Decoding the Elementary Forms of Social Exchange in Philippine Politics

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ABSTRACT

Considering the interplay of cost and reward as the basis of human interaction, this research is designed to elaborate on the nature and structure of social exchanges in Philippine politics. It is assumed that the appropriation of rewards and benefits impacts the actor's behavior or *the behavior is modified* (Baldwin and Baldwin, 1986 p. 6) based on the understanding of past and anticipated consequences.

The cost and benefit analysis are used to render a thorough analysis of the social behavior between and among political actors in the Philippines. It is argued that the virtue of a theory depends on its capacity to generate assumptions about the social world. Thus, this research, attempts to test the five propositions perceived by Homans (1961) as the foundations of sociability.

These propositions were validated to generate a scientific blueprint of the dynamics of human interaction as participants strive to achieve a balance in the ecology of power relations. The project seeks to elaborate on how social bonds are built, maintained, or broken in politics.

Qualitative research techniques were employed to explore and explain the phenomenon using the narratives of elected officials, party officers, political advisers, and leaders of politically inclined organizations that supported politicians during the election season.

Interestingly, this study theorizes about the basis of political interaction in the country by looking into the costs and benefits of politics, the occasions when actors get punished or rewarded, consequences when actors failed to value the reward accumulated from a political interaction, misappropriation of rewards and punishments, and what drives actors to choose one response over other alternative course of actions.

Keywords: Cost, reward, Philippine politics, punishment, social exchange

Introduction

This project seeks to study the different forms of social behavior in Philippine politics using the five propositions developed by Homans (1974).

In the Success Proposition, Homans argued that:

> for all actions taken by persons, the more often a particular action of a person is rewarded, the more likely the person is to perform that action. (p. 16)

In the Value Proposition, Homans (1974) argued that:

> the more valuable to a person is the result of his action, the more likely he is to perform the action. (p. 25)

In the Deprivation-Satiation Proposition, Homans (1974) argued that:

> the more often in the recent past a person has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes for him. (p. 29)

In the Aggression-Approval Propositions, Homans (1974) presented two possibilities:

> Proposition A**:** When a person's action does not receive the reward he expected, or receives punishment he did not expect, he will be angry; he becomes more likely to perform aggressive behavior, and the results of such behavior become more valuable to him. (p. 37)

> Proposition B: When a person's action receives the reward he expected, especially a greater reward than he expected, or does not receive punishment he expected, he will be pleased; he becomes more likely to perform approving behavior, and the results of such behavior become more valuable to him. (p. 39)

Lastly, in the Rationality Proposition Homans (1974) argued that:

> in choosing between alternative actions, a person will choose that one for which, as perceived by him at the time, the value, V, of the result, multiplied by the probability, p, of getting the result, is greater. (p.43)

The study employs qualitative method following the rigid techniques of sociological research in its aim to develop grounded understanding as well as advance the state of knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. As such, the research seeks to describe the dynamics of human interaction between and among political actors in the Philippines.

Review of Literature

The attempt to theorize about the foundations of sociability among political actors in the Philippines lends an opportunity to understand how the patterns of political exchanges are built, maintained, or broken.

The study seeks to open new possibilities to sociologically understanding human social behavior taking place in the domains of politics. This theoretical exposition takes a bold step in rendering a scholastic analysis of individual behavior and interaction. The analysis centers its attention on what leads people to a particular act given the alternative courses of actions available to them.

Drawn from psychological behaviorism, Homans developed his own brand of sociologizing that later became known as the *social exchange theory*.

