

A PSYCHO-SOCIAL REFLECTION ON THE PATRIMONIAL CULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Theoretically, this essay is a psycho-social reflection on the patrimonial character of Philippine political democracy. Many scholars attest that Philippine politics is marred by oligarchic rule composed of elite families, knitted by blood and marriage, who use state resources to perpetuate themselves into public office. These officials control and exploit the economic and political landscape to rule and govern the lives of the Filipino people. Hence, I argue that the patrimonial culture is a social pathology and has imbibed other names such as patron-client democracy, cacique democracy, predatory oligarchic state, and bossism. This type of social malady highlights the coercive forms of control in the Philippine political arena and, thus, expanding oligarchic power relations over and above the interest of the people. Money and power are the main causes why this social malady persists. However, more than that, I want to add that the persistence of patrimonial culture in the Philippines lies probably in what Freud calls the introjected father image, which unconsciously becomes the standard of authority. Further, I contend that, like the Oedipus rivalry, fear is a primordial element in the introjection of this authority figure which began at the nascent of the Spanish rule. Particularly, the abuses and atrocities of the colonizers over the natives created a deep-seated traumatic experience that would later fortify the immanence of a patrimonial power structure in the Philippines. Hence, a psycho-social approach could perhaps unearth these 'events' that perpetuate a patrimonial culture in our country. I believe that excavating our collective experiences could probably help us in our search for leaders who could usher us towards real liberation.

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THE MODERN PHILIPPINE POLITICS

When Senate President Jose Avelino was investigated by President Quirino for questionable financial transactions, he responded by saying,

Why did you have to order an investigation, Honorable Mr. President? If you cannot permit abuses, you must at least tolerate them. What are we in power for? We are not hypocrites. Why should we pretend to be saints when, in reality, we are not? We are not angels. When we die, we will all go to hell. It is better to be in hell because, in that place, there are no investigations, no secretary of justice, no secretary of the interior to go after us (Simbulan 2005, 161).

Avelino's rebuttal describes how patrimonial culture permeated and subsumed Philippine politics and transformed it under the supervision of elitist and oligarchic authorities (Weber 1922; Charrad and Adams 2011; Iglesias 2018). In fact, Simbulan (2005, 110) traces how the patrimonial mindset crept from the time of Quezon until the reign of the dictator in the 70s that elite and oligarchic rule asserted its influence based on how the colonizers institutionalized Philippine government centered on the *principalia*. He (2005, 110) laments,

The concentration of ownership and control of land and business (including private educational institutions and the mass-media) is all the more bolstered by intermarriages among the elite. Thus, the Aranetas married into the Lopezes and the Yulos into the Aranetas, the Osmenas into the De la Ramas and Jacintos, the Cojuangcos into the Sumulong, the Aquinos and Reyeses into the Cojuangcos, the Madrigals into the Paternos, Gonzaleses, Vasquezes, etc

This was bolstered by Maccoy (1993, *Preface*), who also claimed that these oligarchic families who are knitted by blood and marriage assert their control through the consolidation of their political connections and economic assets, thereby strengthening their power relations. Dominant and exploitative as they are, Sidel (1997, 947) describes them as predatory power brokers who have always enjoyed expansive political privileges and economic sustenance "within their respective municipal, congressional, or provincial bailiwicks through landownerships, commercial networks, logging or mining concessions, transportation companies or control over illegal economies." Quimpo (2005, 239), who extensively studied Philippine patronage politics, also adheres that these elite-oligarchic-predatory power brokers can directly access state coffers and thus have the capacity to expand and fortify their power resources. They rely heavily upon state resources to further their capricious political interests yet construct their economic bases as independently as possible from any governmental interference. In this sense, these politicians could accumulate more wealth and thus fortify even more their political power relations (Quimpo 2005, 231). As early as the 70s, Hutchcroft (1991, 415) admonished already that Philippine politics is an economic command emanating from the "favored elites with particularistic demands from, and particularistic actions on behalf of, those oligarchs and cronies who are currently most favored by its top officials..." Since wealth and power reciprocate each other, the patrimonial culture in Philippine politics is a bandwagon control as political groups, or clans surge toward dominance through

the diversification of their business interests "like iron filing towards a magnet" (Kang 2002, 122). For instance, their alliances of power relations are best achieved through the accession of more material wealth based on vertical relationships of dependence (Pingel 2010, 10). The reciprocal relationships between predatory politicians and vulnerable clients are strengthened due to the presence of capital, which allows oligarchs to control the socio-political landscape (Sidel 1997, 953). Moreover, this reciprocal interdependence is just a political ploy to strengthen a much-coveted political-economic hold. Simbulan (2005, 142-143) attests that,

The nature of the relationships in these families may be consanguineal, affinal, or a combination of both. There is the male-line type which sometimes extends from a great-grandfather who was the Cabeza de barangay, a gobernadorcillo, or a Capitan – all members of the caste-like principalia during the Spanish times – down to the great-grandson who, just fresh from school, has already been "prevalued upon the masses" to serve them...[example] Cojuangcos of Tarlac, Sumulong and Rodriguezes of Rizal, Laurels of Batangas, the Primiciasos of Pangasinan, Osmena of Cebu...affinal types of relations [example] Paredes-Valera of Abra, Lopez-Ledesma of Iloilo, Romualdez-Veloso of Leyte, Cojuangco-Aquino of Tarlac, etc.

