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The Art of Governing the Self and Others in the Christian Philippines

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Abstract

Through an ethnographic depiction of cultural creolization, this paper will detail the ways in which traditional Filipino values have been successfully mixing with and eventually lodging into the intersubjective landscape of Cagayan Valley, where the Chinese, Ibanag, Ilocano, and Itawes ethnic groups dwell. This cultural creolization process informs the ways in which the imagined social reciprocity between the self and others has been governed by a historically constituted power/knowledge system: the *padrino system*. This system is mainly composed of the symbiotic codes and social practices of (1) Catholicized ritual kinship and (2) the Tagalog ethics of "debt of gratitude" (*utang na loób*). In light of Foucault's (1988) governmentality, the uncertain contact zone between the art of governing the self and the selves of others, I will detail the creative ways in which the *padrino* (power/knowledge) *system* is used in the Philippine frontier life-world to build local communities, resolve conflicts, and restrain self-aggrandizement.

Introduction

One day, an Ibanag-Filipino teacher, Roxanne, was approached by her student's Itawes mother, Eloisa, who was accompanied by Roxanne's niece, the daughter of Roxanne's elder brother. Roxanne's niece is also the god-child (Ibanag/Itawes: *ina-anak/inanak*) of Eloisa. Roxanne felt that by bringing the girl, Eloisa was presenting herself as a relative: the matron (*madrino*) of Roxanne's niece. Knowing that her son needed a passing grade for admittance into high school, Eloisa pleaded with Roxanne for special consideration when grading her son's examination paper. The encounter constituted a predicament for Roxanne. While she is expected to be impartial in marking, it becomes hard to refuse Eloisa's request because if Roxanne does so, she may be accused of being *awan tu pavvurulum* (Ibanag: without sympathetic companionship) by her elder brother.[1] Although I was not able to learn what Roxanne eventually decided, her predicament actually pointed to two phenomenological puzzles. First, how can we conceptualize Eloisa's invocation and skillful use of the symbiotic codes? Second, how is it that Roxanne and Eloisa needed not to be reminded of the implications of the presence of Roxanne's niece in the encounter despite the fact that Roxanne and Eloisa belong to two different ethnic groups? These two questions set the terrain of this paper.

Just as sovereignty-making hinges on the successful instillation of an insider knowledge system that exclusively links the nationalizing state to its subjects (manifested primarily in the forms of personal identities, moral virtues, and tacit rules of everyday exchange), the Cagayan frontier inhabitants' realization and grasp of a power/knowledge system is critical to the conduct of everyday politics. A power/knowledge system is elaborated in terms of symbiotic codes and social practices that govern the ways in which inhabitants conceive the person, imagine the self, practice social skills that connect with each other, and make sense of social reality (Cannell, 1999). This system is locally known as the *padrino system*. What are the codes and practices of the *padrino system*? How does this system contribute to the imaginings of the Filipino person, self, others, and social reality? How would this system enable an actor to govern the self and others' selves? How would this system contribute to the production of truth? First, I will discuss how the co-existence of various ethno-linguistic groups constitutes a *cultural continuum* in Cagayan Valley, one of the Philippine state's frontiers where cultural creolization takes place.

Beyond the State-Frontier Dichotomy: Contours of the Cagayano Cultural Continuum

Figure 1. A Possible Model of the Cagayano Cultural Continuum

Ibanag - Ilocano - Itawes - Tagalog – English – Chinese – Spanish-Isneg – Kalinga – Malaueg -Indian

It is held that the modern state-building project represents a form of "internal colonization" in both western and non-western settings. For example, while Habermas (1987) identifies the "colonization of the life-world" as a process by which the state imperatives penetrate and distort everyday life in the western societies, Scott (2009) finds "internal colonialism" in the relatively stateless highland Southeast Asia, where frontier inhabitants have developed astute ways of evading the states' subjugating mechanisms. The "internal colonization" argument may be economical in explaining the persistent recurrence of human-induced sufferings such as war and displacement. Nonetheless, there are other innovative ways for the state to include frontier populations without creating a zero-sum state-frontier dichotomy. One way is to conceive the state-frontier relations in terms of the murky and uncertain zones in which the nationalizing state and the frontier society imbricate and synergize with each other.

The term frontier has two meanings. First, contrary to the international juridical norms, which assume clear-cut boundaries that separate human communities, frontier can refer to the unstable zone within which the sovereign state meets its challengers and engages with other sovereign entities, such as insurgents and frontier strongmen. The Cagayan Valley is qualified to be one such zone. In the late 1960s, the communist ideologues of the Huk rebellion (1940s to 1960s) had decided to go beyond the "Huklandia" of the central Luzon plain to reach the southern and northern Philippine frontiers due to a strategic consideration (B. J. Kerkvliet, 1986, 1990[1977]). Identified as a state granary and a base for peasant mobilization, the Cagayan Valley was selected for the revolutionary cause, which fitted into the site selection criteria and the "encircling cities from the countryside" tactic that Mao (2002[1968], pp. 12-24) originally proposed. The 1970s and 1980s marked the hype of communist insurgency. Although the movement faltered in the 1990s, low intensity conflicts were revived in the 2000s (Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2008). Second, frontier can refer to the frontier life-world's multi-ethnic, inter-subjective landscape, in which the state strives to meddle and attempts to assert its superiority. In state-building, the subjectivity of the individual becomes the state's most desired frontier, within which it strives to lodge itself. Through mass education and evangelization, the Manila state and the Catholic Church both attempt to resonate with the frontier populations by matching and hybridizing the frontier populations'

local codes and practices (Gatan, 1981; Liban, 1973).

Due to the multi-ethnic and religious context of the Cagayan Valley, actors are living within a "cultural continuum" in which different cultures intermingle and creolize (Drummond, 1980) (Figure 1). Within this cultural continuum, language and religion both reflect a sort of cultural hybridity. For instance, it is common for speakers to incorporate bits and pieces of Ibanag, Ilocano, Itawes, English, Chinese, Spanish, and Tagalog in their daily language. Since Spanish times, Christianization has taken place in the Cagayan Valley (De La Costa, 1967, p. 59), yet Cagayano social relationships are largely mediated through "folklore Catholicism," in which the practice of ritual kinship (*compadrazgo*) plays an indispensable role to formalize allegiance and affirm bonding (Lynch, 2004[1984]). As such, despite the fact that a homogenizing national culture has been institutionalized for years through mass education, the local government, and electoral politics, the Ibanag, Ilocano, and Itawes cultural groups still retain their indigenous cultures. Often, this cultural continuum permits individuals to draw from the multiple cultures (functioning as a sort of a pool of symbols and identities) available to them to purposefully retrieve and make practical use of in certain situations. In other words, the presence of multiple cultures permits actors to call upon any of their "cultures-in-reserve" when necessary.

A cultural continuum is an intersystem in which different cultural manifestations are acquired by a person through learning and socialization. Although there are boundaries between these seemingly independent cultural systems, the systems also overlap into aspects of social life, e.g. religious syncretism and linguistic creolization. The creolization process is significant in that it enables us to understand the *padrino system*, within which actors can interpret, create, and renew meanings by establishing patron-client relationship with others. The culture of patronage and its associated institution, ritual kinship (*compadrazgo*), were originally introduced by the Spanish missionaries and qualifies as the Philippine state's capillary power/knowledge system

> that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body. (Foucault, 1980, p. 119)

In northern Luzon, just as the indigenous institution of *lakay* (headman) includes a reciprocal network of a "big-men" and followers (W. H. Scott, 1994), modern Filipino patronage already had pre-colonial roots. Mixing the indigenous chieftainship and the Catholic ritual kinship, the contemporary patronage found in this frontier

region is regarded as a creolized cultural system (the *padrino system*).[2] Informants point out that the *padrino* is a *system* which characterizes its historical and institutional characteristics. The Spanish word *padrino* refers to the personage – the patron. The word *system* refers to a pattern of interpersonal interactions that reconstitute a larger moral order. It is systemic because it encompasses a constellation of complementary moral values that guide how reciprocities should be organized.

