The Journal of International Civilization Studies
Uluslararası Medeniyet Çalışmaları Dergisi
Volume I/ Issue II- Winter 2016
ISSN: 2548-0146, Nevşehir/ TURKEY

EARLY SPANISH REIGN OVER THE PHILIPPINES: SOCIAL AND SPRITUAL REMODELING

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Abstract

This paper aims at examining the character of Spain's policy with reference to the Philippines and *its* sweeping social and religious *consequences* in the islands between 1565 and 1700. On their arrival in the Philippines the Spaniards found the people still under a tribal allegiance and under the Spanish influence in the sixteenth century a sudden change was made in the social condition of the islands. In 1572, the "galleon trade" was named for the huge ships that carried the merchandise from all over Asia (Macao, Japan, India, Java, Borneo, Indochina, Siam) in exchange for silver that passed over the Pacific, especially out of Acapulco and through Manila. Although it is *undeniable* that there was an important intercontinental trade before 1571, there was no direct trade link between America and Asia and the viceroyalty of New Spain was the principal market for the cargoes of the Manila galleons. In that way, the Spanish crown and its Philippine colony were affected by the cultural rationale of the Chinese, while the Filipinos became formally Christians. However, the cultural meaning that emerged from this multicultural interaction was circumscribed by local cultural logics and the Filipino spiritual as well as the social Hispanization evolved *as a* mechanism for native adjustment. Using a wide range of research methods including analytical work and a *comparative* critique of already-written analyses drawing on archival resources, historical analysis, book reviews and articles, the main conclusion of this research paper refers to an indisputable need to interpret the evolution of Philippine culture from *a holistic* and *multicultural perspective*.

Key Words: *Spain, the Philippines, Hispanization, Manila, folk Chatolicism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Inspıred by their previous experience in Mexico, Spanish colonizers decided to reorganize Philippine society, *giving rise* to a dramatic cultural change that affected social, political, economic and religious life of the Filipinos.[1] In presenting the general contours of early Spanish reign over the Philippines, we have chosen to pay special attention to Manila as as a specific geographical setting in the period between the 1570s and 1644. The nature of the South China Sea as a macro- region was particularly favorable for the development of long- distance trade (Hamashita, Grove & Selden, 2008) and the emergence of Manila as the global stage of cross- cultural trade. For that reason, the foundation of Manila as the capital of the Spanish Philippines in 1571, has been regarded as the beginning of global trade (Flynn & Giráldez, 1995:201).[2]

In order to break the Portuguese monopoly of the spice trade and establish direct contacts with China and Japan so that the Catholic missionary enterprise could be promoted, the Spanish monarchs sought to grab some land in Asia. After the Treaty of Zaragoza between Spain and Portugal, the Spanish Crown gave up any plans to build a base in the Moluccas and focused on the Philippines. Moreover, Spanish expansion overseas was chiefly a missionary endeavor and had many *similarities with* the Spanish reconquista from the Moors (Phelan 1967:4).[3] Although the colonial enterprise indeed resulted in a Catholic Philippines rather than a Spanish Asia and the goal of finding spices and metal wealh was not reached, the Mexican archival sources and some researchers indicate that the Spaniards decided to stay *in the Philippines* for economic and strategic reasons. In other words, the Spaniards needed to retain an outpost for entree to China, Japan and the Spice Islands and the colonial income (*situado*) derived mainly from entrepôt trade to facilitate the *financing* of the Spanish Empire.

Even though many historians *have* a *tendency to dissolve* the Southeast Asian history into "pre-European" and "colonial", we consider this belief innapropriate with reference to the Philippines. Hence, in this paper we will mainly deal with that part of the Philippines which was under Spanish rule in the first two centuries[4] and try to describe changes in local level authority relationships, and in the relation of the Filipinos to their environment. Nevertheless, because of *scarcity* of records that

[1] In the 19th century historical studies the trem Filipino was used to refer to the Spaniards born in the Philippines, whereas he native inhabitants were referred to as indio or india, naturales or Tagals, Tagalogs.
[2] Chinese travel to the Philippines predated the arrival of the Spaniards by at least seven hundred years, but it was after the founding of Manila that the city became the single largest foreign port for Chinese goods for the next two centuries and the place from which New World silver flowed into China via the galleon trade.
[3] The inhabitants of the southern Philippines had been converted to Islam during the century prior to the Spanish conquest, so the Spaniards had to prevent the further Muslim penetration toward the central and northern regions of the archipelago.
[4] After the conquest or, to be more precise, after 1570 which was the time by when the Spaniards were in control of the maritime provinces of the northern and central parts of the Philippines, while the events after 1700 will not be taken into account.

account for the social structure of the island prior to the coming of the Spaniards in 1521,[5] except for the Spanish chroniclers whose accounts were focused only on the condition of the Philippine island in the middle of the 16th century, we will use the term pre-Hispanic to describe the basic socioeconomic and political structure of the Philippine society before the Spanish conquest.

