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Author

Woods, Damon L.

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From Wilderness to Nation: the Evolution of Bayan

By
Damon L. Woods
Lecturer

California State University; UCLA

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Much of what has been written about the Philippines, particularly its history, has been produced either by outsiders, or for outsiders—using their categories, their languages, their terms and often informed by their own agenda, specifically economic and/or political. Unwilling or unable to appreciate the fluid, even ambiguous nature of Tagalog social structure before and after the Spanish intrusion, writers of Philippine history have presented a deeply flawed vision of that society. The desire to view pre-hispanic and early Spanish Philippine societies in primarily institutional and political terms has resulted in a static and consequently mistaken representation of that society as is demonstrated in the concept of *barangay*. Beginning with institutional reports for the Spanish government and continuing to the present with theoretically based reconstructions, the *barangay* is presented as the basic unit in early Tagalog society and is constructed as containing various aspects of Western society, including class structure and entrenched leadership. Few have bothered to ask how it is that *baranggay*, a Spanish corruption of the Tagalog *balangay*, described the basic unit in that society. In the project of rewriting Philippine history, *baranggay* is representative of the problem and *bayan* the solution;

baranggay as an imagined and imposed view—based on a report from an outsider, and *bayan* as a fluid and evolving basis of Tagalog identity—found in Tagalog sources.

The myth of the *barangay* had its genesis in a single source: *Las costumbres de los indios Tagalos de Filipinas*, submitted in 1589 by the Franciscan Juan de Plasencia. Commissioned by Spanish civil authorities, the report was based on Plasencia's apparent attempts to collect and analyze information regarding the Tagalogs. The influence of Plasencia's report cannot be overstated. This report became *the* basis for Spanish laws and policies in the Philippines, allowing the Spaniards to not only govern, but also to reconfigure and reconstruct Philippine society. And it has continued to serve as *the* basis for historical reconstructions of Tagalog society. As John Phelan noted: "The overwhelming bulk of our knowledge about the character of preconquest Tagalog society comes from a study of Tagalog customs composed by a Franciscan friar, Juan de Plasencia. Plasencia's report reads, in part:

These chiefs rule over few people; sometimes as many as a hundred houses, sometimes even less than thirty. This tribal gathering is called in Tagalo a *barangay*. It is inferred that the reason for giving themselves this name arose from the fact (as they are classed, by their language, among the Malay nations) that when they came to this land, the head of the *barangay*, which is a boat, thus called, became a *dato*. And so, even at the present day, it is ascertained that this *barangay* in its origin was a family of parents and children, relations and slaves. There were many of these *barangays* in each town, or, at least, on account of wars, they did not settle far from one another. They were not, however, subject to one another, except in friendship and relationship. Their chiefs, in their various wars, helped one another with their respective *barangays*.

The significance of Plasencia's work is all the more striking in light of the fact that not all Spanish accounts, reports, and other materials agreed with his reconstruction of Tagalog society. There were those who also wrote of the *baranggay* in the same vein as Plasencia. But as Carlos Quirino and Mauro Garcia have explained: "After Loarca's and Plasencia's the originality of the rest, insofar as the information on the subject is concerned, may be doubted." On the other hand,

significant figures in their writing either present a different view of the word *balangay* or do not mention it at all and certainly not in terms of political organization. The Dominican, Francisco Blancas de San Jose, (died in 1614), one of the greatest Spanish authorities on the Tagalog language, defined *balangay* in his dictionary manuscript only in terms of a means of transportation, a boat- *navio comun*- and traveling in a boat. In practical terms, in the extensive collection of surviving Tagalog sermons and lessons written for the local population by Spanish friars in the last part of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, one does not find the word *baranggay*.

The problem is not that Plasencia and those after him merely chose the wrong name or title for the basic organization of Tagalog society; they chose the wrong concept and construct.

Vicente Rafael comes tantalizingly close to catching the heart of the issue when he writes:

The confusion of data in early Spanish accounts stems from what seems like the inadequacy of Spanish political terminology, rooted in Roman law and European feudalism, to comprehend Tagalog social structure. There appears to be a lack of fit between Spanish descriptions and the Tagalog reality they seek to convey. Perhaps the difficulty may be attributed to the overdetermined nature of both Spanish political terminology and Tagalog designations of social status.

Correct or not, Spanish policies were based on this view of the indigenous society. The *datu*, translated as chief by Plasencia, was transformed into the *cabeza de barangay* and society was reorganized accordingly. The *barangay* came to be accepted as the basic political unit of Tagalog society. However, the term *baranggay* in describing political structure quickly faded and was replaced by the Spanish *barrio* and part of the *pueblo*. *Baranggay* continues to be heard only as part of the new title for *datus*, i.e. *cabeza de barangay* (head of the *barangay*).