Currently, patrimonial culture in the Philippines remains enhanced precisely because of this solidified relationship of interdependence. Coronel (PCIJ 2007) collaborated with this by claiming that "In the same way, political marriages consolidate political networks and expand the reach of clans... Families whose members marry astutely can pool various assets together to enhance their political chances." Because of this, Sidel (1997, 952) abhors that as long as there is a "solid base in proprietary wealth invulnerable to state intervention," we will be ruled by paternalistic bosses who wallow in capital-intensive machinations which then lead to what we call political dynasty.

Even after EDSA, patronage politics continues to persist in Philippine electoral politics. Analyzing post-EDSA politics, Brillo (2011, 54-76) observes that the control of oligarchic families of governmental policies and outcomes resulted in the perpetuation of the old political economy, reinforcing patrimonial culture. Corazon Aquino, who could have institutionalized participative democracy, allowed powerful families to get hold of the Philippine bureaucracy. Thus, after her reign, nepotism reigns and continues to capitalize on all material assets of their family members to expand patrimonial thinking. For instance, as Rocamora (1991, 636-638) explains, the Cojuangcos, who own 6000 hectares of land and large stakes in real estate, banking, and telecommunication, only prove the continuity of the oligarchic culture in the Philippines. Again, Maccoy (1991, *Preface*) detests that "by the end of Aquino's term in 1992, the restored Congress was virtual congeries of elite families, with 32 percent of the representatives' children of established politicians and 15 percent "third- or fourth-generation politicians." In fact, in a study published by Yu (2015, 101), it was disclosed that the new democratic order during the Aquino administration has failed

"to produce new politics of democratic accountability in the Philippines. After the dictator had gone, the traditional political-economic elite returned to dominate Philippine politics with the old style of political clientelism." Regrettably, Yu explains,

Of the 200 representatives elected in 1987, 169 (nearly 85 percent) were classified as belonging to "traditional clans." Only thirty-one had no electoral record before 1972 and were not directly related to these old dominant families. Of the 169 congressmen from traditional political families, 102 were identified with the anti-Marcos forces, while sixty-seven were from pro-Marcos parties or families. Most of the twenty-four elected members of the Senate were also from prominent, pre-1972 political families (Mojares 1993). According to Julio Teehankee (2007), "For some 160 families, the two Houses of the Philippine Congress have practically been home for the last century"... The membership base of these parties is almost entirely drawn from the politically active elite clans, and parties do not have ordinary members. Candidate selection is determined informally between national and local politicians, which involves a non-transparent and undemocratic process of clientelist horse-trading and bargaining (p. 101)

Maccoy (1991, *Preface*) also reiterates:

Cory Aquino appointed to public office people who are related to her family – Tatjuatco's, Oreta's, Cojuanco's...some run for public office taking advantage of their relationship with the President. ...by the end of Aquino's term in 1992, the restored Congress was virtual congeries of elite families, with 32 percent of the representatives' children of established politicians and 15 percent "third- or fourth-generation politicians" is instead becoming an eclectic collection of gambling bosses, media stars, smugglers, telecom rent-seekers, real estate wheeler-dealers, and Chinese taipans."

Hence, although the 1986 EDSA Revolution is considered to be a catalyst for social change, it was not able to transform the political electoral system that could be inclusive toward a participative electoral democracy. When President Corazon Aquino opened the doors to the same political power brokers, it was an opportunity to control and dominate the socio-political landscapes again. Nevertheless, this is not to show that Aquino is the source of our political and economic maladies. In fact, the reign of the Marcoses is notoriously known for plunging the Philippine economy. From 1970 to 2003, the Philippine economy continuously declines, leading to severe "retrogression of Filipinos' income which is a testimony of the dark era of our economic history (Punongbayan and Mandrilla, 2016). Still, the Marcos family was able to totally secure and control their family's assets and interests, which pushed other oligarchs to depend on them. The Disini, Cojuangco, Romualdez, Silverio, and

Benedicto – were oligarchs who were indebted and depended on Marcos (Kang 2002). He further (137-138) observes that during the Marcos years,

... the direction of corruption shifted from the bottom-up plundering of the state to the top-down plundering of society. Given the opportunity to impose his will on society and to choose the economic policy that would benefit Filipino society, Marcos chose instead to take the gains for himself.

Thus, what prompted the people power in 1986 was the cry for real change that could have allowed participatory democracy. It is to end the reigns of absolutism, economic plunder, and oligarchic rule. It is the spirit of EDSA that calls for reforms of our democratic institutions. It is the voice of those thousands of people who yearn for a genuine revolution that would probably end nepotism, elitism, and oligarchic rule. However, as mentioned earlier, patrimonial mentality still prevailed.

