

# **Sustaining Filipino Unity: Harnessing Indigenous Values for Moral Recovery**

PROSERPINA DOMINGO TAPALES AND MA. CONCEPCION P. ALFILER\*

*The series of revolts dated back to the Spanish era down to the 1986 EDSA Revolution concretizes the sporadic sense of unity of the Filipino people during crisis situations. However, once the crisis is resolved, the spirit of unity withers, leaving the nation at the foothold of recovery. The reason behind this is the faulty perspective toward nationalism. The exposure to a motley of cultures created a gap between the privileged few and the masses. Western values were forced down our throats disregarding the indigenous ones. What is needed for the nation to take off is to reconcile the meaning of the indigenous core values—kapwa and pakikisama between the elite and the masses, incorporate these in projects/ programs involving mass participation and translate these into empowerment of the masses through equal sharing and redistribution. Only then will a sense of shared identity and a truer meaning of nationalism be developed which are necessary for Filipinos to sustain unity.*

## **Introduction**

The din from the applause and cheers of EDSA in 1986 has turned into noise barrages of discontent from some sectors that helped bring about the people's revolution. The one million signatures which the late Chino Roces obtained to get Corazon Aquino to run for President will be tripled by early 1991, according to oppositionist Eva Estrada Kalaw, to get Aquino to resign.

By Christmas time, the peso had plummeted to P28.00 (P31.50 in the black market) to a dollar; the price of premium gasoline had gone up to P15.95 per liter (forcibly lowered from a high P20.70 to appease irate consumers). To cushion the impact of price hike of commodities on their lives, workers demanded a P30.00 per day wage increase and government workers fought for P1,000 across the board increase per month.

---

\*Associate Professors, College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines.

Prepared for the National Congress on Moral Recovery, 2-3 March 1991, Ateneo de Manila University. The authors are grateful to Dr. Virgilio G. Enriquez and to some of their colleagues at the UP College of Public Administration for sharing their ideas on the topic.

As though the country's economic woes were not enough, the government continues to face subversion threats from the left and the right. Lack of consensus divides the political institutions of government, from issues like selective or total ban on logging, to the extension or removal of US bases and payment or repudiation of the huge foreign debt.

The forecast of the future for the country is again bleak, as the government plods along without a concrete ideology, policymakers continue to apply inappropriate solutions to the country's problems and Juan de la Cruz goes on living in his seemingly indifferent manner. The shopping malls of Metro Manila fill with people everyday, even as children continue begging or selling their wares in the streets, and the rural folks wake up everyday not knowing when their next meal will be.

The problem is systemic, and needs a total approach, necessitating governmental orchestration of all effort. This paper looks only at one such dimension—the human resources from whom must emanate all these efforts. It posits that changes must also come from the people themselves, and such can only come about through proper utilization of the basic values which direct their behavior, as individuals and members of the collective.

### Looking at Ourselves

Many of the country's ills have been blamed by respectable scholars to the mistakes of our colonial past. The Spaniards imposed upon an archipelago of politically independent communities of pagans and Muslims, a central government and a bureaucracy alien to their culture. What emerged was a highly hierarchical system of corrupt officials alienated from the masses they were supposed to serve. The colonizer and officials spoke in a language which their supposed benefactors could not understand. When the Americans took over, the English language which was taught the natives was used as an avenue to colonize them, culturally. Concepts of merit and fitness were introduced to a bureaucracy already used to corruption; politics was taught to an eager people whose regionalism and factionalism were encouraged by the Spanish colonizers. Thus, government and politics were learned by the Filipinos only in process, but not in substance.

The Americans introduced a system of education that bred scholars and technocrats schooled in western concepts and techniques, who eagerly applied them to the unanalyzed Philippine situation. The western system of education produced what was termed as the great cultural divide between the elite and the masses. The American-educated elite imbibed western culture, while the masses kept much of the indigenous (Enriquez 1989; Salazar 1989). While these two cultures were not really

in conflict, they existed separately without synchronization. The elite held the reins of government and business, and continued to prescribe what was best for the country, while the masses in general remained as mere benefactors.

It is the constant separation of the elite and the people which led to problems caused by their disunity. Constantino explained the disruptive actions of the elite.