At the core of the theory is the idea of operant conditioning or the learning process by which "behavior is modified by its consequences" (Baldwin and Baldwin, 1986, p. 6). Ritzer (2011, p. 417) simplified the general thesis of the social exchange theory by pointing out that:

> The environment in which the behavior exists, whether social or physical, is affected by the behavior and in turn "acts" back in various ways. That reaction—positive, negative, or neutral—affects the actor's later behavior. If the reaction has been rewarding to the actor, the same behavior is likely to be emitted in the future in similar situations. If the reaction has been painful or punishing, the behavior is less likely to occur in the future. The behavioral sociologist is interested in the relationship between the *history* of environmental reactions or consequences

> and the nature of present behavior. Past consequences of a given behavior govern its present state. By knowing what elicited a certain behavior in the past, we can predict whether an actor will produce the same behavior in the present situation.

Behind the operation of calculating the cost and benefit derived from an interaction is the rational understanding of the actor's preference hierarchy that leads to action. Significant to the hierarchy of interests is the "quantity or quality of available information… has a profound effect on actors' choices" (Heckathorn in Ritzer 2011, p. 420). It is assumed that the availability of information and one's understanding of the social world drives the person to perform rational and purposive choices among the alternative possibilities of action available.

Furthermore, in the selection and performance of the act, the actor needs to consider not only the anticipated consequences of the act but also one needs to factor in first; the availability of resources needs to fulfill the act and second; the limits of the social institutions.

Although the origin of Homans' sociological assumptions was from psychology, Homans recognizes the inseparable bond that links the individual to the collective. The interplay between the individual action and the social environment as well as the principle of reciprocity (reinforcing or punishing each other's act) lies at the center of Homans' analysis. He emphasized on the enabling and at the same time limiting nature of social institutions over an actor. Homans (1967) suggests that:

> The great example of a social fact is a social norm, and the norms of the groups to which they belong certainly constrain towards conformity the behavior of many more individuals. The question is not that of the existence of constraint, but of its explanation.... The norm does not constrain automatically: individuals conform, when they do so, because they perceive it is to their net advantage to conform, and it is psychology that deals with the effect on behavior of perceived advantage. (p. 60)

Therefore, it is perceived that the conformity or non-conformity of an act and the anticipation of reward or punishment is powered by the actor's rational calculation of the act's total consequences.

Homan's Five Propositions: A Synthesis

Homans' proposition begins with the understanding of the stimulus and arrives at the fulfillment of the stimulus through an act. To consider it as a social behavior, the act must be directed to another person which in turn will either punish or reward the act. This is the elementary form of human interaction according to Homans. Homans intended to create a general pattern of behavior and response that can be extended to popular forms of human interactions.

The Success Proposition. According to Ritzer (2011), the dynamics of Homans' success proposition provides three potential conditions of exchange and response:

> First, although it is generally true that increasingly frequent rewards lead to increasingly frequent actions, this reciprocation cannot go on indefinitely. At some point individuals simply cannot act that way as frequently. Second, the shorter the interval is between behavior and reward, the more likely a person is to repeat the behavior. Conversely, long intervals between behavior and reward lower the likelihood

> of repeat behavior. Finally, it was Homans's view that intermittent rewards are more likely to elicit repeat behavior than regular rewards are. Regular rewards lead to boredom and satiation, whereas rewards at irregular intervals (as in gambling) are very likely to elicit repeat behaviors. (p. 423)

To further clarify the matter, Homans (in Ritzer, 2011) used the fishing example to stress his point; he argues that:

> one aspect of generalization would be to move from fishing in dark pools to fishing in any pool with any degree of shadiness. Similarly, success in catching fish is likely to lead from one kind of fishing to another (for instance, freshwater to saltwater) or even from fishing to hunting. However, the process of *discrimination* is also of importance. That is, the actor may fish only under the specific circumstances that proved successful in the past. For one thing, if the conditions under which success occurred were too complicated, similar conditions may not stimulate behavior. If the crucial stimulus occurs too long before behavior is required, it may not actually stimulate that behavior. An actor can become oversensitized to stimuli, especially if they are very valuable to the actor. In fact, the actor could respond to irrelevant stimuli, at least until the situation is corrected by repeated failures. All this is affected by the individual's alertness or attentiveness to stimuli. (p.423)

At this point, Homans is suggesting that the material condition or the social and physical environment in relation to human action forms the building blocks of the actor's behavior. The discrimination process that takes place in the memory of the actor as one learns from one's history of costs and benefits leads the actor to pursue exchanges that proved to be rewarding in the past and abandon those that were costly and punishing.