In seeking to recover and reconstruct the organization of pre-Spanish Tagalog society, Filipinos and Americans looked to the *baranggay*. Between 1887 and 1892, Pedro Paterno published several books in which sought to argue for the equality of Filipinos with Spaniards

based on pre-Hispanic society. His interpretation of the *baranggay* included the notion that it was monarchial and democratic at the same time, “uniting all the best features of contemporary Spain!” When the Americans took the Philippines, they embraced and perpetuated the myth of the *baranggay*. Schumacher notes:

So complete was this American appropriation of the Propagandists’ reconstruction of the Filipino past, that post-independent nationalist historiography in its own reconstruction of the Filipino past and search for national identity has tended to underplay or ignore, paradoxically, both the period that Rizal saw as the destruction of Filipino culture, and the work of Rizal himself—the former as a Spanish period, the latter as an American view.

Thus, the problem had its roots in incorrect data that then blossomed into a wide range of misinterpretation. As a result, by the second half of the twentieth century, one finds a wide range of interpretations regarding the *baranggay*. Consider the statement (based on American sources) by A. B. Villanueva, “City-states are to the ancient Greeks as *barangays* are to the Filipinos.”

A more temperate and widely accepted definition of *baranggay* is given by David Joel Steinberg: “a basic kinship unit in the pre-Spanish Philippines that consisted of from 30 to 100 families which the Spanish preserved as the basis of local administration.” While Steinberg’s definition is concise and helpful, it contains within it the seeds of confusion on the part of scholars who seek to reconcile the kinship and political aspects of the *baranggay*. Thus, one finds a lack of clarity or uniformity in discussions of the *baranggay*. Phelan illustrates the inexactness that marks modern understanding of the *baranggay* in his classic work, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*. He begins by referring to the *barangay* as a small kinship unit, then later marks it as “the only form of political and social organization,” and then calls the *barangay* a “patriarchal kinship,” which was transformed into “the cornerstone of local government.” Finally, he concludes that the *barrio* and *barangay* are one and the same. In the glossary of his book, the entry for *barangay* reads: “In prequest times a political-social unit;

the Spanish term for a village.” The second part of the definition shows more insight than Phelan may have realized. This confusion can be traced back to Plasencia himself, as he failed to appreciate the fluid nature of Tagalog society. In his *Costumbres*, quoted above, he stated that there were many *barangays* in a town.

The desire to imagine Tagalog society in a form recognizable and familiar to Western minds has perpetuated the myth of the *barangay* in political terms and by extension, in terms of identity. This insistence on the *barangay* as the basic kinship or political unit in Tagalog society is so entrenched in modern scholarship that when an alternative is present, it is ignored or missed altogether. Consider the following:

These settlements, or at least the land they occupy, appear to be what the dictionaries call a *bayan*, namely, “place for a pueblo” or “pueblo where people live,” as in the question, “*kaninong pabuwisan ang bayang ito?*” (Whose estate is the *bayan* here?) Assuming this to be the case, a given *barangay* might have claims to swidden land in more than one *bayan*, and serfs (*alipin namamahay*) might be inherited from one *barangay* to another but could not be removed from the *bayan* itself.

Based on the information given in this passage, *bayan* would seem to have greater significance than the *barangay*. Yet this possibility seems not to have been considered. The end result, in practical terms, is illustrated by the Local Government Code of 1991, or Republic Act Number 7160 that established the *barangay* as the local unit of government throughout the Philippines. While scholars and politicians have sought to establish the *barangay* as the basic unit of society, *bayan* has emerged and remains a dominant part of national, nationalist, and political discourse in the Philippines.

To set the context for understanding Tagalog society, one must begin by examining the region in which it is located: Southeast Asia. When the Spaniards came to Southeast Asia, they did not have an understanding of the region and they did not develop one after they established a presence in the Philippines. How they interpreted any new contact was based on their

experiences in the Americas. In Central Mexico, “The Nahuas had reasonably close analogues of the concepts structuring nearly all facets of European society and culture.” In terms of political organization, the *altepetl* among the Nahuas of Central Mexico, and the *cah* among the Maya, were seen as “essentially identical” with those found in Spain. The assumption held was that the Tagalog equivalent was the *baranggay*. This failure to appreciate the differences between not only Tagalog and Spanish societies, but also Tagalog and Latin American societies, was based on both a lack of, and faulty, information.

Modern scholars have no such excuse. Southeast Asia is the proper context for understanding the structure of pre-Spanish Tagalog society. Utilizing and comparing the material available from other Southeast Asian societies with that of the Philippines allows one to get a sense of the foundations and assumptions under girding Tagalog society, its pre-hispanic cultural norms in addition to its fluid political structures.