Conquest and Hispanization

The first recorded sighting of the Philippines by Europeans was on March 17, 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan and his expedition sighted ground on "the Archipelago of San Lázaro".[6] After the Magellan claimed the land for Charles I of Spain, the intrepid native leader *Lapu-lapu* killed him on Mactan Island. During the next decades, the Spanish Crown sent several expeditions to the archipelago until the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi's expedition to Cebu.[7] Legazpi arrived in Cebu (the chief port of Visayas) from New Spain (México) in 1565 with six Augustinian friars. As the first royal governor and captain-general (*gobernador y capitán general*), Legazpi established the first permanent Spanish settlement**,** built a chapel and erected a fort.[8] Because of promising reports**,** Legazpi and his men continued further north to Manila. After defeating a local Muslim ruler called Soliman, in 1571 they took over the burnt remains of the settlement of the city *Maylannd* (an outpost of the Brunei sultanate) and established the borders of the new Spanish city at the mouth of the Pasig River. During the years to come, the Spaniards succeeded gradually in extending their rule over Luzon and partially to the Visayas, but the rest of the islands remained outside their influence.

The *Manila's foundation* as the *capital* entailed the creation of a *cabildo secular,* the municipal government. In 1583, the king established an Audiencia in Manila, serving as the highest judicial body in the Philippines. The Spanish kings were the ones fostering the growth of the Spanish population of Manila. Aside from recruiting new soldiers, every new governor had the task of bringing along new settlers.[9] There was a sustained effort to increase the city's population, which was especially notable in

[5] Surely there are some precious accounts on trade routes made by some Chinese traders whose memories refer more to the great profits that once had been made during the great expansion of Eurasian trade between the 10th and 14th centuries.
[6] Now the island of Samar in the Philippines.
[7] The person for whom they were named was King Philip, but the name *Felipinas* was given by Ruy López de Villalobos during his expedition of I541-1546, when Philip was the crown prince of Spain. It has been suggested that the naming took place in 1543 and that, in turn, the king in 1568 granted Legazpi's right to create cities and authorized his followers to establish *encomiendas*.
[8] Legazpi and his men erected in 1565 a triangular fort named *San Pedro* near the coast of the city. This fort was a modest palisade of timber and the first in a chain of fortifications erected by the Spaniards throughout the country.
[9] Governor and captain-general was the head of the supreme court (the Audiencia of Manila), the commander-in-chief of the army and navy and the all executive power of the local government stemmed from him. Also, he supervised the economy and missionary work and was a Spaniard.

the last decade of the sixteenth century, and lasted until 1630s (Cushner 1971: 1-54; García-Abásolo 1997: 144-151).

On the basis of available data, we can distinguish two fairly different phases of development *of colony life* and social organization of the Philippines during the first two centuries of Spanish rule. The first of these ran from 1565 until about 1650**.** This period of relatively peaceful conquest and enthusiasm characteristic of new enterprises was followed by a century or so of quiet routine administrative organization. Because of the fact that seventy-three years intervened between the first voyage of Columbus and the definite occupation of the Philippines, the Spaniards had undergone *through* an *unpleasant experience* of a *painful Mexican conquest* and therefore gained the necessary colonial knowledge so that they could establish the office of Philippine governor on the model which had originated in Spain and been developed in the New World. In that sense, the American experience pretty much determined the Philippine conquest and its character and a great body of law defining the powers and relations of colonial officers already established in Mexico was put into effect in the new colony. Although the Philippine colonization was modeled on Mexican antecedent, and administratively the colony *functioned* as an autonomous branch of viceroyalty of New Spain, local conditions of the archiplelago were not always in accordance with the government's instructions. However, America was relied on to supply most of the Philippine governors, and becuse of his distinctive character, the *adelantado* Legazpi was appointed to lead the expedition that effected the conquest from the post of *escribano mayor* and *alcalde ordinario* of Mexico[10]; Sande (1575-I580) was an *oidor* of the audiencia of New Spain, and Gonzalo Ronquillo (1580-1583) and Dr. de Vera (I584-I590), officials of the same government (Barrows 1916:289).