The persistence of patrimonialism ultimately secures political relevance and continuity. Philippine democracy, or, more particularly, our political-economic frameworks, command elite policy-making that supports private oligarchic interests. In this sense, Philippine democratic structures remain weak because laws and policies are not proactively construed toward social reforms but instead serve the particularistic interests of the few. Brillo (2011, 68) explains,

In general, the weak state-elitist framework presupposes that the Philippine polity's chronic incapacity of producing public regarding policies is deemed the consequence of two conditions of the state. First is the elite-captured state, which refers to the enduring control of powerful, homogenous political elites over the government's policy-making mechanism. Second is the foreign-dominated state which refers to the vulnerability of the government's policy decisions to external influences or interferences. In both cases—whether under the elite-captured state or the foreign-dominated state—there is an adverse effect since the governmental capacity in legislating beneficial public policies is considerably compromised.

Hutchcroft went further, arguing that the power relations among the elite politicians are strengthened because of their rent-seeking activities. Government programs that could have probably served to alleviate social problems like poverty and inequality are now reversed: through rent-seeking activities, these oligarchs engage themselves in capital-intensive mechanisms that primarily secure the stability of their business empires, thereby perpetuating themselves and their cohorts all the more in capturing the Philippine economy. Hutchcroft (1998, 53) points out that

... piecemeal reforms are often inhibited both by the lack of bureaucratic coherence and by the tremendous power of oligarchic interests

...although there are instances when regimes might benefit from selective measures of reform, there has been little assurance that the weak bureaucracy (even if bolstered by infusions of technocratic expertise) can implement them over the objections of various entrenched interests long accustomed to particularistic plunder of the state apparatus.

Consequently, the oligarchic rent-seeking activities redirect the flow of goods and services back to themselves. Instead of directly supporting the plight of the impoverished citizenry, goods and services, through laws or ordinances being implemented, return to their fold precisely because the businesses within their bailiwicks are owned by members of their families and political cohorts. It is protecting their family's interest to strengthen their power relations. Further, not only do they focus on their businesses, but more importantly, they rely heavily on contracts or deals coursed through the state. Through lobbying, the legislator, governor, or mayor could easily approve or disapprove a deal that directly affects his material shares. Undeniably, these power brokers, their cohorts, clan, or family would benefit and thereby expand their power relations in Philippine politics (Maccoy, *Preface*). Since rent-seeking activities greatly help to advance the interests of these oligarchs, there arises a coercive component that could perpetuate themselves into power – violence. Kreuzer (2012, 3-6) explains:

A coercive dimension is also present, one which takes note of the capacity of local politicians to act as agents of violence, both within intra-elite competition and in the area of repression of political and social dissent. The nexus that binds the two is familism which is a core characteristic of both the structural model of oligarchy and the process model of Mafia-style domination.

Power and control through rent-seeking strategies maim the electorate. Though meager favors and protections are given, fear of reprisals and the horror of violence keep the ordinary citizens to remain silent amidst the abuses of powers-that-be (Coronel 2007; Iglesias 2018).

Consequently, this culture has led to massive inequality. Laws that are protectionist in nature serve not for the common welfare but for the chosen few. Amidst the massive material disparities, the only recourse is to depend upon the political oligarchs. Hence, patronage politics, clientelism, or patron-client relations continue to persist, further strengthening the patrimonialism culture. Yu (2015, 12) describes it well when he says:

...high inequality will increase and intensify clientelism. The literature on clientelism has found that the poor are more prone to clientelism than the middle class...high inequality will encourage the wealthy to prevent the development of programmatic competition and to rely on clientelism to secure support.

Patrimonialism and clientelism are dialectic. Since the same political elites legislate laws and regulations, they would cater to their political interests, thereby creating further structural inequalities that now characterize the political and economic climate. The social conditions force the majority to cling, depend and submit themselves to clientelism, thus strengthening the control of the predatory power brokers. However, it is precisely the control and domination of the Philippine bureaucracy that breeds more clientelism. With wealth and power in the hands of these oligarchs, Simbulan (2005, xix) says that we expect the rise of numerous subalterns that illustrate the patrimonial culture in the Philippines. We remain and probably continue to embrace this socio-political pattern. These are the present-day predatory power brokers who relentlessly milk the state, leaving the citizenry helpless and submissive. It is given, and no matter who the leader may be, that systemic malady will continue to persist. No matter how we try to educate our fellows, these political oligarchs kept coming back to office, leaving us to ask whether there could be a more plausible explanation? Is it because of favor and protections? Is it because of money-related issues? Probably! However, I would try to offer my two cents by claiming that there could be a deeper explanation for why Philippine electoral politics is stuck in a vicious cycle of the patron-client dyad. This has something to do with the collective psyche of the Filipinos.

THE INTROJECTED "FATHER IMAGE"

This paper is a psycho-social reflection of the patrimonial culture in the Philippines. The thesis I maintain is that the persistence of political power brokers, elite and powerful politicians, and the perpetuity of political dynasties has something to do with the introjection of the "father-image," which has resulted in the cycle of submission and dependence in the Philippine electoral politics. The introjection and projection of this 'father-image' rest, I argue, on how the social narratives-economic, political, social, cultural, and religious -seep into the collective psyche of Filipinos and thus become the blueprint of socio-political exchanges. In other words, the introjection of political leadership has something to do with the collective experiences during the Spanish-American regimes and is now a part of how social members mutually view their world. As a psycho-social question, we ask how those experiences and narratives have fashioned the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of the people (Jhangiani, R., Tarry, H., & Stangor 2022; Bronner and Kellner 1989; Fromm 1937). Particularly, we want to know in this essay how the experiences, thoughts, and narratives of the Spanish-American colonizers affect and mold the Filipino psychological structure? Although the Oedipus story institutionalized by Freud is not clinically and scientifically proven and thus, remains to be a theory, I want to show that because of the introjected 'father-image,' the same has become the standard blueprint, a political electoral framework, as to why predatory political power brokers remain in power, and thus institutionalizing a patrimonial hegemony in the political public sphere.