Both sectors were politicized by their contract and their joint struggle.... The masses saw clearly the correspondence between the formulations of their leaders and their aspirations.... Their consciousness was widened and they fought unservingly against their oppressors. But the *ilustrados*, though they had been the articulators of national aspirations, ran true to the logic of their class and eventually compromised with the enemy in the Pact of Biak na Bato (Constantino 1978:56).

Philippine history is replete with moments of unity in crisis and disunity after victory. As Constantino recounted, during the American regime, the masses retained their revolutionary fervor even after the elites have abandoned the united front. As they compromised after the revolution, "the elite began going over to the American side." It then became easy for the Americans to gradually dismantle the revolutionary consciousness of the Filipinos:

Absorbed into the system, the elite were fairly quickly Americanized through colonial education. They were accommodated within the economic hierarchy and thus given a vested right in the new regime. Their armed resistance destroyed by the brutal application of force, the people were gradually brought within the framework of the colonial establishment by the pervasive powers and propaganda efforts of the elite and by a combination of policies of coercion and attraction developed by the new rulers (Constantino 1978:64).

We are familiar with the unity forged in recent history. The unity against the Japanese broke up when freedom was attained and the elite again came to power. The unity dramatized in EDSA in 1986 was destroyed by elements which were themselves active in the struggle. Elite elements took over the government again, leaving the masses in the coalition out in the cold. With no unifying cause except the ouster of the dictator, the effort at solidarity has become volatile.

There seems to be three important steps to be undertaken in bringing about change by harnessing the people's inherent values: (1) a deeper understanding of what are indigenous and common to both the elite and the masses; (2) an understanding of how these indigenous elements may be instrumental in forging a common and unifying nationalism; and (3) a commitment among leaders in effectively harnessing the values of the people for sustained unity toward societal change underlined by people empowerment.

### Value Formation and Reformulation: The Philippine Experience

There are values people treasure as members of a collectivity. These values serve as guide to their relationship with others within or outside their immediate circles. The study of local language shows that it is a rich source of indigenous Filipino values.

But it is easy to talk about values and difficult to fully understand them in order to operationalize them for development. Younger psychologists, for instance, are critical of old school scientists analyzing Filipino values from a western point of view. For instance, earlier studies on Filipino values described *hiya* only as shame, and Filipino behavior toward each other as something called smooth interpersonal relations, arrived at through go-between and other means. The Filipino personality was even compared by one to the split-level bungalow. The younger psychologists attribute this to shallow attempts to put into Philippine context what is learned from methodology of the west. The approach has since deepened.

In a study on values for moral recovery for the Senate Committees on Education, Arts and Culture and Social Justice, Welfare and Development, the team led by Patricia Licuanan identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Filipino character.

Foremost among the strengths of the Filipino character is *pakikipagkapwa-tao*. As Licuanan said:

...It is shown in the Filipino's ability to empathize with others, in helpfulness and generosity in times of need (*pakikiramay*), in the practice of the *bayanihan* or mutual assistance, and in the famous Filipino hospitality.

Filipinos possess a sensitivity to people's feelings (*pakikiramdam*), *pagtitiwala* or trust and a sense of gratitude or *utang na loob*. Because of *pakikipagkapwa tao*. Filipinos are very sensitive to the quality of interpersonal relationships and are very dependent on them. If our relationships are satisfactory we are happy and secure.

*Pakikipagkapwa tao* results in camaraderie and a feeling of closeness to one another. It is the foundation for unity as well as the sense of social justice (Licuanan, in Schwenk 1989: 13).

Although Virgilio Enriquez, founder of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, is critical of the Licuanan report as repetitive of others by psychologists heavily influenced by the west, his analysis of the Filipino character, which he defines as not personality but personhood or *pagkatao*, asserts the pervasiveness of *pakikipagkapwa-tao* in the Filipino. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* identified *kapwa* (shared identity) as the core value of the Filipino personality. The pivotal interpersonal value is *pakiramdam* (shared inner perception) essential to *pakikipagkapwa-tao*. A person "without *pakiramdam*

cannot possibly have *pakikisama* and *utang na loob*. Similarly, one cannot expect *hiya* from someone who has no *pakiramdam*" (Enriquez 1990:291).