There are two major complementary pillars in the *padrino system*. First is the notion of gratitude. Second is the notion of revenge. A 'debt of gratitude' (*utang na loòb*) is the cornerstone of interpersonal 'trust' (*tiwala*), which compels one to return a gift or a favor after receipt. Likewise, not appreciating an exchange party's debt of gratitude is considered immoral. The notion of gratitude serves as the moral basis for long-term relationship development. What happens if the principle of debt of gratitude was violated? The notion of revenge (*ganti*) sanctions behavior that is considered ungrateful (*walang utang na loòb*). For instance, in a case of negative reciprocity (Sahlins, 1972, p. 195), the *padrino system* also provides moral guidelines to sanction impersonal exchanges. Chicanery is severely sanctioned by the act of revenge. Use of violence and the sabotage of one's reputation through gossip (*tis-mis*), intrigue (*intriga*), and slander are not uncommon. Without changing the originality of this indigenous phrase, my additional understanding of the *padrino system* is to regard it as "a kind of rationality which was intrinsic to the art of government" that "constitute(s) the specific reality of the state" (Foucault, 1991, pp. 89 & 97). Patronage is conceived as a cultural pattern, sustained by compatible moral principles that govern reciprocity and social hierarchy (Blok, 1969). In the Cagayan Valley, patronage is seen to be a moral practice that informs the ways one should properly behave as a "good person" (*tao ng mabait*); it dictates that individuals should reciprocate (provide mutual help to one another) and act with compassion, honor, and dignity. Further investigation has shown that compatible ideas also exist in the Ibanag, Ilocano, and Itawes cultures.

Compadrazgo: The Art of Producing the Good Person (*Tao ng Mabait*)

Codes and Practices

Strands of post-structuralism are often criticized for downplaying the subject in their allegedly 'anti-humanist' analysis (Layder, 1994, pp. 106-113). This might be true in Foucault's (1989) earlier archaeological works in the 1960s, but Paras (2006. p. 121) suggested that "the Foucault of 1980 had found room for interpretation, agency, and subjectivity" which promises "a unified theory of human agency" (Smart, 1985, p.

71). For instance, in contrast to Bourdieu's conceptualization of agency, which is largely structured by the capitals and dispositions (Mouzelis, 1995, pp. 112-113), Foucault conceives that human subjectivity functions in two directions: it is both constituted by and constituting the state's capillary power/knowledge system (Foucault, 1988). As the state governs the frontiers by producing and localizing this power/knowledge system, *frontier governmentality includes the uncertain contact zones between the arts of the government of others and of the self*. In order to escape from the circular loop between agency and structure, my proposition of frontier self-governance espouses the kind of heterogeneous and undetermined human agency that would enable us to explain changes informed by actions of mixed motives (Callinicos, 2004).

I am therefore going to elaborate on the discursive specifics that guide dyadic transactions on which the frontier agents rely for building communities. Community building entails the art of creating and cultivating loyalty from other existing actors in the network of social relations across a particular geographical territory. Maintaining loyalty does not solely mean controlling followers. Although it involves inculcating debt of gratitude that the receiver is compelled to reciprocate, it also allows freedom for one to decide when, what, and how to reciprocate. As a personhood system (Carrithers, Collins, & Lukes, 1985), the *padrino system* enables the transacting parties to evaluate the involved persons with a key assessment criteria: is s/he is a *good person* (*tao ng mabait*)?

The conflict perspective of patron-client models suggests that the Philippine state is largely a continuation of its colonial dynamics (e.g. Hedman & Sidel, 2000). Such a perspective would naturally attribute the present socio-political state of affairs to colonialisms and their complex art of government, which leave very little room for postcolonial agency. As a result, *postcolonial Philippine human agency refers to the reflexive manipulation and versatile interpretation of the padrino power/knowledge system for improving oneself and another's life chance within the uncertain, constraining conditions of postcolonial transitions.* As an alternative, I propose a "ripple" model of social relations to portray the frontier organization as an inter-subjective system of meanings, which allows different interpretations of meanings by the actors based on the *padrino system*. In Foucault's (1991, pp. 89 & 97) sense, the *padrino system* entails the art of governing the self and the selves of others, which becomes "a kind of rationality which was intrinsic to the art of [Philippine] government" that "constitute(s) the specific reality of the [Philippine] state."

The *padrino system* thus represents the dominant value system of the frontier life-world, in which actors who are either playing the role of the patron or client are

interlocked by a potentially expanding social network. Among the Ibanag people, the bilateral kinship system is headed by the father (*yama*), who is expected to be a *mangiyegu* (protector):

> [a] strong man, able to protect his family and his home against any aggression. In this sense, he is called *patul* – a king, in his own domain. No one can question his sovereign power. In the absence of the father, the mother is expected to take over. (Gatan, 1981, p. 28, italics original)

Compared to the Ibanag phrase *y daga mas nakannag ta danum* (blood is thicker than water), invoking *tattadday tam nga familia* (we are one family) has more far-reaching moral implications to both kin and non-kin.[3] In merging with the traditional tribal chieftainship, the *padrino system* becomes a creolized technology of the strongman in the reproduction of political legitimacy. In the Philippines, like other Catholic countries in which the Christian ritual kinship (*compadrazgo*) is practised (Hart, 1977), the Spanish term *padrino* is equivalent to the Tagalog terms *ninong* (god-father/male sponsor) and *kumpadre* (co-father), respectively. *Madrino, padrina, ninang* (as to the godchildren) and *kumadre* (as to the parent of godchildren) mean the female sponsor/patron/godmother and the co-mother, respectively (Lynch & Himes, 2004[1984], pp. 158-159 & Figure 6).

It is important first to clarify the equivalent ritual kinship categories adopted by various ethno-linguistic groups who have absorbed the *padrino system* into their ritual kinship system (Table 1). Citing Drummond (1978, p. 35), "[c]reole contains not one grammar, […] but several." Hence, creolization of these ritual kinship categories thus constitutes a "grammatical continuum be adapted to form a conception of a *cultural continuum*" of ritual kinship categories that embrace contradictory (or, seemingly incompatible), but semiotically related, units of ritual kinsman (Drummond, 1978, p. 35, italics original).

These ethno-linguistic groups do not operate separately within their own symbiotic realm of patronage. None of them is completely independent from the others. While I aim to delineate the perceived cultural compatibility between these ethno-linguistic groups, I will illustrate how creolization, as the Philippine state's art of governing the frontier, enables a basis of self-governance, i.e. to facilitating within individual actors the ability to create cultural realities by re-interpreting meanings from a 'cultural continuum' of discourses of patronage. Through the ritual kinship ceremony endorsed by the Catholic Church, social relations are renewed, and the subsequent role expectation is redefined. The *padrino* (patron) has a higher symbolic status than the sponsored (client) in ritual exchanges (Arce, 1973). *Compadrazgo*

(ritual kinship) “is … often assimilated into patron-client relations” and commonly found in other non-Catholic societies as an ideological practice to legitimize social inclusion and exclusion for community building (Bloch & Guggenheim, 1981, pp. 377 & 385 n.2). In Cagayan, it is common to hear businessmen and politicians address and greet their concerned counterparts as *pare* or *mare* to denote a sense of ‘we-ness’ – this is a creative (ab)use of *compadrazgo* for establishing social networks and suiting individual needs (Parkin, 1980). The following ethnography substantiates this observation.