The Oedipal story, as Funk (1982, 18) explains, tells us about the rivalry between the desires of the child and those of surrounding authorities. In the interpretation of Gay (1989, 642), the Oedipus story concerns about the rivalry

between the father and the child that results in experiences of inner squabbles: follow his sexual desires or submit to the father's commands. Given these ambivalent experiences, anxieties and tensions ensue, which need to be overcome. However, afraid of his father, the child represses his wishes and subsequently gives them up because of fear. Consequently, Gay infers that the child then identifies with his father's commands and prohibitions. After all, in a patriarchal society like ours, the father wants to mold his son into his image (Altemeyer 2006). This is clearly recognized by Fromm (1979, 28-30) when he pointed out that in a patriarchal system, the child is owned by the father, and his fate is now determined – submit to him, obey him and replace his own will with that of the father. Henceforth, this identification of the child towards his father forms what Freud calls the super-ego.

The super-ego [father figure] is now the child's ego ideal. It contains rules, regulations, and prohibitions exhibited by the father's superiority. It insinuates a moral imperative that must be accomplished: You ought to be like this (like your father), or You may not be like this (like your father); that is, you may not do all that he does; some things are his prerogative (Gay 1989, 642; Fromm 2020, 14). Thus, the child represses his will, wishes, and fantasies and obeys the father image as his ego ideal. However, this identification and submission do not remain only to the relation between the father and son. The authoritarian element in the formation of the super-ego is extended to different social forces like families and other higher figures that also do exact obedience and commands. Freud explains in the "Ego and the Id,"

The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling, and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt (Gay 1989, 642).

The Freudian Oedipus, as mentioned earlier, is just a theory. In fact, Paris (1976, 173-178) argues that the sexual desires of the child towards his mother and the consequent hatred towards the father are not empirically substantiated by clinical practices. Nonetheless, it has to be reiterated that Oedipus is not so much about the sexual desires of the child towards his mother. Instead, it is a story that tells us about the rebellion of the child against parental structures. The story conveys not so much about the incestuous relations but the corporal discipline that goes along with parental obligations and duties (Smith 2006, 115; Fromm 1947; 1963). Because of the intense environment in which the child finds himself, his reaction to the pressure brings about fear and subsequent submission to it (Fromm 1944, 3; 1955, 66). This is supported by Frankel (2002, 103), who cites Ferenczi, who is also a noted psychoanalyst. Ferenczi writes:

...children who are terrified by adults who are out of control will "subordinate themselves like automata to the will of the aggressor to divine each one of his desires and to gratify these; completely oblivious

of themselves, they identify themselves with the aggressor...The weak and undeveloped personality reacts to sudden unpleasure not by the defense but by anxiety-ridden identification and by introjection of the menacing person or aggressor.

The submission of the child towards the parental enclave leads to the subsequent introjection of the same. This is the most secure way of protecting himself from external fear, and thus internal anxiety takes the place of the external one (Fromm 2020). In this sense, Frankel, this time, cites Davies, who describes this cooptation and says,

...violent penetration and coopting of mind that occurs when one is emotionally and physically dependent on another who violates and exploits—when . . . one person is granted the authority to control and define the other's reality, even when that definition of reality exists in stark contrast to the person's actual lived experience (2002, 105).

Again, on identification and submission, Ferenczi remarks:

...identification means trying to feel something that someone else feels—essentially, getting into his head, molding one's own experience into his. In the case of someone feeling threatened, identification is a way to guide one's adaptation to the frightening person. Introjection is about getting an image of the attacker into one's own head (Frankel 2002, 106).

Many psychoanalysts, in particular Erich Fromm, believe that the force which the super-ego [parents/authority] imposed upon the child/individual may also expand into a larger context. The rules and prohibitions mandated, for instance, unto the child are social in nature. Fromm (1944) contends that these mandates reach the child/individual through the commands and prohibitions of the parents who, in their character structure and methods of education, represent the social structure. In other words, the family transmits the production of the socially desired psychic structure (Fromm, 2020, 18). So as the child represses his desires in obedience to his father, the society too has its own "filters" to reach its own goals (Silva 2009). The repressions of our desires happen not only within the family as Freud claims, but it also most often occurs within society itself. The story of Oedipus is a story of the rebellion of individuals against the cruelty of social authorities, which uphold the father image in a patriarchal society (Funk 1982, 18). A society with its governing authorities transforms itself into a larger super-ego. Becker (1973, 53-36) captured it clearly when he said that the message of the story of Oedipus is whether or not we become passive recipients of society or the actors of our own lives. Like the Oedipus story, we have introjected the image of our leaders, and consequently, I am one with what Frankel (2002, 107) remarked that "in our minds, the aggressor—an image of the aggressor, the introjected aggressor—is available to us; he is ours." We adjust to the demands of our political leaders, which is now the super-ego introjected within. It prompts us to

adapt to promulgated laws, policies, and regulations at the price of giving up a part of our spontaneity and will (Fromm 1944).