The legitimate balance upon the powers of the governor was the audiencia. The Audiencia of Manila was created on the American model, and it was first erected in I584 under the presidency of the governor, Dr. Santiago de Vera, but for economic reasons was suppressed in 1590, and re-established in I598. On the vacancy of the office of governor the audiencia assumed the duties of the position, confiding the direction of military affairs to the *maestre de campo*, or more usually to one member of the audiencia. However, it was the Church that constituted the real check upon the power of the governor of the Philippines. The conflicts which arose between the governors and the archbishops of Manila were never resolutely dealt with by the Spanish crown.

Interestingly, despite the fact that in the beginning the Philippines was regarded as an outpost for further eastern conquests of Japan and China, the sparse population of the archipelago,[11] as well as the insufficiency of revenues and the the vast distance **from the Spanish** *metropolis* and hardships of

[10] From a list of officers proposed by the Council of the Indies the king personally elected the governor. The post was set for eight years but sometimes extended to nine or ten.
[11] Less than a million natives and only a few hundred Spaniards.

the long voyage, eventually imposed a policy of economy and extreme simplicity of administration that enabled a workable compromise between the central authorites and local environment.

Before the Spaniards, the only form of social and political organization in the Philippine island was the *barangay* or a community of parents, children, relatives, and slaves (Jocano 1975:9).[12] Even though these kinship-based communities were independent and distinctive societies ruled by a chief, generally known as *datu*, its residents shared a similar way of life *practicing* sustainable *agriculture*, iron working, wood working, boat building, pottery, weaving, and so forth, and *relying* on mutual cooperation for survival (Scott 1994:54-75, 135-136). In order to colonize the archipelago and collect tributes and exact services from the natives, the Spaniards had to subdue the natives from *barangay* to *barangay* and then from island to island. Because of the absence of a centralized government, the Spaniards reorganized the pre-Hispanic Philippine society by integrating subjugated *barangays* to form the *encomienda*.[13] The *encomienda* was a vast tract of land granted to both the Spanish colonial officials and the Catholic religious orders in exchange for their services in the conquest of the natives, but on condition that they protect and indoctrinate them. In the year 1576, an official counting listed already 143 *encomenderos* but compared to the early *encomenderos* in the Americas, their rights were limited. In 1591, their number had increased to 270, with 668,000 natives working for Spanish *encomenderos* in the entire colony (Hidalgo 1995:178). Upset by this development of a rich land- owing class with the potential to undermine political power, the king soon restricted the allocation of the *encomienda*s and promoted the cultivation of agricultural products (Tremml 2015). At the beginning of the next century, the colonial government appointed officials and priests instead of *encomenderos* to administer the indigenous people. Despite its abusive character, as the administrative and economic unit of the Philippines during the early period of Spanish occupation, the *encomienda* system entailed the forcible resettlement of the small and scattered *barangays* into larger communities called *pueblos* (Corpuz 1997:25).[14]

The reorganization of the old *barangays* into *pueblos* produced a profound socio-economic and political transformation of the pre-Hispanic Philippine society because it brought the native people together within close scrutiny and direction of the Spanish colonial officials and friars. Spanish friars

[12] Most barangay were small lowland societies, having from ten to thirty houses, but there were also some large ones of a hundred or more houses. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, these societies functioned as piratical chiefdoms making war and trading with one another.

[13] The *encomienda* was a feudal institution used before in the Spanish overseas colonies in the Americas to grant deserving colonists the right to collect tributes and services from the native people of a specified territory.

[14] Every *pueblo* was a collection of *barangays*. *Pueblos* were located in areas accessible to Spanish soldiers and friars and had a square-shaped plaza at the center where the church and the parish priest's were located. As the resettlement polices of Mexico and Peru, a regular block-and-street grid was laid out for the houses, and the leading families were strategically situated along its four sides. *Pueblo* was the precursor of the modern *municipio* or township.

served as public administrators and the economic and political lives of the native people in the *pueblo* were administered through the church. Each *barangay* in the *pueblo* was headed by a *cabeza* or a headman.[15] Attached to the pueblo was a whole series of outlying population, the *visitas* or *barrios*. The chief magistrate of the *pueblo* was called the *gobernadorcillo*.[16] The whole archipelago was divided into 12 provinces called *alcaldías mayores*, whereas the more extensive provinces were subdivided into *corregimientos*.[17] *Alcaldes* were political and military leaders, officials and financial managers. The administration of the Manila realm was divided among *alcaldes*, which meant that the inhabitants of the municipal quarters were legally and officially considered their subjects (Tremml 2015).