Table 1: Considered Equivalent Ritual Kinship Terms by the Cagayanos

Tagalog	**Spanish**	**Hokkien**	**Mandarin**	**Chinese Characters**	**English Translations**
kumpadre/ pare	*compadre*	*kiat-pai-hia-ti*	*jiebai xiongdi*	結拜兄弟	co-father
kumadre/mare	*comadre*	*kiat-pai-tsi-mei*	*jiebai zimei*	結拜姊妹	co-mother
ninong	*padrino*	*kueh-bei*	*qifu*	契父	godfather
ninang	*madrino*	*kueh-mu*	*qimu*	契母	godmother
Ina-anak	*ahijado/a#*	*kueh-gin-a*	*qiernü*	契兒女*	godchildren
kinakapatid	¶	*kueh-hia-ti-tsi-mei*	*qixiongdi zimei*	契兄弟姊妹	god-sibling
Tagalog	**Ibanag**	**Ilocano**	**Itawes**		**English Translations**
kumpadre/ pare	*kumpari*	*compadre$*	*kumpari*		co-father
kumadre/mare	*kumari*	*comadre$*	*kumari*		co-mother
ninong	*nangana/ namallao@ / ninung*	*ama ti buniag/ ninung*	*kanganak*		godfather
ninang	*nangana/ namallao@ / ninang*	*nanang ti buniag/ ninang*	*kanganak*		godmother
ina-anak	*ina-anak/ naballao/ inana ta kristiyano*	*barok ti buniag (male) balasangko ti buniag (female)*	*inanak*		godchildren
kinakapatid	*wawagi ta santa Iglesia/ wagi ta kristyano*	*manong/ manang/adik/ ating+ / kabsat ti bunyag / kabagis*	*wahi kang simban*		god-sibling

Keys:
Rarely used. Gender differentiation: *ahijado* (god-son); *ahijada* (goddaughter).
* Gender differentiation: *kueh-ga*; *qier* 契兒 (god-son); *kueh-tsa-mo-a*; *qinü*; 契女 (goddaughter).
¶ Not used at all.
@ Naganan/namallao is used to address the sponsors during the actual ceremony. The godchildren address their godfather as *tiyu* (uncle) and godmother as *tiya* (auntie). Other equivalent terms for godparents are *ulitag* and *pakiaman*.
$ Usage extends to siblings of co-sponsors and their spouses (Jocano, 1982: 117).
+ *Manong* and *manang* are used to address older male and female god-siblings. *Adik/ating* is for younger god-siblings regardless of gender.

Source: Author's field research on kinship terms (2003-2009).

Reinventing a Good Man (Mabait na Lalaki): An Ethnography

A vibrant culture of entrepreneurship can not develop without "economic personalism," as an entrepreneur not only has an economic role but is also an agent-broker who represents, maximizes, and creates gains for his or her connections or networks (Anderson, 1969). In Tuguegarao, Alejandro Chua and Noynoy Ty[4] have enjoyed friendship and a close business partnership over the past six years since Alejandro has been the sole supplier of pancit (egg noodles), bihon (米粉 mifen, rice vermicelli) and misua (米線 mixian, flour vermicelli) to Noynoy's new business venture, a restaurant with a *panciteria* section (a local eatery which specializes in Tuguegarao-style fried noodle dishes[5]) on Tuguegarao's busiest street. Alejandro is an elected leader of the local chamber of commerce. He is also well known for his industriousness, generosity, and benevolence. Noynoy is a migrant entrepreneur, newly arrived in Cagayan. After working for his Chinese father's restaurant in Manila for many years, he wanted to establish his own business in a new environment. His distant relative in Cagayan referred him to Alejandro for help. Based on trust and endorsement from the referee, Alejandro used his connections and influence to help Noynoy to secure his business licence. Moreover, he often offered him "friendship price" and low-interest credit. In return, Noynoy patronizes the grocery store of Alejandro's son, Juan. The store is the sole supplier of cooking oils and seasonings, as well as other ingredients for Noynoy's restaurant. The two families have become close to each other in business. The businesses have progressed and Noynoy is doing very well in the eyes of many businessmen in town. Apart from his own business, Alejandro also helps his children's businesses and his wife's newly established meat-processing business. As the workload is heavy, Alejandro employed one of his nieces to be in charge of the routine deliveries to Noynoy's restaurant and *panciteria*, thinking that the new staff would find it easy to adapt to the already routinized dealings with Noynoy's business.

However, things began to go wrong from this point. Noynoy started to realize that he had to pay increasing amounts for Alejandro's deliveries. The amounts reported were becoming greater and greater. As Noynoy valued the friendship and previous help offered by Alejandro, he kept silent for several months of transactions. On Alejandro's side, unlike before, he noticed that Noynoy had not paid for his deliveries but demanded more and more supplies, which was interpreted by Alejandro as *kuripot* (stingy): doing very well yet refusing to pay debts. Both Alejandro and Noynoy started to suspect that the other was taking advantage of the shared friendship

and trust. Bitterness grew on both sides. In a telephone conversation, when Alejandro asked Noynoy to clear the debts, Noynoy asked for a price reduction. The discussion did not go well because both sides felt insulted when Alejandro commented on Noynoy's stinginess and Noynoy asked why Alejandro had become greedy (*swapang*). Both sides failed to come to a proper solution to resolve their problems with each other. What made the situation worse was when Alejandro was encouraged by a good friend who was a lawyer to sue Noynoy for not paying his debts.

Caught in the conflict between his father and one of his closest business partners, Juan went to investigate the issue. Juan eventually found out that it was Alejandro's newly employed staff member who had created the anomalies in the accounts and deliveries by lining her own pockets. Alejandro and Noynoy then cleared up the misunderstanding, but because of the charges filed by Alejandro against Noynoy, Noynoy was 'extremely hurt inside' (*masakit na masakit ang loób*) and refused to talk to Alejandro. In a telephone conversation, Juan asked Noynoy about the issue, and he told Juan in despair, 'Why does your father sue me? We had been together for years. Do I look like a thief? *Yi mo-leong-sim*[6] [He has no good conscience]!' Noynoy felt insulted because of Alejandro's decision to sue him, which implied that Noynoy did not want to pay his debts. To Noynoy, Alejandro was ungrateful (*walang utang na loób*) because although Alejandro helped Noynoy very much, Noynoy had been patronizing his son's business since he had come to Tuguegarao. Alejandro felt it was unnecessary to apologize to Noynoy because of *min-zi* (面子 *mianzi*, face, or in Tagalog, *mukha*) and said that he had already withdrawn the case and that he would continue to give good offers to Noynoy. However, bitterness on the part of Noynoy drove him to look for other foodstuff suppliers directly from Manila. He wanted to change suppliers.

Juan was sensitive about the change of relationship between the two families since the misunderstanding. He also learned from his business friends that Noynoy was looking for alternative suppliers. After consulting with his mother on the matter, and considering the relationship between the two families, Juan decided to nominate Noynoy and his wife as his wedding's *kueh-bei-kueh-mu* (契父契母 *qifu qimu*, sponsors)[7] or in Tagalog, *ninong* and *ninang*. He told Noynoy that it was the Chua family's sincere invitation to start a new phase in their relationship with the Ty family. Seeing it as an honour – a token of reconciliation from Alejandro, Noynoy was pleased to accept the invitation.

At the wedding ceremony, inside the largest cathedral in Tuguegarao, Alejandro and Noynoy came together and shared the fact that they were now as close as brothers because they were *kumpadre* (co-fathers) or in Hokkien, *kiat-pai-hia-ti* (結拜兄弟 *jiebai xiongdi*, ritual brothers). Noynoy praised Alejandro for having a son who is

mabait and *magandang loob* (meaning good, humane, kind, and generous in Tagalog) and *ko-yi* (meaning good, well-behaved and kind in Hokkien). The sponsors were mostly Alejandro's close family members and friends, including a few notable figures in Tuguegarao, such as the mayor. As a non-family member, Noynoy was still seated with the Chua family at the dinner reception. The ceremonial event helped to sweep away the bad feelings between Alejandro and Noynoy. In this particular episode, Juan acted as a go-between, mending the relationship between his father and his closest business partner by practically using the *padrino system* as an honor system – nominating the Ty couple to be one of the wedding sponsors. Originally, Noynoy was a good friend to Alejandro and a business partner to Juan, but the wedding ceremony pulled him closer to the network center of the Chuas by recognizing and honoring him as a ritual kinsman, and positioning him within the inner circle of the social universe of the Chua family. In this particular wedding ceremony, the Chuas made use of the *padrino system* by nominating Noynoy Ty as a ritual kinsman.

Against the backdrop of previous misunderstandings between Alejandro Chua and Noynoy Ty, the Chua family's decision to nominate Noynoy as Juan's wedding sponsor was re-interpreted as a token of reconciliation offered by Alejandro to Noynoy. This reconciliation would not have been possible without Alejandro's ceremonial endorsement of the godfather-godson relationship between Noynoy and Juan. Through ritualizing the patron-client relationship between Noynoy and Juan, Noynoy and his wife were given an equal symbolic status as the co-parent of Alejandro and his wife. However, at that moment, Noynoy himself knew well that the nomination mainly served as a token of reconciliation by granting him a seemingly equal status with Alejandro. In reality, the nomination was intended to mend the patron-client relationship between Alejandro and Noynoy. Alejandro's superiority as the common patron of Noynoy, and his son, Juan, was affirmed at Juan's wedding ceremony.

