

# Playing The Game: Reform Politicians In The Cebu Traditional Political Field

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**Abstract**— The study looks into the viability of reform politics in Cebu’s traditional political field. This traces how politicians labor to assert and institutionalize political settlements such as “diskarte” or rationalization and legitimacy of position. The researcher found out three sources of political “habitus” [Bourdieu’s appropriation of political structure and political culture] that formed part of Cebu City’s political institutions, namely: a.) the gatekeepers who are reform-grassroots-petty politicians at the barangay level; b.) the public interest articulators at the Sangguniang Panglungsod (City Council) level; and the c.) Archetypes who are *trapo* aristocratic politicians competing for the seat of mayor at the city executive office.

The researcher presents six (6) purposely chosen gate keepers known as reform-grassroots-politicians at the barangay level; three (3) public interest articulators at the city council, and, three (3) mayors contesting for the city’s seat of power -- the executive office in the local government unit of Cebu City. The researcher assessed each one according to their narratives as politicians, their distinctive identity claims, their views on Cebu’s political dynamics and political norm, their annual revenue generation and budgetary allocations and their understanding on the following institutions: a.) the *cabo* system (system of enrolment under specific patrons), b.) the *lansaderas* (ballot switching schemes during elections) and the c.) *inangayan* (vote buying system).

The study shows that the “habitus” of the aforementioned three institutions [gate keepers, public interest articulators, and archetypes] are so inter-twined that the whole field cannot operate independent from any one of them. However, for the purpose of this paper, the habitus of the gate keepers is focused. In the paper, the three habitus have a hybridized multiplicity of complex structure-culture-nexus now distinctively operative in Cebu City’s political field that have reforms rooted only at the grassroots level and not yet embedded in the entire structure of the political order.

Neo-patrimonialism is still present although held in control due to the pressures from the grassroots below who constantly assert the legitimacy of political change in terms of assets reforms and assets redistribution. Meanwhile the go-between public interest articulators stay at the middle ground in the tug-

of-war between reforms and neo-patrimonial archetypal and traditional politics.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Why are reform-oriented grassroots leaders engaging in the murky and violent world of traditional politics? Political bargaining between elites is often seen as an effective strategy for avoiding electoral violence and winner-take all outcomes in local politics. These political settlements have also been critical in securing political legitimacy and stable political authority for local elites. However, in recent years reform-oriented village-level leaders have used similar bargains to advance their interests and advocacies, in some instances challenging traditional politicians in local elective positions in city-wide and municipal councils. Fueled in part by successful collective action at the *barangay* level, these grassroots leaders have arguably transformed the political landscape in Cebu province starting from the 1990s and are now seen as key actors in the evolution of “new politics” in the province.

Have these engagements caused a significant shift in patterns of rule? Are they genuine ruptures from *trapo* politics or more of the same, and can it be sustained? This study examines provincial politics in Cebu and the emergence of a new type of reform politics “from below” that is seen to challenge the entrenched interests of traditional politicians in ways dissimilar from the past. Traditional politics, popularly referred to as *trapo* politics, has continued to hold sway in varying forms in the province since the post-war period, and more recently, in the post-Marcos period.<sup>[1]</sup> Recent years have seen the rise of new-type political leaders who do not come from the same powerful families or clans that lorded over the province, employing new forms of patronage and reciprocity to generate adherence from local citizens. They established their political authority by adhering to a combination of strongman rule, patrimonial politics, and “good governance” institutions that strengthened their “legitimate domination” over local politics (Weber 1954).

<sup>[1]</sup>Trapo, a neologism for “traditional politics” is characterized by the corruption and despotism of old oligarchic political dynasties after a colonial legacy of patron-client-machine politics and personalistic rule (Hutchcroft and Rocamora 2003; Sidel 1999; Kawanaka 1996). The term has become popular because it also refers in the vernacular to a dirty rag, and thus becomes a derisive connotation for the entrenched unscrupulous culture of patrimonialism in local politics.

This phenomenon is the subject of this study. The research is situated within the current scholarship on the nature of political transitions and the construction of political rule and authority at the subnational level. It documents the transformation of grassroots leaders into effective and accountable public officials at various levels. The study revisits relevant concepts from previous studies on Philippine local politics including political legitimacy, strongman rule, patronage politics, and responsible governance, among others.

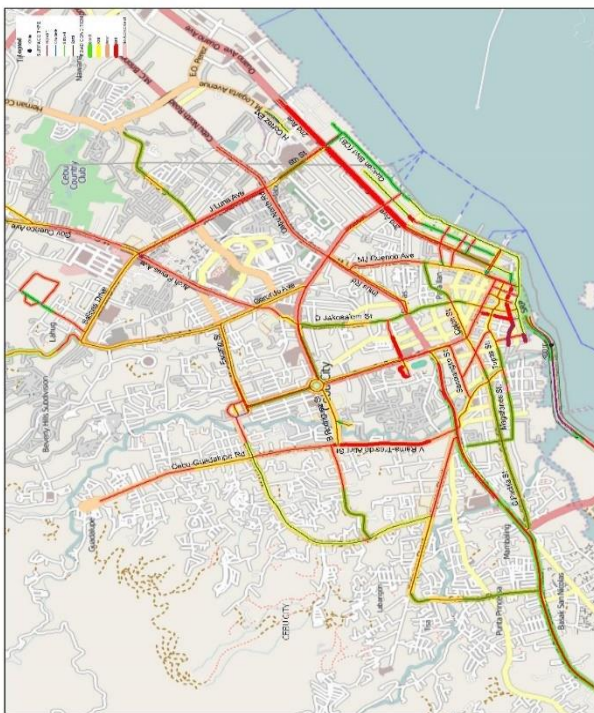
A. *Background of the Study*

Cebu province hosts the biggest voting population among all provinces in the country making it attractive to the eyes of national politicians. The country’s major political parties regularly court local political leaders to gain political dominance in this vote-rich territory.

As of Census Year 2010, Cebu City alone had a total population of 866,171 persons based on the National Statistics Office (NSO) 2010 Report. In terms of political subdivision, Cebu City has eighty (80) barangays (divided between the North and South Districts), comprising three hundred and six (306) puroks. There are thirty-four (34) urban and coastal barangays with large voting populations. Getting the majority votes in these barangays could very well deliver electoral victory to candidates who seek political control of the city.

In particular, the votes cast in the densely populated urban and coastal barangays at the Cebu reclamation area and the South Road Properties alone could win the seat to any candidate for the mayoralty position.

The Cebu City Government is made up of offices of



mayor, vice mayor, and sixteen (16) city councilors. The sixteen council seats are equally divided between the two districts of Cebu.

The first signs of a “reform politics” emerged in the early 1960s when the Cebu City’s political scene saw the emergence of political advocacies calling for more access to basic services and greater accountability among local politicians that was introduced by a church movement called the “Basic Christian Communities Community Organizing (BCC-CO)” The movement harnessed local leaderships from the ranks of

urban poor who engaged in plain discourse on basic issues like water and power supply and non-basic issues like construction of foot paths and installation of drainage systems.

Extraordinarily, came Ferdinand Marcos, an Ilocano legislator who rose from the fringes of Philippine oligarchy. Marcos reversed the pattern of the usual cacique democracy that was founded on the American context of “rule of law” by using the state as instrument of political power (Anderson 1995). Hence, it was the constitutional suspension of the writ of “habeas corpus” and the Marcosian imposition of martial law in 1972 that precipitated the proliferation of mass movements. Progressive groups were subjected to repression. Professionals, students, farmers, workers, and vendors who belonged in progressive organizations active in the anti-dictatorship movements were either summarily executed or arrested by the military. In the early stages of military rule, all attempts at political organizing work were outlawed by the State. The enactment of the anti-squatting law (PD No. 772) in 1975 paved way to the formation of the Panaghugpong sa Kabus nga Tagadakbayan (PANAG). As a result of political persecution and repression of members of progressive groups, many activists went underground during these years. But it was the church-based groups, functioning as non-government organizations (NGOs), that were the first to engage in community organizing in Cebu City at the height of martial law. These groups included the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFD), and the Share-and-Care Apostolate for Poor Settlers (SCAPS) of the diocesan Catholic Church.

In the latter part of martial law, other NGOs helped expand grassroots activities in Cebu City. There was the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community Organization (PECCO) that expanded community organizing (CO) all over the country, combining Marxist structural analysis and the strategies made popular by Saul Alinsky and Paulo Freire.

Instead of railing against national issues and opposing repressive rule, local concerns such as water, power, sanitation, path ways, and paved roads and their links to larger issues such as education, health, and housing were used as entry points for organizing. Various political groups such as the underground organizations of the Left saw the value of establishing their own open and legal organizations to

influence the programs and projects of existing ones and redirect these to national issues such as martial law and corruption. It cannot be denied that the most effective NGOs of the period were those whose leaders and staff pursued ideological and political interests. However, competing ideological persuasions eventually led to organizational splits and rivalries among various civil society organizations.