The Filipino upper class (*principalía*) consisted of the hereditary *cabezas* and a whole series of elected officials (*gobernadorcillos, fiscales* – the sacristans, etc.). All these magistrates enjoyed the privileges of the *cabezas,*[18] and although their political authority was not negligible, it was limited by the Spanish officialdom. Even though they could not directly oppose the commands of the Spanish officials and the clergy, due to the geographical isolation of the archipelago, the Filipino magistrates had the possibility to procrastinate and disregard the injuctions of the Spanish authorities by invoking the formula "I obey but do not execute". The growth of the *principalía* class in the early Spanish period has profoundly affected the political development of the Philippines. As the economic and the administrative intermediaries between the Spaniards and their own contrymen, the Filipino upper class has enabled the indirect Hispanization process and gradual adjustment to new political practices (Phelan 1967:124-128, 154-159).

Manila as a Permanent Trading Base

The promising outlook of future trade relations with China was the strongest impetus for Legazpi and his followers to found Manila as the colonial capital. It offered optimal conditions for foreign trade with East and Southeast Asia and guaranteed access to supply from outside, so from its earliest days, the Manila trade became a crown monopoly. Legazpi established a customhouse (*real hacienda*) right after the foundation of Manila and the crown took a serious interest in the income of the Manila- trade (Tremml 2015).

[15] The primary duty of the *cabezas* was to collect the tribute tax from the members of the *barangay* and recruit men for communal public works.
[16] In the early 17th century all adult males nominated three canidates for the post, and the governor selected one of the three nominees for all communities adjacent to the capital, while the *alcaldes mayores* chose one of the candidates in the outlying provinces.
[17] The modern provinces of the Philippines grew out of these *alcaldías* and *corregimientos*.
[18] The officials of the *pueblo* were exempted from the exaction of tributes and sometimes they were also exempted from rendering services of forced labor (*polos*).

Recently, Henry Kamen wrote that "*Manila was a highly vulnerable and isolated outpost, wholly outnumbered by native populations, subsisting not only because of its tenaciousness but even more because of the tolerance of the two major powers in Asia, the Chinese and the Japanese*" (Kamen 2002:206). As soon as the Philippines were established as permanent colony in the East Indies, cargos with provision (*situado*) and silver were sent from Acapulco to Manila annually. The passage via Mexico served as the Philippines' only regular transport network and bridge to the European mainland. The galleon's journey across the Pacific was one of the longest and most dangerous to that time. However, by trade volume, the number of ships that used the port, as well as with complex transactions at the end of the sixteenth century, Manila was ranking among the number- one ports in Southeast Asia.

Early Spanish settlers welcomed the increase in incoming traders, as well as the flexible structures of Fujianese and Japanese maritime networks.[19] China's enormous thirst for silver was satisfied by both Japanese and American silver exports throughout the 16th and 17th century and beyond. With the foundation of Manila as a permanent trading base for exchanging the Chinese junks going to and from the Philippines, carrying silk, cotton, ceramics, iron ware, and luxury goods in exchange for native products, goods from other Asian areas, and most of all, the American silver, nearly all came from various ports in southern Fujian (Felix 1966; Ch'en 1968).[20]

Process of Assimilating Christianity

Before looking at the data, it is necessary to understand the nature of the Philppine society of non-Christian beliefs and practices which formed an important part of its social identity. First, the Filipinos worshiped a supreme being similar to that one of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Generally, various ethnic groups from Luzon to Mindanao believed in some sort of supreme god known by different names between different communities[21] and represented through the lesser divinities or spirits known as *nono*s or *anitos* (Jocano 1998:183-185).[22] Unlike the European Roman *Catholic tradition*, religion was so interwoven with the daily lives of the natives that it is difficult to distinguish what was social and what religious. Belief in spirits was all pervasive, and natural phenomena such as

[19] The three premodern states considered commercial relations as a form of "negotiation", thus, *diplomacy* and *trade* had been inexorably linked.
[20] Not only traders but Chinese emigrants flocked to Manila, so that their numbers in the island of Luzon jumped to approximately 20,000 by the beginning of the seventeenth century, while the Spanish population never exceeded two thousand in that century.
[21] *Bathala* for the Tagalogs, *Laon* or *Abba* for the Bisayans, *Kabunian* for the Ilokanos.
[22] *Nono* not only referred to grandfather but also served as a term of respect for ancestors and guardian spirits (*genios*). There were different *anitos* or *diwatas* for different purposes.