Drawing from this case, I want to highlight the creolized nature of the discourse of patronage: the interpretation of the meanings behind the nomination of the wedding patron as a creative enterprise. In order to make a meaningful interpretation of the nomination act, one should delve into the specificities of the life histories of the parties involved. Based on the situational necessities of the involved parties, the nomination successfully rescued a faltering patron-client bond. In this case, Filipino patronage provided a timely platform from which to create a new phase in the relationship between the Chua and the Ty families. Thus, the above ethnography informs an archetype of, in Parkin's (1980) terms, "creative abuse" of the *padrino system* found in the Cagayan Valley. I selected a Chinese-Filipino case with the

intention of displaying the creolized nature of this power/knowledge system in contemporary Filipino society.

Three features of the *padrino system* are worthy of further attention. First, the *padrino system* is an interest-coordinating system. With its hierarchical structure between the patrons and clients, both parties seek their own interests. Secondly, it is an honor system based on frequency and depth of interactions (Bourdieu, 1966, pp. 197-198). The closer an individual is cognitively located to the designated ego-self within the circular orbited network, the more prestige/honor is enjoyed by this individual. If the ego-self is a renowned individual, the amount of prestige/honor would increase accordingly. In short, the *padrino system* is a honor system in which the interacting actors within the social network enjoy a collective self-esteem, *amor propio* – "an emotional high-tension wire that girds the individual's dearest self, protecting from disparagement or question the qualities he most jealously guards as his own best claim to others' respect and esteem" (Lynch, 1970, p. 16). It is the sensitivity to the norms of good behavior that preserve one's acceptability among others and the sensitivity to personal affront by preventing embarrassment or shame (*hiya*). Thirdly, the symbiotic ingredients of the *padrino system* inform the specific yet delicate logics that actors must tactfully manipulate in order to maintain the Filipino ideal type of social acceptance: smooth-interpersonal-relations (SIR). Accordingly, SIR is constituted by (1) *pakikisama*, meaning 'sympathetic companionship', "concessions" or "giving in" or "yielding to the will of the leader or majority so as to make the group decision unanimous" (Lynch, 1970, p. 11). (2) The practice of using euphemisms in language marks a trait of the Filipinos to cushion the feelings of the person affected. (3) Use of go-betweens as a way of preserving and restoring smooth interpersonal relations by avoiding loss of face or shame (*hiya*) and to remedy an existing state of conflict and tension by sensitively replacing shame, embarrassment, affront, and uncomfortable feelings with honor (*puri*) (Lynch, 1970, pp. 15-17). Undoubtedly, Juan played a successful role as the go-between, consoling Noynoy by honoring him as his family's *padrino*. By doing this, Juan has won the praise of Noynoy as someone who is *mabait*, *magandang loób* and in Hokkien, *ko-yi*, which are all regarded as the virtues of being a good person (B. J. T. Kerkvliet, 2002[1990], p. 177).

Cutting across kinship, ritual kinship, friendship, patron-client relationship, and other social relations, the *padrino system* actually means more than *compadrazgo*. Its essence remains the practical rules of interaction between the political elite and the masses. The *padrino system* thus entails reciprocal exchanges between actors whose give, take, and return are governed by a complex set of codes and practices, which specifically define the roles, statuses, and expectations of the actors positioned

differentially in each other's subjective imagination (Lynch & Himes, 2004[1984]). Perceptually, the strongman is the person who manages to occupy the most superior status in a constellation of criss-crossing social networks in which he engages; he is the ultimate *padrino*. While he is continuously glorified by honor as the *padrino* in numerous life-events and communal ceremonies and rituals, he is obliged to reward his followers and sometimes sacrifice himself in exchange for their loyalties. The *padrino system* is a set of moral codes that govern exchange and interdependency that provide individuals with roles and expectations to negotiate for qualitatively different objects. Gifts, favors, services, and financial rewards are given out in exchange for political support. Every three years since 1988, elections have been a routine event during which one's political influences as the *padrino* can be attested and proclaimed. Through elections, fiestas, municipal beauty contests and other similar ceremonies and life-event rituals, the codes and practices of the *padrino system* have been reproduced.

To illustrate the *padrino system* pictorially, imagine that a piece of stone is thrown into a pool of calm water. From the center point, where the stone reaches the water, rings of ripples radiate outward to the peripheries. As a ripple moves further from the center, it becomes weaker. Ripples close to the center point are stronger. Using this pictorial metaphor to depict the pattern of social relations in rural China, Fei (1992, p. 60) coined the phrase, "the differential mode of associations." Social relations are patterned as outward radiating orbits that circle around the ego-self, prioritizing associations according to the differential proximities to the centre, and forming a circular onion-like network of connected individuals who play a range of different social roles – the ego-self's "social universe." Applying this typology in the Philippine context, bilateral family members and kinsmen are located at the most inner circle;[8] next would be the ritual kinsmen, and then neighbors and friends. Although the positioning of personal associations is believed to be orderly patterned spatially, in actual situations, individuals are said to be moving sometimes closer and sometimes more distant from the ego. Both involved and observing parties can create different interpretations with respect to the individuals and their respective movements.

Although the *padrino system* resembles the features subscribed by "the differential mode of association," it is, in addition, a power/knowledge system. The *padrino system* involves a range of structural roles, a pool of moral codes and options of social practices that enables actors to negotiate and reinvent meanings in lived situations. The *padrino system* allows individuals who occupy different structural positions in the circular orbits to cut across others' social universe and move along the

proximity to the ego-self. In other words, Filipino kinship, ritual kinship and friendship are the social practices that generate (multiple) symbolic meanings. These constitute the moral force that governs the reciprocal exchange which radiates throughout a constellation of multi-ego-centered criss-crossing social networks. In Cagayan, the *padrino system* works both inside the family and between non-kinsmen. The family head usually enjoys a superior status to other clansmen in political, economic, and social affairs. Although debates and disagreements are allowed within the family, the final say of the family head is still respected. The family head controls most of the resources, thus ensuring that s/he is the most influential of the clan, enabling her/him to serve as the sponsor and patron of most life-event ceremonies and rituals of the kinsmen. Yet the *padrino system* goes beyond the boundary of the kin group (*angkan*). Its capacity is also effective to non-kinsmen.

Among different ethno-linguistic groups, one's cousin (*kasinsin*) and co-mother/father (*kumadre/kumpadre*) are often called 'brother/sister' (*kapatid*). Within the hierarchical social structure, a set of symbiotic codes and social practices governs the reciprocal interactions between the ego-self and the connected actors positioned differentially in the ego's onion-like social networks. These codes and practices serve as the shared internal system of meanings to signify and decode interactions and exchanges between different positions in the social structure, e.g. parent and child, godparent and godchild, and patron and client. It is therefore the mortar that cements the ego-self and other actors together which forms the whole constellation of criss-crossing circular orbits of social relations that connect across the strongman's bailiwick.

The Cagayan province has twenty-eight municipalities and one component city – Tuguegarao. The strongmen occupy official positions such as that of provincial governor and mayor, allowing him/her the governmental authority to implement law, maneuver funds, administer the local police force, and execute policies and projects in the designated jurisdictions. Imagine seven stones being thrown together into the same pool of calm water. One sees seven political centers of outward radiating force collide and coalesce, forming the contours of their bailiwicks. This is a picture that depicts a discursive field of power contest and mutual encroachment, as well as juxtaposition of interpretations and meanings. Add in the daily interactions and routine exchanges of ordinary inhabitants, and the splashes of ripples with lower velocity criss-cross the ripples of the strongmen. Hence, the existence of competing strongmen, measures such as surveillance and coercion, as well as intimidation have to be also ensured in order to maintain effective control.