As Tony Day observes in his recent work, *Fluid Iron: State Formation in Southeast Asia*, those writing on the subject tend to focus on the political rather than the cultural aspects. Be that as it may, one can still construct a framework within which to work. At least four characteristics of pre-hispanic Tagalog political life emerge. First, fluidity was a key characteristic. O. W. Wolters in his *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, writes of the *mandala*, a Sanskrit term meaning “circle of kings,” to describe what he accepts as “a political apparatus *fluid* in terms of territory and therefore without fixed frontiers.” [emphasis added] He also notes, “*Mandalas* would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion.” Second, this fluidity, in part, was due to the nature of socio-political organization. They were based on relationships. “The territorial scale of a political system is certainly not the correct measurement

for describing and defining it. Instead, we should think in sets of socially definable loyalties that could be mobilized for common enterprises. Barbara Andaya notes:

The typical Southeast Asian 'kingdom' was a coalescence of localized power centers, ideally bound together not by force but through a complex interweaving of links engendered by blood connections and obligation. Leadership, conceived in personal and ritual terms, required constant reaffirmation.

Third, indigenous terms for such political entities either did not exist or have not survived. The known titles given are borrowed from foreign influences; kingdom, state, *mandala*, *negara*, etc. Wolters has even suggested that *mandalas* existed in the Philippines. Thus, it seems unlikely that the Tagalog had a name for their social organization. Fourth, Southeast Asians identified themselves in terms of place and relationships. "In Southeast Asia space was organized under cover of personal relationships" These four characteristics were also true of the Tagalogs in early Spanish Philippines, as will be seen below, and thus probably the case in pre-Spanish times as well.

With this in mind, a re-examination of Spanish reports clearly demonstrates that the Spaniards were not primarily concerned with the social or cultural structure of that society as much as they were with controlling the Tagalog people; thus, the commission given to Plasencia. The Philippines was a part of the Spanish Empire and Spanish authorities needed to not only control the territory, but the local population as well with the least amount of difficulty and expense as well as with the fewest number of Spaniards possible.

What the Spaniards sought, and historians continue to seek, was a political entity in Tagalog society that had structure, hierarchy, authority, and continuity. As Phelan notes from Pigafetta's account: "the Spaniards did not find kinglets in the islands; hence they tried to create them." The focus of Spanish authorities was on rulers, not political entities as such. Southeast Asian

societies were marked by fluidity in social structures as well as in leadership. Overcoming the fluidity in leadership was an easier task than seeking to reshape Tagalog society.

As a result, the reports produced by both Spanish friars and civil authorities focused on what they perceived as local elites rather than local structures. The local structures only come into play as they related to local leadership. As Rafael notes:

From their earliest years in the Philippines, the Spaniards had tried to locate native ruling elites and incorporate them in the colonial hierarchy. Sixteenth-century Spanish accounts purporting to describe the social and political structures of *indio* society were compiled precisely for this purpose.

Plasencia began his report by writing about the *datus* and ended it dealing with the issue of the *datus*. Pedro Chirino's *Primera Parte de historia*, also focused on the political figures which one could or could not find in the Philippines; for example, *ni avia Reyes*, they do not have kings. The Augustinians requested in a memorandum to the civil authorities: "That his Majesty order that the chiefs be treated as such, and that they do not pay tribute in their persons or be made prisoners except for very serious matters."

It becomes necessary to present an alternative to the question of Tagalog social organization and identity in order to cut through inaccurate interpretations based on erroneous information. To accomplish this task requires at least two mechanisms: unused and untapped sources—Tagalog sources— and a new methodology, both within a Southeast Asian context.

The documents in question are those written in Tagalog by Tagalogs beginning in the sixteenth century. As James Lockhart notes in his monumental *The Nahuas After the Conquest*:

I need not belabor the advantage of using records produced in the mother tongue by the subjects of a given historical study. Wherever native-language materials have been available, they have been used as the primary source for writing a people's history.

This has not been done in the writing of Philippine history. The significance of existing Tagalog documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been demonstrated. For example: Nicholas Cushner's *Landed Estates in the Colonial Philippines*, which includes the transcription of a Tagalog petition from 1696, Jean-Paul Potet's "*La Petition Tagale Caming manga Alipin (1665)*," which is based on a Tagalog document from Mindoro, and Jaime B. Veneracion's paper on several sixteenth-century Tagalog documents, "*Ang mga Pinuno sa Silangang Maynila noong Dantaon 16 ayon sa mga dokumentong Tagalog na may petsang 1590.*"

Up to the present, it has been assumed that one seeking to study Philippine history of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries faces the overwhelming task of breaking through the "parchment curtain" and, with creative methodologies, writing "a history of the inarticulate." For the corollary to this assumption is that Spanish sources are all that exist and they form the "parchment curtain" that separates us from the Filipinos of the past, who could not and did not leave behind any written records. The result has been an institutionalization of early Spanish Philippine history.

