

# **The Robredo Style: Philippine Local Politics in Transition**

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Politics in the Philippines has been a matter of patronage. The political elite solicits the support of the relatively powerful who draw strength from the individually powerless voters for assistance. In return, the former will reward the latter with the fruits of influence and whatever else that was agreed upon. This relationship of patronage is renewed during elections and is understood as the way the political system worked until the late President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law and did away with patronage politics. In its place came a more unilateral relationship which voided contracts with traditional power brokers. The Aquino administration facilitated the return of patronage politics but at the same time introduced a new breed of leaders. One such politician is Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo. Robredo consolidated popular support without the aid of mutually rewarding ties, a strong political machine or a monopoly of power. The manner in which he secured the maximum term of office and improved the lives of his constituents sets a new standard in governance. The author calls it the Robredo Style.

## **Introduction**

Local politics has been considered as one of the main areas of concern in Philippine politics. Several frameworks have been proposed, based on empirical researches since the 1960s. Each framework is attractive and persuasive because of the abundant field data. However, studies on local politics have their own limitations because of their very empirical nature. The peculiarity of an area which a researcher chooses is always involved, though he/she tries to construct a sort of general framework which could explain the patterns of local politics in the Philippines. Time factor should also be given attention. Changes in the socio-economic situation create a climate for changes of political leadership.

This paper intends neither to refute the previous frameworks nor construct an alternative general framework, but tries to explore some points which may have been missed out in their discussions. In order to do so, Naga City focusing on Mayor Jesse Robredo's administration is chosen as the case. There are several reasons for choosing Naga City, the main one being its urban setting. One important point which has been left out in the previous discussions is the impact of urbanization on local

politics. Although Naga City is still a small city, its urbanized situation is apparent. It is not so difficult to assume that urbanization transforms the political pattern as it does the socio-economic situation of both constituency and the political elite. Another reason for choosing Naga City is its so-called innovative political leader. The city has been continuously earning awards under the administration of Mayor Jesse Robredo. The previous frameworks did not consider the political leader's capability for governance as an important factor.<sup>1</sup> This aspect should be scrutinized as well.

### **Frameworks of Philippine Local Politics**

There are three dominant frameworks in the study of Philippine local politics: patron-client relationships, political machine, and patrimonialism/bossism.

#### ***Patron/Client Relationships***

The most dominant and traditional framework is the patron-client relationship. This framework emphasizes the reciprocal — dyadic — personal relations, instead of ideology, class and religion, as the main factor in the mobilization of political support. According to James Scott, the patron-client relationships is:

An exchange relationship between roles — may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patrons) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of Philippine local politics, the patron-client framework is combined with factionalism. Carl Lande discusses that:

The two rival parties in each province are structured by vertical chains of dyadic patron-client relationships extending from great and wealthy political leaders in each province down to lesser gentry politicians in the towns, down further to petty leaders in each village, and down finally to the clients of the latter: the ordinary peasantry.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, he points out that a local faction:

Is a loose combination of a number of such family constellations with a rather large and prosperous family constellation at its core and smaller or less prosperous ones at its periphery. Within each family constellation, a strong web of kinship ties binds related families together into a cohesive group. Between the allied constellations of the faction, a smaller number of dyadic ties — more commonly ties of marriage, *compadre* ties, or ties of patronship and clientship rather than ties of blood — create a lesser bond. Family constellations work in alliance with one another for varying periods of time due to the need to create combinations formidable enough to compete with some prospect of success in local elections or in other community prestige contests.<sup>4</sup>

Needless to say, this framework is constructed on the basis of a rural setting. The assumed patron here is landlord and the client is a tenant. The image of the set of political relations is vertical pyramid style.

### ***Political Machine***

As commercialization and social mobilization increased, scholars started to point out the transformation of the patron-client relationship. Some discuss it in the context of the breakdown of the patron-client relationship and the rise of social unrest.”<sup>5</sup> Others emphasize the emergence of the political machine, which is a more sophisticated mechanism of distribution of patronage. Kit Machado’s work is suggestive in this context. According to him:

The most evident change is that factions are losing their extra-political character and are being transformed into quite specialized political organizations. This reflects a change in the central element of the faction from an extended family or alliance of families into an electoral machine, composed of an individual leader and his followers, that has been built for specifically political purposes.<sup>6</sup>

Willem Wolters also points out that:

It is of course true that a large amount of government money was distributed along particularistic lines in the form of “patronage” during elections. But this patronage should not be confused with “patron-client” patronage. That is, the term “patronage” when applied to

political activities by politicians and political scientists refers to the distribution of favors by higher-level politicians, the so-called “pork-barrel funds.” This type of patronage is capable of being dispensed without recourse to patron-client relationships. Although the characteristics of patron-client relationships might well be discerned in many of the ties which bind higher-level politicians to lower-level ones, or local politicians to a handful of immediate supporters, in general the relationships between politicians and the electorate were short term, impersonal, instrumental and based on a specific transaction (if any). These relationships, if they may be called relationships at all, endured for a few weeks or months at most, and consequently were of a completely different nature than the multi-faced, dyadic relationships that linked landlords and tenants in “the good old days.”<sup>7</sup>

Political machine does not need a dyadic personal relationship. It is based on short-term, materialistic benefits. At the same time, political leaders’ socio-economic status has changed. In the patron-client relationship framework, they are landlords. But in the political machine framework, they are professional politicians.

### ***Patrimonialism/Bossism***

Although there are some differences, the patron-client relationship framework and the political machine framework share a common characteristic — the reciprocal relationship between politicians and between a politician and supporters. The patron-client relationship framework describes it as very personal and comprehensive. On the other hand, the political machine framework argues that the reciprocal relation is more limited to political purpose. Hence the short term arrangement.

But the patrimonialism/bossism framework does not consider the reciprocal relationship as an important factor. The relationship is rather unilateral. John Sidel defines that:

“Bosses,” ...refers to predatory power brokers who achieve monopolistic control over both coercive and economic resources within given territorial jurisdictions or bailiwicks (*balwarte*). Bosses thus include para-statal mafias, small-town mayors, provincial governors, congressmen, and even presidents. “Bossism,” ... alludes to that “sophisticated system of brigandage,” that interlocking, multi-tiered directorate of bosses whose

control over the state apparatus facilitates their exploitation of the archipelago's human and natural resources.”<sup>8</sup>

The existence of coercion and the role of state apparatus distinguish the patrimonialism/bossism framework from others. Coercion is the opposite of reciprocal relationships. Instead of patronage and loyalty, there exist intimidation and submission. Access to state apparatus, on the other hand, allows the elite to gain wealth and rule through coercion and violence. Such is not present in the patron-client relationship framework (and in a sense, the political machine framework) which sees the elite's socio-economic status as vital to their having opportunities to become political leaders.

The patrimonialism/bossism framework stresses the crucial role of violence, fraud, and vote buying, reducing it to a sophisticated academic translation of the more common term, “3Gs (Guns, Goons and Gold).”

### **Urbanization and Good Governance**

These frameworks have their own limitations. As the patrimonialism/bossism framework points out, the patron-client relationship and political machine frameworks neglect ties between elite and state apparatus. Furthermore, they cannot explain the existence of coercion.

Regarding the socio-economic background of politicians, the patron-client relationship framework has difficulty explaining the emergence of non-landlord politicians.

On the other hand, patrimonialism/bossism does not admit the significance of the existence and effectiveness of reciprocal relationships. This kind of relationship can be easily found among politicians and sometimes, even the most violence-inclined politicians give paternalistic benefits and protection to loyal supporters as a “patron.”

It should be noted also that the patron-client relationship and patrimonialism/bossism frameworks do not consider the time factor and changes in the socio-economic situation. It is as if local politics never changed since the time of Spanish colonization.

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The reality is that several frameworks can be found in one place. In some places, different types of political leadership appear one after another through the course of time. And besides, local politics in the Philippines is so diverse.

In the discussion of the above-mentioned frameworks, two factors were not cited. One is urbanization,<sup>9</sup> which dissolves traditional political and social relations which has been existing in rural areas. Economic activities shift from agriculture to commerce or manufacturing. A new urban poor emerges, totally different from tenants in rural areas. In addition, professionals (the so-called middle class) are becoming

defined as a social group, too. It must be remembered that almost half of the population in the Philippines reside in urban areas. Thus, the significance of dealing with the urban area factor should be recognized.