Historians attested that our indigenous people wandering in the islands had simple ways of figuring out their lives. In fact, the natives did not have any concept of material competition to become wealthy inhabitants. The social hierarchy at that time did not accrue any political or economic gradations. They simply construed their lives as following communal ways of living (Constantino 1975, 30-31). Such were the social arrangements until the natives were brutally coerced towards submission and dependence (Constantino 1975, 45). The ruthlessness of the Spanish *encomienda* system accelerated the disintegration of the old communal way of living among the natives. The collective spirit of the original *balangay* was compulsorily transformed into Spanish socio-political frameworks. The ferocious acts wrought tremendous changes not only in the individual psyche of the natives but also reversed their communal character. They were forced to introject the image of the oppressors and identify themselves with it. Consequently, how they must look and interpret the world must always be from the mantle of the Spanish bosom (Simbulan 2005, 30). Further, the political and social changes resulted in the rise of *gobernadorcillos*, *tenientes*, *alguaciles*, and *alcade mayores* who ruled and aided the colonizers, which eventually came to be known as the *principalia* class (Simbulan 2005, 147). This was the framework from which all actions depended. The *Indios* embrace this not voluntarily but under the excruciating presence of the sword. Their consciousness was then immersed in following a social characterology enforced by the oppressors. For 300 years, the cross and the sword enforced a political structure where the *principalia* class dominated the social sphere and thus considered the principal members of the community. They became the guide and symbol of better ways of living. Since the time of the colonizers, great modifications have already been made. However, the social structures remain the same, and it continues up to this day (Simbulan 2005). What the Spaniards delivered, the Americans just modified with the introduction of a political party system, government organizations, and electoral practices. Simbulan (2005, 144) testifies that "The empirical data and other evidence presented... provide documentation to the main proposition that the *principalia*-type of leadership which developed during the colonial period has not materially changed; that today's power wielders continue to be drawn predominantly from the socio-economic dominants in the community, the group designated as the modern *principalia*." To this day, the dominance of the *principalia* classes has transformed into political dynasties composed of wealthy families. This is compounded by the inclusion of gambling bosses, media personalities, action stars, rent-seekers, real estate taipans, and Chinese tycoons, whom all translate public office into their particularistic interests and demands (Coronel 2007).

The authoritarian rule experienced during the Spanish-American regimes instigated fear among the natives to the extent that the indigenous' communal dreams and passions were made to be redirected into another path, that of instituting a colonial passive construct. Just like the Oedipus complex, the superiority and ruthlessness of the Spaniards forced the indigenous people to identify themselves with colonial frameworks that are so alien to their own primitive lived experiences. In this sense, the super-ego [superior authority] viciously impinges itself upon the collective consciousness, and there is no recourse but to repress and introject a foreign entity.

The traumatic experience is a repetition compulsion determining the natives from without (Anderson et al. 2011, 23-24). In other words, Funk (2019, 2) reiterates that the introjection of the colonial mindset forced the natives to develop specific patterns, a blueprint, or a socio-political framework of viewing reality that led to their libidinal strivings and social behavior. They mentally subordinated themselves to the colonizer's desires, feelings, and thinking and thus eventually vanished themselves through their submission and compliance with the colonizers (Frankel 2002).

This social trauma during the Spanish-American occupation made us dependent upon that "father image." Filipinos have been compromised in a never-ending "struggle to repress, incorporate, sublimate, and integrate the inevitable tensions and conflicts between the drives, on the one hand, and specific cultural demands and ideals, on the other" (Anderson et al. 2011, 22). We become helpless and dependent that we yearn for a mother figure who exudes warmth, life, and security amidst larger and bureaucratic social forces. Amidst the social upheavals and struggles to emancipate ourselves, our oedipal tie with the mother figure becomes so intense that we dream of becoming a child again (Fromm 1979, 29). However, we could no longer go back to the paradisaical state. We need to confront the 'rivalry' within. As Frankel (2002, 108) asserts, "We may try to master our inner foe by domination or, more cleverly, by submission, but he [father-image] will continue to haunt us; we can never truly vanquish him because he has beaten us, at least at one moment in our lives." Hence, it is the desire for our integrity and, at the same time, dependency on the father image.

The story of suppression which created the child's feeling of powerlessness in the Oedipus story vis-à-vis the construction of the super-ego sheds some light on how we psychoanalytically understand and interpret control and domination. The fear of forces beyond our control, the risks, and the insecurities of our immediate environment throw us to yearn for a mother figure which is a primordial element in the Oedipus narration. However, the father image is so intense and powerful that, despite that longing, we submit and become dependent upon it. Hence, the importance of the absorption of the 'father-image' figure helps us understand the psycho-social dimension of patrimonial culture. i.e., why "ruling power in society is actually as effective as history shows us" (Fromm 2020, 15).