With the realization that indigenous language documents exist, the task is to seek them out, searching through the archives of various institutions for them. With the exception of the treasure of material dealing with the 1745 Revolt found in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, the majority of material is found in collections coming from the various religious orders. If one accepts Lockhart's thesis regarding the cycle of sources, from more to less synthetic, that is, beginning with 1) contemporary books and other formal accounts, which we call 'chronicles'; 2) official correspondence; 3) the internal records of institutions; 4) litigation; 5) notarial records, then the documents from Tagalogs of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries fit into the last

two categories, testimony given in legal matters and notarial records. Although the issues discussed in the documents are not usually religious or institution-related, they were still kept among the papers of the different religious orders.

These documents were written by Tagalogs for Spanish eyes (unlike those produced by the Nahuas of Central Mexico), but like their counterparts in the Americas,

most of them [were] ostensibly in Spanish genres...not only more individual in their language, conventions, and content than the Spanish counterparts, but more complex in belonging to two traditions rather than one. They are both more difficult and potentially richer (that is, per item) than Spanish records.

But more importantly, “language itself turns out to be an irreplaceable vehicle for determining the nature and rate of general cultural evolution.”

The number of Tagalog documents from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries is small, but the possibilities are exciting. Lockhart, whose work dealt with Nahuatl documents from Central Mexico, in establishing a New Philology argues that in light of the limited number of records, it is difficult and often impossible to track a single individual, in contrast to what is possible with Spanish sources.

Largely deprived of seeing the pattern in a succession of actions, we must fall back on the other aspect of the career-pattern approach, a close attention to the categories that the person and his peers used to classify himself and his thoughts and actions, as well as the phenomena surrounding him, thus studying concepts borne in a person’s language rather than patterns manifested in the person’s life.

This is certainly the case with Tagalog documents, in which not only is the number rather small, but the geographic and temporal distribution is wide— from across the Tagalog region and almost two centuries. Thus, one should take into account the diversity found among Tagalogs as well as “the nature and rate of general cultural evolution” demonstrated by these sources.

Taking into account the diversity among Tagalogs, one discovers several features when it comes to self-identification: as was the case throughout Southeast Asia— relationships and

location. In examining Tagalog documents, one comes across at least two broad categories: those written by individuals and those by communities—usually a collection of individuals from a given community. In both cases, the individuals identify themselves in two ways: by location and in terms of relationships. In terms of relationships, horizontal and existential are what are expressed—based on contemporary realities and not ancestry. Three types of relationships tend to be used to express relationships: familial, age, and shared experience. In identifying oneself in terms of family relations, the most commonly used words are *capatid* (sibling) and *kamaganac* (relative). Age is used in general terms and usually only to express a breadth of community participation; thus, *matanda 't bata* (old and young) and *bata 't matanda* (young and old). These phrases occur often enough to indicate that they carry some significance. In addition, *pinacamatanda* (the eldest) also carries weight. The most common way of identifying oneself is based on shared experience, designated by the prefix *ca*; words such as *casimba*, *casamahan*, and *cababayan*.

The Spanish titles *don* and *doña* were taken on by the early seventeenth century. The famous *baybayin* documents in the University of Santo Tomas archives, dated 1613 and 1625, are bills of sale for land in Tondo. The first records a sale of land by one Doña Catalina Bayiya, who identifies herself as *maginoo sa Tondo*, along with her sister Doña Cecilia, to one Don Andres Kapiit of Dilaw. The second records a similar sale by one Doña Maria Sila, *maginoo dito sa bayan nang Tondo* to Doña Francisca Luga. Both the Spanish *doña* and *don* were used, as was the Tagalog *maginoo*. But these titles again reinforce the horizontal nature of relationships and identity among Tagalogs.

Location was expressed with the word *bayan*, which is found consistently in documents dating from 1583 well into the nineteenth century. Relationships, as mentioned above, are

described using a wide variety of terms that indicate horizontal relationships. By the end of the nineteenth century, *bayan* would come to express aspects of both location and relationships.

The importance of location as a basis for identity can easily be missed. As Tagalog notarial documents followed the Spanish formula of beginning with the place and date of the writing of the document, one could easily assume that the material is formulaic and not of any great significance. Most Tagalog documents began with the location of the writing of the document. Where a Spanish-language notarial document might begin *En la ciudad de Manila*; one finds in a Tagalog-language equivalent: *Sa bayan nang Pasig*, for example.