As mass actions intensified, more urban poor communities were organized. This development threatened entrenched "trapo" interests as more urban poor groups could now be mobilized in protest actions against inequities in public office. Up to this day, however, traditional politics, which in varying forms dominated the island from the post-colonial period through the recent post-Marcos period, has nevertheless continued to hold sway in Cebu. Recent years also saw the emergence of new-type local political leaders who did not belong to traditional political families or clans but who nonetheless gained voters' adherence through political patronage. There were also an emerging breed of politicians who gained political ascendancy through sheer combination of strongman rule, patrimonial and machine politics, and the use of "good governance" discourses to strengthen their legitimate domination over local politics.

In Cebu City, former leaders of informal settlers affiliated with the umbrella organization known as the Panaghugpong sa Kabus nga Tagadakbayan (Confederation of Urban Poor Dwellers), positioned themselves in active political offices in various barangay government units. In the 1970s and the 1980s, they were active in organizing a series of worker strikes and other mass actions through a combination of street protests, mass student and workers walk outs, and transport strikes. Today, with the support of grass root families who helped to vote them into office, they are already holding elective posts at the level where it counts most--the barangay level. They may be situated at the village level, but they are adept at securing bargains with local elites and have become active players in the local political landscape that used to be dominated by traditional politicians.

These new-type of politicians articulate a wider set of interests. They use a discourse of change that calls for participation of people belonging to the marginalized sectors, such as the labourers, poor households, and women. They made the delivery of basic social services the priority over infrastructure projects. Apart from attending ribbon-cutting ceremonies as traditional politicians often do, they are also distributing subsistence goods, medicines, housing materials, and basic necessities. Above all, they engage in advocacies for redistributive reforms in land, taxes, and services.

What have these leaders accomplished by shifting the basis of their legitimacy and authority from grassroots-level action and mobilization to electoral politics? What were the factors that caused the shift in the patterns of political participation? Finally, should this pattern be seen as a genuine shift from

trapo politics or, is it more of the same? Can these be sustained?

*B. Political transitions in the Philippines  
Colonial Politics and the Post-War Period*

Traditional politics in the Philippines traces its roots in the colonial politics cultivated and reinforced by Spanish and American authorities. The Spanish system of patrimonial politics and the American system of elite democracy had combined to embed a system of political domination that featured strong patronage relations expressed in representation through elections.

The Philippine colonial experience introduced a kind of politics that had paved the way for the entrenchment of self-interested, corrupt, and repressive political leaders. The colonizing state offered a lot of incentives and privileges that induced ambitious politico-economic entrepreneurs to engage in business enterprises that utilized political connection and protection, and to adopt patronage practices to sustain their rule. Taylor (1968:76) in Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* writes:

"Politics is a major industry among Filipinos; it is a way of life. Politics is the main route to power, which in turn is the main route to wealth... More money can be made in a shorter time with the aid of political influence than by any other means."

Public office in the Philippines is derived from a colonial legacy of patron-client relations, machine politics, patrimonialism and "bossism" that thrived within the country's brand of democratic politics, specifically in such mechanisms such as the party system and the electoral system (Sidel 1999). The environment has effectively attracted the local elite to express their power and authority through electoral politics and the practice of democracy through institutions that sustained the American colonial project. Native leaders and local political groups are pitted against each other (Lande 1965). Recruitment to political parties and the ascent to leadership positions in public service induce collaboration, competition and bargaining among politicians.

Scholars such as Lande (1968), Constantino (1975) and May (1984) postulate that these patterns of governance that were embedded under American rule were ritualistically turned over to members of the Philippine elite who originally came from the privileged classes from which the *Ilustrados* originated (Corpuz 1957; Kerkvliet 1985; 1990; Simbulan 2005).

Under this patronage system, government administrative positions are gained not through professional competence or civil service eligibilities but through inter and intra-elite bargaining. Rents are distributed and conflicts are avoided through political arrangements established through personalistic forms of relations within closed social and

political networks dominated by elite interests (Michel 1911; Taylor 1968). Powerful local elites leveraged both their educational backgrounds and social positions to justify their rule over the poor majority (McCoy 1993; Kerkvliet 1990).

In rural areas the landed elite accumulated wealth and power through control over large tracts of land that served the export market for agricultural products such as sugar and copra. They also benefited from state subsidies and protectionist policies served to dampen and delay the drive to modernize agriculture and enabled them to profit from the simple production of raw materials for export. To correct this anomaly, several attempts at comprehensive redistributive land reform were made only to be consistently blocked by big landowners. A series of half-baked measures were likewise undertaken, starting with the supposed redistribution of public lands mostly in Mindanao by the National Land Settlement Administration (NLSA), Land Settlement Development Corporation (LASEDECO), or the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA). The result of all these bureaucratic experiments was to further delay the redistribution of land, particularly those lands grabbed from farmers who were victims to the practice of the colonial *inquilinato* system.<sup>[2]</sup> Another aspect of colonial and post-colonial rule was to stifle the rise of insurgent movements by resettling landless farmers from Luzon and the Visayas to distant places in the South such as Sarangani, and Basilan in Mindanao (Corpus 1997).

The dominance of local elites in public office could be gleaned from the long political career of Sergio Osmeña Sr. A Cebu-born mestizo and prominent member of one of Cebu's elite families, he epitomized the classic colonial "politico" as provincial governor of Cebu from 1904 to 1906 during the Filipino-American War. He was also the governor of the Province of Cebu during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. He served as Senator of the Philippine National Assembly after the Japanese War and was later elected Vice President of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1944-1946. In spite of the ravages of war, his political control and influence in the province was sustained by his son's ascension to the political throne. Sergio "Serjeng" Osmeña, Jr. won the gubernatorial post in the 1951 elections against Mariano Cuenco, the candidate of a rival elite political family.<sup>[3]</sup> The Cuencos at the time enjoyed the support of the Duranos, another powerful political family who ruled the mid-Northern district of Cebu. Through the practice of machine politics, Osmeña Jr. rose to become the second Osmeña to lord it over the Cebu Province within a generation. After four years as provincial governor, Osmeña Jr. was also elected as Cebu City Mayor from 1955 through 1963, holding the office for three consecutive terms. He made a presidential bid against Ferdinand Marcos in 1965 but had lost in the elections reportedly marred by massive fraud. In Cebu alone for instance, the political districts that were part of the Durano bailiwick had delivered their vote banks to Marcos.

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<sup>[2]</sup>From the Spanish term "Inquilino" that refers to a worker of a colonial landed estate who is usually given the use of a small plot of land, implements, seed, and a small wage in return for his labor. The existing system is referred to as the "Inquilinato Sytem" (Agoncillo 1990; Constantino 1975).

<sup>[3]</sup>Some studies show that Osmena engaged in war-related enterprises that enabled the clan to secure its powerful economic and political position prior to the conflict (Mojares 1985).

Over time the dominance of colonial politicians had induced massive social unrest and intense political rivalry among the elites that led to the creation and maintenance of private armies by rival politicians, acting as warlords, who often demonstrated violent claims at the center of political power in Cebu. Elite politics hardly contained the violent inter-elite struggles for control of political office. Meanwhile, a wave of repressive policies were enforced targeting nascent social struggles such as labor protests and millenarian movements. As early as the 1900s Sergio Osmeña, Sr. had criminalized local peasant groups, accusing them of being outlaws (Sy 1996; Freeman Daily 1919; Sturtevant 1976).

#### *The entrenchment of trapo politics in Martial Law*

The old system of elite politics and patronage that failed to contain the political competition in the pre-martial law years was interrupted by the declaration of martial law in 1972 by then President Ferdinand Marcos. The political rhetoric of the "strong state" and "new society" was foisted on elite groups and civil society through the concentration of political power under one-man rule.

Cronyism became the route to political office and economic wealth, giving birth to the period of "booty capitalism"—a modernizing economy where members of a systematic oligarchy take turns in looting the resources of the state for their own benefit (Hutchcroft 1998). While one-man rule enabled the development of a "strong state bureaucracy" (Sidel 1999), it also led to rampant corruption and international debts — especially as massive subsidies and investments in infrastructure were bankrolled by international financial institutions.

As huge debt and the economic crisis followed, the economic foundations of martial law started to disintegrate and the system of elite and crony politics was severely weakened. Members of the economic and political elite later joined the fight against the dictatorship that culminated in the fall of the Marcos regime in 1986. The prominent role that the elites played in ending strongman rule had given rise to the restoration of *trapo* politics under the guise of the new discourse of democratization and good governance.

#### *Post-1986 elite politics*

Traditional politics did not end with the downfall of Marcos. Kerkvliet and Mojares (1991) argued that entrenched political families who were in power years before and during the Marcos regime had managed, by means fair or foul, to remain in office and to continue enjoying political and economic pre-eminence in their bailiwicks. The authors further assert that the practice of authoritarianism did not end, but had grown worse instead, as power, both political and criminal in nature began to reassert itself among new political elites—including those who had distinguished themselves in the struggle against the Marcos fascist regime (Kerkvliet and Mojares 1991).

However, the EDSA revolt that toppled Marcos had “modernized” the system of *trapo* rule in the country (Tancangco 1988 and Rocamora 2000). A consequence of the restoration of elite democracy is seen in the rise of “political bossism,” which mandated the cultivation of networks within civil society equivalent to those nurtured with the economic and political elites (Sidel 1999). The restoration of elite patronage politics came with the same sordid components that characterized traditional politics in the pre-martial law period. Bribery and corruption continue to grow, masked as culturally acceptable forms of “gift-giving” to cronies and their families, close friends, and allies. It included the practice of awarding business contracts, or elective and appointive posts in public office to election financiers, leaders, and supporters.

