach all peoples of all ages in the country. For the more people are informed of the various government activities designed for the people's general welfare, the more there is created in their total

perceptions that they are part of the country and are the most important members of the national community. However, mass communication with the people can be frustrated if their level of literacy is below comprehension of national government programs. It is not then just a question of mass communication, but a question of raising the level of education of all the peoples of the country. The literacy level of all those that cannot afford education need be raised also.

As indicated above, education and mass communications are indeed interconnected. And this is very much evident in programs for raising the national consciousness of the lowest strata of the national society—the lowliest of the farmers, peasants, labouring classes, and the ethnic minorities whose exposures to national life have been sporadic and far between.

There are at least three levels in the functional literacy and mass communications programs, that are evident:

THE PRIMARY LEVEL. Materials in the culture, namely folklore, belief-systems sayings may be used to excite commitments to learning. These could be systematized in pamphlets, booklets and even flyers, both for the print as well as for the radio for dissemination. Number of hours devoted to this level will be determined by the rate of progress in the learning process. The utilization of cultural materials in this level will create a consciousness of the values of these folklore, narratives, legends within their own milieu and at the same time show to these people that national government recognizes the validity of these cultural elements in the context of national culture. The use of audio-visual materials in this level is important. They constitute a greater portion of the basic teaching/learning materials. Printed matter being a visual aid would play an important role in increasing literacy capabilities.

THE SECONDARY LEVEL. The materials that are developed on this level become more functional in terms of the various occupational groups. Both visual print and visual illustration will play a significant role. As the functional literacy pupil graduates to this level, he will not be merely satisfied with learning of this culture and its values in the context of his social milieu, he would need to increase his perceptions vis-a-vis his occupation, and thus improve his livelihood. If but on the lowest level of economic subsistence, he must improve his methods of lifting out of this level.

THE TERTIARY LEVEL. This level may be called the National Ideological level, because the literacy programs developed shall be those that will tie up all the elements brought out in the primary and secondary levels, and elevated to this present level to create a commitment to the national ideology, a recognition of a national identity and national consciousness. While this may not come up to the level of the programs of university or college, the programs in this level would somehow prepare the people for some sophistication in perceiving national progress for total national commitment.

Here, the potential of the media—print, radio and television—must be exploited to the limit.

III. SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS WHERE ACTION PROGRAMS MAY BE UNDERTAKEN TO EFFECT NATIONAL UNITY

The problem areas are (a) the ethnolinguistic problem, (b) resolution of the Muslim-Christian conflict, (c) intensification of relevant programs in the field of education and (d) re-examination of the notions of "integration", the "one" and the "many" in society and culture. There are others that come to mind, but I would concentrate on these four areas, because I feel they are crucial to the current problems of the country.

(a) The Ethnolinguistic Problem. In this essay the problem will be treated on the cultural level. The ethnic and linguistic identities of each of the groupings in the country had contributed to the division of the Filipinos according to these identities. This is recognized by the languages spoken by each group, and the emphasis had been primarily on the level of differences rather than on the level of commonalities.

The intelligibility among Philippine languages would range from 35 per centum to about 65 per centum on a very conservative estimate. This would, therefore, emphasize the commonalities that underlie these languages. They all belong to the greater Austronesian (formerly called Malayo-Polynesian) family of languages. The range of intelligibility of these languages within this great family is 25 per centum to 65 per centum. Historically, before the intrusion of the western world in Austronesian regions, the range of intelligibility would be much higher.

With Filipino developing as the *lingua filipina*, with Tagalog as its grammatical base, a common vocabulary must be developed from all the languages spoken in the Philippines. However, there should be no attempt to obliterate the various ethnic languages. Rather, they should be allowed to develop and continue creating their individual literatures. They should even be encouraged with government support to publish their literatures to propagate their languages as well as develop a high level of literacy among them. They must be speakers of not only the *lingua filipina* but also in their own languages.