Place was important, as were their names. The Laguna Copperplate Inscription demonstrates the importance of names for specific geographic locations. Written in 900 A.D., it is the earliest known Philippine document and it contains place names which remain to the present day: Tundun for modern-day Tondo, Puliran for Pulilan in Bulacan on the Angat River, Pailah for further up the Angat River at the Ipo Dam site, and Binwangan at the mouth of the Bulacan River, near Obando.

That *bayan* was a remarkably fluid term and could indicate much more than geographical location is demonstrated in the Franciscan Pedro de San Buenaventura's *Vocabulario*, published in 1613. In the second part of the *vocabulario* the author lists the following as Spanish equivalents for *bayan*: *pueblo*, *poblar*, *lugar*, *habitar*, *morar*, *bivir*, *poblacion*, *peregrinar*, *zielo*, *espacio*, *tiempo*. One expects the Spanish equivalents, *pueblo* (town, village), *lugar* (place), *poblacion* (town), *tierra* (land, region), *sitio* (place, spot), but not the verbs, *poblar* (to people, to settle, to colonize), *habitar* (to inhabit, to reside in), *morar* (to live, to stay), *vivir* (to live, to dwell in), *peregrinar* (to travel, to roam). Thus, we are faced with a word that had not only noun equivalents in Spanish, but verb equivalents as well. In addition, the even more perplexing

equivalence given between *bayán* and *tiempo*— as in *masamang bayan, mal tiempo* is found as late as the mid-eighteenth century in Noceda and San Lucar’s dictionary. It is small wonder that the Spaniards chose *barangay*, a more static concept than *bayán* as the designation for the basic political unit in Tagalog society. The Spaniards chose to reshape leadership and this had implications for society as well.

It should be pointed out that *bayán* was not the equivalent of *mandala*, but was as fluid as the *mandala* has been described. The fluidity of *bayán* allowed its use to evolve and expand during this period. At least four stages are illustrated in Tagalog documents. Each stage or expansion did not mean the end of the previous meaning of *bayán*, but rather the earlier meanings continued to exist, to be understood, and to be used, while the new use and meaning of the word entered into the vernacular.

In the first stage, *bayán*, while used along with place names, had an informality to its use. Thus, in the earliest known Tagalog document, dated 1583, one finds two words to indicate location, the Spanish *lugar* and *bayán*. While *bayán* is used with place names, as in, *bayán nang San Matheo* (a Spanish Christian name) as well as *bayán nang Bangbang*, *lugar* is used in two ways. First, to indicate location, without a specific name, as in, *sa lugar yto*, and then it is used as the equivalent of *bayán* with a place name, *dito sa lugar nang Binongsoran*.

That this earliest document fits into the first stage is seen in Tomas Pinpin’s *Librong pagaaralan nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castila* (A book to teach Tagalogs the Spanish language), published in 1610. As he gives Tagalog equivalents for Spanish words, at least three ways of translating *bayán* are indicated. First, it could be used to indicate location in a general sense without a place name, as in the place of the Muslims. Secondly, it was given as the

equivalent for *pueblo*. Finally, it was presented as an attempt to match Spanish realities, such as the homeland of the Spaniards.

The second stage emerged early on during the Spanish period. Here, *bayán* was used in a more formal and even legal, though not political sense. Both individuals and communities identified themselves in terms of location, that is, *bayán* in a formal sense, at least until the end of the seventeenth century. In a document dated August 12, 1626, the two persons giving information are husband and wife, Don Agustin Manguiet and Margareta Limbauan, identify themselves as *manga tauo sa bayan nang Malis*. In the will of Maria Jimenez dated 1687, she writes: *acoy si Maria Jimenez tauo sa bayan nang Calumpit*.

Three documents from the end of the seventeenth century demonstrate how communities identified themselves in terms of location or *bayán*. All three are from Maybonga, a separate *bayán*, but a part of the *bayán* of Pasig. All three were written within fifteen months of each other, and each was written by a different *escribano*, each with his own orthography. The earliest document, which is transcribed in Nicholas Cushner's *Landed Estates in Colonial Philippines*, sets the stage. The document is from the people of Maybonga, who wish to give authority to four individuals to act on behalf of the entire community. These four men are to be given the power to:

- (1) take care of the property of the community, i.e., land, bamboo groves, woodlands; and other property, (2) rent out the lands that have previously been rented, (3) collect debts left over from their predecessors, (4) take back communal land from those not fit to hold it, (5) sell property and communal land only to members of the community, and (6) issue receipts and letters of payment when rent is collected.