Although new clans and political networks superseded some powerful political players of the past, the old patron-client politics survived the martial law years. However, more recent developments indicate that a different strand of politics has emerged, and largely as a result of the role played by a network of grassroots organizations that played a significant role in the fight for human rights and democratization and the toppling of the Marcos regime. This sort of politics departs significantly from the classic brand of *trapo* politics by inserting redistributive and reform-oriented goals with the use of popular mobilization and patronage.

#### *Evolution of reform politics*

Philippine politics gradually developed new perspectives of leadership given the series of political changes the nation have experienced at certain historical junctures such as the Propaganda Movement, the Katipunan-led Revolution, the Filipino-American War, the formation of the First Philippine Republic, and the Third Republic. The Marcos regime, facing massive protests that culminated in EDSA I, gave rise to the clamor for new variants of politicians in the political field. The nation witnessed political cleavages that facilitated political change by way of continuing massive resistance and social movements.

Civil disobedience and the practice of “people power” placed the Philippines on the international political map. The revolutionary government of Corazon C. Aquino appointed left-leaning personalities from the ranks of civil society to serve the government under her administration. Many of them were appointed to national, regional and local government posts, and also in the judicial and legislative departments. Initially moved by a desire to use government power and authority to effect socio-political change, many of them accepted and even sought government posts. When the first post-EDSA elections came in 1987, many from the progressive ranks, who thought their mass base is strong perceived popularity were enough to make them win in the elections, sought elective positions. Thus, it was EDSA, at a time when the country’s political atmosphere was less hostile to the leftist participation in mainstream politics, that opened the political arena to various reform-oriented and progressive

political participants. EDSA moved them to enter the realm of political leadership by way of elections. For the first time, in more than two decades of centralized authoritarian rule, these new reform-oriented progressives “joined the game” in the Philippine political field. The question is how this new breed of politicians carried with them the banner of political reform that could change the substance and trajectory of politics.

#### *C. New politics via emergent grassroots oriented reform politicians*

When traditional politics was still in vogue, none of the big *trapos* would deign to seek, much less hold barangay level positions. Their social and economic stature and the winner-take-all nature of Philippines politics drove them to higher political office, with municipal and city council and mayoral posts representing the bottom line of their political ambitions. Meanwhile, most of the local barangay officials were small-time village leaders, who were oftentimes the *encargados* [administrators] of lands owned by absentee landlords, merchant proprietors, or rice and corn mill owners, who were in turn the clients of big local politicians. Professing loyalty to these politicians, they served as nodal points in consolidating the electorate at the local level, and were expected to broker the delivery of votes of their constituents via the *cabo* system.

After the fall of the Marcos regime a group of political reformers began to participate in the murky and violent world of electoral politics in Cebu. They were distinctively different from the traditional politicians due to their social and economic origins and their experience in pressure politics. (Sidel 1999, Cullinane 1998, and Mojares 1998).

Evidence from the field shows the evolution of new political leaders who do not come from the previous neo-patrimonial, patriarchal, and clientelistic-warlord political networks in the province of Cebu. They are not similar to the connectivities which Sidel (1999) described as supra-municipal structures of small town and district bosses and provincial patrons. These rising politicians push for change and articulate the interests of marginalized sectors including issues of women, labor, and poor community welfare, access to basic social services of communities, and ecological concerns. They do not push for huge infrastructure projects. They initiate mass distribution of measured quantities of basic materials that respond to felt and articulated needs in the community. These goods include subsistence commodities (rice and dried fish) which address basic needs for food, medicine, housing materials (nipa shingles and GI sheets), and other basic amenities (mosquito nets and blankets).

Rather than imposing TOP-DOWN programs and projects, these grassroots leaders are known for conducting regular consultations with their poor constituents, and in promoting a more inclusive collective community development agenda. They do not possess the means nor the capacity to engage in patronage politics. More importantly, they are associated with advocacies such as genuine asset reforms and redistribution

that have earned them the hostility of big land owners, corporations, and traditional politicians.

*D. The research problem, objectives, and hypothesis of the study*

*Research problem*

This study problematizes the dynamics of political change in Cebu City's local politics in terms of the shift of leadership from trapo to reform politicians at the grassroots level. The study analyzes the experiences of reform politicians or of individuals who rose to leadership in the Cebu political field outside of the regular and traditional patterns of entry. The study is a critical assessment of the leadership structure and culture of the different types of politicians in local Cebuano political offices in the city government and barangays, as well as the viability of this leadership transformation.

How did they emerge and what interests do they represent? Will they become a permanent fixture of local politics in Cebu and other provinces in the Philippines?

These new-type actors in the Cebuano political field do not trace their lineage to the wealthy and powerful *paterfamilias* of the province. They are not the subjects of big traditional politicians i.e., 'encargado,' or tenants in the farms owned by traditional politicians. They come from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from marginalized basic sectors, i.e., urban poor settlers, street vendors, media professionals, human rights activists, middle class professionals and even members of the labor sector. Their ideological orientation and characteristics differ from those of traditional politicians.

*Objectives of the study*

The study is an analysis of "reform politicians" and "reform politics" in the province of Cebu. The study examines the evolution of new actors and institutions at the subnational level, the interests they represent, and their origins, characteristics, and approaches. The study shall distinguish "reform politics" from traditional politics in the province, and determine whether new practices and new institutions introduced in the field by reform politicians have actually produced substantial economic, social, and political change.

The study aims to contribute to the literature on Cebuano politics in particular, and Philippine local politics in general, and provide new narratives that explain emerging forms of political leadership and political change. The study attempts to contribute to the field of political sociology by explaining WHY the political force for genuine change in Cebuano politics comes from grassroots reform politicians.

*Research hypothesis*

In addressing the abovementioned question, the study aims to identify the conditions that have led to a shift in actors and the strategies they employed, and whether these will significantly alter the nature and characteristics of politics in Cebu. Finally, the study reviews the implications of this

emerging form of politics on the wider local political arena in the country. The study hypothesizes that these new actors will contribute to enduring political change in Cebuano politics and will be able to entrench themselves in the local political field, eventually tilting the balance of power in favor of their poor and marginalized constituents.

II THE PLIGHT OF REFORM POLITICIANS IN CEBU'S TRADITIONAL POLITICS

This chapter provides the final mapping of the whole picture of the study. How the political game has been in place and how Cebuano political structures and political culture interlock into one logical field or space called the Cebuano Political field. And from these premises, the lenses used in the conduct of the study is reassessed and juxtaposed with the objective distinction of the field where it is applied and at the same time the theory is extended into new ramifications and juxtaposed with parallel theories where it can be reassessed in terms of applicability in method and context. Finally, the Cebuano political field is rendered and understood in the way it is structured, shaped and embossed in the overall social field and the reasons why it is so.

1.) The three political *habitus*

The study shows Cebu politics as a hybridized sub-national native political norm with a hue of the formal colonial "legal" bureaucracy, explained as a combination of nativism and xenophilia of local political dynamics of a.) gate keepers, b.) public interest articulators and c.) archetypes. This is shown in their command of machines or of organized bodies of supporters, of tactical alliances, their power sharing capabilities, their kind of coalition building and their tolerance on organized opposition. But all these are only made possible through the mandate provided in R.A. No. 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code (LGC) serving as the constraining and enabling mechanism in place for local government units.

Here are three (3) types of political *habitus* otherwise known as political institutions that exist and are contesting for power in the Cebuano Political field. These are the Reform-Grassroots-Politicians or reform gatekeepers for brevity; the Public Interest Articulators or articulators and the Trapo Archetypes or archetypes. Parallel to Sidel's work are three types of politicians according to the political division of labor in the city that are namely, those in the level of the barangay local governance, the *Sangguniang Panglungsod* (City Council) and the city executive office as the three major structures in the Cebuano political field.

2.) Multiplicity and hybridity

So, here comes now the resonance of multiplicity, and hybridity of political institutions in the Cebuano political field following a gradual unfolding of grassroots reformism

strongly in the actual community management structure the barangay level where they serve as service front liners, and at the city council level with the public interest articulators. At the barangay level comes the norm of reform gate keepers in constant learning and innovation [adjusting to both local-nativist form of “pagpangulo” or leadership and that of the colonial-rational legal bureaucracy of grand-office-leadership]. On the other hand, articulators at the council, position themselves as mediators between the positions above them and those below them. Then there are archetypes navigating through development diffusion as a form of political action to accommodate or not to accommodate all the forces below him including his rivals.

In terms of leadership structure and culture of local Cebuano politics are the following three (3) types of leadership *habitus* evident in the political field prior to the elections in May 2013, namely:

- a.) The hybridized generative native structure and culture of reformgate keepers at the barangay level who originally started political leadership from the ranks of native local activists of the anti-Marcos movement.
- b.) The hybridized articulators who are negotiated by political families to join local traditional political parties.
- c.) And scions of ancient oligarchs who rose to politics as trapo archetypes and who competed in office for business interests in the city.

3.) *Trapo* politics prevail: The *Cabo*, *Lansaderas* and *Inangayan* Systems

The main menu here is the contest between three to two trapo archetypes while the rest align under each matrix of archetype.