The Value Proposition. With a certain sense of foresight and anticipation, the value of the result of an act defines the stimulus for a person to act upon or ignore the opportunity for an action. The reciprocity of material and/or non-material rewards that may exist between the actors led these actors to continue performing desired behaviors.

However, in an occasion where actions with negative values (punishment) tend to outweigh the actions with positive values (rewards) it is more likely that the actor will no longer perform the act or will respond differently. This proposition presupposes that:

> punishments to be an inefficient means of getting people to change their behavior, because people may react in undesirable ways to punishment (Ritzer, 2011, p. 424).

The Deprivation-Satiation Proposition. It is argued that the more often the person receives a reward, the receiver becomes satiated thus, making further rewards less valuable. The surge and extended frequency of unsolicited rewards becomes void and meaningless to the participant.

The Aggression-Approval Proposition. The two conditions in the aggression-approval proposition synthesizes the two possible responses of an actor relative to the receipt of reward or punishment. The first condition highlights the emotion of "anger" as a response when there is a perceive failure in the rule of distributive justice. The actor is perceived to exhibit an aggressive behavior when one receives an unexpected punishment. The result of such aggression now becomes more valuable than the result of the initial cause of action.

The second condition under the aggression-approval proposition lean towards a more positive response from the actor by arguing that when a person receives a greater reward than what was earlier expected or failed to receive the presumed punishment, the more that the actor performs conforming behavior making such behavior more meaningful and valuable.

The Rationality Proposition. The calculation between the alternative course of actions to achieve maximum profit becomes the defining element of the rationality proposition. It seeks to closely take into consideration various probabilities of achieving the desired outcome with the least cost.

Through the rational examination of the probability of success and the value of the investment, the actor accumulates reward with the least energy and resources spent.

Consequently, after having elaborated on the five propositions, this research stretches out Homans contribution into the analysis of social behavior in Philippine politics based on the principles of rewards and punishments.

The Elementary Forms of Social Behavior

In a domain of exchanges as informal and as direct as that of the transfer of costs and rewards in politics, it is the intention of this inquiry is to understand the:

> behavior of a man who, through his own exertions as an individual in his face-to-face dealings with other individuals, acquire influence over them not de jure but de facto (Homans, 1961, p. 5).

It is therefore considered how people in their immediate environments develop their patterns of actions and responses based on the principle of costs and benefits.

In understanding the operational and functional capabilities of the entire political machine, this research brings together the basic treatise of structural functionalism and social exchange theories to fully comprehend the integration of the micro and macro levels of a social act.

It is essential in the understanding of the forms of social exchange in Philippine politics, to identify the various actors and their specific roles in the entire network of interaction. By examining the interplay of actors, the dynamics of reward and punishment that takes between and among them becomes apparent and observable.

Since there will always be uneven exchanges of rewards, it becomes obvious that there will also be an uneven distribution of power that will result to the layering of individuals in a hierarchical structure allowing the system of reward and punishment possible.

The table below presents in a hierarchy, the common features of a political machinery and the nature of operation of each individual actor. Furthermore, it necessary to be clarified that on top of the class system is the candidate from whom all political possibilities and impossibilities emanate.