Sikolohiyang Pilipino looks deeper beyond the root word, because affixes in Pilipino change the context of words. Salazar (in Aganon 1985) identified the external and internal aspects of *hiya*, and therefore interpreted it beyond mere shame. According to Salazar, the old descriptions captured only the external aspects of *hiya*. However, through psycholinguistics, he identified the internal aspects of *hiya* to mean "the qualities and technical values of *karangalan*," while the external aspects have a social dimension, pertaining to social interaction. That is why *pakikisama* (going along with others) is what foreign psychologists only see, when actually *pakikipag-kapwa* is what Filipinos value most. *Pakikipagkapwa* was also found by Ma. Luisa Doronila (1989) as a valued Filipino trait, expressed by 70 percent of fourth year high school students she surveyed; as *pakikisama* was also valued by as many as 41 percent. *Lakas ng loob* is also an important aspect of *kapwa*, and *pakikibaka* (struggle) is the height in which *pakikipagkapwa* may be carried, in a shared magnanimous goal. As Enriquez explained:

*Pakikibaka* affirms one's convictions as part of one's being. It recognizes the meanings of cooperative and corrected action in resistance even when utterly powerless, which are aspects of the value of *pakikipagkapwa* (Enriquez 1990:304-305).

Enriquez went on with the analogy:

The people's power revolution illustrates *kapwa* and *lakas ng loob* as the businessmen and professionals from Makati joined ranks with the urban poor and protesting laborers from Tondo. The voice and *lakas ng loob* from Mendiola joined in EDSA in a united move to *pagbabagong dangal*. Instead of the overdrawn and mis-used conduct of *utang na loob*, the Filipino *lakas ng loob* supported by his conviction and the social psychology of *kapwa* were affirmed. The motivation to dislodge a dictator in the light of values of *katarungan*, *kalayaan*, and ultimately *karangalan* led to a demonstration of people's power in a move to *pagbabagong dangal* (Enriquez 1990:303).

*Pakikipagkapwa* may then lead to *pakikibaka*, for *kalayaan* and *katarungan* are ideals valued by Filipinos. What is *katarungan*? Jose W. Diokno gave a Filipino interpretation to the important concept of justice (*katarungan*). *Katarungan*, he said is used by Tagalogs, Ilongos, Cebuanos and Pampangos. The word is derived from the Visayan *tarong* "which means straight, upright, appropriate, correct." Diokno said:

...For us, therefore, justice is rectitude, the morally right act; and because it also connotes what is appropriate, it embraces the concept of equity.

For "right" we use *karapatan*, whose root is *dapat*, signifying fitting, appropriate, correct. The similarity in meaning of the roots of the words for "right" and "justice" indicates that, for us, justice and right are intimately related" (in Aganon 1985:273).

For katarungan, the elite joined the mass-led revolution of 1896 against Spain. For katarungan, the elite and the masses staged their nonviolent struggle in 1986. Thus, the core value kapwa, expressed in pakikipagkapwa-tao served as a unifying force.

Kapwa has many dimensions. As shared inner self, "a person starts having kapwa not so much because of a recognition of status given him by others but more so because of his awareness of shared identity. The *ako* (ego) and the *ibang tao* (others) are one and the same in shared identity" (Enriquez 1989:33). For the pursuit of a cause dimmed noble at any one time, pakikipagkapwa may mean pakikibaka, a fight waged in unity.

In the 1986 revolution, the unifying factor that led to pakikibaka was the desire to oust the dictator. In the 1896 revolution, the unifying factor was the desire to boot out the Spaniards. It is unfortunate, however, that after the elite took over, they relied on another foreign power to complete the task of driving out the Spaniards. A few of the mass leaders continued the fight against the Americans, but the introduction of the American system of education using the English language and American symbols of culture suffered what could have been a more potent resistance.

In the 1986 revolution, the rainbow coalition united under the yellow flag fought for katarungan, symbolized by the ouster of the dictator. After the fray, some sectors dropped out or were dropped and the elite in the yellow army took over, as the masses went back to their humdrum lives.