volcanoes, mountains, waterfalls, etc. were revered.[23] Spiritual beliefs were also related to ancestors and the Indios carried on frequent idolatrous practices in connection with planting, harvesting, traveling, and many other daily pursuits (Reyes 2002: 222, 279; Rafael 2001: 111-112). Second, the Filipinos uphold animistic afterlife beliefs (Scott 1983:141) and because of their belief in an afterlife as a continuation of life on earth, they surrounded death and burial with a great deal of ceremony believing in reciprocity, negotiation or token repayments (Rafael 2001:131) where debts of gratitude (*utang na loob*) were too overwhelming to pay. And lastly, the distinctive mark of the Philippine social identity was fear of the unknown, as well as the *nonexistence of* concept of heaven, hell or sin (Rafael 2001:127, 146, 170, 191).

These features had an underlying compatibility with the redemptive message of the Gospel and were pretty much compatible with the indoctrination offered by the Christian missionaries. So, when the Filipinos encountered Spanish missionaries, they were "missionized" or received instruction on the Gospel by various methods confessional or coercive.[24] In contrast to the practice in Mexico, the elite Filipino class was trained to act as intermediaries between the Spaniards and the Filippino masses. Instead of *direct*-method *approach* to religious coversion, first were indoctrinated the children of the chieftains, and then was performed the conversion of the Filipino leaders (Phelan 1967:55, 58).

Unlike the *indio*s of the New World, Filipinos had neither temples to be destroyed nor pagan monuments to desecrate and as such offered little resistance to Christian missionization while in many ways seemed to relish submission to it (Rafael 2001:106, 136). Also, the absence of centralized power meant that with a mere fraction of the military force used in the New World, Spaniards were able to "requisition" the lowland Philippines and put it under colonial and cultural hegemony. A requisition notice (*requerimiento*) was read to the natives requesting them to receive the faith and submit to the Crown. Due to the fact that the *indios* were not "enemies of the faith" like the Moors, the Spaniards could justify colonization in terms of evangelization which, in turn, created a fiction of the need for Filipinos to be converted (Schumacher 1979). Initially, the missionary efforts were supported by galleon trade and later by "tributes of gratitude" imposed by the Crown. The forced relocation of scattered *barangays* into one larger town centered around a church or the *cabecera-visita* complex facilitated the friar rule of the archipelago (Phelan 1967: 44-49).[25]

[23] Elderly women (*baylans*) most commonly performed all community religious ceremonies and people believed they possessed extraordinary powers, among these to cure illness, speak with the spirits and provide protection through charms and amulets. Thus, ritual beliefs and societal values were closely intertwined.

[24] The missioners were preceded by the encomenderos who facilitated the missionary work by braking the initial native resistence.

[25] The *cabecera* was the capital of the parish in which a string of subordinate clusters of population were attached to a principal village. Since the Filipinos were reluctant to resettle, every parish had a whole series of *visita* chapels visited periodically by the Spanish clergy from the *cabecera*. This resettlement model originated from Mexico and, by 1700, between 254 and 400 friars managed to ministere the 600,000 natives.

Because there was no schools to train natives in Spanish, the friars were required to communicate in the vernacular languages of the Philippines.[26] Therefore, the key Christian terms were left untranslated, in the Spanish or Latin form. On deeper level, this process actually stimulated "reverse translation" by the Filipinos and *facilitated* a process of indigenization (Rafael 2001:29, 131). As for the features of indigenous religion, the Filipinos assimilated the core Christian principles because they brought a paradigm shift in their understanding of death and the afterlife**.** As noted above, the pre-existing Philippine beliefs made easier the conversion of the Filipinos and the most significant was the reinvention of the concept of death which was previously seen as an undifferentiated afterlife. Through the new Christian concepts of sin, heaven and hell the lighting of candles was perceived as a way to guide the dead back to revisit the living (*tibao*) (Cannell 1999:153, 157).

At the same time, since the earliest years of colonization there has been a reverse translation of Christian traditions in the form of indigenization (Chirino 1890), so the Catholic liturgy has found its way into local animistic and healing rituals. Accordingly, the Filipinos accepted the virtue of baptism not only as a form to wipe away the spiritual sins, but also as a mean to cure the ailments of the body (Phelan 1967: 55). Likewise, although the passion plays originally derived from 16th century Spanish religious texts, they have never been performed in a formal church context, but rather used for "bargaining" with saints for healing or empowering benefits (Cannell 1999:168-170; Rafael 2001:194).