On the one hand, the *padrino system* entails a benevolent dimension of the strongman as the all-providing patron who controls and distributes the most

substantial amount of resources in the bailiwick. On the other hand, it also enables the strongman to penetrate into the coercive state apparatus (e.g. police aides as personal bodyguards), even including the aides into the strongman's circular, layered personal social network. This enables him to exercise physical force as a potential threat to weaken the capacity of adversaries by instilling fear in order to elicit subordination. The *padrino* therefore has a coercive face. This often Janus-faced style of strongman politics requires the maintenance of reciprocal circulations (the art of governing the self and the selves of others), which commonly hinges on the Tagalog ideas of debt of gratitude (*utang na loób*).

Utang na Loób: The Art of Governing the Self and Others

'Ang pagtanaw ng *utang na loób* ay may lalakip na pananagutan. Tama o mali? [Acknowledging a *debt of gratitude* has a corresponding responsibility. True or false?]'

Test question used in the Philippine elementary schools[9]

The ethics of *utang na loób* include the ways in which the self and others may be imagined, related, and ordered in reciprocal terms. Is this unique to the Philippines? No, Kaut clarified that

> [t]he principles and mechanics of this system [*utang na loób*] are by no means unique to Tagalogs but are found as well among other ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines and seem to be variations on a structural theme implicit in value organizations from Tikopia to Japan, to Vancouver Island, to Classical Greece – and not unheard of in Washington, D.C. (Kaut, 1961: 256)

For instance, in Cagayan, the Tagalog ethics of *utang na loób* share four similar features with the Chinese ethics of *lin-qing*. The first similarity is that both symbolize a system of reciprocal obligations. Secondly, *utang na loób* is commonly translated as "debt of gratitude" or "debt of prime obligation," for *utang* means 'debt' and *loób* means 'inside of something'. *Lin-qing* is translated as 'human sentiment', 'human feeling' and 'human obligation.' All of them refer to a subjective emotion/feeling of obligation and indebtedness, internally created within another person through an unsolicited presentation of services, gifts, favors, honors, and other considerations.

Thus, *utang na loób* and *lin-qing* compel the recipient to return the favor after receipt because of the internal indebtedness. Thirdly, both refer to a set of norms and moral obligations which govern practices of exchange. These norms and moral obligations require the involved parties to keep in contact and continue to participate in future exchanges. Lastly, as an extended usage, both can be regarded as a kind of resource, in the form of favors and gifts, as well as honors, used in the medium of social exchange to establish social networks (Yan, 1996, p. 122). In this spirit, *utang na loób* (debt of gratitude) is essential in establishing *pakikisama* (sympathetic companionship, giving-in, concession) and SIR as well as 'building public relations (PR) in politics.' In the same manner, *lin-qing* (human sentiment) is essential in order to establish *guanxi* (關係 social relationship/connections) for the Cagayanos (Tables 2 & 3).

The ethics of debt of gratitude allow people of different cultures to relate to each other despite their different ways of elaborating the idea in their own cultural terms. Being a good person is regarded, as in Goffman's (1983) words, as 'the interaction order' with the objective to live up to the expectation of being a grateful person. The ethics of the debt of gratitude are an indispensable moral guideline for building and cultivating personal relationships for the Filipinos. As reciprocal exchange is featured in all human interaction, before giving a gift or offering a service, one should consider the receiver's particular need. To be a good person is to be sensitive to what is inside the other person's mind and to his or her feelings. It is considered a compliment to be called considerate, kind, or compassionate (*mabait, magandang loòb, mabuting loòb*). There is a subtle structural difference between "debt of gratitude" (*utang na loòb*) and "sympathetic concern" (*pagmamalasakit*) in actual usage. In the context of a superior-inferior relationship, especially in patronage, *utang na loób* refers to the debt of gratitude embodied by the client after receiving help. *Pagmamalasakit* (showing sympathetic concern) is the moral obligation of a patron to show his compassionate support. Literally, it means surrendering a part of oneself in order to benefit another, causing some pain/hurt (*sakit*) to the giver in the process. A patron who is willing to make a sacrifice for his or her followers is highly regarded as displaying a moral virtue, which renders the client indebted forever.

Table 2. Cagayano Renditions of the Tagalog Ethics of *Utang na Loób* (Part I).

Tagalog	**Hokkien#**	**Mandarin**	**Chinese characters**	**English**
pakikisama	*kuan-hei, wu-lai-ki, cup-lang-ying-siu*	*guanxi, youlaiwang, yuren yingchou*	關係, 有來往, 與人應酬	sympathetic companionship/ relationship, relationship-building.
walang pakikisama	*wu-kuai-piat, mui-a-ying-siu*	*youguaipi, budong jiaoji*	有怪癖, 不懂交際	weird, anti-social, unable to socialize
amor propio	*min-kam, zi-chuan-sim*	*mingan, zizunxin*	敏感, 自尊心	sensitivity, self-esteem/respect
hiya	*kian-siao, minzi*	*lianchi, mianzi*	廉恥, 面子	shame, self- esteem
walang hiya	*mo-kian-siao, mo-pai-say, mo-min-zi*	*buzhi lianchi, mei mianzi*	不知廉恥, 沒面子	shameless, losing face
mukha	*min-zi*	*mianzi*	面子	face
puri	*mia-sia, min-zi*	*mingsheng, mianzi*	名聲, 面子	reputation, face, honor
kaloob/ saloobin	*sim*	*xin*	心	heart, innermost state of mind
tiwala	*xin*	*xinren, xinyong*	信任, 信用	trust, credibility
utang na loób	*lin-qing, lang-qing, kiam-lang-lin-qing*	*renqing*	人情	debt of gratitude, human obligation
walang utang na loòb	*mo-leong-sim, mo-lin-qing*	*meiliangxin, meirenqing*	沒良心, 沒人情	without good conscience, without human sentiment, inhumane.
pagmamalasakit	*wu-wao-lang, wu-kam-qing*	*ganqing*	感情	sympathetic concern/support, compassion
walang pagmamalasakit	*mo-wao-lang, mo-kam-qing*	*meiganqing*	沒感情	without sympathetic concern/support, compassion
pagkakaisa	*dong-qing*	*tongqing*	同情	having same feeling
ganti	*bo-in*	*baoen*	報恩	return a favour
ganti	*bo-siu*	*baochou*	報仇	Avenge
mabait, magandang loób, mabuting loób	*ko-yi, zhui-lang-ya-suwe, e-yao-zhui-lang*	*zuoren henmei, dongde zuoren*	做人很美, 懂得做人	considerate, generous, kind, compassionate, good (describing a person)

Key:
* With assistance from the Chinese-Filipino communities in Tuguegarao and Tuao.
# Some colloquial terms do not exist in Mandarin and Chinese characters.

Table 3. Cagayano Renditions of the Tagalog Ethics of *Utang na Loób* (Part II).

Tagalog	**Ibanag**	**Ilocano**	**Itawes**	**English**
utang na loób	*gatu ta nono, makagain avi na ammu y mappabalo, tappao*	*utang nga naimbag a nakem*	*katut kan nonot*	debt of gratitude
walang utang na loòb	*awan tu gatu ta nono*	*awan ti utang na nga naimbag nga nakem*	*awan nga katut kan nonot*	without debt of gratitude
kaloob/saloobin	*nono*	*nakem*	*agal; nonot*	innermost state of mind
hiya	*pasiran*	*bain*	*mappasiran*	shame
walang hiya	*awan tu pasiran*	*awan ti bain*	*awan nga mappasiran*	shameless
pakikisama	*anaddu y aggao*, pavvurulum*	*kaarruba, pakakaisa*	*akkikuvvulum*	togetherness, sympathetic companionship
pagmamalasakit	*pangitaki*	*pangisakit*	*aggideddut, angnguffun*	personal concern
tiwala	*confiansa / pangurung*	*panagtalek*	*pangurung*	trust
pagkakaisa	*pattaradday*	*panagkaykaysa*	*(nakasta nga) attaradday*	having the same feeling
barkada	*kakofun*	*gagayyem*	*kakkavulum*	friend
mabait	*masippo*	*nasingpet*	*nasimpat*	considerate, generous, kind, compassionate, good (describing a person)
magandang loòb, mabuting loòb	*masippo; napiya nga nono*	*napintas nga nakem*	*nakasta yo unuunag*	considerate, generous, kind, compassionate, good (describing a person)
ganti (1)	*balo; itoli*	*agsinnulit, bales*	*balat; mangitoli kang ayat*	return a favour; reciprocate
ganti (2)	*balo; balyan*	*bales, agibales*	*balat/ibalak*	avenge
mukha	*muka*	*rupa*	*muyung*	face
puri	*dayaw*	*dayaw*	*dayaw*	honor
bahala na	*komforme ngana*	*makammu ditan*	*conforme ngin*	God will take care

Key:
With assistance from the inhabitants of Tuguegarao and Tuao, Cagayan province.
* Literally means 'the day is long' which implicates that even though one may seem to not need help from others, the wheel of fortune will turn and s/he will need help in the future (Gatan, 1981: 41).