In those instances, pakikibaka was fought under a noble cause so political and ideological and called nationalism by both leaders and followers. But even such rhetoric did not pass the test of time, as the unifying factor each time got buried in the rubble of the ensuing class cleavages.

Why is unity transitory? A possible explanation is that the core Filipino value of kapwa does not have exactly the same degree of meaning to the elite and the masses. Salazar (1990) dealt with the concept of *sarili*, kapwa and *iba*. He said that feudal perceptions still pervade the relationships between Filipinos on different socioeconomic levels. For the elite, the concept of *sakop* prevails; they are part of the household but do not dwell exactly in the same domain. The elite feels a sense of responsibility toward their *sakop*, but expects them to keep to their part in the feudal exchange. For the elite then, kapwa has more a connotation of *pakikitungo*. On the other hand, kapwa for the masses is a larger concept of sharing or *pakikibahagi*.

These may explain why, after a crisis is resolved through unity between the elite and the masses, the coalition breaks up after the initial goal is achieved. The elite and the masses go on with their respective lives and their own expectations from each other.

Corpuz (1989: 568) criticized what he called "the fading away of nationalism as the guiding spirit and paramount values of Filipino politics." He explained some of the country's ills through this phenomenon: "The lack of one recognized unifying or guiding value in politics and society had to lead to crisis."

And yet, to the common people, nationalism is as simple as Diokno's food and freedom, jobs and justice. Ma. Luisa Doronila's survey points to this succinctly:

Across all communities, without exception, respondents express overwhelming agreement to the statements that equitable distribution is a basis for unity and peace and that authentic *pakikisama* means equitable sharing of property and wealth.

This (finding) further suggests rather forthrightly that any call for unity and peace among the people must rest on the solid foundation of a more equitable distribution of property and wealth, not on the merely symbolic such as EDSA where other things took place but not redistribution (Doronila, M. 1989: 47).

The people expect of the elite who go along with them to carry their political partnership through redistribution, by means of a mutually defined nationalism. The masses want their own empowerment, not only those of the elite who unite with them in crisis.

But how can such mutual definition be arrived at? Perhaps, it lies on forceful and responsible leadership.

### Nationalism as the Unifying Force

The reason for the 1896 revolution was set as early as 1872 with the execution of Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora; 1872 made clear what the leaders of unsuccessful revolts tried to say—the Spaniards must be driven out of the country. In Spain, Filipino propagandists waged the fight for reforms with their pens. In the Philippines, the fight for independence was waged with the *bolos* of the proletariat, later joined by the elite. The ideology of nationalism was put into shape by Bonifacio and Jacinto, later hammered out by Mabini in the inspired new government and the subsequent resistance against the Americans. Nationalism took the form of the fight for independence during the American regime. It took the form of armed resistance again for a free Philippines during the Japanese occupation.

Yet, Filipino presidents did not expound any consistent ideology upon which their governments should have been anchored. Carlos P. Garcia came close to an ideology with his Filipino First policy which stressed nationalist industrialization, but this was nipped in the bud by the usual intervention of foreign and local vested interests. The absence of ideology has led to the passage of contradictory laws and policies, both in

the economic and social spheres. Lichauco (1989) lamented the downplaying of nationalist industrialization in Philippine economic policies.

Ferdinand Marcos came to power via the usual personalistic politics. He stage-managed a series of events which extended his power for 20 years. After he declared martial law in 1972, he undertook a series of steps to extend his power further through popular acceptance of authoritarian government which he attempted to dig from our cultural past.

The first attempt was the use of slogans: *Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan; Isang bansa, isang diwa*. The first slogan was a successful attempt to cow people into obedience. The second was an unsuccessful attempt to use ethnic unity by locating (and dislocating) isolated Filipino tribes, by the token use of indigenous terms like *barangay* which became empty in the light of reality. To meet demands for social justice, he embarked on a land reform program which covered only rice and corn lands with many loopholes for exemption. He financed a history writing project to reaffirm the need for the Filipino to find himself in a crisis identity fomented by colonization. (The martial law years were, after all, justified by the irrelevance of alien models to the Philippine situation). In his "democratic revolution," he said that "the democratic system of government shall rather utilize its 'self-rejuvenating and self-revolutionary power,'" "meaning anti-communist and indigenously Filipino." According to Josefina Tayag (1989: 257), "the democratic revolution of Marcos floundered not on the basis of achievements nor of requisite structural changes, of which there were several, but on the lack of leadership by example." She added:

...There was a glaring discrepancy between the posited ideals and actual behavior of the chief ideologue, his family and friends, as well as on those of his implementors and enforcers, the military who could not enforce discipline for long, themselves undisciplined and non-idealized. The majority of the people, moreover, did not share the ideology, nor believed in it, and at the first opportunity, reverted to their original conduct, once the loopholes in the system have been discovered (Tayag 1989: 257).