The four men in question are to act on behalf of Maybonga, that is, the people of Maybonga, who identify themselves in two ways. First, they mention personal relationships. They use four words, all with the prefix *ca* to signify these identifying relationships. *Cababayan*, meaning

someone from the same *bayán* is used once, *casamahan* (companion or associate) is used twice, *casimba* those who attend the same church is used once, and *camaganacan* which means relative is used five times. It is this designation that Cushner identifies and translates as “community.” At least three times (of the five times it is used) *camaganacan* is preceded by *boong* meaning entire, whole, that is, the whole group of relatives, in modern terms, the entire community. Toward the end of this first document, the writers identify themselves as *boong camaganacan taga Maybonga*, that is, the entire group of relatives *from* Maybonga. *Bayán* thus retained its primary designation as referring to location in a formal sense. Yet the documents continued to use *bayán* in a general way, without place names.

The third stage emerges in the eighteenth century as is demonstrated in documents generated by the Revolt of 1745. The revolt reflected tensions between local communities and the various haciendas of the religious orders. The revolt seemed to have begun in Silang, the culmination of over half a century of conflict between the Dominican hacienda Biñan and the community of Silang. In many ways, this conflict was not unique; similar conflicts could be found throughout the Tagalog provinces, including the communities of Taguig, Hagonoy, Parañaque, Bacoor, Cavite el Viejo, San Mateo, Yndang, Cautit na Matanda and others. An attack on the hacienda followed; granaries burned and irrigation works damaged, the administrator and the Chinese and mestizo tenants fled to Manila. After destroying structures on the hacienda, the people of Silang moved against the Hacienda of Santa Cruz de Malabon. This pattern was repeated in the provinces of Tondo, Bulacan and Batangas.

One “General” Joseph de la Vega led the rebels from Silang, with his “army” of 1500 armed men. When an *alcalde* was sent to negotiate, the rebels stated their terms: the return of their land; the removal of the administrator of Biñan; assurance that they would be under the spiritual

jurisdiction of the Jesuits. This last item, along with other factors, caused some to claim that the Jesuits were behind the revolt. No evidence has been produced to support this claim. In fact, the Jesuit haciendas of Nasugbu and Lian were also attacked during the revolt. In the negotiations, the men of Silang were careful to point out that their actions were against the religious haciendas, not the government. Most of the *principales* of Silang agreed to submit to Spanish authority, but this was not the case with the commoners (*timaguas*), who said that without land they would eventually die. The revolt broke out again.

The people of Silang not only fought but also wrote letters and formal documents in Tagalog, following Spanish formulas and structures, but using Tagalog values and sensibilities. At different points, they were careful to identify themselves as Tagalogs. In addition, the *oidor*, Pedro Calderon, amassed some five thousand pages of testimony and other legal documents while investigating the revolt. Some of those documents were in Tagalog. These documents reveal a number of realities regarding *bayan*, including its expansion.

The conflict was between competing “bayans;” for example, the “town” (*bayan*) of Silang and the “estate” or hacienda (*bayan*) of Biñan. The Tagalogs refer to the Augustinian hacienda as *bayan at hacienda nang Biñang*. The issue was not private ownership, rather, it was a conflict between two communities, Silang and Biñan, much in the same way one might imagine conflicts in pre-Hispanic times between various groups over land use. As Cushner notes in his article, dealings between the Augustinians and other towns contained “a faint echo of pre-Hispanic communal use of land.”

What is striking in these documents is the assertion of those writing that they are the *bayan* of Silang. While a number of the documents begin with the formulaic *Sa bayan nang Silang* (From the *bayan* of Silang), one finds the statement, *cami ang boong bayan nang Silang*— we are

the whole *bayán* of Silang. In the place of *boong camaganacan*— the whole group of relatives— such as is found in the second stage documents from Maybonga, one finds time and time again *boong bayan*— the whole *bayán*. The responsibilities of the four individuals in the Maybonga documents are for the community as *camaganacan* not as *bayán*. By the time of the 1745 Revolt, *bayán* had evolved and expanded to represent not only location, but also the community that resided in that location and space.

In this capacity of being the community, the *bayán* was seen as the preserver of memory. Not only was the land in question “inherited from our grandparents,” it belonged to Silang “before we became Christians.” This would indicate ownership based on memory that predated the Spanish incursion. While asking pardon for the revolt, they told Calderón that “the Reverend Fathers of San Agustin have taken from us the lands and woods which we inherited from our grandparents and in so doing they have taken away our livelihood.”