In addition to the utilitarian and instrumental dimension of reciprocity, its moral nature should be emphasized. To be grateful is to remember the gifts, services, and favors which have been received. The receiver is obliged to reciprocate (*ganti*) or 'get ready' when the giver is in need. The need may either arise urgently or be planned. For this reason, the reciprocal relationship should be based on trust (*tiwala*), an invisible tie that binds the two parties together, which faithfully stretches across a time-span. Without trust, long-term relationship development would not be possible and mutual benefits would not be maintained. Reciprocating parties should not be forced to return a service or favor on a specific situation, but the eventual reciprocal action should be largely based on personal "good will." In Ilocano, a "debt of good will/gratitude" (*utang nga naimbag a nakem*) is equivalent to the Tagalog idea of debt of gratitude (*utang na loòb*). Both refer to a sacred sense of remembered indebtedness that has a long-term effect on the reciprocating parties. Forgetting one's human obligation is regarded as a violation of the ethics of the debt of gratitude. It is immoral, and therefore attracts sanctions. The Tagalog word *ganti* is the sanctioning mechanism, which includes two meanings: (1) to return a favor and (2) to avenge. Revenge is manifested in various forms, such as refusal, avoidance, confrontation, threats, and sabotage of reputation as well as the use of violence. Usually, the violator would be accused of being 'without good conscience' (*walang utang na loòb*) or sometimes more seriously, shameless (*walang hiya*). Fox (1959, p. 430) suggested that *hiya* (self-esteem) is "similar in some respects to Chinese 'face'." Despite the various yet similar usages of the concepts, they both serve as a social sanctioning system that attaches the sentiments of reputation, prestige, pride, and honor to the ego, thus inhibiting the violation of moral codes. A violation of moral obligations and social expectation would cause the emotional tension of "losing face," resulting in feelings of shyness, embarrassment, shame, and timidity (Bulatao, 1964; Hu, 1944). Nevertheless, the interchangeable use of these cultural concepts is quite unique in a creolized context like Cagayan. It is important to see that these specific ideas are not identical but, rather, compatible.

In contrast to the Mediterranean notions of "honor" and "shame," which emphasize the cultural logics of prestige-in-relations with its specific symbolic expression of honor in challenge-riposte contests and warfare (Herzfeld, 1985; Peristiany, 1965), the Tagalog notion of debt of gratitude is largely a moral code that

governs reciprocal exchange. It proves itself to be better adopted by the ethnic Chinese, Ibanag, Ilocano and Itawes, who also hold compatible principles of reciprocity. In other words, Mediterranean notions of honor and shame are more likely to operate outside the realm of reciprocity, whereas this is less likely in the Filipino case. As my previous case studies have shown, the discourse of patronage involves a carefully calculated balance sheet of business transactions, favors, credits, and services. In China, the discourse of reciprocity is regarded as "an extremely versatile interactive resource" and could be used in a variety of situations (Pieke, 1995, p.502). Tuguegarao city mayor, Delfin Ting, also observed a similar phenomenon:

> People say these things [(ethics of debt of gratitude)] in situations for their own purposes. It is more a common language. It is more a common language that [mandates] you as the recipient of the request to cooperate. This one comes for *pakikisama* (sympathetic companionship), that one comes to ask for *pagmamalasakit* (personal concern); you just cannot accommodate all of them. We have our own considerations. Otherwise, you destroy your government. If you cannot give them what they want, they like to accuse you [of being] *walang utang na loób* [(ungrateful)], *walang pakikisama* [(anti-social)], *walang pagmamalasakit* [(without personal concern)], even *walang hiya* [(shameless)]. You cannot care that much. We have work to do and we have to consider these things according to situations.[10]

Ting turned the tables by showing the situational use of these moral symbols by the actors. This is reminiscent of 'everyday politics' (Kerkvliet (2002[1990]: Chapter 8), which suggests that people make different claims and disagree with each other based on a set of common values and beliefs. People value social justice and equality and expect to be treated accordingly. Due to slippage use and differences in interpreting these values, conflict emerges. Many traditional Filipino values, such as the ethics of *utang na loób*, are envisaged to facilitate social justice and equality. However, these moral symbols always become the arena of meaning contestations and means for self-justification in disagreements and conflicts of interests because of their ambivalence and contextual variations of usage (Quito, 1994). Paradoxically, disagreements and conflicts further reinforce the utilization of the *padrino system* for two reasons.

First, individuals are competing for social connections and networks to suit their own interests – a person who may leave the old *padrino* and shift to a new relation without leaving the *padrino system*. Bishop Ricardo Baccay perceptively points out the social control property of the *padrino system*:

> The moral system of *utang na loób* is a circulatory system that binds the patron and client together into dependency. These moral sayings are also the means used by the politicians to control the people, making them further dependent on the debt bondage. […] But sometimes I see the clients also use these sayings to control their *padrino*, especially in elections. Every three years, you can see the sudden increase of invitation of sponsorship to politicians in baptisms and weddings. Many of them would even invite candidates of opposition camps and see who would come with their gifts, for those politicians who [could] not afford losing their votes would come. As a matter of fact, in my opinion, vote buying is a modern form of Filipino padrino system. […] Both patron and client gain something out of the relationship, often they 'jump ships.' But the *padrino* is still there.'[11]

This observation partially echoes what Agpalo (1969, p. 6) asserts as the sophistication of the political elite as the *padrino*: the "political elite, however, are also compelled to behave like *pandanggo* dancers [a Filipino oil-lamp dance displaying good balancing technique]. To remain in power, they must manipulate the people by tempting them with jobs or threatening them with loss of employment. They are also forced to distribute jobs to persons and towns where the payoff will be greatest in terms of votes."

Secondly, the situational use of traditional Filipino values can also work for conflict resolution. In the Chua–Ty incident described earlier, I have shown how Juan Chua made creative use of the *padrino system* to mend the relationship between his father and his closest business partner after a misunderstanding. The *padrino system* may also be creatively used to resolve interpersonal conflicts, which is illustrated by the following cockfight.

Awakening Play: Notes from a Cagayano Cockfight

One Sunday afternoon, my Ilocano informant, Manong Katigid, invited me to observe a cockfight in his town.[12] Upon arrival, one of his nephews took me inside, where we sat with Manong's clansmen and friends while he was preparing his cock for the fight outside the cockpit arena. The cockpit arena resembled a stadium, although it was smaller in scale. The audience members were either standing or sitting on the steps, all looking down onto the cockpit. I knew that this fight appeared to be an intra-clan affair – a fight between Manong's cockerel and his cousin's cockerel. I was unable to figure out how closely the two men were related, but it seemed that this fight had attracted a big crowd of supporters and spectators from both sides of the same clan, all men. Manong suddenly approached me and informed me that he had been waiting for this fight for a long time. He lost last time to his cousin, but he had confidence that he could win this time. He invited me to bet on his bird. Although I told him honestly that I was not supposed to gamble as a researcher, he insisted. Full of confidence, Manong left me and went down to the cockpit.

At the centre of the arena, the two cocks were being positioned opposite each other. Manong's cock was positioned on the *Meron* side, whereas his cousin's cock was positioned on the opposite, *Wala* side.[13] Around the cockpit, I came to learn some of the names of his relatives and friends from his town. The way the crowd acted seemed to indicate that Manong could be a *lider* (leader) of his clan, yet the arrangement of the cockfight symbolized an intra-clan split. According to the rule of the cockpit, the *Meron* side has the larger amount of bets, which symbolically suggests that the cock has a bigger crowd of supporters. The *Wala* side, literally meaning 'nothing' or 'none,' had fewer bets. The *christo* (the middleman in charge of the fight) took a microphone and announced his invitation for extra bets from the audience to close the gap. However, it was an empty gesture – nobody responded around the heavily packed arena.