In continued attempt, Marcos again commissioned a study to formulate "an ideology for Filipinos" in 1979 and in 1980. This ideology

...emphasized national consensus and unity, rather than class warfare and confrontational politics. It also set the vision of a New Society, a Philippines that would be "great again," where values like egalitarianism, social justice, participatory democracy, economic emancipation, and social concord were high (Tayag 1989: 262).

But "what Marcos asserted as values were incontrovertible and self-evident truths no Filipino could quarrel or argue with" (Tayag 1989: 262). Then again, what he did was not in keeping with his official Filipino ideology propagated through Executive Order 879 in 1983.



Where Marcos failed can be attributed to many causes. One probable reason is the impossibility of imposing new ideas—authoritarianism and discipline on a people characterized as lacking in discipline and initiative. What kept the Filipinos going through 14 years of authoritarian rule were their faith and religiosity, hard work and industry, which enabled them to survive. Marcos and his technocrats failed to understand the core concept of kapwa, where pakikipagkapwa-tao demands empathy for people. The people, seeing through empty rhetoric, carried forth their pakikipagkapwa to pakikibaka for katarungan.

In contrast to Marcos, Cory Aquino has not put forward any ideology; in an interview, she even wondered if she needed any. It was probably impossible to draw up an ideology during the early months of her coalition, since each group supporting her had different ideas about running the country. But increasingly, the conservative elements in her coalition are winning the game, and a conservative posture is becoming more apparent in the policies being pursued by her government. It may pave the way for an ideology; the question is, whether such ideology will be based on the values of the masses who are not represented in the policy process. Only through this deep linkage in our culture and values can any ideology of government survive.

An ideology need not be written or “taught” to the people; as the Marcos experience has shown us, even that will fail. What is important is a conscious effort to feel the people’s pulse to come up with programs which fit their needs. What is even more important is to galvanize people into concerted action to bring those programs to fruition. These strategies require fully understanding our values, and picking out those constructive ones which build and sustain unity. The core value of kapwa must be utilized for cooperative endeavors among the people. Kapwa and pakikisama must be translated into empowerment of the masses through equal sharing and redistribution (Doronila, M. 1989). It is a definition which must be accepted by the elite who have attained power to make decisions.

### **Translating Kapwa into Concrete Programs**

Three steps seem to be important in bringing about unity among the people on a more permanent basis: (1) utilizing indigenous values held by Filipinos; (2) translating this into an ideology to foster unity; and (3) sustaining the unity through programs and projects to empower the people. As already explained, the cleavage which results after initial unity in a crisis is caused by differing perspectives between the elite and the people of the core concept of kapwa. Kapwa, to the western-educated elite means a superficial relationship to the other. Thus, plans and programs initiated by the elite who get to government do not go beyond these superficialities. To the masses, kapwa has a deeper sense of identification, calling for equality and redistribution.