The field remains to be a game of trapo with prevalent practices of support from national patrons and then from national patrons to perks to trusted *cabo*, in order to operate the *lansaderas* and *inangayan*. One can speak of this norm of society particularly in elections. Election period covers regular campaign period, the day of elections and canvassing time for results of elections. It is Comelec who sets the actual date of elections and duration of campaign.

What is observed in Cebu is that even prior to filing of candidacy and campaign period politicians already gear up themselves in hype for political positions. They do not wait after filing of Certificates of Candidacy (COC) and actual campaign period.

The Cabo system is the main institution in communities organized in matrices under political parties or candidate politicians of particular dynastic family names. Hence, the community organizations are under trapo archetype politicians who hold the purse of local and national parties contesting for

slates in public office. Cabo recruits and enlists followers from individual precinct voters who work within the organizational set up of local parties during campaign periods. Recruited poor voters operate the set-up of grand ballot switching and flying-voter-schemes defined as *lansadera*.

Along these operations is embedded vote buying schemes where money is attached to sample ballots of line-up of candidates or names of politicians that will be copied into official ballots. This sample-ballot with money is folded in distinct manner inconspicuous to the ordinary eye. It may also be inserted in an envelope and passed on to enlisted precinct voters pre-located in the community. This is called *inangayan*.

*Inangayan* is the native way of reciprocation for effort spent to copy a sample ballot into the voter's official ballot. The *inangayan* is a token of exchange for votes. It is a form of money distribution as “a system of reciprocation and redistribution” from politicians who appeal to community-folks to choose him as honored leader or choice public servant to sit in power. For a politician, those who accept will in turn give him authority to take position of power to control and make use of public resources for a period depending on the position of power. Amount paid for *inangayan* varies depending on the position of power and volume of resources at stake for a position of power that is vied for.

4.) All forms of capital

- Warm bodies of voters - There are three forms of capital in Bourdieu's framework but may not necessarily belong to only one individual in a certain ladder or position of political power in the field. Hence, for the reform gate keepers, their capital is their ability to control and position at the heart of the everlasting source of warm-bodies of voters the voting population in communities that serve as their capital.
- Cultural capital is one's academic or religious standing in the community. - For articulators, their normative input to the field forms their cultural capital. They pose as articulate figures with ability to negotiate and renegotiate between both native barangay communities and big landlord dynastic political families. It is basic strategy they use to position in the field.
- Economic resources - Cebu's political archetypes with command over material possessions their economic capital, or social connections in networks of propertied upper class their social capital, plus their profession as cultural capital are all solid grounds of power except for warm bodies of voters controlled by reform gatekeepers and that ability to articulate good interests before the poor like how the interest articulators would do.

## 5.) Political Dynamics

The stakes here emanate from those variegated capital aforementioned in dynamic interplay in fields of contestation being tacit mechanisms.

For reform gatekeepers political position is important to push for genuine asset redistribution for long awaited shares of resources after years of historical struggles. For the articulators, their position next to archetypes is for them to climb to executive office too. To be city mayor from ranks of articulators means power for power's sake. And for the archetype trapos, the position of top executive in the City is decisive position to dispose of city resources for networks as enterprising institutions, and for profit such as the real estate business in brisk trade and commerce locally and internationally. As it is, archetypes pursue their role as dynastic political families in the forefront of shaping a city's politics and economy, institutionalizing its lead role as proprietor of local government being top land owners of the city.

- Reform-grassroots-gatekeeper politicians (reform gate keepers)

Here reform gate keepers are defined in terms of their narrativity and their social class, their tasks and functions, their ideological orientation, their notion of change in the political field, their endurance, and their electoral "diskarte". They are assessed in terms of their efforts or extent of fighting against patronage politics, and their identity claims being grassroots-gatekeeper-politicians. They are also asked to give inputs on how they go about their particular role in the cabo system.

- Public interest articulators (articulators)

Public interest articulators are likewise identified according to their feel for the Cebuano political terrain, their distinctive identity claims, their advocacies and their knowledge about the cabo system.

Engagements of articulators are taken from the experiences of some city councilors who were a mix of poor yet progressive individuals who are not necessarily natives of Cebu City. The study concludes that the cases here are from those lower middle class politicians who were coopted or given favors by traditional politicians, making them into some kind of odd progressive individuals now used to paint a progressive picture on local traditional political parties and then planted to participate in a line-up of political candidates as bearers of development agenda of traditional political families.

These middle politicians are those categorized as articulators who are a combination of progressive individuals, two of whom are former social development workers and one, a son of an anti-Marcos opposition leader. They act as urban poor articulators, on one hand, and advocates for development for poor communities on the other. They promote and transform the needs of the poor into a rationalized market for social protection perceived to be commodities for sale. In particular, they are capacitated to transform urban poor folks simply into a market segment for low cost housing or estate boom in the city.

Public interest articulators in this study happen to be negotiated lower middle class professionals and articulate leaders who are not necessarily natives of the city but can push for political advocacies on sectoral issues without creating antagonistic mechanisms against business opportunities of the city properties designed by an archetype politician. This is the doxa of public interest articulators.

The articulators, are adept at social marketing of issues, are chosen and appointed by a particular sector to represent them in negotiations for their interests. In some cases, politician-interest-articulators stand as middle persons between the interests of poor household heads and the interest of proprietary classes. The poor needs public interest articulators because they need someone who has the authority to speak on their plight and negotiate with rich institutions and vice versa. They also speak in behalf of the rich and haggle with the poor to give in to development plans envisioned by the rich. Meaning, the articulators, on the other hand, may stand as spokespersons of the rich families and that includes the circles of the archetype politician who sits as mayor. They act as skilled operators in terms of bargaining for a middle ground between development technocrats who push for development construction projects or for the poor for basic amenities. At times, they serve as adjunct agents for politicians' business plans since the latter are regularly those landlord-realtor-archetype politicians. It is also the role of articulators to act as middleman between poor resident mass clients for low-cost housing, and the archetype who transforms government properties into objects of their profit schemes.

There are three articulators purposively chosen in this study, namely: Councilor Joey Dalus, Councilor Alvin Dizon and Councilor Nida Cabrera. The aforementioned are crucial sources of literature on "reform politicians" as articulators, of political norm concepts and of political dynamics that are decisive



to understand the Cebuano political field. The study concludes how old families in Cebu City namely: Osmeña, Rama and Garcia manipulate and compete for resources or work for a “political grab” and how their “political grab” turns to be a modernization perspective for both economic power and economic growth in the city.

- Trapo archetype and Cebuano pulitiko (archetypes)

On the other hand, with the leadership of the archetype executive politician, one can see the matrices of families among three traditional political archetypes contesting for the seat of the executive in the Cebu City government. Its class position and proprietary character guarantees itself as local executive of the land. At the top is the field of political contestation between three traditional political archetypes that happens to be that of a “legalist,” a “cultural visionary,” and a “realtor” in Cebu’s political field.

These three politicians in Cebu City are engaged in a tug of war over the center of power, they being the protagonists in the contest for seat of Mayor of Cebu City. They are: the incumbent mayor Michael Rama, former mayor Alvin B. Garcia and the former mayor and then representative Tomas dela Rama Osmeña of the second district of Cebu City.

Traditional political archetypes are oligarchs in Cebu City. Aside from the patterns of political history of Cebu City, the study concludes that these archetypes are the accepted models considered to be the rightful visionaries who plan and design development. They possess the social connections, cultural standing and the command of economic resources necessary to make them top executives of the city. There appears to be an automatic and unspoken acceptance of this arrangement on top of the assumption in the community that these figures are guaranteed to deliver the goods when it comes to development of the city. These scions of local oligarchs are the ones who decide who shall take part in the enjoyment of the city resources and who shall live within the boundaries of city space. They are the socially accepted power who, by virtue of possessions, control space and determine to whom space must be shared for economic exploitation.

These archetypes have all the resources at their command because they belong to the ancient landed oligarchs that commenced at the old Parian district in Cebu City and whose business expanded to other parts of Cebu province, and even to the rest of the Visayan Islands and to the Mindanao region as well.

6.) New-type politics: Reform grassroots politics

- How did reform grassroots politicians emerge?

### *The Reform Gate Keepers*

Reform gatekeepers hail from the barangay native life-world. The barangay has been the oldest political structure that is carried onward through time since ancient Filipino political institutions. Here are “grassroots leaders” who serve as reform politicians, and at the same time as gatekeepers who are veterans in social mass movements of the anti-Marcos activism during the 1960s through the 1970a and the 1980s. They are purposely chosen as sample sources of data on their habitus with a certain extent of “tenacity of principles and interests”. They are the emerging reform political leaders pursuing the grand goal of assets reforms and assets redistribution for basic sectors of society at the village sphere.