Perhaps, to engender greater consciousness for the other languages spoken by the various ethno-linguistic groups, the Tri-Language Formula adopted by the Indian Government must be examined for what it is worth in the context of Philippine conditions. In brief, the formula is that every Filipino, on the basis of the Language Policy enunciated by Government, must learn English as a tool for higher education and international communications. He must also learn the National Language which is *Filipino*, developed according to the suggestions above. The Tagalog speaker MUST learn any one of the major Philippine languages, namely, Iloko, Bikol, Sugbuanon, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausog, Maranaw, Magindanaw, etc. This will certainly validate the principles of equity, which creates a sense of unity in a highly volatile situation, where the only lasting possession of these peoples would be their cultural heritage expressed most vividly in terms the living language.

(b) Resolution of the Muslim-Christian Conflict. The conflict has been identified primarily as political and economic in nature, but has been complicated by the introduction of religion into the problem. The introduction of religion into the conflict is understandable owing to the lack of a full understanding of the nature of the conflict. Moreover, the identities of the protagonists had been reduced conveniently to the simple terms *Muslim* and *Christian*, without any thought that this simplification of identities will create international repercussions. Moreover, in the course of this confrontations, only the differences between the two identities were given emphasis. It must be noted that these two seemingly different religious orientations have common historical roots, and that only in knowing these and understanding them would in the long run reduce the seemingly difficult problem capable of being solved. Perhaps even beyond historical beginnings in relation to each group's religious orientations, we seek the more fundamental ethnic roots. For both the Christian and the Muslim in the Philippine context share common ethno-linguistic origins. This can be the most substantial basis for reconciliation, allowing each group to develop according to their understanding of the world as it were.

In very succinct terms, one of the most respected Mindanao leaders and scholars wrote:

. . . the Muslim-Christian conflict is not the root of all Mindanao (and Sulu) problems. Muslim Mindanao (and Sulu) suffers from the instability of the masses in relation to government programs, unpreparedness of the Muslim communal society for changes in its conditions, and the Muslim groups. The government cannot be faulted for intensifying its Mindanao (and Sulu) development programs in recent years. But the greater concern is the protection of the Muslim community as a part of the national society, and also as a creative minority group of citizens, who because of their Islamic heritage and historical experience, do require some understanding, if not special recognition. (Michael O. Mastura, "Development Programs for Mindanao and Sulu, Retrospect and Prospect," Siliman Journal, Vol. XXV, No. 4, 4th Quarter 1978, 394).

And understanding should be fourfold in the study of their common roots both religious and ethnic.

(c) Intensification of Relevant Programs in the Field of Education. The educational system is the system that is in the forefront in developing a national community bound by common ideals and aspirations. In more specific terms, through its varied programs and policies, massive curricular development focusing on the specific ethnic, regional needs are undertaken. This would result in the development of positive value orientations for national community life, without, however, overlooking the individual ethno-linguistic diversities.

To illustrate this, the Bureau of Elementary Education of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) has already undertaken steps to enrich the social studies curriculum in the elementary level to include cultural materials from the various ethnic communities. But this is a very small beginning. Greater and more massive support of

Government must be extended to effect extensive changes in the perceptions by school children of the national character of every ethnic cultural possession.

Related to the Muslim-Christian Problem, it is seen that “education and opportunity for gainful occupation as the most primary needs of the Muslim population. If national solidarity is the end of the social programs, then education would be the leveling force to achieve it” (Mastura, *ibid.*) And it is still through the curriculum where this, indeed, could be achieved.

As an area of education, functional literacy could be a very effective mechanism for raising the level of national consciousness of the disadvantaged. It utilizes local cultural materials, like folktales, folk narratives, folk stories derived from the traditions of the people as to create initial commitments to learning. This could be the springboard for raising the level of aspirations, leading to national consciousness. On the higher level of literacy programs, materials should then be developed from programs in land reform, agricultural productivity, environment and ecology, legal systems, etc. All those must be designed to train them not only to be able to read, but to read for productive purposes, like being able to utilize brochures designed to disseminate information in the various occupational areas.