Lastly, since the *early* years of colonial period popularity of confession among the Filipinos has had little to do with total submission to the word of God (Rafael 2001:132). The principle of confession was entirely new to the Filipinos and although the sacrament was supposed to elicit the sense of their perpetual indebtedness to a Creator God, the Filipinos *frequently* used confession as an occasion for boasting and protesting their innocence, maneuvering around Spanish demands for submission (Rafael 2001: 96, 135, 168).

Therefore, affected by the combination of factors of social identity and indigenous religion, as well as historical factors, the degree of Christianity conversion in the Philippines has been relatively complete and profund. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the Filipinos did not respond to all forms of social indoctrination. Actually, the Filipinos were highly selective in their spiritual borrowings and they modified the chosen elements from the Chatolic tradition to suit their own cultural identity. In accordance with their previous traditions, they accepted the sensual and graphic elements of Spanish Catholicism (the pomp and pageantry of the Church's ritual like the thick aroma of incense, the

[26] Although the primary education flourished from the 1580's onwards, from 1609 onward the quality of instruction sharply fell off.

liturgical music, the custom of shooting off firecrakers, the candlelit processions of penitants dressed in hood and gowns, the depicting scenes from the Passion, etc.), but could not deprive themselves of the custom of daily bath (Phelan 1967:73-75).

Hence, while the Filipinos outwardly have accepted the influence of the Spaniards in their behavior, they have essentially remained oriental in their worldview**,** creating some kind of Filipino Folk Christianity which refers to a religious organization that is local in origin, but maintains itself as an autochthonous (Jocano 1975; Phelan 1967).

2. METHOD

This paper examines cross- cultural interactions that took place in the Philippines during the early Spanish period and the unique and complex interplay between *conqueror* and *conquered* based on multilingual primary source research and a critical evaluation of different historiographical traditions. In this respect, content and comparative analysis based upon a comprehensive study of various sources, including not only the voluminous published chronicles of the Spanish religious orders, but also the archival resources, shed light on the parallels and contrasts to the Spanish colonization of the Philippine archipelago from a background of Spanish American history.

Methodologically, the paper begins with an inquiry into the basic socioeconomic and political structures of the early modern Spanish colonial period in comparison to the earlier forms of pre-Hispanic Philippine society. This is followed by a discussion on how the Spaniards transformed the native society into a Hispanized one, with emphasis on the Manila's overall role for premodern economies in the region. The third and last section presents a discussion on how the Filipino anitism and various idolatrous practices were *adapted* to the new canonic standards of Christian doctrine and explains the progressive development of Filipino folk Catholicism.

Subjects and Data Analysis

The Spanish colonial model was to extend the Spanish culture over the Philippines and to pacifically incorporate the native population under the Crown. The present paper attempts to reconstruct the history of the Filipinos between 1565 and 1700 and analyze how the Hispanic regime transformed the indigenous culture by altering the Philippines in spiritual and social way. Also, opposing the common observation that in the early Spanish period Manila was nothing more than a trading outpost for the Spanish and the Chinese (Spate 1979; Boxer 1970) we will try to point out the *global-level acculturation* that the region had undergone.

The Philippines were the main focus of Spanish writing on Asia and the four dominant religious orders – the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Dominicans – produced their own histories that form a significant and indispensable body of literature. Combining a narrative of spiritual affairs with geographic and ethnographic information, some of these accounts deal specifically with the Philippines or one of its parts, while others represent more general syntheses written on the basis of a wide range of primary materials like official documents**,** private correspondence and local church records. Even so, much of the Spanish historiography on the Philippines lacks objectivity and the data are sometimes open to question with respect to their meaning or their credibility.[27] In addition, as well as the early Catholic chroniclers, most *scholars* of *nationalism* of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century had their hidden agendas so, as one might expect, their work very well need future revision.[28] Apart from this, during this period appeared a *multitude of* random and sporadic contributions from different scholarly backgrounds but almost nothing has been published on social history and ethnohistory of the Philippines in the early Spanish period. In other words, one notable characteristic of Philippine historical scholarship is that it has tended to focus on developments between the mid-18th century and the present, while scholarship on the pre-Hispanic and premodern Philippines is thin and oversimplified due to the exclusively historical method, selective approach,[29] and serious lack of *anthropological survey* in particular essential for an authentic study of the Philippine indigenous ways of life.