They are namely, former Busay barangay chairperson Eleodoro “Yody” Sanchez (now already Kagawad after the 2013 elections), Sambag II brgy. kagawad Aurelio “Dondon” Jagmoc, brgy. Ermita kagawads Filicisimo “Imok” Rupinta and “Inday” Maria Ruiz Pino-Buanghug, Carreta brgy. kagawad Renato “Jun” Mabute (deceased in 2013) and Pasil Brgy. kagawad Constantino “Boy” Ostulano. All these grassroots barangay politicians are former mass leaders of the Panaghugpong sa Kabus nga Tagadakbayan (PANAG) an anti Marcos confederation of urban poor organizations since the 1970s to the early 1990s. Except for brgy. chair Eleodoro “Yody” Sanchez, who is from the student youth movement, petty middle class and former leader of the Student Catholic Action of the Philippines(SCAP) and League of Filipino Students (LFS) at the Cebu Central Colleges. Sanchez happened to join first in politics through the kabataang barangay (KB) but lost the elections. And then he is chosen SK leader in one of the Barangays in Cebu City also along his leadership in school.

These “reform gatekeepers” are barangay level politicians. Through collegial manner, they are assigned the task of gatekeeping. They are the government personnel closest to the household of every citizen and every family residing in the barangays. Firstly, they are runners, and sooner, they become “kagawad” gatekeepers. Then gradually they become headman or village chief, gatekeeper and barangay chair. Being the closest individual to the daily lives of community folks and whose task is to foresee the redistributive welfare rights of basic society at the barangay village sphere, these petty officials then gradually became gatekeepers.

The barangay reform gate keeper knows everyone in the barangay and monitors everyone to identify their needs and to deliver basic amenities and

services. The barangay reform gate-keeper-politician serves as a bridge for any party into the barangay community. That means he who sits as gatekeeper has the skill to monitor entry of any outside force and not make anyone pass him by without his knowledge and tacit approval. He is the eyes and ears of political groups who contrive to gain the confidence of voters in the village and the custodian of the barangay resource base. The gatekeeper has control over the dispensation of community resources and takes note of the individuals who vie for power in the political field and whether their designs are beneficial or not to the common good inside the village sphere. Hence, these mechanisms serve as the realm of *doxa* for grassroots gatekeeper politicians.

- What interest do these reform gate keepers represent?

These petty barangay politicians, are crucial to the emergence of an alternative form of power from grassroots leadership being the tradition of native Cebuano leadership of “pagpangulong banikanhon,” to mean leadership rooted from the basic community rather than leadership from the top colonial rational and legal bureaucracy only introduced in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Philippines.<sup>[4]</sup>

Hence, the resulting contemporary political dynamics and norm in the barangay being propounded here, is but a legacy of a mix half-native and a half-colonial rational legal bureaucracy that operate now. But this is historically rooted from the ancient nativistic structure of the barangay government. This hybrid system of barangay or basic village governance now serves as cup-link between barangay as bearer of grassroots ranks and gatekeeper politicians [from the basic Cebuano communities] to that of grand high profile type of colonial bourgeois rational bureaucracy. In a practical sense, it has developed local political practitioners from a social space that was historically appropriated to them as natives, or created from them a natural consequence, a logical course that fit to their everyday with ease. These politicians are honed progressively from experiences of both native welfare redistributive leadership and the training and orientation from the left anti-dictatorship movement from the 1960s to the 1970s. Some of them might also have sustained the embodied traditional leadership orientation of old, while others might have been influenced into the western teachings of contemporary and modern leadership norm, while the others have sustained praxis from past formations of progressive open-legal mass movements pursuing asset reforms through pursuing protest actions.

- How widespread is their influence?

These purposively chosen sample grassroots reform gatekeepers are among the mass leaders who won elections as barangay politicians and who happened to have command on larger and decisive sectors in the city’s economy. They are distinctively identified as active mass leaders of the progressive anti-Marcos mass movements in Cebu City in the past 20 or 30 years. They are chosen on purpose as politician samples here because their historical participation in the progressive and militant groups in Cebu City became a crucial force that got them embedded into the political structures. They are honed by experience to fight against demolition squads and massive arson that eliminated poor urban households residing within large market areas if not in street alleys and traditional poor barangays in the city. A large portion of grassroots politicians at the barangay level do not have the orientation and experiences of those purposively chosen in the study. These politicians are those who come from various walks of life who work with traditional orientation and inclination. The others who are simply traditional leaders, simply make politics a career in life.

- Will they survive?

The reform gate keepers in this study can survive and sustain themselves, for as long as they remain relevant and indispensable to the political structure and culture; for as long as they pursue the character of the *manggi-angayon* (*fair*) and *manggihatagon* (*generous*) kind of leader, or not the *dalo* (*tightfisted*) and the *suwapang* (*miserly*) type of person in the community; for as long as they can sustain as reform grassroots politicians whose prime function is at the heart of “resource redistribution and reciprocation” (which might be reinterpreted as clientelistic at some levels) but only particularly at the village sphere; and for as long as they remain effective being headmen or headwomen known as “reform gatekeepers” for purposes of centrality and symmetry over the resource base in parity with the village population. Other entry points into politics outside of this framework are regarded in this study as secondary or lesser in the degree of being reform politicians.

- What challenges do they face?

A shift in leadership from trapo to reform gate keepers has taken place shortly, outside of regular patterns of entry. But reform gate keepers will still have to show who will truly prevail in the tug of war of power over the Cebuano political field. Will that

be reform gate keepers or middle grounded articulators or archetype traditional politicians? A pattern cannot be proven as yet.

It is noted that at the barangay level are the reformgate keepers who not only act as gatekeepers but who are also once exposed to or had a stint in the left mass movement. Their consciousness is to pursue genuine representation for the basic masses and to call for assets redistribution for fellow poor residents. This is not an easy task. From these groups are community leaders whose interest is to achieve parity assets redistribution.

- Will these emergent reform politicians get entrenched in the Cebuano Political field or wane away? Why?

The role that grassroots petty politicians [reform gate keepers] portray is cut out for the village sphere level. For as long as they sustain openness to neighborhood constituents and their household continue to be the source of centrality in the village sphere, these kinds of folks will surely sustain. And if the parallel people's organizations are likewise sustained in the community, such as the chapel organizations, and home-owners associations that are affiliate to the PANAG, and if the PANAG sustains the fight for land-issue in the city, then the number of these mass leader type who emerged from the social struggle for land will also continue to develop a larger number of these types of leaders who can articulate basic mass issues and later compete in local electoral positions in the barangay government.

The basic limitation of barangay reform gate keepers is that it will only be at the level of the barangay where they can be elected as leaders. Most local political analysts find this strange since the numbers mustered by kagawad Rupinta and former barangay chair Sanchez who ran for councilor in the 2013 elections were not enough to install them at the city council. But same numbers were enough to sustain them at the barangay level in the October elections in 2013

Finally, the structure of Cebu's Political Field:

- Are there changes in the political field?

The fact, sustains that political machines have been in place in Cebu City since the first historical

<sup>[4]</sup>It was then later sustained in what Glenn Anthony May (1984) calls "social engineering" of national, provincial, townships and barangay governance in the archipelago. It is therefore, a kind of acculturation that resulted from the merging of traditional native political norms cum traditional native political dynamics with the contemporary practice of colonial and rational bureaucracy in the Philippine context of governance. This can be called some kind of hybridized-native-colonial-bureaucratic style of leadership.

elections in the Philippines that was implemented in 1907. It was the election for national assembly, and at the time, there were only the Osmeñas and Cuencos at the helm. At the present the same family names prevail. The Osmeñas are still here alive and kicking. Antonio Cuenco had retired from politics, but his son James, took his turn for hold of political position when he became Cebu City councilor in 2013.

The Cabo system is still sustained today, where most grassroots traditional gatekeepers as barangay politicians are attached to the matrix of patron archetype-politicians at the city level and likened to that of an umbilical cord where trapo power in office dies the moment ties connecting them to warm bodies of voters are severed.

The cabo has been installed as an underground cheating machine that operates every election time. Gatekeepers are maintained and perform regularly in the field while their "amo" (to mean master or patron), the archetype politician, looks for funds to sustain their families so that their loyalty to the latter would remain.

*Lansadera* ballot switching and the *inangayan* vote buying system are among the schemes mastered by the cabo to deliver votes every election day, until a more systematic synchronization of statistics via comelec workers or officers could prepare election returns and pull off election "*dagdag bawas*" or vote padding efficiently.<sup>[5]</sup>

City level politicians are also adept at all these, but some cabo leaders have come to detest the practice especially if the leaders have turned reform gate keeper politicians in the field after experiencing progressive activities with the left. They decided they have to work harder to combat these schemes to topple a system that party politics of the old and rich political dynasts had institutionalized. Today, election protests articulate that automated election machines are allegedly embedded with patterns of biased source codes that rig votes and come as even a grander cheating system.

#### E. Objectives and significance of the study

What are reasons behind the shift to new-type political actors in the field that is from old-type trapo politics to reform gate keepers who are identified in terms of their characteristics, leadership orientation, and functions? Why does the political force of change in Cebuano local politics come from grassroots reform politicians?

- The basic village leader who acts as the person closest to the household is found to be a better alternative for support and source of information about the political activities of the state. They serve as effective messengers of boon or bane to the community-folks. Usually, they are the persons who are seen to be generous that, despite the economic difficulties, they remain resourceful enough to share whatever small bounty is delivered to the barangay hall.

What accounts for the emergence of new-type institution in the local field with new-type actors' distinctive political norm gradually accommodated into the Cebuano political field?