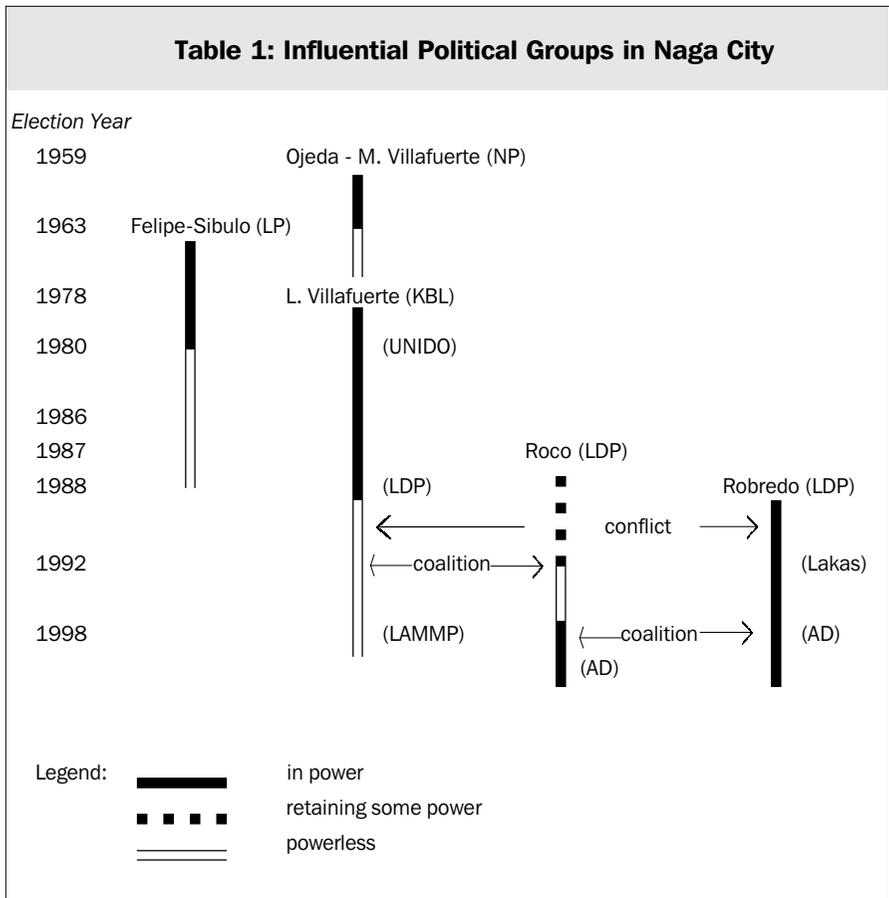
Another factor is the emergence of local politicians who are known primarily for good governance and integrity. Although, there are not so many of them, it is a remarkable trend. Aside from Mayor Robredo, the roster includes, Mayor Edward Hagedorn of Puerto Princesa City, Gov. Roberto Pangdanganan of Bulacan province, Mayor Eddie Dorotan of Irosin, Sorsogon province, Mayor Rosalita Nunes of Gen. Santos City, and Mayor Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City to name a few. Their emergence may be compatible with the previously cited frameworks, but, cannot be explained by them sufficiently, especially since they defeated politicians who were either patrons or bosses in their respective localities. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that most of them are from urban areas.

### **Political History of Naga City**

Naga City is one of the oldest Spanish settlements in the Philippines. It used to be called Nueva Caceres. Since then, Naga has been the center

of religion and education in the Bicol region. Naga City was the capital of Camarines Sur until it acquired its charter (R.A. 305) and became an independent city in 1948.

Today, Naga City is composed of 27 barangays and has 126,972 residents.<sup>10</sup> Among the 27 barangays, only five are called “upland barangays,” or rural areas. The others, whose population comprises 88% of the total population of Naga City, are considered as urban areas. The main industry in Naga is commerce.



### ***The Days of Landed Wealthy Families***

Naga City had appointed mayors from the enactment of its charter in 1948 up to 1959. The first elected mayor in 1959 is Nacionalista member Victorino Ojeda, a lawyer from a landed wealthy family.<sup>11</sup> (See Table 1 for the influential political groups in Naga.) His opponent was Ramon Felipe, Jr., who is also from one of the wealthiest landed families in Naga since Spanish time. Father Ramon Felipe, Sr. was a congressman for two terms (1922-28) and a governor for two terms (1928-34). Felipe Jr.'s wife is from the Abella family, considered the wealthiest of the wealthy in Naga.<sup>12</sup>

A topnotcher in the 1944 bar exams, Felipe, Jr. was able to win the next elections held in 1963 as the Liberal candidate, defeating incumbent Vice-mayor Mariano Villafuerte, Jr. (Nacionalista), who is also a son of a former congressman (1928-34) and governor (1942), Mariano Villafuerte, Sr.