Bayán also came to include the functions of governing. Those writing the letters to the Spanish authorities and the Spanish friars possessed knowledge and familiarity with the Spanish legal/civil system- a familiarity with the various offices, officers, and their functions. There was also an awareness that they had Spanish law on their side. The Laws of the Indies stipulated that land was to be left open “to common use for pasturage and forage.” According to Spanish law, “all fruits of nature which grew without the aid of human labor were open to the inhabitants of the surrounding communities.” At the same time, the Tagalogs appeared to have their own system of government, beyond that instituted by the Spaniards. In one letter from Silang, those writing are described as *jocoman nang lalauigan nang Tangui*- the court of the province of Tangui. These are Tagalog titles and designations, not Spanish.

It should be noted that the rebels were not anti-Catholic; they just wanted their land back.

This is particularly reflected in the letter written to Padre Joseph de San Vicente.

Esteemed Padre Father Joseph de San Vicente: There is no other purpose in this small letter to the esteemed/beloved/*mahal* Padre except to wish him a good day and give thanks for your good fortune, esteemed Padre, that what you have long hoped for has become yours. And one more thing that we want to warn you, esteemed Padre, tomorrow, Thursday, if the Lord God is merciful, we will arrive there, at our lands which you have unjustly taken (through the power of your money) and we are going to destroy your house being built near the pass of the Monting Ilog as well as the dams attached to our lands. In this, we are not turning our backs on the Lord God and his teaching and the Lord King, and that is why we cry out: Long live the faith (*mabuhay ang pananang palataya*), Long live the holy church (*mabuhay ang santa iglesia*), and Long live Philip (*mabuhay si Phelipe*) (may the Lord God watch over him)....

This expansion of the use of *bayan* is reflected in Tagalog writings after the mid-eighteenth century. A document dated 1783 begins with the words *Caming boong comun nanamamayan dini sa Bayan ng Subaon* (we are the whole community of residents/citizens here at the *Bayan* of Subaon). The Spanish *comun* is used in the place of *bayan*, but the sense is that of the community as a whole being represented, as found in the Silang documents. The designation *pinunong bayan* (heads of the *bayan*, translated as local leaders by Ileta) is found not only in the *Pasyon Pilapil*, which was based on the *Pasyon* by De Belen, but is found used in letters and documents during the revolutionary period at the end of the nineteenth century.

The fourth stage appeared in the *nineteenth* century, as Filipinos began to think of the archipelago as not only a single unit, but as a political entity; that is, they began to imagine themselves in the terms outsiders used. *Bayan* was then employed to express Western or Spanish political concepts, such as *nacion* and *patria*. The use of *bayan* in this way was not new in the nineteenth century. Fernando Bagongbanta in his poem “Salamat nang Ualang Hanga” (Undying Gratitude) from 1605, wrote “*sa lahat na bayan natin*” with the Spanish translation “*de toda esta nuestra tierra*” (everywhere in this, our land). Pinpin, as mentioned above, also

gave *bayán* as the Tagalog equivalent of *pueblo* as well as describing Spain, *ang bayan nang manga Castila* (the *bayán* of the Spaniards). Francisco Baltazar, the poet known as Balagtas, in “Florante’s First Lamentation” in the epic “Florante at Laura” the well-known line “*Sa loob at labas ng bayan cong saui*” (All over my hapless country). However, the *bayán* referred to was Albania, the setting for this metrical romance.

The evolution of *bayán* in the nineteenth century pointed to changes in thinking as well as language. *Bayán* was conscripted to convey the *idea* of a national entity, and later, that national entity itself. But the transition took time. While Rizal in *La Liga Filipina*, imagined the national community in terms of an archipelago as “one compact, vigorous, and homogenous body”, the *Katipunan* thought in terms of “a nation of Tagalogs” or *Katagalugan*, as found in Andres Bonifacio’s “*Ang Haring Bayang Katagalugan*.” As Bonifacio wrote of the coming of the Spaniards in “*Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog*,” he spoke in terms of *mga lupaing ito* (these lands here). But as the historical account continues, *bayán* comes to the forefront. Is it to be translated as land (as does *Ileto*) or community or country? On August 24, 1896, Bonifacio did establish *Ang Haring Bayang Katagalugan* on August 24, 1896. The *Cartilla* of the *Katipunan*, published in 1896, explained that Tagalog referred to “all those born in this archipelago; therefore, though visayan, ilocano, pampango, etc. they are all tagalogs.” Carlos V. Ronquillo, President Aguinaldo’s secretary, explained further that Tagalog was not limited to those from the Tagalog region, but as the name Tagalog actually meant “*taga-ilog*’ [from the river] which, traced directly to its root, refers to those who prefer to settle along rivers, truly a trait, it cannot be denied, of all those born in the Philippines, in whatever island or town [*bayán*].”