- The reform gate keepers are real and meet the constituents in the eye regularly, while the state is simply an abstract entity and the congressman, mayor and city councilor are but hazy, ephemeral figures to the community folk. These new-type politicians became successful lately because they have mastered the acts of gradually bridging households to government programs. They learned to be articulate as they are gradually empowered to handle programs inside the community through the new arrangement of the fiscal tasks they handle. They serve as go-between the household residents and the big public officials at the city hall or that of the district representative's office. They epitomize community doers and nativistic humble leadership as opposed to the grand politicians who glibly talk but could not go down the village to sit and eat with their constituents.

Why did reform strategies and tactics, or *diskarte* associated to progressive politics recently earn head-way in public office?

- These practices form part of the "habitus" of these kind of gate keepers. They are not orchestrated or dramatized. Rather, they are patterns of regularity of norms that are already embodied in the characters of village petty barangay politicians [gate keepers]. "Diskarte" appears as second nature to them as most of them truly hailed from the community where they won as politician or public leaders. It does not come off as a pretense because they also come from the same community where they serve and their households are so close and connected to those of the others in the barangay. Besides, in every village sphere are only few family names because most, if not, all of them are relatives either by affinity or by consanguinity. So that normally, it would be easy for a homegrown politician to know each one and approach anyone in the community.

Will these norms eventually come to superimpose itself in the local political field? Why?

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<sup>[5]</sup>It is implied in the case of the Arroyo-Garci tape scandal and the patterns of election results in the past 10 elections where "dagdag bawas" was prevalent, and even the latest with the reputed 60-30-10 encoded PCOS machine program.

- If assimilation to the colonial, grand and rational legal-type bureaucracy prospers, and it becomes effective in penetrating the core of a barangay government and changing the aforementioned institution into a strict office-type-rational-bureaucratic operations, in the process it will also transform barangay governance to impersonal business with neighbor- constituents who are treated as plain rational citizens and no longer neighbors and kin. This is not the culture of the Cebuano community. In this manner, petty politicians can no longer find time to go down household to household. It would then be impossible to sustain these reform oriented politics now growing at the local level whose consciousness is tied up to the perspective of assets redistribution and pervasive preference for what is familiar and real personalistic support systems of households.

Why is it significant to have new-type politics and new-type actors in to bring about political change in the local field?

- It is significant because it means that the lowest level of the political structure itself has gradually found the means to resolve problems that have long confronted the village sphere. It is the economic poverty of the basic village sphere that is the main reason that new-type actors evolved. The continued economic poverty of the basic structure [the barangay] is practically what leads to the improvisation of leadership ethos in the field. Likewise, the continued difficulties of barangay governance and barangay workers are what pushed local villagers to see through the heart of the issues of governance amidst poverty and graft and corrupt practices of higher government bureaucracy. Hence, this is what redefines leadership and the support that is truly needed at this level.

Why does it have to be actors such as barangay grassroots gate keepers in the Cebuano local politics that new type institutions have emerged? Why is it a political change and social transformation that hail particularly from the grassroots type politicians? Why the shift in political norm, political dynamics and parity participation of leadership in public office? Why the transformation and patterns of variations?

- Actors at the barangay level have front stage and back stage transparently open to the community. They can be read and they are regularly seen. It is easy to catch a traitor at this level, whereas it would be difficult to prove accusations of treachery against extraneous actors with no native ties to the community. This shows that proximity is valued as next to transparency. The importance of proximity to barangay constituents cannot be overemphasized. It is of utmost political value such that oftentimes it turns up as a burning issue in many barangay electoral campaigns. Proximity issues against a politician who is perennially absent in his barangay finds sarcastic expression in a Cebuano

saying “*daling duolon apan lisud pangitaon*” (easy to approach but difficult to find). Indeed, there are politicians in the community who are very approachable but because they are not always around they can never be reached anytime by their constituents. The politician might be willing to help his constituents but his willingness is rendered futile by his absence, thereby negating to some extent, his readiness to serve the community when the need arises.

Why the distinctive shift in the kind of political leadership and rhetoric particularly in terms of distinctive sources of leadership, characteristics, orientation and ideology, roles, tasks and functions, experiences, knowledge and skills?

- Primarily, political settlements and elite bargains are the major components of a politician’s legitimacy in the field that form part of “doxa” as *diskarteng politika*. These political settlements and elite bargains vary depending on the players who employ the scheme (reform-grassroots gatekeeper politicians to public interest articulators and to archetype politicians). These are the durable political actions they engage in the field that define their characters and marks in the political field.
- As to reform gate keepers, their political actions appear to be the most durable in terms of real delivery of public services as they are at the frontlines of public service to the constituent households at the felt-needs level.

The hybridized political culture is premised on the call for assets redistribution as the core of reform politics. This is rooted in ‘gate keeping’ with the secrecy of the *inangayan* [vote-buying] and *lansaderas* [ballot switching] that fits Bourdieu’s concept of *doxa*. Doxa here is the unspoken rules and norms in the game of politics, rules and norms that are integral to Cebuano society’s system of production of texts and narratives derived from its effective formulation of community-life stories. In other words, political narratives of old are significant parameters that define the changing realities in the field of politics. Likewise, it means what forces of change create new forms of literature and calls for a transformation of actors that in turn create transformation of the field or the structure of the social relations within it.

Taken from Bourdieu, *doxa* is expressed in terms of texts and narratives as best examples of means to measure what value and level of acceptance there is towards concepts like *bag-ong pulitika* [new politics] that eventually reflect back to society and struggle against movements of change. The change or transformation in society also creates new forms of

texts and narratives such as narratives on reform politics (as opposed to “*trapo*” politics), and that can be read in a society’s body of literature, that, in turn, influence the creation of its history.

Particularly, at the barangay level, the subjective necessity of existence of reform grassroots gatekeeper politicians appears self-evident in its commonsense level of practice. For who would not ask for a portion of shared space when homelessness and poverty confront ones community? Consequently, it comes to be validated by objective consensus of political sense as it “*goes without saying because it comes without saying.*” This is a culture or behavior embedded in the field as part and parcel of established and emerging political order (Bourdieu, 1960).

Hence, in Cebu City are reform gate keepers whose experiences in community leadership were acquired from the collective life of less privileged dwellers in an urban center and whose day to day struggle is focused on the assertion for asset redistribution that is land for homeless dwellers, and basic social services for the poor such as public housing, public education and public healthcare. The field gradually puts on record how grassroots-gatekeeper politicians focus on the day-to-day practice of delivery of social services to address what are described as felt needs of poor community dwellers. The delivery of amenities is meant for the provision of social protection. These were provided with the literature of old social movements of poor sectors during the Marcos regime. The historical narratives on cries for land rights in the cities coupled with narratives on historical struggles for empowerment are embodied and have been embedded into the field as part of praxis. What is now carved gradually into the old structure are concepts and praxis of reform grassroots political leaders, who are classified as new politicians entering into the field of the old *trapo* local political arena.

Hence, the crucial part of the study is the establishment of patterns of literature on the emergence of the *doxa* of poor reform gate keepers. The study accounts for conditions that lead to the emergence of reform gate keepers from the way they pursue and haggle for responses to the needs of constituents. These norms have resulted in the existence of a political practice that is an amalgam of both heterodox [*trapo*] and orthodox [reform] practices influencing Cebu’s political field as accommodations for reform grassroots- politics. This is a hybrid form of politics that is somewhat clientelistic and not necessarily ultra-reformist. Perhaps, this is the best that they can be for the time being.

Here, the *doxa* of reform gate keepers are major *habitus* of those who are at the core of community service, leading towards achievement of community goals such as freedom from the perennial threat of demolition, and the achievement of welfare amenities (i.e., public housing for the poorest of the poor families along danger zones; public healthcare for the

sick and senior citizens; public education for the young and deserving youths).

The *doxa* of hybridity or multiplicity is drawn from grassroots reform politicians' praxis. Some still ride on or accommodate trapo practices in what Bourdieu's work calls *double verite* while some are gradually weaning their communities away from patronage politics and trapo electoral practices like the *cabo*, the *lansaderas*, and the *inangayan*.

Other political practices either reinforce or hinder informed actions of political reforms in the field by way of symbolic exchanges on issues of trapo practices of other politicians. In a way, this kind of undertaking reflects enabling and constraining factors in the practices of politics in the field. In Cebu City's case, gatekeepers also serve as a bridge between articulators and their community for the latter to establish connections with archetypes. Some gatekeepers build up teams in their communities or set up committee systems for purposes of accommodating outside politicians such as archetype politicians and other articulators at the city council. When the archetypes approach them for support during election time, they would subdivide the barangay and assign one team to accommodate an outsider trapo politician and find out what benefits they can get from him.

The *doxa* for reform politics develops from a circular reinforcement of local practices, such as exchanges of local texts, and constant engagement in local issues, (such as the *cabo system*, "vigilantism," *demolition of communities* after failure to pay CMP and *arson of communities*) that strengthen or weaken the foundation of all grassroots reform collective beliefs expressed in terms of local language, metaphors, and actions. Hence, the self-evidence of the social condition for reforms in the political field are being reduplicated through instituted discourses about new politics in Cebu. This is regularly accompanied by an exemplar.