Nevertheless, over the past decades some researchers presented an overall approach to early Philippine history, as well as to the indigenous communities in particular. Amnog the most prominent researchers who managed to integrate comparative approaches into their research work we would like to mention the French economic historian Pierre Chaunu,[30] William Henry Scott,[31] Robert R. Reed,[32] Anthony Reid,[33] Maria Lourdes Díaz- Trechuelo,[34] F. Landa Jocano,[35] John Leddy Phelan,[36] Birgit

[27] Despite some ideological and institutional constraints, as examples of valuable Spanish ethnography sources one should surely consider the primary accounts of Antonio de Pigafetta, Miguel de Loarca, Juan de Plasencia, Marcelo Ribadeneira, Pedro Chirino, Antonio de Morga, Diego de Aduarte, Francisco Colín, Francisco Combés, Francisco Ignacio Alcina and Gaspar de San Agustín.

[28] Like writing on the Philippine hero José Rizal or dozens of books on the Philippine Revolution of 1896, the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) or U.S. colonial rule.

[29] Chinese, Japanese and Maxican contributions were rarely integrated in a bigger picture of multi-layered *and complex* economic history of the Philippines.

[30] By collecting the extensive statistical data on trans-Pacific trade in the Spanish archives, Chaunu gives us the information on the amount of American silver that went to Asia.

[31] *Scott's* book *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society* presents an insightful Philippine ethnography that describes lives, culture and traditions of the ethnic tribes in the Philippines and is of particular interest to anthropologists.

[32] In his monography *Colonial Manila* Reed traces Manila's character from its establishment as colonial capital to its growth as a cosmopolitan entrepôt.

[33] In his study *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680, The Land Below the Winds* in two volumes Reid analyzes the 'Southeast Asian Age of Commerce' and Asian integration into a global trade system.

Tremml[37] and the new generation of Spanish historians who have begun to produce important books and articles on the early years of Spanish colonialism.[38]

However, what is here presented is a brief cultural research that tries to interpret different perspectives of writing history based on interdisciplinary approach, which, although being supported by critically analyzed data, may very well need future revision in the light of new findings.

3. FINDINGS

The Spanish colonization of the Philippines was strongly influenced by earlier experiences in New Spain and Peru. Unfortunately, the majority of historical writing has looked at the Philippines in isolation so it is difficult to analyze social history and ethnohistory of the Philippines without taking into account its Latin American background and the overall historical framework of Spanish colonial culture. Owing to this, many of the subjects that have been examined by historians of the recent past such as socio-economic developments, the nature of indigenous politics, and so forth, have been ignored by historians of the first two centuries of Spanish rule. Moreover, almost nothing has been published on social history of the Spanish *colony's early* years and, what is essential, the political and economic reinvigorating of the Filipino native elite class has not been adecuately addressed. As a consequence, many questions remain open, such as the questions of inequality or equality and the potential Spanish contribution to the Philippine *social stratification.*

Under the impact of Spanish power, from the mid-16th to the beginning of the *18th* century the native settlements were completely remodeled and eventually lost their freedom. Nevertheless, throughout the archipelago, uprisings against the Spaniards were undertaken by native Filipinos, but this data is scarcely studied and made part of institutionalized Philippine history. In seeking to recover the true Filipino history we need to look more deeply into the pre-Hispanic milieu. In that sense, our goal in putting together this research is to encourage a deeper understanding of the consequences of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines, including the injustices and inequalities it created. During the Spanish colonial rule**,** the archipelago was reduced to the pattern of socioeconomic exploitation with

[34] Her study *Filipinas. La Gran Desconocida* gives excellent synthesis of historical and anthropological data.
[35] In his work *The Philippines at the Spanish Contact* Jocano gives a comprehensive primary-source based overview of the early Spanish period.
[36] *The Hispanization of the Philippines. Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses* assesses the *acculturation process* of the Filipino people over the *first* two centuries of Spanish rule.
[37] In her book *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local comparisons and global connections* Tremml gives excellent cross-cultural analysis and, by examining a wealth of multilingual primary sources, offers a new perspective on the Manila's development as a "Eurasian" port city. Tremml describes the encounter between the "political economies" of Spain, China, and Japan in the 16th and 17th centuries and offers a far-reaching analysis of Philippine premodern history.
[38] Like Florentino Rodao, María Dolores Elizalde, Josep Fradera, etc.

the collaboration of a native political elite. With the imposition of *Christianity* Filipinos were subjected to "cultural imperialism" in which idealized versions of *conquistadores* holding the cross on one hand and the sword on the other were happily greeted by natives, who are baptized and given Christian names like *Santos, de los Reyes de La Cruz,* and so on. However, the Philippines did not fall completely into the orbit of Spanish colonization and Filipinos retained not only their indigenous names (*Putong, Langit, Dait, Gamulo,* etc.), but also a common pattern about the early Filipino concept of God. Actually, even after conversion to Christianity many animistic practices gave birth to profoundly syncretic character of Philippine Christianity.