However, fear alone cannot reinforce the constancy of patrimonialism in the Philippines. The wickedness of the martial law years, the brutalities and fears it infringed upon our privacy did not deter us from deposing a ruthless leader. However, despite the 'people power' movement, patrimonial culture continues to reign. In the presence of social resistance among the critical intellectuals, oligarchic leaders persistently sustain their control to plunge the country into a patron-client dyad through money and power. Undeterred by fear, the 'democracy from below, the voices of critical intellectuals continue to fight for participative democratic life, equal opportunities for all, protections of common rights, and the abolition of oligarchic-elite patronage politics in the country (Quimpo 2005). That despite the presence of real fear, these people march in protest and yearn for a real change. However, despite the opposition's call for social change and its claim for good governance, oligarchic patronage persists. Moreover, regardless of how we educate the citizenry, the more

they continue to dominate the socio-political landscape. Does it mean that the introjection of that father image has already permeated every nook and cranny?

I find the analysis of Fromm (1936) on authoritarianism very intriguing in this sense. Fear indeed becomes a primordial factor in the submission and dependency of the masses on political elites. Out of fear, the majority of the Filipino masses introjected the very image of authoritarian leadership. Nevertheless, Fromm (2020) opines that once the edict of the super-ego is introjected into the subconscious mind, it is no longer fear of external entity; *it is the fear of the psychic apparatus built within*. It is no longer the child fearing external commands and prohibitions but the fear of dismantling those introjected blueprints the political elites have built. In other words, the "father-image" becomes rooted within the subconscious mind, and this becomes one's driving impulse. Fromm (1936; 2020, 15) explains:

It seems that when external force determines the obedience of a group, it must also change the quality of each individual psych...the external force is transformed by the super-ego in such a way that it changes from an external into an internal force...authorities become internalized, and the individual acts on their commands and prohibitions no longer solely out of fear of the external punishment, but rather out of fear of the psychic entity erected within.

In this sense, the commands and prohibition of the "father image" are invested with morality and power, that when transgressed, turns into a moral guilt that becomes inescapable (Fromm 1936; 2020, 16). In other words, resistance and defiance of that internalized psychic entity whose super-ego is transformed into a moral one result in an inner turmoil that seems impossible to outpace. Moreover, once this is established, the introjected 'father-image' is reversed. Fromm (2020, 16) continuously maintains that the super-ego is then projected onto our elite and oligarchic leaders and becomes the blueprint of the ideal authorities that we ought to emulate. Our political leaders, no matter how traditional, elitist, and oligarchic they may be, turned into our ego-ideal as a people. We invest those qualities of this archetypal leadership unto the actual ruling authorities. We vote not because they are qualified but because of that blueprint instilled in our subconscious minds. The 'father-image' of superiority, power, prestige, and elitist mentality, which are all incorporated during the Spanish-American period, serve as the ego-ideal. Hence, I maintain that because of the moral ascendancy of the internal psychic apparatus, patrimonialism persists. It is the fear of razing out that particular image built within. We unconsciously dread to dismantle the kind of narrative we have internalized all along during colonization. Fromm (1936; 2020, 17) explains:

Fear of the power invested in real authorities, the hope for material advantage, the wish to be loved and praised by them, and the gratification that follows the realization of this wish...– all of these are factors whose strength is at least no less than the ego's fear of the super-ego.

Nevertheless, the favors common people receive from our politicians, whether material, financial, or whether as a matter of security and protection, serve as the effective and emphatic means of 'equalizing,' 'taming', and strengthening the patrimonial culture (Montiel and Chongbian 1991). In fact, the presence of extreme material inequality strengthens what has already been built internally. A study by Tũaño and Cruz (2019, 305) asserts that "there is increasing evidence that wealth inequality has risen, even while the social mobility prospects of most of the population have been hampered by entrenched forms of social and economic insecurity. These, in turn, have elicited increasing concern from observers about the "exclusive" and even "oligarchic" character of the Philippine economy and its growth patterns." This is also corroborated by Solt (2012, 12), who declares,

When economic inequality is greater, those among the relatively rich who believe that established authority must always be respected not only are more numerous, they also have more resources to spread this view in the public sphere. Poorer citizens, on the other hand, have fewer resources to resist these efforts in such circumstances, and their greater relative powerlessness leads to "a greater susceptibility to the internalization of the values, beliefs, or rules of the game of the powerful as a further adaptive response - i.e., as a means of escaping the subjective sense of powerlessness, if not its objective condition.

The majority of Filipinos who are psychologically vulnerable yearn to be part of something bigger that could provide security and protection for a better life. Hence, whether favors come as means for material survival or praises, they just reinforce and cement the 'father-image' projected onto the elite-oligarchic leadership. Accepting any amount of favor or help counts as gaining pleasure and avoiding pain and thus, the satisfaction of the elementary needs for self-preservation (Fromm 1963). The pangs of inequality, the consolidated social stratifications, and material favor push the common tao towards inferiority. They succumb to submission as a matter of survival. As a matter of fact, Eidelman and Crandall (2009) would argue that people who encounter and who are more exposed to leaders, particularly through the media, would mean preferring them over other qualified political alternatives. Thus, the helplessness amidst these social disparities is a vital psycho-social element why people tend to submit themselves to political predators (Rensmann, 2018). Like the Oedipus story, ordinary people regress, submit, and depend upon their rulers for survival. Fromm (1963, 12) clearly posited and said:

In the social stratification, the infantile situation is repeated for the individual. He sees in the rulers the powerful ones, the strong, and the wise—persons to be revered. He believes that they wish him well; he also knows that resistance to them is always punished; he is content when by docility, he can win their praise. These are the identical feelings that, as a child, he had for his father, and, understandably, he is as disposed to believe uncritically what is presented to him by the rulers as just and true,

as in childhood, he used to believe without criticism every statement made by his father.