The classic examples of trapo lexicons such as: *cabo*, *lansaderas* and the *inangayan* systems of trapo politics are embedded in the field and floated as evidences of a political-culture now embossed into politics for a period of time. From long labors of politicians in the field, these terms are historically produced and are used, practiced, lived by and accepted, knows no "disenchantment" (Bourdieu, 1960) and made it a tacit order of things given in the political field. The concepts and/or the practice known as the *cabo system*, *lansaderas* and *inangayan* are now part of a ritual of practices, of discourses, sayings, or proverbs that are all structured in concordance with the principles of the corresponding habitus of the Cebuano trapo politicians. That their distinction and identification falls within the realm of trapo is in itself a revelation that there exists an unholy alliance between two opposing *doxas* that support each other although they are against each other. The relationship is a unification of opposites that blurs the line separating the realms of reform politicians and trapo (traditional politicians).

Hence, what is the deeper meaning of a trapo system? The trapo system is but a system understood to be the mechanism where uncontrived masses in communities accept what big politicians offer, provided the deal carries with it a justification or legitimizing factor that usually comes into the form of pecuniary consideration for gatekeepers and for the poor unemployed people in the community. However, the community folks are also intelligent enough to recognize the degree of exploitation to which the trapo subjected them. Fully aware that they being treated like a pool of enslaved constituents who are being used by trapos in exchange for a few cash, these folks they pull off their counter-maneuver by maximizing their takes and at the same time under delivering the votes thereby shortchanging the trapo in the deal. For instance, some community folks talked one trapo candidate into shelling out P1,000 *inangayan* at the last minute in the last elections. They took the money and decided to properly divide it and distribute in equal shares among the voters in their community. But the voters were still given the free hand in choosing their candidates to vote. A number but not all, of them voted for Osmeña.

While it is true that there is a gradual emergence of reform, it is likewise admitted that the trapo system still prevails and has not been totally eradicated although it is constantly counter-checked by a gradually emerging discourse of reform among grassroots-gatekeeper-politicians in the field. Why does trapo prevail?

- Trapo prevails because, at the moment, the hybrid structure needs to sustain itself through the interdependent relations of gatekeepers, articulators and archetypes. There is no other logical and more durable arrangement that sustains the political field except for this kind of mutuality between and among players. It is not the individual players that count as decisive here, but the structure that inter-locks each other's position in the field and that accounts for its legitimacy and logicity. If one component gets extracted from this formation, the whole political system will surely breakdown and the Cebuano political structure and political culture get disentangled.
- There are various forms of dramaturgies that reform politicians have utilized for their claims of *selfhood* as they get embedded in their respective fields of social relations. The researcher appropriates Bourdieu's theory of praxis as expressed in the native concept "diskarte." This is because the politician as public servant makes it a point to sustain various roles in the various stages, and spaces of the social conditions. If one looks at the contemporary condition of politics and politicians, one may see the character of some 'slimy' objects [the conscious players in the field, according to Pilario, resort to ruses in order to hide or dissimulate their character flaws]. Because politics and politicians in Cebuano language is always in the norm called "*minaru*" or "*minarunong*" which means the act of being scheming which makes it difficult for one to

properly figure out the motives, ways, and characters of the actor who wanted to hide them. But for politicians, the condition is dependent on one's ability to make "*diskarte*" which is referred to as their "*cunning intelligence*". The term applies to those who have the ability to adjust and readjust quickly into positionalities, according to one's ability to fit into the situation or move swiftly according to challenges in the field. And so are the reform politicians, who have learned the art of politics morphing, enabling them to change and readjust their position and dispositions in a reasonable and legitimate manner in the changing times.

The capability to *diskarte* is the ability to fit into the changing conditions of society where political actions serve as responses to situations that challenge politician's difficult position. At times, this appears like a bluff but at the same time it is what legitimizes the bluff into a necessary form of political action. The *diskarte* is often resorted to by politicians in order to avoid embarrassment, trouble, or shame. Hence, *diskarte* is sometimes considered a means to slip away or make a cunning move to extricate one's self from a compromising situation, or unflattering controversy in which he or she is involved. *Diskarte* is also used when there are necessary political actions to be undertaken in order to satisfy an obligation that may challenge one's social position but cannot be satisfied automatically within a period of time. In Cebu's political field is the *cabo system* as *diskarte*, as *lansaderas* and *inangayan systems* are all but forms of *diskarte*. Hence, politics becomes more of the manner how politicians do their *diskarte* to keep them in the limelight or to best sustain their legitimacy and attract their constituents who must keep them in power indefinitely.

Archetypes, wittingly or unwittingly, provide the articulators and gate keepers the chance for the latter to apply their *diskarte* that serve to advance their respective interests; votes for the archetype politicians, are chances at city office for articulators and preservation of barangay leadership for gate keepers. But, given its nature, chance is momentary. So are the gains of gate keepers in the scheme of things.

Hence, the concept of "chance" although it is quite an absurd space for a positionality that is only involved in a very specific moment, the moment or chance is why the local metaphor called *diskarte* is likened to the Greek concept "*phronesis*" [*practical wisdom*] based on the work of Greek Philosopher Aristotle in his *Nicomachean*

<sup>[6]</sup>Aristotle states in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Practical wisdom, on the other hand is concerned with things human and things about which it is possible to deliberate; for we say this is above all the work of the man of practical wisdom, to deliberate well, but no one deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise, nor about things which have not an end, and that a good that can be brought about by action. The man who is without qualification good at deliberating is a man who is capable of aiming in accordance with calculation at the best for man of things attainable by action. Nor is practical wisdom concerned with universals only it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical and practice is concerned with particulars." NE 6.7, 1141b8-16.

*Ethics*.<sup>[6]</sup> In the Aristotelian text, *phronesis* refers to the true and genuine skills of everyday practice that makes a system of habitus [*hexis or habit of character, in Bourdieu the concept "habitus"*] appear like second nature to a person. It becomes a skill which at first is only served as a balancing tool until he develops the capability to see through and influence the scheme of things beyond his self, given his repeated exposures to situations of chances or in unexpected moments that require a necessary action. Hence, these moments of chance sometimes involve the ability for "*metis*" to mean *cleverness, and/or cunning intelligence* that, according to Aristotle, is integral to all conditions of the duality of truths [*dual face/Greek term is "doble virite"*]. And that is why *diskarte* [*phronesis*] may not necessarily be *metic or cunning intelligence* [*metis*] or vice versa, and conversely. *Cunning intelligence* may not be *diskarte* [*phronesis*] if one of the other [*metis*] is not present in it. (Aristotle, NE 6.5 1140b2-5).

In other words, *Phronesis* may be taken as some reasonable skill born out of *hexis or habit of character* that Bourdieu coins out in his work as *habitus*. *Habitus* just like *Diskarte* is what triggers one to act according to calculated risks of deliberating whether an action is dangerous or just appropriate for a given "moment of chance". *Diskarte* may also correspond to the Greek word *metis* [*cleverness*] that in Greek concept corresponds to the notion of "double face" [*doble virite/dual truths*]. Thus, *diskarte* as an act privileged by habitus cannot be entirely or simply put as *phronetic or metic* but is somehow a combination of both *phronesis* [*practical wisdom*] and *metis* [*cleverness*].

On the other hand, the so-called "*diskarteng pulitiko*" is the manner in which leader-politicians such as the grassroots gatekeepers, public interest articulators and archetype politicians handles, with the use of skills or strategy, certain issues, actuations and challenges that confront them or the community. Each political leader has his own "*diskarteng pulitiko*" consciously or unintentionally acquired through experience in the community. In its varied ways, "*diskarteng pulitiko*" is a by-product of circumstances in his political life that shapes his individual self [*a self configuration*], a transformation of the self [*self transfiguration*] and/or that repeated transformation [*self reconfiguration*] being politician leader and public servant at the same time (Ricouer in J. Dunne 1995, 21:137-157). This might be taken in from the metaphorical sense from the life stories of politicians. It could be an appropriation of a chapter of the lives of politicians in which they intertwined in the positions of power gate keepers and articulators both serve as enabling mechanisms for the former. These system may be referred to as political positions in the forced field analysis. All these three positions interlock with each other and is so embedded with each other's structure that extracting one away will dismantle the whole field. But this happens only if there is a unification of a theme that runs through the

lives of each individual in the story of the forced field, of tacit agreements that play part of the contests of symbolic powers.

Here the term *diskarte* also refers to the researcher's neologism for the praxis or the "act of poaching in the field" undertaken by gate keepers in their efforts to gain space within the political playing field of the ever traditional political field still dominated by dynastic families to date. Conversely, getting the dynastic politicians to accommodate the articulators in the former's political party is the latter's *diskarte* to be able to get a post or political position in the field of power. The culture of the new breed of politicians (the gate keepers and the articulators), in their historical experience embodied in them as distinct from the practices of *trapo* politicians who are entrenched in the political field.

*Diskarte* in this study is seen as a process of concealment of interests in the field rather than a form of revelation of their interest because reform politicians act simply by poaching in order to gain ground and handle power by means of misrecognition and other tacit means.