Many spectators suddenly stood up and shouted either in a long non-interrupted high pitch "Wa … la … wa … la … wa … la …" or in a firm and forceful tone uttering continuously "Meron! Meron! Meron! Meron!" By shouting, on the one hand, they signaled a position of being open to take bets. On the other hand, they solicited private bets from each other. Although there was an official betting counter, almost everyone was allowed to solicit private bets in the arena. After shouting for a few minutes, they start to shout the betting rates they are going to offer, 'Loges! Loges! Loges! Loges!' The amount of bets would then be negotiated by hand signals (Table 4). The talk, heat, sweat, laughter and moving bodies reminded me that I was not the only one waiting for the fight in this little, yet lively, arena.

Table 4. Jargons of Betting Rates and Hand Signals in a Cagayano Cockpit

Betting Rates	**Descriptions**
Loges	5/4: 100 pesos bet, 180 pesos return if win
Kuarto-tres	4/3: 100 pesos bet, 175 pesos return if win
Singko-tres	5/3: 100 pesos bet, 160 pesos return if win
Siete-diyes	7/10: 700 pesos bet, 1700 pesos return if win
Tres-dos	3/2: 300 pesos bet, 500 pesos return if win
Hati	2/1: 100 pesos bet, 150 pesos return if win
Hand Signals	**Descriptions**
Pointing fingers up	Multiplier of ten pesos
Pointing fingers horizontally	Multiplier of one hundred pesos
Pointing fingers down	Multiplier of one thousand pesos

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2004.

Quietness and concentration suddenly prevailed. The fight was quick. I attest it was the quickest I had seen – after staring at *Wala* for a few seconds, *Meron* jumped and kicked its feet onto *Wala*'s head. The whole crowd exclaimed together, 'Ha!' In less than a second, *Wala*'s head was being dragged down onto the dirt ground. Applause, laughter and despair all issued from the crowd – wherever *Meron* went, *Wala*'s head followed on the dirt floor. *Meron* proved itself so strong that it dragged *Wala* for three rounds until they were separated by the *christo*. A vivid path of blood circled the cockpit – *Meron*'s spur had actually gone through the neck of *Wala*, becoming stuck inside the neck of *Wala*. In my estimation, the fight finished within one minute. All of a sudden, folded Peso notes were being thrown from one corner to another, across the cockpit, and above the audience. All bettors remembered their bets, whether won or lost; they paid and took their winnings, with trust and without dispute. Manong won 30,000 Pesos from his opponent, who is his second cousin, or the grandson of his maternal grandfather's brother. He then went around and gave Peso notes to the *christo*, the entrance guards of the cockpit, his clansmen, and friends. He was in the highest spirits that I have ever seen him in.

In an ethnography of Balinese cockfight, Geertz (1993[1973], p. 417) maintained that "[f]or it is only apparently cocks that are fighting there. Actually, it is men." Indeed, after leaving the leftist movement, Manong rejoined his family and has been a *lider* of his clan. He first ran as a *barangay captain* (village council chairman) with his second-degree cousin, who ran as a *barangay kagawad* (village councilman). The unitary clan dominated the political scene of the barangay until their split – when their

sons ran against each other for the *Katipunan ng Kabataan*, the chair position of the barangay's *Sangguniang Kabataan* (Young People's Council).[14] The winner would have a further opportunity to become an ex-officio member of the municipal council. Without any clear evidence, Manong suspected that the opposition gave 100 Pesos for each vote, which ensured his son's loss. Since then, the clan has split into two factions. In the 2001 election, Manong supported the opposition candidates against his cousin. In August 2003, Manong's son challenged his cousin to a cockfight. Yet he lost again. Insults and jeers had been exchanged between the two young men, which affected the relationships between the two families. I came to know that this recent cockfight held by their fathers is a continuation of the symbolic *vendetta* between the two young men. However, Manong explained to me that it was actually a Cagayano way of peace-making – cocks spilled blood on behalf of their masters in hope that the involved parties would be awakened.

The above cockfight is instructive to supplement a missing dimension in Lynch's theorization of Filipino society – the place of conflict resolution. Lynch asserted that SIR consists of the highest values of the Filipinos, who are patterned to avoid conflict and ease tension within a social grouping that already shares a bonding of positive emotional fulfillment. However, relationships are not always smooth. Jocano (1966) questioned the basis of the generalization of SIR and its inability to explain the existence of prevalent in-group conflicts which he observed in a Manila slum:

> The internal structure of these groups is, in fact, tinged with conflict – anxiety, jealousy, exploitation, suspicion and so on – in spite of its apparent unity. Members join the leader or other members in various mischiefs, gang-wars, and other serious criminal acts *less of a desire* for social acceptance or *pakikisama* than *out of fear* over their own safety and that of their families even if they should refuse to toe the line of gang norms. (Jocano, 1966: 287, italics original)

Jocano may portray an extreme. As the above scene illustrates, in the midst of factional conflicts, actors have the creative capacity to make practical use of events and ceremonies such as cockfights to soothe interpersonal tensions and tentatively resolve conflicts. Drawing from the above ethnography, vengeance (*venganza*) appears to be related to a structure of social relations of interpersonal conflicts. It can be viewed as a form of (negative) bonding which enables two parties to become involved in prolonged tension and exchange of violence (c.f. Jamous, 1992). There

seems to be a moral code that governs conflict. Although Evans-Pritchard (1940, p. 152) revealed that the blood feud is an essential tribal institution for the survival of the Nuer, I maintain that the Filipino *padrino system* is mainly a contractual system of 'generalized reciprocity – transactions that are putatively altruistic' (Sahlins, 1972, p. 193). Violence is likely to occur when there is a situation of "negative reciprocity," or "an attempt to get something for nothing with impunity" (Sahlins, 1972, p. 195). Situations of assault, deceit, chicanery, and theft are as prone to violence as simply being ungrateful – taking advantage of a reciprocal relationship or even going into bitter rivalry against a patron.

The *padrino system* mostly performs violence in two related ways. First is a display of extraordinary capacity to seem powerful enough to offer protection and then display generosity or benevolence. Secondly, when revenge is taken against someone who sabotages his own or his grouping's sense of honor (*puri*) or self-esteem (*amor propio*), as well as face (*mukha*), the *padrino* is obliged to avenge the infraction on behalf of the group in order to neutralize the shaming effect (*hiya*) and restore his face from the perceived symbolic assault. There is a common saying in Tagalog: *mata sa mata*; *ngipin sa ngipin* (an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth). Violence is conceived as a social exchange (conveyed by the term 'blood-debt'), in which one's honor is meticulously weighed like a balance-sheet. Violence remains a moral imperative that motivates an individual to reciprocate (*ganti*) physical harm or symbolic damage in order to 'get even.' *Venganza,* therefore, is an emotional tension, a feeling of distress created internally after one's physical and symbolic well-being is damaged by another antagonistic party. *Vendetta* means more than inter-family blood feud but has symbolic value to individual and collective honor (Bourdieu, 1966). The vengeful aspect of human societies has been covered by different ethnographies globally (Black-Michaud, 1975; Blok, 2001). In northern Luzon, for example, Barton (1949; 1969) described the legal institutions and procedures among the Kalingas and Ifugaos established to punish wrongdoings to curtail personal revenge. However, without a state-endorsed judicial system to settle blood feuds, killing in revenge would only lead to further killing in counter-revenge (Schlegel, 1970, p. 52). A Cagayano theologian and legal scholar brought out the relationship between justice and revenge when he made the following instructive remark:

> One of the roles of the state and its justice system is to serve as a third party to mediate vengeance and curtail revenge by imposing an objective verdict. By no means [can justice] be fully objective, but there should be

> rigorous procedures to assure a fair and just judicial process. It is a natural tendency for a human being to take revenge as an act to exercise justice [against wrongdoers]. What is justice is to punish those who commit wrongdoings. When the justice system does not live up to the expectation of the victims, there is a tendency for them to exercise justice by themselves. This is one of the problems of the Filipino legal system we are facing now.'[15]

Regarding this predicament, Manong Katigid, however, suggested that in the short-run, it is difficult to expect the poor Cagayanos to only look up to the state judicial system.[16] At the village level, for example, there is the 'people's court' (*lupong tagayambayaba*) which invites villagers to serve as juries. Instead of immediately resorting to state-endorsed legal procedures, disputing parties would try to resolve a conflict in front of a patron, mostly elected village officials. If the matter cannot be resolved, the complainant many decide to forward the matter to a higher level, e.g. a municipal court. In most cases, to settle a dispute, people still seek assistance from higher patronal figures, such as the councilors, mayors, and congressmen, who are regarded as the sovereign persons because of their political supremacy over the disputing parties.[17] This creolized litigation practice is also an art of self-governance.