When Felipe, Jr. ran for the congressional elections in 1965 and won, then Vice-Mayor Vicente Sibulo became mayor. Although Sibulo was also born in Naga, he is a bit different from his predecessors. His father, Pablo Sibulo, migrated from Muntinlupa and gained a high status in Naga not with inherited wealth, but through the legal profession. Vicente Sibulo's mother is from the prominent Prado family in the neighboring municipality, Camaligan. Like his father, Vicente Sibulo is a lawyer. He was city fiscal before becoming the vice-mayor.<sup>13</sup>

Sibulo was the mayor for 14 years until he was removed by former President Ferdinand Marcos in December 1979. He was elected as mayor in 1967 and 1971. His vice-mayor was Felipe, Jr.'s sister, Virginia Felipe-Perez, a pharmacist. Sibulo is remembered as a development-oriented administrator. He employed his cousin, Pit Prado, a technocrat, as his consultant. The public market in Naga was built during Sibulo's term.

### ***A Boss Backed by the State***

Naga was under the governance of the Sibulo-Felipe tandem from 1963 until 1972, when Martial Law was declared, after which, Luis Villafuerte emerged as a political kingpin not only of Naga, but also of the entire Bicol region. Villafuerte's father Mariano Sr. was ambushed and

killed in 1942 by anti-Japanese guerrillas for his alleged collaboration during the Occupation. Since then, the Villafuerte family's political power in Naga waned, though Luis's elder brother Mariano Villafuerte, Jr. became at one time vice-mayor. Luis Villafuerte's rise was facilitated by President Marcos who took notice of the then corporate lawyer. With the support of the late strongman, Villafuerte won a seat in the Interim Batasan Pambansa in 1978. In 1979 he was appointed Minister of Trade.

The nationally prominent Villafuerte tried to build his political clout in local politics, especially in Naga City and Camarines Sur province. In Naga City, his opponent was Mayor Sibulo who survived martial rule by joining the administration party, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL). Not one to yield to Marcos, Sibulo was not a member of the "favored few" and was removed from his position just one month before the local elections in 1980. Villafuerte recommended his henchman, Carlos del Castillo to the position. Del Castillo was not from the elite families, though his father was a municipal board member once. He started as a member of the police force and after passing bar exams became city fiscal. Before he became Villafuerte's choice, he served as city councilor for one term. Del Castillo became mayor along with his KBL candidates for vice-mayor and councilors. Their opponents were Ramon Felipe and Sibulo's wife who ran for mayor and vice-mayor respectively but lost through massive disenfranchisement and other forms of electoral fraud that were allegedly committed in the elections.

Just before the 1984 Batasan Pambansa elections, Villafuerte defected to United Democratic Organization (UNIDO). Already displaced from the post of Trade Minister in 1981 it was rumored that he lost his place in the inner circle of Marcos. But his defection later strengthened his political position. Winning the congressional post, Villafuerte gained further prominence when the Marcos regime was toppled and Corazon Aquino took over the presidency in 1986. Villafuerte was already a key person in UNIDO at that time. President Aquino appointed him as Chairman of Presidential Commission on Government Reorganization and then Officer-in-Charge Governor of Camarines Sur.<sup>14</sup>

Villafuerte saw his nephew Jesse Robredo as a future mayor of Naga City.<sup>15</sup> The young Robredo found himself appointed as Program Director

of the Bicol River Basin Development Program (BRBDP), a governmental planning agency for the development of the Bicol region.

Robredo is from a family of Chinese businessmen engaged in lumber and trading in Naga City. After completing Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Management Engineering courses at the De La Salle University, he joined the San Miguel Corporation as head of the logistics division. Before assuming directorship of the BRBDP he earned his masters degree in Business Administration from the University of the Philippines. He was only 28 years old.