Politics is a semi-autonomous field defined by class relations and domination. Here, the changing conditions of time, of power, and of legitimation demand a certain kind of creativity to respond to the challenges of the field. The cunning intelligence of gate keepers or that of articulators are seen through their ability to adjust to changing and vacillating conditions that require an element of bluff or deception in their actions to make their actions appear appropriate and justifiable in the given instance. For Filipino politicians, such ability for *diskarte* has been proven true mostly in cases that expose or might expose them to public shame and conflict of interests. It is situations like these that confront their ability to decide and make sound or cunning choices. Thus, the local term *diskarte* is understood as a strategy of concealment to save oneself from the occasions of shame or embarrassment.

On the other hand, *diskarte* is also employed in situations where certain concerns require urgent actions, but there is not enough time and resources, (not to mention lack of ability to meet legal obligations or requirements) to achieve as certain objective at a given time.

*Diskarte* is also understood as the normative aspect of Bourdieu's practice when Bourdieu took off from MacIntyre's (1985) statement that practice is a set of human activities through which goods or end results distinctively defined by such activities are achieved. This set of activities, in a way, also extend to a kind of standard performative skill and/or standard of excellence in the performance of this set of activities that corresponds to the defined standard end result (MacIntyre 1985: 187). For instance, a politician may be motivated to perform well as a public servant due to the

economic rewards that he gains from his services. However, only when he performs his sworn duties well, out of true sense of commitment to the genuine love of public service can he truly be a real practitioner of politics. Thus, comes the distinction between what Aristotle calls *poiesis* and *praxis*. The former is an act of doing a thing for a cause other than itself, while the latter speaks of an act done for its own sake. That is why for ordinary gatekeepers, to enter into political practice, they have to accept the standards of excellence according to authorities in the field of politics, such as their mentor cadre activists, and to accept their inadequacies and incompetence. In the same way, one should have the proper attitudes, values orientations, and practices to enable one to make judgment, decisions, and actions consistent to the current standards of social justice in political practice. Like other fields, the standards of practice in politics, or in the field of development and activism had had long histories before they cannot to be defined as social fields.

On the other hand, the *habitus* of a politician defines the manner and conduct in which he asserts political settlements and legitimation in everyday life. Given the crisis situation in Cebuano politics, and as reflected in the literature, the embodied Cebuano political culture in the history of its praxis, is characterized as that of: a.) warlordism; b.) machine politics and neo-patrimonialism; c.) neo-patriarchalism in networks of patrons as social capital; and d.) political dynamics through coercive electoral schemes. Its remarkable evidence is the historically-established *cabo networks* of the supra-sitio, supra-baranganic structures of the lower class masses in their respective villages and the *lansaderas* chain-of-cheating-ballot-switching mechanisms coupled with the long history of the *inangayan-vote-buyingscheme*. This is where barangays are subdivided into smaller cells of registered precinct voters organized parallel to the sitio-based precinct household clusters for purposes of insuring election alignments. Local kingpins establish sitio-based *cabo* leaders who enlist or enroll these households reflected in the voters' list at the precincts for them to provide the perks in exchange for their votes during elections. The *cabo* system is regularly reactivated during election time and is deactivated thereafter leaving only selected sitio or barangay *cabo* leaders are sustained all throughout the political period.

Meanwhile, the emergent reform politicians rely on setting up various political machines that may appear like patrimonial and uneven in some way, but are actually people-oriented, face-to-face, personalized alternative structures of formal and semi-formal networks. These alternative organizations are of equal, rather than feudal, relations replicating mass organizations as political structures for the purpose of securing extensive people's participation in governance that used to be marred by the patron-client relationship, the political machine, patrimonialism and bossism of old. In short, its *habitus* is grounded as the alternative to the *cabo* system in a way that makes direct democracy work in the actual field. This is how mass organizations and institutions of public service, as



alternative empowerment centers for the poor and the deprived, came to being.

#### F. Validating the Hypotheses

The study further affirms the following hypotheses:

- Some reform gate keepers of the past two decades are recruited not from traditional political families, but from groups involved in mass movements and similar socio-civic networks that strongly fought against the Marcos dictatorship and see that there is no other way to assert change but through actual participation in mass movements at the grassroots level;
- That reform gate keepers are not the articulate or ideologue type of mass leaders from the left who can provide theoretical bases for their actions as they were not trained to be ideologues in the movement and it was not their preoccupation to engage in theorizing but they do claim that their origin and exposure to such movements and networks have become the source of their anti- land-lord, and anti-political dynasty sentiments, practices and conducts of political norm and political dynamics in public office;
- That reform gate keepers are not from ranks of hardcore leftist activists in Cebu City. They are but ordinary members of the people's mass movements of the left;
- That reform gate keepers introduce democratic and participatory approaches ranging from personalized consultations, collective action, collective sharing of resource base, mass consultations, people's initiatives, and other democratic civil society-oriented reforms;
- That reform gate keepers gradually establish barangay to home-based and sitio-based collective alternative structures as schemes of interest articulation for civil society groups that can compete with structures of traditional politics, e.g. cabo system, small-town boss, district boss, and others to secure votes needed to make them win in public office during elections;
- That for as long as genuine assets redistribution and felt needs of the people are not met, these parallel structures of civil society pursue their interest to push for continued political reforms so that emergent reform gate keepers have reason to exist and sustain its position in public office;
- That reform gate keepers somehow combine their new politics with some personalistic politics associated with traditional politics as a norm in public office. They, too, make use of clientelistic practices although at the minimal level of felt needs redistribution ;
- That some social connectivity between trapo and gate keepers exists, such as the relationship between trapo archetype politicians with reform public interest

articulators and reform-grassroots progressive gatekeepers at the barangay level allowing pragmatic coexistence of some hybridized-multiple strands of politics to continue; and

- That these emergent grassroots reform gatekeeper politicians and their politics though only at a minimal level, still contribute to the development of a concept of "political change in Cebu City's local politics."

#### CONCLUSION

Based on aforementioned political relations and political behavior that have unfolded in the field, one can see a parallel development of institutions that is determined "by the system's capacity to adapt to changing environments in order to maintain itself" (Pertierra 1988: 12; Sandschneider 1995). The Cebuano political field is quite permeable, what with its own mechanisms and sets of political settlements and elite bargains that have to be maintained to sustain itself. This is still called "Institutionalism" although it fails to attach an independent role for particular institutions such as the role of gatekeepers as against articulators and against executive archetype in the city government. This is because one component structure is dependent on the other, such that it cannot operate the moment it is removed from its interlocking mechanism.

However, from the statist perspective of political sociology, the researcher finds it not enough to consider Blondel's (1973) "Old Institutionalism" with purely historical and legalistic description (Blondel 1973:23), to speak for Cebuano politics. This is because Cebuano politics goes beyond historical and legalistic premises. The researcher considers this more of a kind under Neo-Institutionalist school where dependent and independent variables are taken into account. Cebuano politics has had institutions that affect distribution and redistribution of resources, and influence political meanings. Such institutions also create norms and rules that shape preferences, choices, and behavior of political actors in a manner where there is interdependency among subgroups, such as gate keepers in relation to articulators and archetypes and vice-versa. There are particular institutions that play both roles of cause and effect (Martin and Simons 1998: 743). Incrementally, Cebuano institutions such as gate keepers, articulators and archetypes become more than just a field of social forces aggregating excessive amounts of societal interests and political action. They appear as collective actors for political change (March and Olsen 1984: 738). Like, the gate keeper nature cannot stand on its own without the given institution of articulators whose duality outlasts the extent of the character of the archetype institution in public office.

The researcher finds this neo-institutionalism expressive of the conditions in Cebu since it concurs with fundamental importance of designs, like system of government, elections, and representation (Stepan and Skach 1993 :1; Diamond 1997: xxii; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997: 2.; Roper 2002 : 253).

Here is a field that belongs to institutionalism like the *cabo system*, the *lansaderas* and the *inangayan* in the Cebuano political field.

Thus, looking into the designs of political institutions in Cebu City, such as in terms of a.) political norm; and b.) political dynamics, from the perspective of neo-institutionalism, the study concludes that here comes a mutually dependent relationship between social structure [cabo system] and the political actors [gate keepers, articulators and archetypes] in Cebu City's local government units.

Furthermore, the researcher found out how in Cebu comes Neo-Institutionalism as a renewed interest in institutional and "constitutional engineering" (Sartori 1994) along with Bourdieu's sociological concept "habitus" as the reflexivist dimension, while asserting the norm of a symbolic field of political change as endogenous. In this case, a kind of multiplicity and hybridity of the institutions serve as conclusion, after finding out how cabo leaders are likewise transformed into reform-grassroots-gatekeeper-politicians and then embedded back into the political field as integral political institutions or as independent variables or collective actors.

But still, in the Neo-Institutionalist's school, the process of political change appears hazy, if not fragmented, slow or too mechanical. True Cebuano political culture and practice can be viewed through different lenses. Now what lens appropriate and more generative-reflexivist in "habitus" that draws out processes and moments of political change from interactions within a framework of norms? Here the actor [gate keepers] improvises the political dynamics via his/her assimilation into new institutions or structures as he/she engages in the practice. As the actor becomes determined and effective, spill-over effects on other institutions foster changes in the political culture. While institutions change the values and attitudes of political decision-makers, the Cebuano society also gets redefined as a consequence of these decisions. Eventually, with changes in resource allocation [urban lands] also comes changes in the redistributive properties of resources other than what was previously experienced and which, over time, stimulate changes in the social and economic structures of Cebuano society.

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