Many government programs fail to address that depth of *pakikipagkapwa* desired by the people. Cause-oriented groups became concerned during the Marcos years about the failure of the government to deliver services needed by the people. They thus took the responsibility of helping the government in delivering services to the people. Under the new government, NGOs have become more active in the task of helping the government fulfill its responsibility. It is apparent that the elite is increasingly becoming aware of the need to bridge the gap between those who make crucial decisions in government and those who receive government services. Another bridge is being built by the NGOs in the other direction—bringing to the attention of the policymakers the feelings and desires of the people. Two national experiences attest to the attempts of certain sectors of the educated elite to unite with the masses. Triggered principally by their concern for the plight of most disempowered Filipinos who are otherwise unable to influence their government to heed their call for greater attention to their social and economic hardships, these sustained and organized collective efforts which continue to draw popular support, signal a growing unity between the masses and the elite. The two concerns which we describe below show two directions for masses-elite collaboration: (a) in promoting locally based efforts which strengthen the people's confidence and resolve for self-reliance and empowerment; and (b) the peoples' articulation of and insistence on democratically evolved debt policy which puts the country's social needs above and beyond the payment of external debt. The experience of community-based health programs as pioneered in by the Rural Missionaries and documented recently in an evaluation conducted by the National Council for Health and Development elaborate on the first concern. The phenomenal popular support for the stand of the Freedom from Debt Coalition on the country's external debt policy, on the other hand, vividly captures the Filipinos' appreciation for the FDC's consistent call for a democratic process in the formulation and implementation of a people-oriented debt policy.

#### *Community-Based Health Programs*

The significance of articulating national values as priority concerns, translated through concrete programs may be captured in the experience of community-based health programs undertaken by various nongovernmental institutions in the country. In their desire to assist severely deprived, depressed and relatively isolated communities which had no access to basic social services during the authoritarian regime, nongovernmental organizations emerged and mushroomed after the declaration of martial law (Alfiler 1985). The history of community-based health programs (CBHPs) in the Philippines clearly show that the health conditions in these communities, the scarcity of health professionals and facilities within easy reach and the lack of necessary drugs prompted CBHPs to resort to utilize traditional and indigenous remedies, to rely on trained community health workers and more importantly to appreciate the need for people to actively determine how they choose to respond to their own health problems. All these preceded the formal adoption of the primary health care approach in *Alma Ata* in 1978.

CBHPs operate on the philosophy that the health condition is inevitably related to the objective conditions prevailing in the country. Consequently, they see health problems as being rooted in the socio-politico-economic makeup of the nation. Even as they see the need for structural transformation to address these problems, CBHPs continue to work on the improvement of their approach which is distinct in that: (a) it manifests its bias toward the poor, particularly in the rural areas; (b) it stresses the long term adverse effects of the doleout approach used in some health programs; and (c) it rejects the elitist, doctor and hospital oriented notion of health care and promotes the community's confidence to deal with their health needs through its advocacy for participatory methods of collective decisionmaking in the community.

While CBHP proponents do not proclaim their use of *kapwa* in this philosophy, it is clear that their respect for the humanity of, and their acceptance of the masses' inherent rights serve to unify the uneducated and economically deprived residents of rural areas, their community health workers and the professional and educated elite, the doctors, in their belief in the values of self-reliance and people empowerment. This is no more concretely expressed than in the title of an enduring local TV series which focus on health as a social service, *Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko*. It is important to note that beyond their concern for the delivery of health services, CBHPs are also known for their active support for accessibility, disease prevention and empowerment (Bodegon 1990).

By 1989, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, the Council for Primary Health Care and the Community-Based Health Services (CBHS) had CBHPs operating in some 634 barangays (590 in Mindanao, 29 in Luzon and 15 in Visayas). These CBHPs had two things in common: they had been in operation for at least two years and they had Community Health Workers (CHWs) who had undergone basic training by January 1986 (CBHP 1990).

The proliferation of CBHPs in the Philippines attest to the responsiveness of their approach to local conditions. This likewise underscores the value of linking self-reliance values with actual empowerment of the people. As manifested in failed efforts in the past, no social transformation may occur simply by advocating selected local values. Devoid of a concrete action component through which the people may experience how they may finally be empowered through these values, value reorientation by itself may serve as futile panacea to the country's seemingly endless search for a unifying force.

The experience of community-based health programs attests to how, despite trying social and economic conditions, communities may be relied upon to organize and take collective action. These efforts succeed and are sustained principally because they keep faith and believe in the wholeness and in the dignity of their *kapwa* Filipino. They keep faith with the people.