Table 1. F. Rey's Elements of a Political Machine

The Elders of The Council	Refers to those who plan and lay down strategies and direction of the entire election process including its finance strategy
Legal and Para Legal Staffs	Refers to those who provide the legal needs of the party or candidate from simple signatures or notary functions to legal defense of the party or candidate
Trustees	Refers to those who deliver party resources and sensitive messages to the underbosses of the party
Communications Division Media Specialist/Cyber Crony	Refers to individuals hired by the party or candidate to manage the public image of the political entity using the traditional media (print, radio and television) including the recent technological innovations such as the cellular and internet technologies. It also includes the ghost writers who covertly express the sentiments of the party or candidate using the mass media.
Political Combatant	Broadly, this term refers to those who are willing to use force or violence for the party or candidate during the campaign period. The combatant is someone attached to the party or candidate rather than an ideology. It also refers to those who carry deadly weapons to secure the safety of the candidate during the campaign, volunteer or hired personnel that can be disposed by the candidate or the party to intimidate, harass, terrorize, perform cleaning operations of the campaign venues, and other acts that will require potential or actual use of force or violence.
Poster boys/girls	Refers to those who perform the in house printing, distribution, and/or display of campaign materials.
Vigilantes	Refers to the person who monitors the movement of the people in the barangay lelvel and reports directly to the preferred members of the party hierarchy. The vigilante may or may not be a political combatant.
Resident Manager (RM)/Municipal level Coordinator	Refers to the person who supervises the entire recruitment process as well as the maintenance of allies in the barangay. Reports directly to the mayorial candidate or other preferred members in the party hierarchy. One resident manager (RM) per barangay. In practice, this task is assigned to the barangay captain. The RM is in charge in the validation and authentication of the list of allies and rivals in the entire barangay. The RM supervises the barangay manager (BM) and sees to it that the recruitment protocols is faithfully followed.
Barangay Manager (BM)	Refers to the key leadership in the barangay who over sees the recruitment process and should report directly to the RM. The BM is likewise in charge in the validation and authentication of the list of allies and rivals in barangay level. Supervises the barangay team leader.
Barangay Team Leader (BTL)	Refers to the person who secures and monitors the movement of one's own family members, purok/sitio members (neighbors), or the nine (9) members assigned to him/her with reference to the list of voters. The BTL may reports directly to the BM.
Runners	Refers to the errand boys and girls who perform quotidian tasks for the party.

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At the same time, the candidate is also the center of all relational prospects and dangers. The research is designed to understand the foundations of social relationships present in a political system.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Social behaviorism or social exchange theory guides the departure as well as the arrival of this research. It seeks to analyze the reinforcement patterns that make social interaction possible. It is assumed that the history of rewards and the threat of punishment led the actor to continue or abandon the performance of a certain act.

The five propositions suggested by Homan's will be validated to establish a structure of reward and punishment that takes place in a political interaction.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The philosophical and methodological underpinnings of this study was based on phenomenology. Phenomenology was used as a research approach to provide the study its distinct character of being inside and at the same time outside of the phenomenon. As a method of inquiry phenomenology was dedicated in describing the configurations of human experiences as they present themselves to consciousness, without attachment to any theoretical orientation, deductions, or presumptions. By being inside and outside of the political orbit, the elementary forms of political interactions were unveiled.

Selection

The study derived its data through interview schedule from the following sources: local elected officials party officers, party bosses, political advisers, leaders of organization supporting politicians. In total, 13 respondents form Luzon participated in this study.

Mode of Analysis

In this research, the first stage of data processing involves actual fieldwork of generating responses from the field (Data Collection). The second stage includes the conversion of information into an electronic form (Encoding). After the data was converted, the researcher then breaks down these facts into themes or categories making it more manageable for future theorization and conceptual associations (Coding). After the codes had been generated, the data was organized based on themes (Sorting). The last stage is the Decoding where the unriddling of the phenomenon takes place. Realities that were previously unknown and distant becomes familiar with the aid to academic proficiency and scholastic mastery.

Research Findings

The research findings seek to elaborate on the varied response depending on how rewards and punishments are appropriated to political actors. Research participants were coded using "R" to represent "respondent" and a number was assigned to each respondent during the unpacking and treatment of data.