The hope to be recognized, the wish to belong to a group or clan, and the desire for material stability are all projections of an introjected father image, which is hard to resist. Moreover, when consciously resisted, the guilt that follows bolsters the reinforcement of the introjected 'father-image.' Hence, this also explains why, despite the presence of critical voices of some activists and progressives, patrimonial culture persists. No matter how critical and radical protests be, if the socio-economic and political structures are held hostage by these predatory power brokers, dependency and submission are psycho-social factors that we must reckon with. This is what precisely Freire (1970, 30) commented several years ago and said:

The very structure of their thoughts has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity...for them, the new man is themselves become oppressors...this is because the context.... remains unchanged.

No matter how disparate our social structures may be, submission and dependency through patronage politics in the Philippines is a defense mechanism that equalizes and tames collective guilt (Gandeshia 2018). We are all aware of the lopsidedness of our political democracy. We are all cognizant of the brazenness of our political predators, yet we cling, we depend, we vote, we uphold, and we bring them back to public office because of the fear within – fear of dismantling the introjected 'father-image' - which results to tremendous moral guilt if transgressed. It is the internal uneasiness that we might be left out. It is the feeling of moral turpitude of deviating from the collectively incorporated father figure of the clan, community, or society. It is the agitation of not 'toeing the line' along with the members of our group (Packer 2012). It is the feeling of being an outsider or an outcast from a culturally introjected image. In addition to this, the unjustness of the social situation in which the majority find themselves make them too insecure and just accept the cliché' of the majority just to feel being protected and cared for (Fromm 1962, 96). This is why Fromm (1957; 2011) admonishes those victims of social disparities who are forced at least subconsciously to become a part of a larger unit, a pendant, a particle, at least a small one, of this "great" person, this "great" institution, or this "great" idea." Hence in a patrimonial culture like ours, I am more convinced that attaching ourselves to somebody greater than us – like our political leaders – is a matter of economic, social, cultural, and emotional survival. Fromm (1957; 2011, 1-3) explains:

...the individual is convinced that "his" leader, party, state, or idea is all-powerful and supreme, that he himself is strong and great, that he is a part of something "greater." The paradox of this passive form of the authoritarian character is: the individual belittles himself so that he can —

as part of something greater — become great himself. The individual wants to receive commands so that he does not have to make decisions and carry responsibility. This masochistic individual looking for dependency is in his depth frightened -often only subconsciously — a feeling of inferiority, powerlessness, and aloneness. Because of this, he is looking for the "leader," the great power, to feel safe and protected through participation and to overcome his own inferiority. Subconsciously, he feels his own powerlessness and needs the leader to control this feeling. This masochistic and submissive individual, who fears freedom and escapes into idolatry, is the person on which the authoritarian system rest.

On the other hand, our politicians behave in such a way because, according to Fromm, they also flounder in isolation and fear. They remain also like the child in the Oedipus story that they need to incorporate and depend on somebody to feel secure. Despite their wealth and power, something is lacking within, which makes them feel empty. They feel secure and resilient only because they have 'incorporated' us – their constituents (Fromm 1957; 2011). Further, Fromm argues that our leaders cannot rely on themselves, i.e., to be independent of their constituents. Their personality is always to rely on others to be acknowledged or recognized as persons. They always need the approval of their constituents to be accepted as individual human beings. He (1957; 2011) further remarks:

He (authoritarian leader) is extremely alone, which means that he is gripped by a deeply rooted fear. He needs to feel a bond, which requires neither love nor reason — and he finds it in the symbiotic relationship, in feeling one with others, not by reserving his own identity, but rather by fusing, by destroying his own identity. The authoritarian character needs another person to fuse with because he cannot endure his own aloneness and fear.

Thus, the symbiotic relationship between the patron-client dyad is a psycho-social matter. One cannot exist without the other. Leaders and followers revolve around the psychic apparatus of domination and control, without which they feel a meaningless existence. They need externalities to confirm who they are: the followers submit, while the leaders adhere (Freire 1970, 44). They need the power from the "other" to allow their own individuality to grow and develop. Moreover, when a society like ours is marred by poverty and extreme material inequality, then submission and dependency on the political electoral status quo become a coping mechanism that is "adopted when individuals doubt their ability to provide themselves and their families with the necessities of survival and inclusion in their societies" (Solt 2012, 704).

CONCLUSION

I argue that the vicious predatory political landscape in the Philippines continues to persist because of an introjected 'father-image' that transforms into power, control, and security. This kind of social problem does not evade our consciousness. In fact, it is already embedded within the collective unconscious of the people. It has become the blueprint projected upon our present leaders. Although resistance and protest arise, that projected 'father-image' remains since it is already a psychic entity built within. The introjection-projection cycle sustains itself precisely because our elite and oligarchic leaders control and dominate the economic, political, social, and cultural landscape. Through rent-seeking activities, legislation of laws, policies, and regulations that protect their interests make patrimonial culture dominantly despotic. This leads me to my second point.