Nevertheless, by carefully rethinking and reconstructing the cultural encounter between the Spaniards and the Filipinos, one must admit that the Philippines had developed a more sophisticated social structure. Firstly, even though the natives resepected some generally rules and laws, the pre-Hispanic justice was primarly dispensed either by ordeal or divination (Rafael 2001:140). Secondly, on the northern island of Luzon early trade contacts in the area of Manila Bay over centuries had developed into an extensive agricultural and trading area but had never led politically or economically to much more than to an inter-*barangay alliance* indispensable to regulate the exchange of local products such as honey, beeswax, livestock and food products, palm wine and sugar in exchange for porcelain and metal products. On the contrary, with the arrival of Roman Catholicism and political Hispanization the prevailing traditions of the pre-Hispanic communities turned to the service of the new economic and religious orders which had left an enduring mark on the *settlement patterns* in the Philippines.

Secondly, what is important is the fact that within fifty years of the conquest, through the agency of Catholicism the Spaniards gradually managed to suppres many indigenous mores (polygamy, certain sexual behaviors and penchant of the Filipinos for divorce, ritual drinking, etc.) and set up a new moral an ethical standards that have permanently altered the Filipino culture. However, despite the fact that Christian missionary work swept away many old traditions and habits and left an unencumbered field on which new social structures might be established, the Filipinos selectively responded to Hispanization and managed to conserve their community-orientated value system, as well as many of their pre-Hispanic beliefs and rituals.

Finally**,** because of the distance between Spain and the Philippines and because of the indirect nature of the colonial administration of the islands, the galleon trade was paradoxically the most regulated and the least controlled one. Moreover, the multi- layered encounters of state competition and geopolitical considerations in Manila *clearely* show that the Spanish colonization of the Philippines wasn't solely determined by its functional relation to the European world system, but also

by its place in an expanding Asian trade network and by the interests of Mexican officials and merchants.

4. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this investigation is to outline the specific nature of Spanish reign over the Philippines from a background of Spanish American history. Beginning with the 16th century, in spite of the Spanish bureaucratic system and centralized imperial policy, the Philippines managed to develop its own personality with regional variations which culminated in early modern regional "globalization" and the conversion of the Indians to Christianity. Through the Council of the Indies which was the supreme organism in the government and management of the overseas kingdoms, the Spanish Crown exercised some kind of multiplex theocratic power which enabled the unique *administrative hierarchy in which the native chieftains acted as intermediaries between Spanish authorities and the Filipinos.*

In order to *pacifically conquer* and incorporate the Filipinos into Spanish culture, The Spaniards put a heavy emphasis on the spiritual conquest and indirect Hispanization of the Philippines. Although the Philippines has become the bastion of Christianity in the Orient, in dealing with the Philippine situation, one must put into consideration the pre-Hispanic and colonial past of the Filipino people who actually indigenized the Chatolic Church's influence and preserved much of their ethnic identity. In that sense, the Filipinos were no just passive reipients of the Spanish cultural stimulus but rather creators of their own etnohistory.

However, the religious indoctrination of the Filipinos surely provided conditions of their social unity and, in comparison with the Mexican Indians, the Philippine natives absorbed the acculturation process in a less painful way which, in turn, enabled a radical and permanent transformation of native Philippine society and its social evolution. Moreover, the fact that the native upper class (*principalía*) actually was enriched end politically empowered by the Spanish conquest created conditions of law and order throughout the maritime provinces of Luzon and the Bisayas, the *political institutionalization and true social cohesion of the archipelago*.

The colonization of the Philippines was a complex venture and its results differed from what were seemingly similar projects in the Americas. Due to the geographical reasons, many of the original imperial goals were never accomplished. Nevertheless, because of the previous experience in colonising methods, the Spaniards practiced moderate colonial policy which had less drastic effects on the native population.

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