Those familiar with Philippine history will recall that the rallying point in the conflict with Spain was the oppression of the friar-controlled estates and the overreaching power of the friars.

As with the revolt of 1745, the Revolution was not motivated primarily by an anti-Spanish sentiment, and the hostility against the friars did not mean that the Tagalogs were anti-Catholic. Lacking the strength of local government (of the *bayán*) the *Katipunan* constituted a substitute on at least three levels: first, an extended community (for the conflict was between two communities); an alternative governmental system, as the Tagalogs still possessed in place in 1745; as well as the preserver of the memories of the past. This last aspect is seen in the initiation rites described by Iletto in *Pasyon and Revolution*. The initiate was asked three questions, the first being: “What was the condition of the country in early times?” The answer to this would have been provided through indoctrination prior to the initiation.

It was during this period that the concept of *Inang Bayan* emerged, and a division as well.

As Professor Salazar points out:

...the rift would later result in the ideological break in Tejeros between the more indigenous *Inang Bayan* of the mass-oriented Katipunan and the more Western-oriented *nación* that the *ilustrados* around Aguinaldo wanted to construct....Bonifacio’s *Inang Bayan* would continue to haunt the Filipino revolutionary spirit as an ideal of nationality...Again and again, decisions as daring—and as fundamentally correct—as that of Bonifacio in August 1896 would also be executed, against all odds for *Inang Bayan*.

Yet it must be noted that the writing of the period retained the earlier uses of *bayán*. Emilio Aguinaldo, though fluent in Spanish, wrote only in Tagalog, and his writings are filled with mixed uses of *bayán*. One finds frequent references to *Inang bayan*, a name created by Bonifacio that could be translated motherland. But in giving instructions regarding military matters, *bayán* tends to be used as location.

The next stage of the usage of *bayán* remains at this point a possibility, not a reality. If we take to heart the words of the late Virgilio Enriquez, “*Pilipino kahit saan, kahit kailan,*” then *bayán* may be used to refer not only to the population living within the archipelago, but those in

the Diaspora as well. This is critical as by some estimates, by the year 2020, one-third of all Filipinos will be in the Diaspora. And no matter his or her location, or even citizenship, each Filipino would be a vital part of *Bayan nang Pilipinas*.

CONCLUSION

In examining this evolution of the concepts and usage of *bayan*, varying perspectives will tend to focus on different aspects. Some will emphasize the impact of Spanish influence on the changing nature of the concept in Tagalog thinking. That is, *bayan* will be viewed as a vehicle for Spanish constructions into the Tagalog world. Others will concentrate on how Tagalogs appropriated or adapted Spanish concepts into their expanding worldview. This fits with Phelan's observation that:

The Filipinos were no mere passive recipients of the cultural stimulus created by the Spanish conquest. Circumstances gave them considerable freedom in selecting their responses to Hispanization. Their responses varied all the way from acceptance to indifference and rejection. The capacity of the Filipinos for creative social adjustment is attested in the manner in which they adapted many Hispanic features to their own indigenous culture.

Southeast Asianists speak of the phenomenon of domestication, vernacularization, or indigenization to indicate the process as well as product of taking something foreign and making it indigenous. H. G. Q. Wales used the phrase "local genius" to express how Southeast Asians retained their own cultures while appropriating from other cultures aspects which gave concrete expression or organization to local ideas.

The focus should be on the word *bayan*, a word elastic enough to encompass meanings from location to community to nation. Other Philippine languages lacked such words. The Ilokano word *ili* is translated today as town or country; in the past, its primary function was to indicate location. The people of a town or country are called *umili*. Those who come from the same

town or country are referred to as *kailian*, the equivalent of the Tagalog *kababayan*. But *ili* by itself, without prefixes, did not and does not have the flexibility or the fluidity found in the Tagalog *bayan*. That such a word was so pliable and adaptable as to evolve and still remain a major marker of identity should be the primary focus.

Owen Lynch suggested some years ago that the name of the Philippines be changed to *Bayan* and accordingly, its citizens would be known as *bayani*. An intriguing idea, but I think a bigger change than most would be comfortable with. Instead, what if the title of the country is changed to *Bayan ng Pilipinas*? To the rest of the world, the nation would be known as the Republic of the Philippines, but here in our own language, *Bayan ng Pilipinas*. *Bayan* has the flexibility to refer not only to location—the archipelago, but the people as well. And, one day, we could aspire to say to one another, “*Tayo’y mga bayani ng Bayan ng Pilipinas.*” For it is not political systems that should identify us; they certainly don’t seem to unite us. It may not even be the foreign notion of nation, or *bansa*, which tells us who we are. It is the *bayan* that gives that sense of identity.