Since our political and economic structures are restrained, the survival of the common *masa/tao* depends upon this cycle. We vote, elect, and bring back elite leaders, hoping that they could assist with our basic elementary needs for survival. However, these same leaders deliberately expand their empires and clout through more rent-seeking activities. The laws and policies they enact are cautiously calculated to serve and to protect their own interest. Thus, the cycle becomes persistent. History shows that almost all of our politicians come from elitist and oligarchic families. They intermarry to maintain and sustain their economic and political power relations. This leads to my third point.

This leads to social imbalance and irregularities. Because of despair and helplessness, ordinary citizens are pushed to depend on and submit to these leaders for gain and protection and, of course, for the satisfaction of the basic need to survive. In this sense, patrimonialism is all the more reinforced.

Lastly, my fourth point, although there is resistance coming from below, i.e., activists and progressive intellectuals, the ego-ideal, as mentioned, becomes the blueprint for restructuring our political, economic, and social atmosphere. The Spanish-American colonization has instilled in our collective minds that leaders should arise from the *ilustrados* and *principalia* classes. Henceforth, our collective ideals depend upon this conceptual framework. Our collective libidinal drives shove us, time and again, to keep on voting for wealthy, powerful individuals whose economic and political clout extends to every corner of the barangay. Regardless of whether he is popular or charismatic, as long as he has the money to manipulate and exploit the minds of the people, this politician is capable of commanding everyone's aspirations. We bring them back to office, not on merits, but based on the introjected image of 'father-image', and this is bolstered all the more by the presence of favors and praises provided by them. After all, the status of life would still be the same because, as Freire mentioned, the socio-political structure remains unchanged. Hence, Filipino lives depend upon 'economic instrumentalization and absorption,' which casts its aim on "patrimonial and elitist social networks [which relies] on vertical relationships of dependence" (Pingel 2010, 10). In other words, as Quimpo (2005, 247) would describe it, if the landlords and *trapos* still call the shots, then patron-client would continue to

exist. We continue to bring back elitist-oligarchic ruled democracy, and we stumble helplessly into this vicious narrative of patrimonial politics.

We have already elected our new leaders. Almost all of them hail from the elite-oligarchic category. I posit that as long as we have the same socio-political and economic structures, the promises made would lead to naught. Moreover, as long as we wallow in the same patrimonial culture, the assurance of a better tomorrow remains to be a dream. I hope I will be proven wrong someday.

NOTES

1. In 1922, Max Weber used the term Patrimonial Domination to describe how a medieval ruler exact blind obedience from his subjects. It is the unfettered loyal subordination of subjects towards their Lords, or Kings. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. London: University of California Press, 1968, pp. 1010-1045. Patrimonial domination is the exertion of the authority of the ruler upon his subjects. This authority is based on "kin ties, patron-client relations, personal allegiances, and combinations thereof, with few formal rules and regulations" (Charrad and Adams 2011). Further, kin ties and patron-client relations are not without the use of force and power to maintain the leader's particularistic advantages (Iglesias 2018).

2. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Freudian Oedipus tells us about the child-father rivalry. Because of fear, the child represses his desires. Because of fear, the child renounces those desires and instead submits himself to the demands of the father. Submission and dependence upon the father are a result of the trauma the child experiences with his father. See Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), translated by James Strachey in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. London: Hogarth Press, 1927, p. 31. In Fromm's analysis, it is not so much about the sexual desire of the child towards his mother. It is about the ability to express his desires and to question parental authority. See Erich Fromm, *The Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought*. New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1979, p. 28-29.

3. Constantino narrated that the natives in the Philippines did not even think of enriching themselves. While it is true that they possess one or two pieces of earrings made of fine gold, they did not trouble themselves to look for more. As a matter of fact, the chieftain, although the head of the *balangay*, remained to be a farmer and wove his own cloth just like the rest of the *barangay* members. Constantino continued and said that private property, in its most exploitative sense, did not exist during that time. Each individual participated in communal ownership of the land and the instruments of production. See Renato Constantino, *History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, pp. 30-31.

4. When the Spaniards arrived, brutality and coercion were enforced through the institutionalization of the Encomienda system. Under this arrangement, vast tracks of lands were appropriated and distributed to loyal and deserving Spaniards who were then called *encomenderos*. The *indios* (Spaniard's term for the native settlers) who

lived in these areas were brutally forced to pay tributes. Simbulan, p. 28, See Footnote; In the diary of Fray Domingo de Salazar, Constantino noted: "...injuries and vexations, torments, and miseries which Indians are made to suffer in the collection of the tributes. If the chief does not give as much gold as they demand, they crucify the unfortunate chief...lash and torment the chief until they give the entire sum demanded from them...both the *encomenderos* and government officials were instruments of pacification and exploitation." See Constantino, p. 45.

5. The colonizers decided to appease them by changing the original name *Datu* into *Cabeza de Barangay* (head of the *Barangay*). It was a privileged status given by the colonizers that members of the *Cabeza*, and together with their eldest sons, were exempted from paying tributes and forced labor projects the colonizers. They were given the title "Don" who eventually became agents of the Spaniards to further colonized the natives. See Simbulan, p. 30.

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