(d) Re-examination of the motions of “integration” versus “assimilation”, the “one” and the “many” in culture and society, etc. Other notions that may be included in this discussion are *bhinneka tunggal eka* (Bahasa Indonesia) meaning “unity in diversity” and perhaps the notions of *Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa*, literally “one nation, one spirit”. The latter notion was somehow the “motto” of the previous Marcos administration, but it never found its full meaning and realization among the Filipinos, for it seemed merely a “motto” and never pursued with vigor. The events in 1986 deeply emphasized its futility.

In re-examining these notions, a classic example may be used for this purpose. In search of the roots of the Filipino, it is best to look at his religious as well as his Philippine ethnic orientations. But, in exploring the background of the Christianized and Islamized peoples of the Philippines, their common Semitic elements grafted onto them must be examined. In more precise terms, there are three levels within which the Filipino will have to explore to show his total unity. In this presentation, it is reasonable to indicate these levels from the latest overlay down to the earliest level, to use the archaeological structure of determining age.

The third level (overlay) shows that the Christianized and the Islamized Filipinos find unity in a Semitic divinity through the line of patriarchs and prophets, i.e., Christ and Muhammad. Before these two central figures, both Christianity and Islam draw a common straight line through Mary, Joseph, David, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Moses and all the way to Adam and Eve and ultimately to the Semitic conception of Supreme Being. Precisely, the Muslims and Christians, as well as the Jews are sons of Abraham (see James Kritzeck, *Sons of Abraham*, Dublin: Helicon Press, 1965), whose genealogy goes back to Adam and Eve.

The second intervening layer or level concerns the Filipino's Asiatic socio-cultural roots, which make him share some of the most enriching elements of culture with the Malay and Indonesian, namely common concepts and vocabularies reflecting the fact that they speak languages belonging to the same family of languages—the Austronesian. Such common concepts and terms cover the most elemental areas of their lives and environments, and these had existed long before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Such a situation brings us to the knowledge that the Malay and the Indonesian were in full trading/cultural contact with the Filipino.

The First and earliest layer/level. Before the advent of Islam and Christianity, who were we, the so-called inhabitants of these seven thousand islands?

What is our pre-Islamic and pre-Christian heritage that lie buried in our ethnic subconscious, in our myths and legends, our arts and language, our values and customs? The most important fact to remember regarding our ethnic backgrounds is that since time immemorial the highlanders and lowlanders formed a single trading community tied together by the rules of supply and demand (the Negritoes or Agta formed the third group of peoples who are also Filipinos). The lowlanders supplied fish, salt, porcelain, ironwork, brasswork, and other trade items to the highlanders, who in turn traded forest products such as rattan, beeswax, resin, honey, rice, and gold. The lowlanders themselves were in full trading contact with each other, from the Ilocos to Sulu to Borneo and beyond—to Malacca, Java and Malay Peninsula, and perhaps even as far as the Indian Ocean.

This brings us to the conclusion that the peoples of the Philippines are fundamentally one people, one in their ethnic beginnings.

The problem in the evolution of our national community did not arise in the original contrast between the converted of the lowlands and the unconverted of the highlands. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that the lowlanders were converted into two different directions, one towards Islam and the other towards Christianity. Although both religious ideologies originated from the same line of Semitic prophets, the problem arose when Christianity passed through the western hemisphere and identified as European, the Middle Eastern garb having been shed, while Islam passed through the eastern hemisphere and identified as Indo-Malay with an Arab clothing. Islam was recognized as non-colonial in contrast to Christianity as colonial. However, both are still foreign.

Because these two religious orientations can no longer be discarded in the light of the events that had occurred in the Philippines, they can only be used as significant points of references in the massive renaissance movement that points to the direction of that heritage which the Filipinos abandoned when some embraced Islam and some Christianity. There is a need to recapture the good, the true and the beautiful that are still enshrined in our native legends, myths, handicrafts, artifacts and traditional courtesies. There is a need to relearn from some of those Filipinos who escaped the leveling effect of Islamization and Christianization, the highlanders of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. There is a need

to find again the foundation of our nativeness which is neither Islamic nor Christian, but Filipino.