*The Freedom from Debt Coalition: Unity Beyond Ideology*

A rare coalition of coalitions, the cause advanced by the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) has brought together a unique unity among nongovernmental and peoples' organizations. Among the 144 organizations of varying ideological and political persuasions represented in the FDC are, BANDILA (*Bayang Nagkakaisa sa Diwa at Layunin*), BAYAN (*Bagong Alyansang Makabayan*), BISIG (*Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa*), DSK (*Demokratikong Sosyalistang Koalisyon*) and the PopDem Cluster (Volunteers for Popular Democracy). Moreover, the LACC (Labor Advisory Coordinating Committee) and CPAR (Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform) are also ex-officio members of the FDC Board. Beyond these groups, professionals, academics and religious have joined and given their time and talents to the FDC.

What has compelled Filipinos to transcend their political ideology and forge an exceptional unity in the FDC? This organization has consistently worked for its vision of a "free and democratic Philippines where debt is not a burden but rather an instrument of growth and equity within the framework of a progressive national economy, where the resource and fruits of production are equitably distributed within the context of a just international economic order." Working with its national and international partners, the FDC works through the realization of a people-oriented debt policy through: (a) policy analysis and research; (b) education and the preparation of educational materials; and (c) campaigns for specific debt and debt-related issues.

The FDC's increasing organizational credibility is founded largely on its broad-based popular support among the people, its remarkable level of professional competence and the national and international recognition it has gained over time.

As it advocates for a greater role of the people in the formulation of a debt policy which is oriented toward the needs of the people and not on the demands and conditionalities of creditors, the FDC reasserts the peoples' inherent right as bearers of the debt burden, to participate in the formulation of a debt policy.

The FDC epitomizes the capacity of the Filipinos to unite when confronted with a common national cause that enables them to express their concern for each other and for the nation. The dominance and overpowering pressure that international agencies have exerted on their government which has turned a deaf ear to its people and has heeded instead the latter's demands despite the Filipino peoples' articulation of their desires through the FDC, has only strengthened the unity and the resolve of this nongovernmental coalition. The FDC today proves that certain sectors among the Filipino educated and economic elite can indeed empathize with the masses who continue to grovel in poverty as their government continues to ignore their plea for

more attention to their needs. FDC's efforts have transformed the debt issue from a simple financial transaction to a national issue, a people's problem. More importantly, it is now viewed as a moral issue with social, political and economic implications.

What are the common elements of these two efforts? One, they are both NGOs which actively translate values they advocate into specific programs of action. Two, they also represent a unique unity of the educated elite and the masses. Three, in both instances, the NGOs espouse a specific mechanism for the equitable distribution of resources and for greater people participation in the process of governance.

### Conclusion

We have shown how our historical experience has been a series of sporadic unity under crises and disunity after each crisis is weathered. We have shown how the core concept of *kapwa*, an indigenous Filipino psychology, has placed a positive value on *pakikipagkapwa* in interpersonal relationships. We have also tried to show how the cultural gap between the westernized elite and the masses have given them different levels of expectations from *pakikipagkapwa*. We have so far seen that no leadership has in fact welded the elite and the people together under an ideology, even under nationalism. Marcos failed in uniting the people through the use of indigenous values, because of his own lack of commitment to the values he espoused. For more sincere leaderships like Cory Aquino, the lack of an ideology has been the deterrent. All throughout has been a series of government miscalculations about programs and projects which only cater to the elite's vision of *kapwa*.

What seems to be needed is an ideology based on the mutual reading of the elite and the masses of the same cause, based on the same level of perceptions of indigenous values. If *kapwa* is used to define nationalism as an ideology, then that nationalism has to be indigenous—a nationalism based on *pakikisama*, *pakikitungo*, *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, a shared identity of being Filipino, a shared identity of equality.

Equality of course, remains as an ideal, CARP and other equalizing programs notwithstanding. We may, perhaps, start with shared identity.

Do we really have a fully shared identity? Amando Doronila, analyzing people power at EDSA remarked on different levels of perception of the people who participated. Quoting a study of Dr. Erlinda Henson of UP, he showed the different perceptions of the participants by sector:

Feeling of unity was most often mentioned by workers, the military and the religious in their perception of people power. On the other hand, the housewives and businessmen felt a sense of pride.

When asked about the extent to which they were willing to participate in future people power events, the lower class respondents responded that they were ready to die to defend the country while the middle class and high socio-economic status respondents often gave the conditional answer that they were willing to participate only if the cause was valid (Doronila, A. 1988:9).