The Benefits of Politics

The cost and benefit analysis provides the basic model of human interaction both in the political or non-political domains. The data set revealed that the benefits derived from political interactions are two dimensional. There are rewards gained that are material in nature such as "income" (R12), "access to government resources" (R1) "through programs and projects of the government" (R6) related to "free insurance, assistance packages on education" (R8)

and "hospitalization" (guarantee letters (GL) given by elected officials to aid hospital bills) (R12) among others.

On the other hand, non-material benefits provide an added opportunity in understanding political behavior.

Political actors put emphasis on the value of prolonged engagement in politics to gain deeper understanding of the political terrain. "Greater knowledge is greater power" (R2) that can be used "to make positive impact in every person in every situation" (R3). The extended exposure in politics allows the actor to gain "higher proficiency in understanding the political conscience and assigning correct value to the communal affairs" (R5). "Sufficient knowledge allows the creation of behavior that is consistent to political culture" (R6).

Furthermore, this extended exposure gives the actors not only "fame and prestige" (R12) or "self-fulfillment" (R7) but also the "knowledge and information" (R2, R4, R6) necessary to improve their social capital in "building up new connections, friendships, and alliances" (R3, R5).

Being at the center of power and influence provides the actor the constant "opportunity to be heard and the power to effect change to one's liking" (R11). To "take part in and shape the decisions that affect people's lives" (R10, R11), an "involvement set on the long-term goal of changing political structures and systems" (R13).

The Costs of Politics

The costs of political participation extend from as manifest as the loss of life to as latent as the threats on the appropriation of space and time. The actors mentioned about the varying imprints of "conflict and violence" (R6, R10, R12) in politics as well as the "loss of privacy" (R11, R12) and the "high cost for time" (R3, R10).

Physical violence refers to the threat or the actual use of violence directed towards another person. Respondents assert that political involvement "can cost you your life" (R3, R11). The "risk of losing one's life is always imminent because the private armies are present to intimidate or even liquidate political opponents" (R8).

On the other hand, there is also a high probability of psychological and emotional attacks as "one opens the self to be criticized by people because of one's political affiliation" (R1). Political involvement "can cost one's status in the society in a positive or in a negative way" (R3). One "can be exposed to different platforms that can bring negative feedback especially that there is multiplicity of truth nowadays" (R5). On a similar note, it was suggested that "people may get upset because of once political affiliation" (R4), enemies "are created" (R12) and there is "a risk of one's reputation, stress, uncertainty, and criticisms" (R10, R11, R12). One's private orbits may be "exposed to intense inspection" (R8, R9)

Aside from the dangers of physical, mental, and emotional attacks, politics all at times challenges one's financial capabilities because political engagement has a "monetary cost" (R3, R10) and "it is expensive" (R8).

Finally, political calisthenics may expose the person to varying forms and degrees of power play and self-gratification that may eventually "corrupt self" (R12).

Occasions When an Actor is Rewarded in Politics

It appears that winning the election is the only occasion when rewards may be granted and shared among the participants.

After a successful election, the participants receive varieties of benefits and access to different resources.

On the level of personal gains, being part of the winning team, "it is a weapon that one can use to receive immediate assistance. When one is part of the group you are first to receive benefits" (R2) and "requests can easily be granted and personal plans implemented" (R1). A successful campaign "provides first, access to sensitive information that are not readily available to the public" (R11), second, "to be included in projects and programs of the government that can help people in the community. Third, one may be rewarded by livelihood, monetary reward" (R6), "work for family friends and constituents and benefits like medical assistance and scholarships" (R12).

On the level of the social, research participants suggest that it "relocates the position" (R3) of the person in the community. There is an enhanced "sense of recognition" (R4), "social acceptance" (R7, R8) and "the feeling of being part of something important, a sense of inclusiveness" (R11). The political victory lends the occasion for the victor of not only "earning the trust and confidence of people in the community" (R3) but most especially the opinions of the winner are "being taken into consideration" (R11). It allows the person to push for "meaningful reforms and legislation that seeks to advance to the interests of the underprivileged" (R13).