To quote one to the leading Filipino anthropologists, who wrote that "there is no alternative to the ethnic base of national unity. Nowhere else in the world does religion substitute for ethnicity." He wrote further

... . The Europeans may have been Christianized for a thousand years, but there are French Catholics as there are Irish, Italian and Spanish Catholics. In all of them their ethnicity shines through their Christianity.

Similarly, Islam has spread wide throughout the Middle East, Africa and Asia. But nowhere in these areas has Islam succeeded in substituting itself for the ethnicity of the peoples. Even in the Arab world where Islam was born and developed their religion. How else can (one) explain the fierce pride of the Egyptians, Syrians, Jordanians and the Saudi Arabians in their nationality. They are all Muslims but they are first and foremost Arabs. . . (Eric Casiño; Readings: Seminar-Workshop on Southern Philippines. PMS Conference Room, August 25-26, 1977, R-5).

The picture one sees in the Philippines is entirely different. A Muslim Filipino in the community of foreign Muslims has no identity among Indonesians, Malaysians, and Arabs. To declare himself simply as a Muslim is meaningless in that context. He must have his ethnic and national identity—a Maranaw, a Magindanaw, a Tausug and above all, a Filipino. There is a world of difference between being a *Filipino Muslim* and being a *Muslim Filipino*. In the first his ethnicity is but an attribute of his religion; in the other his religion is but an attribute of his ethnicity, of his substance. *And the substance of all Filipinos be they Islamized, Christianized or unconverted is that he belongs to the Filipino nation, an inhabitant of this archipelago.*

In concluding this section, the notions earlier mentioned to be re-examined in the light of our classic example can now be re-stated. If we go back to the pre-Islamic or pre-Christian period of our culture and society, the principle of ethnicity describing the notion of *Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa* has been fully illustrated. Similarly, the notion of "one" and "many" as well as *the principle of unity in diversity* is manifest in the acceptance of the phenomena of Islam and of Christianity as well as of the "Pagan" occurring in the Philippines socio-cultural scene. A unified Philippine national community can only be valid in the recognition of their unique contribution to the total development of a reliant and proud Filipino people.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the final analysis, Section III of this essay has spelled out in significant details the directions towards which valid and acceptable integration may be effected.

In the light of III (a), intensification of the conscious effort to develop a common vocabulary of the languages of the various ethno-linguistic groups must be a declared national policy. This will eventually reduce divergencies in perceptions, perspectives and value orientations leading to the creation of the most acceptable national language and national literature. This would also result into the development of national community and consciousness. This is illustrated by the development of Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu, which while developing their vocabularies drawn from all the languages in these countries have created a national consciousness and pride without submerging the identities and individualities of the minority languages.