No wonder the unity of EDSA was volatile. If motivations and expectations were not on equal levels, the unity could not have been kept longer. Doronila concluded: "This finding confirms political opportunism as a historical behavior of the middle class" (Doronila, A. 1988: 10). From that study, there has not yet been a complete shared identity among the Filipinos.

But there is reason for hope. Ma. Luisa Doronila, who studied elementary and high school students in 1982 and found that they preferred to have been born with a foreign nationality, was herself struck by her 1986 survey. Her sample from the same group of people showed that majority of the respondents now opt for Filipino nationality, meaning they are now proud to be Filipinos. She said:

In all communities, the trend is towards increased personal identification with the nation in terms of symbolic identification, social distance and food preferences, role models, values and traits, and appreciation for cultural products, in that order (Doronila, M. 1989: 38).

Beginnings of national unity are now unfolding. The seeds have been sown. What the leadership should do is to use it to bring about longer lasting unity. The government's media campaign is one step in the right direction. But it should not stop there. It should look for ways of sustaining unity through more programs and projects which address people empowerment, which as the community-based health program and the debt debate have shown, is rooted in cooperation of the people.

What of the people themselves? An awareness of the shades of difference in perception of pakikipagkapwa has to be recognized by both sectors, especially the elite. This calls for efforts to sensitize them to this particular issue. Moreover, the recognition of a greater sense of identity with the nation has to be taken advantage of by well-meaning moral recovery activists. The raw materials are there to use. Only greater sensitivity is needed, so that the ideology of nationalism can be defined according to the indigenous values of kapwa which lies in the very core of our being as a people.

### References

- Aganon, Allen and S. Ma. Assumpta David, RVM  
1985 *Sikolohiyang Pilipino: Isyu, Pananaw at Kaalaman*. Manila: National Bookstore.
- Alfiler, Ma Concepcion P.  
1986 The Role of Non-Governmental Associations in the Health Sector of the Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* (30) 3 (July):286-306.

- Bodegon, Sophie Lizares  
1990 Health in our Hands: Community-Based Health Programs in the Philippines. Health Impact Evaluation Study, Council for Health and Development.
- Briones, Leonor M.  
Comments on Senate Bill 1178 - An Act Amending Section 6 of Republic Act No. 6624 Relating to the Composition of the Foreign Debt Council. Unpublished paper.
- Constantino, Renato  
1978 *Neocolonial Identity and Counterconsciousness: Essays on Cultural Decolonization*. London: Merlin Books.
- Community-Based Health Program (CBHP)  
1990 An Evaluation of Selected Community-Based Health Programs and Institutions in the Philippines. National Coordinating Committee, CBHP Impact Evaluation Study.
- Corpuz, O.D.  
1989 *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*. Quezon City: AKLAHI Foundation, Inc.
- Doronila, Amando.  
1988 People Power and Its Perversions. *Manila Chronicle* (6 November):9 & (13 November):9-10.
- Doronila, Maria Luisa C.  
1989 Changing Conceptions of Filipino National Identification in a Nation of Transition. Report submitted to the University of the Philippines- Department of Science and Technology.
- Enriquez, Virgilio G.  
1989 *Indigenous Psychology and National Consciousness*. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
- Enriquez, Virgilio G., ed.  
1990 *Indigenous Psychology: A Book of Readings*. Quezon City: Akademiya ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino.
- Lichatco, Alejandro.  
1988 *Nationalist Economics*. SPSS Institute.
- Licuanan, Patricia, et al.  
1989 The Urgent Need for a Moral Recovery Program in Schwenk, Richard L. (ed.) *Moral Recovery and the Democratic Vision*. Manila: Seed Center.
- Salazar, Zeus A.  
1989 Pantaong Pananaw: Isang Paliwanag. *Philippine Currents* (September):17-20.  
1990 Ang Implisitong Pilipino Sa Ugnayang Panlipunan. Papel na ihinanda para sa isang panayam sa Vargas Museum, University of the Philippines (Hulyo).
- Tayag, Josefina G.  
1989 *Ideology and Public Administration: the Philippine Experience*. Doctoral dissertation submitted to the UP College of Public Administration.