Occasions When an Actor is Punished in Politics

The reason for punishment is characterized by two defining factors; incompetence and conflict with the law on the part of the one who initially had received benefits.

Incompetence is manifested by the actor's "inability to make one's self available" (R1) during critical moments and the inadequacy "to respond to the needs of the politician" (R6). This deficiency may be the reason for the person to be dropped from the roll of beneficiaries.

"Being in conflict with the law" (R4, R5, R7) is another reason to lose all the benefits and privileges of being a member of a triumphant team. Offenses that were mentioned that may prompt the dismissal of the trustee from the inner circle of influence and power includes "graft and corruption or when the trustee steals from the nation's coffers" (kaban ng bayan) (R3, R5, R8, R10, R12). Other offenses that were mentioned that falls within the bounds of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA 6713 of 1989) are "gross negligence of duty abuse of authority" (R8), "fraud" (R12).

Interestingly, the social milieu of the nation was captured by the study through an intriguing fact that was mentioned by the respondent claiming that "people may charge and may result to conviction when they join rallies" (R9). This was in relation to the increased ideological divide between the right leaning Duterte administration against the rest of the ideological spectrum.

Furthermore, a deeper observation shows that in many instances it "is a case-by-case basis in terms if one is aligned with the admin or if on the opposition. If it's the former, most often than not, he/she will only get as much as a slap on the wrist. Maybe a show that due process is being done just for the sake of "press release". If on the opposing side, one can expect the full force and effect of the law. Attack from social media as well will be rampant. Abuse from all angles will definitely occur. If the actor is indeed a major threat, elected or not, he/she can expect being imprisoned" (R11). But in a functioning democracy, the government should actually work for the peoples interests, corrupt actors should actually be detained. This was the case of "GMA (former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo), Erap (former president Joseph Estrada), Enrile (former Senator Juan Ponce-Enrile),

Bong Revilla (Senator Ramon "Bong" Revilla) and Jinggoy (Senator Jinggoy Estrada) to name a the more prominent ones" (R13).

When an Actor Failed to Value the Reward Accumulated from a Political Interaction

Recipients of political favors and benefits who failed to take seriously the rewards accumulated from the political interaction puts the politician (giver of the reward) in a critical spot. The negligence of the receiver affects not only the status of the self within the orbit of favor seeking and granting but more so it "weakens the status of the giver in the network of power dynamics" (R12).

On a personal level, it may mean the "loss of trust and confidence" (R3, R11) on the part of the receiver or "loss or decline of existing rewards" (R4, R12) that may not be recovered in the future because there is "no second chances or opportunities" (R6). It will have a serious effect on the status of the self since "the political circle is very small. Everybody knows everybody. One mistake has a huge impact and that won't be easily forgotten. If it comes to that point, there is no turning back because that would already be embedded in the minds of everybody even if the actor is long gone figuratively or literally" (R11).

Such flawed valuation and laxity deteriorate the receiver's "base of support. He also loses opportunities for burnishing his public image and the publics appreciation of his image or person" (R13) as a leader in the community. Consequently, the giver of the reward suffers the most devasting impact threatened by future injuries and losses due to the slackness of the trustee. It is therefore a cause of worry for unmindful and delinquent beneficiaries to be concerned about the wellbeing of their own life and "family when politicians trying to get even" (R9).

When an Actor Does not Receive the Reward S/He Expected, or Receives Punishment S/He Did Not Expect

The failure to receive expected reward but instead receives an unexpected punishment appears to impact both the self and the social. Proving once again the sociological assertion that there is an inseparable bond between the two.

On the level of the self, when the actor is punished instead of receiving expected reward the feeling of "disappointment" (R6, R9), "depression" (R9), and "anger" (R6) comes into play.