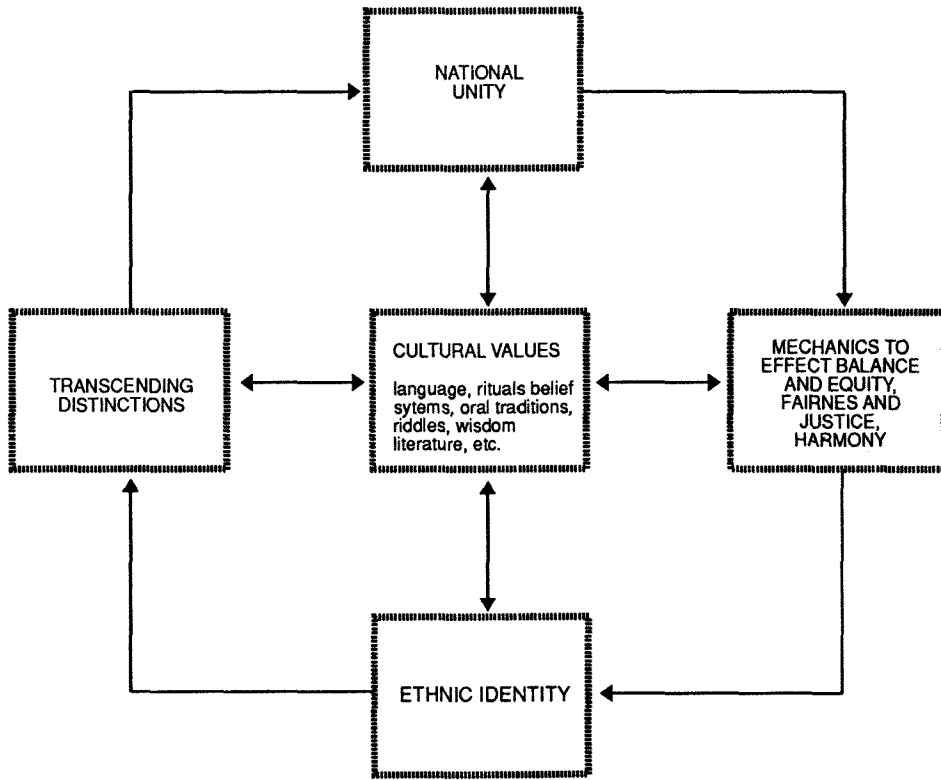
This ethno-linguistic issue has its implications in the Bilingual Policy of Government. Because the Policy does not necessarily encourage the other ethnic languages to develop their own literature, it is recommended that this policy be re-examined to look into the potential of developing it into a three-language formula or policy—that is every Filipino must study English and Filipino and the native Tagalog speakers must learn any of the major languages spoken in the country. This formula would ensure the development of the literatures of these other languages, which otherwise would be left to their own devices, or to their potential neglect if the bilingual policy is encouraged. The tri-language formula would certainly give meaning to the principle of equity. (CF. J.R. Francisco, "The Language Problems in India," Philippine Journal of Language Teaching, Vol. IV, Nos. 1-2, May 1966, pp. 1-17).

Also in the light of III (b), the solution of the Conflict in the Southern Philippines must continually be sought in all possible areas. Foremost among these would be in the areas of religion and ethnicity. Emphasis on the commonalities of Islam and Christianity must be continually be made—hammering upon their common historical roots—in various venues where "encounters" are inevitable (e.g., in the military, in schools, government offices, etc.). But the common fundamental ethnic roots of both the Christian and the Muslim Filipinos must not be overlooked. There are no substitutes to the basic understanding of the Filipino, and his origins must be given full focus.

National Government must be in the forefront of intensified Functional Literacy Programs. While the Department of Education, Culture and Sports continues to develop, implement and evaluate formal/non-formal educational programs, which are accessible to the greater number of citizens, the least advantaged groups can be brought to the level of national consciousness as well as occupational stability by the intensification of functional literacy programs. Both the public and the private sectors of the national community must have a stake in these programs.

Continuing re-examination of notions of *solidarity* (consciousness of being one) and *unity* (mutual re-enforcing factor among basic institutions, and others (see III (d) above) to refine and operationalize their meanings as to make national integration valid, hence a basis for more acceptable national identity, validated by the recognition of our being one in the state of diversity, must be a major cooperative effort of Government and the private sector, without which not much can be achieved. As such, therefore, the attached paradigm may be used to simplify the process by which all these may finally be attained.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTING NATIONAL UNITY
WITHOUT LOSING ETHNIC IDENTITY



EPILOGUE

While this essay was in press, I prepared a paper, entitled “Bhinneka Tunggal Eka: Effecting National Unity Without Losing Ethnic Identity” for the 13th National Conference on History, with the theme “Local and National History: Sources of National Unity,” held on October 15-19, 1992 in Mindanao State University at Tawi-Tawi. The paper focussed on the synergistic relations of the blocks in the paradigm to illustrate the interactions as well as interphasing of these in the process of achieving the elusive unity without losing the ethnic identity of given communities. In the process of elucidating the paradigm, an illustration was used, i.e. language, which was drawn from the above essay.

The paper, together with the other essays presented to the conference, is now in preparation for the press by the sponsor of the Conference, the Philippine National Historical Society.