Although taking revenge is as central as reciprocating a favor in the *padrino system*, Cagayanos also consider the communal techniques of awakening (Tagalog: *natauhan*) for enlightening anyone who is regarded as selfish (Table 5). The symbiotic basis of awakening is communal sanctioning or retribution (Tagalog: *parusa/kabayaran*, Ibanag: *liwa/paga*, Ilocano: *dusa/bayad*, Itawes: *liwat/paha*). Apart from resorting to rebellion, these power/knowledge systems allow the communities to govern anyone who ostensibly maximizes their self-interests (c.f. J. C. Scott, 1976). Whether a person would step back and reflect upon the self or not may depend on the tactical deployment of at least five options listed in Stage 2. These options may be selectively and concomitantly deployed by the community in order to make their governing elite reconsider and rethink whether their course of actions is justifiable or not, as determined by the ideal Filipino personhood, i.e. *tao ng mabait* (good person).

Table 5. Awakening: Cagayano Art of Governing the Self and Others.[18]

	Ibanag	**Ilocano**	**Itawes**	**English interpretation**
Stage 1: To advise someone who ostensibly maximizes her/his self and interests.	*Yppisipisan y aggaw* (Do not take all the days for not all the days are yours)	*Awan ti bagyo nga saan nga agbales/agsubli* (Typhoons do sometimes swirl back)	*Ippisipisan ya akaw* (Do not take all the days for not all the days are yours)	Don't maximize yourself when you are in power. We all need to have qualms.
Stage 2: Five options to restrain someone who maximizes his/her self and interests.	*Ybbita* (avoid; flee) *Contra* (oppose) *Maki-tadday da contra na ira* (join force with his/her enemies) *Lumanban* (fight) *Ymammoc* (make peace, reconcile)	*Pumanaw* (flee; leave) *Kumontra* (oppose) *Maki-kadua ek iti kabusor* (to join force with his/her enemies) *Pumanaw* (fight to the death) *Maki-kapiaak* (make peace, reconcile)	*Panaw* (flee; leave) *Contra* (oppose) *Maki-tadday kan contra nga ira* (to join force with his/her enemies) *Panaw* (fight to the death) *Imammok, maki-kapia* (make peace, reconcile)	To avoid and flee from the person's sphere of influence To oppose the person To join his/her enemies to oppose the person To use violence to stop the person To make peace with the person so to advise constructively
Stage 3: Awakening and self-correction.	*Napanono* (realize from inside), *nariparra* (being reflective)	*Panagpanunot* (realize from inside, being reflective)	*Napanonot* (realize from inside), *nariparra* (being reflective)	To realize from within, to reflect upon and then restrain the self

Conclusion

This paper has delineated the contents and ethnographic illustrations of the historically constituted power/knowledge system that the Philippine state negotiates with its frontier populations in the Cagayan Valley – the *padrino system*. In contrast to the 'internal colonization' argument, which subsumes the dichotomy between the state and life-world, evidences suggest that the state's reach into the frontier life-world may well be elaborated in view of a creolized power/knowledge system.

In Cagayan Valley, with its decades of postcolonial state-building, although the individuals are expected to live up to the ideal Filipino personhood, it is the creative use of the *padrino system* that allows them to coordinate interests and mend broken relationships. The *padrino system* entails the culture-specific arts of governing the self and others. The social reality is conceived in terms of a social universe that stretches across a spatial territory of connected individuals through a range of social relations. Its complex of moral values serves as the symbiotic force that pulls individuals together into a unit which then circles around the strongman as the patron. The *padrino system*, on the one hand, is constituted by benevolence, in which chains of debts of gratitude flow in circulation, making a community possible. Being the patron entails a moral obligation to self-sacrifice and the generous giving to and protection of followers in exchange for support and respect. On the other hand, the *padrino system* may also draw the involved parties into fear, intrigue, conflicts, and exchange of violence. Vengeance is the motivation that compels an individual to 'get even' as a way to pursue justice.

As the state judicial system is still sinking its roots into the frontiers, where the culture of legal pluralism is prevalent, several ethnographic illustrations have been provided to show the creative use of the already-existing institutions (religious rituals and folklore ceremonial activities, such as the indigenous chieftain (*lakay*) system, ritual kinship, local people's court, and a cockfight) to resolve conflicts and make peace. In the light of governmentality, the uncertain contact zones between the art of governing the self and those of the selves of others, Cagayanos rely on the communal logics of *awakening*. Communities may deploy a range of strategic options in order to compel a person to step back and reflect upon the self and course of actions, as a way to "govern" their governing elite.

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[1] Interview, Roxanne (teacher), elementary school, Tuguegarao city, Cagayan Valley, April 7, 2009. For the obvious reasons, some informant identities in this paper have been changed.

[2] Similar creolized system also exists in urban and professional context (see: Kondo, 2008).

[3] Ilocano: *Magmaysa tay a familia.* Tagalog: *Iisa tayong pamilya.* Hokkien: *Lang-si-tsik-ke-lang.*

[4] Alejandro Chua was born to a Chinese father and Ilocano mother in the Cagayan province. He married a Tagalog lady whom he met in business and she gave birth to Juan. Noynoy Ty was born to a Chinese father and Ibanag mother in the Isabela province, before they moved to Manila. Interviews and travelling notes, Cagayan Valley, central Luzon and the Cordillera, December, 2003.

[5] *Pancit* originated from Fujian, China (probably Xiamen) brought by the Chinese migrants into the Philippines.

[6] The Hokkien, *mo-leong-sim* (沒良心 *meiliangxin*, without conscience) is, according to the Chinese-Filipinos, equivalent to the Tagalog phrase *walang utang na loób* (ungrateful).

[7] According to the translation by my Chinese-Filipino informants, this Chinese term is said to be equivalent to the Tagalog terms of *padrino/madrino*, *ninong/ninang* and *kumpadre/kumadre*.

[8] There may be further differentiations within kin (Pertierra, 1988: Chapter 4).

[9] The model answer should be '*tama* (true)'. Source: The first periodical test for grade V, Department of Education, the Philippine government, collected in Manila and confirmed its use in Tuguegarao, July 15 and August 5, 2009.

[10] Interview with Delfin Ting, Hotel Delfino, Tuguegarao city, Cagayan Valley, December 13, 2003.

[11] Interview with Bishop Ricardo Baccay, Archbishop's residence, Tuguegarao city, January 13, 2004.

[12] Field notes, cockpit, Cagayan Valley, May 30, 2004. In Ilocano language, 'Manong Katigid' refers to 'elder brother left', a fictitious identity co-constructed with the informant to denote his previous involvement in the Philippine left.

[13] In the cockpit, *meron* literally means 'sufficient' whereas *wala* means 'nothing' or 'none'.

[14] According to Local Government Code (1991), members of the *Sangguniang Kabataan* must be under 21 years old. They have the authority to initiate and implement all youth-related activities and programs that are coordinated with national, provincial,

municipal and barangay-level officials.

[15] Interview and field notes, parish convent of Father Ranhilio Aquino, Tuguegarao city, June 24, 2004.

[16] Interviews, Manong Katigid, paddy field-side shelter, Cagayan Valley, March 24 & 25, 2007.

[17] Interviews and field notes, 5 barangays in Tuguegarao and 2 barangays in Tuao, Cagayan province, April 11, 13 & 15, 2009.

[18] Interviews with Manong Katigid, paddy-field-side shelter, Cagayan Valley, March 24 & 25, 2007.

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