Since it is argued that, "it is unacceptable to receive a punishment when one is performing one's duties well as a political actor" (R7), the self then when punished unexpectedly may retaliate by "reveling secrets (siraan) that will ruin the reputation of other actors" (R1).

The unjust appropriation of punishment breeds "distrust" (R3) and encourages the actor to "*consider himself or herself first above all else"* (R3).

On the other hand, the social impact of unmerited punishment centers on the structure of the political organization. "Wrong decision or misjudgment in the allocation of punishments (R 10) will create issues that will" (R12) "ruin the hierarchy" (R 10). "Turncoatism" (R11, R12, R13) and "political vendetta" (R12) must be expected since there is a huge tendency for the unjustly punished actor "to run for public office and run against the person or group who gave him/her the undue punishment" (R12). "The actor will look for allies to bring down the source of such punishment" (R13).

When an Actor Receives a Greater Reward Than S/He Expected, or Does Not Receive Punishment S/He Expected

The over-calculation of reward may appear to be harmless as it seeks to provide added gratification to

the self. The amplification of benefits makes the self "happy" (R4), "ecstatic" (abot langit na saya) (R6), and will encourage the actor "to try again in the future" (R9). Moreover, the actor will be "grateful for his/her position, will continue to do good works in his/her area, and will expect more next time" (R12).

However, it is also argued that "it is prudent to receive enough and exact reward so that others may also receive" (R6), "rewards and punishments should be given to whom it is due and any excess or shortage of it will have an impact on one's political career and future political plans" (R8). The exaggerated allocation of rewards negates meritocracy and promotes "palakasan" (patronage system) (R1). The feeling of entitlement and invulnerability makes the person "arrogant and superfluous" (lalaki ang ulo at maging palalo) as "fame and power get into one's head" (R3). "One would feel untouchable and very Important. Look, I have an experience in this matter. I am just fortunate that I got aware of it. Having power is addictive, may you be an elected official or somebody in the inside. Power can get into one's head very easily. If you do not keep yourself inconstant check, you will wake up one morning full of greed and already changed into someone else. Though, it feels good to receive more and not to get punished even if there was an offense. But those definitely are not good and would simply lead to something worse. That is a guarantee" (R11).

When bad actions remain unpunished, offenders will "continue doing bad acts and may even encourage others to do so" (R12). "It invites criticism on the part of the government. This was so prevalent in the administration of Rodrigo Duterte when obviously incompetent supporters were given top level posts, as in the case of Bong Go, Bato de la Rosa, Mocha Uson, Arnel Ignacio among other idiots. The Duterte administration suffered immensely in terms of credibility to the point that the logical conclusion was, the Duterte administration was incompetent and useless" (R13).

What Drives an Actor to Choose One Response Over Other Alternative Course of Actions

One's position in the network of political exchange allows the actor to be always responsible in the assumption of one's role. In the process of being responsible and functional, the actor satisfies the need of the community as if looking after the well-being of everyone. However, it is also argued that since political power is "dependent on elections, the consciousness of satisfactory performance on behalf of the constituency is needed in order not to lose votes for the next election that may lead to" (R12). It is therefore suggested that political acts are always directed towards winning the next election. It is directed towards, "self-gratification, and accumulation of rewards such as psychological or ego-stroking, monetary rewards, and career advancement" (R1, R4, R6, R13) as the basis of human action. "There is only one factor involved in political interaction, it is how would the response benefit the actor in whatever form it may be. Sure, one can scream to the top of their lungs that they chose this or that and make all the justifications in the world, but in their minds, it always ends up to how it would be ultimately beneficial to the actor" (R11).

Theorizing

The research suggests that the model below reflects the cognitive process that takes place inside the actor's mind before the fulfillment of the act.

It is assumed that all actions begin with either a stimulus as suggested by social exchange theorists or with an intention as suggested by social philosophers. Once the stimulus was experienced or the intention was made concrete in the imagination of the actor, the actor then enters a rhythmical pause that allows one to engage in an internal dialogue of cost and reward before making a choice or the

decision to act or abandon the initial stimulus or intention.

If the actor decides to pursue the stimulus, the actor is then confronted on one hand by the actor's capacity or frailty to access resources that will make the act possible and on the other hand is the actor's consideration for the enabling and limiting nature of social institutions manifested in one's values and preferences that are most of the time subject to collective approval.

Having considered the value of the act and the actor's social milieu, the actor then seeks to actualize the act that leads to the fulfillment of the stimulus or the intention.

Figure 1 shows the five stages of an act from a social exchange perspective. It renders a synthesis of how a being arrives at a decision for an action.

Some may argue that the foundations of human act may not be always rational. This research, however, suggests that the sociological *caesura* or the rational pause mentioned in the Figure 1 model presents an opportunity for the actor to render a quick calculation of the circumstances before actualizing a response.

Applied in this research, the model seeks to discover the elementary forms of social behavior and how a political actor maintains a balance of relationship in an informal network of rules, rewards, and punishments.

Conclusion

The cost and benefit analysis provides the basic model of human interaction both in the political or non-political domains. The data set revealed that the benefits derived from political interactions are two dimensional. There are rewards gained that are material and non-material benefits in nature

The costs of political participation extend from as manifest as the loss of life to as latent as the threats on the loss of personal space and time.

It appears that winning the election is the only occasion when rewards may be granted and shared among the participants.

On the other hand, actors are punished and rewards are taken back for incompetence and violating the laws of the land.

Recipients of political favors and benefits who failed to take seriously the rewards accumulated from the political interaction disrupts the organizational structure and may result to a crisis.

The failure to receive expected reward but

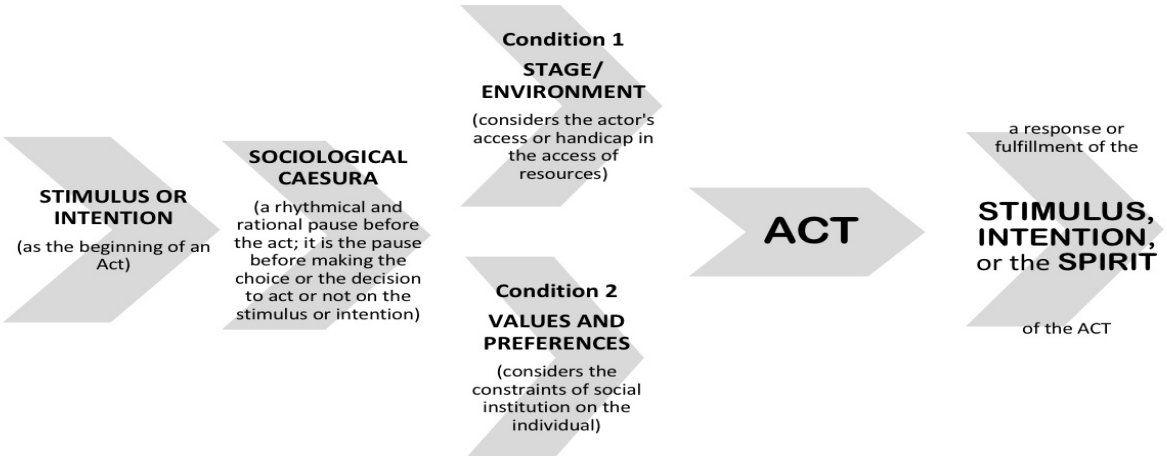


Figure 1. F. Rey's Integrative Model of an Act in Exchange Theory

instead receives an unexpected punishment appears to impact both the self and the social in a negative manner. Proving once again the sociological assertion that there is an inseparable bond between the two.

The over calculation of reward may appear to be harmless as it seeks to provided added gratification to the self. The amplification of benefits makes the self happy but at the same time negates meritocracy and may promotes patronage politics.

Finally, the political actor is always directed towards winning the next election.

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