In 1988, the Villafuerte-backed Robredo ran for mayor under the ticket of Lakas ng Bansa, which would later merge with other parties to form the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP). Robredo's opponent then was lawyer Ramon Roco, Senator Raul Roco's younger brother. Roco was a member of an anti-Villafuerte coalition in Camarines Sur and Naga City.<sup>16</sup>

The Roco family was not a major political force in Naga City. It gained recognition only after Raul threw his hat into the political arena, especially when he was elected as a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention. In 1987, Raul ran in the 2nd district of Camarines Sur (Naga City and nine other neighboring municipalities) against former Vice-Mayor Virginia Felipe-Perez. By this time, Naga City had two political factions, Villafuerte and Roco (or the anti-Villafuerte group). Villafuerte supported Felipe-Perez while the Sibulo group supported Roco. Felipe, Jr. kept his distance from the Naga City elections, being Chairman of the Commission on Elections (Comelec). The race was tight but Roco eventually won a seat in the House of Representatives.<sup>17</sup>

Another Villafuerte-Roco confrontation took place the following year when Robredo and Ramon Roco fought for Naga City's highest office. Robredo secured victory with a small margin of 947 votes. Robredo's vice-mayor candidate Dr. Lourdes Asence was elected but eight among 10 seats in the city council were occupied by the Roco group. The 1988 elections proved to be a turning point in the city's political history as the old families were slowly disappearing from the political arena. Vicente Sibulo's nephew, Mariano Sibulo and again, Virginia Felipe-Perez took part in the mayoralty race but found very little support from the voters.

### ***Rise of a New Politician***

When Robredo became mayor, Villafuerte was elected as governor of Camarines. Though the congressional seat was held by Roco, Villafuerte, not Robredo, possessed greater influence in Naga City. The predicted collision between Robredo started when Villafuerte tried to override Robredo's own style of management and administration of the city.<sup>18</sup> *Jueteng*, an illegal numbers game, was also a major source of conflict. The involvement of one of Villafuerte's son in *jueteng* operations was an open secret<sup>19</sup> and the mayor was anti-gambling.<sup>20</sup> The resulting rift created a three-way power struggle between Robredo, Villafuerte and Roco.

The 1992 elections saw the birth of a Villafuerte-Roco coalition. Villafuerte sought re-election for governorship, while Roco aimed for a trip to the Senate. In Naga City, Villafuerte fielded his elder sister, Pura Luisa V. Magtuto, in the mayoralty race under the LDP ticket along with Roco's city councilors. Meanwhile, Robredo found himself ousted from the LDP due to his differences with Villafuerte but later decided to join future president Fidel Ramos' Lakas-NUCD as a founding member. The decision proved crucial as the Villafuerte group claimed Robredo was not a Filipino citizen and therefore unqualified for the post. Robredo needed an ally for this post election controversy.<sup>21</sup>

The 1992 elections in Naga City turned into a cash war with the Villafuerte camp setting up an incorporeal organization, "*Bunyog Banuaan*" (unity of a town), which provided loans on the condition that if Magtuto won, the recipients need not honor their debts. Aside from this, massive vote buying was carried out.<sup>22</sup> Robredo's pockets were not as deep but he was able to rely on local organizations and government institutions. The result was a landslide victory for Robredo. Not only did he win re-election by a big margin (33,487 votes to Magtuto's 9,056 votes), but also his vice-mayor and councilors swept the polls. Meanwhile, Villafuerte lost his bid for another term as governor. In 1995, Robredo ran uncontested and his ticket soundly defeated Villafuerte's bets.

In 1998, Robredo was barred from seeking a third consecutive term due to the constitutional limitation for local positions. As his uncle anointed him, Robredo adopted Sulpicio "Cho" Roco, Jr, consultant for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as his successor and formed a new coalition. For the Camarines Sur 2nd district

congressional race, Robredo endorsed the candidacy of progressive city councilor, James Jacob. Villafuerte positioned his son Luis Raymund "L-Ray" Villafuerte Jr. against Roco, and another son Mariano Jose "Bong" Villafuerte III against Jacob. As in the previous elections, Villafuerte rode on vote buying while Robredo leaned on organizations for support.<sup>29</sup> The result was also the same; Robredo vanquished Villafuerte.

### Political Leaders

Who are the political leaders in Naga City? The profiles of political leaders give a clue to analysis of local politics.

#### Mayors

While their family backgrounds differ, all of the mayors were born in Naga City. Victorino Ojeda (1959-1963) and Ramon Felipe (1963-1965) are from old landed wealthy families. Sibulo (1965-1979) is from a professional family which was not originally from the region. Carlos Del Castillo (1979-1988), is also from a middle class family. Robredo's parents were not landowners. Hence, after Sibulo, it seems landed elite found the door closed to politics. This tendency is more obvious among city councilors. Regarding their occupations, there is a shift from lawyers (Ojeda, Felipe, Sibulo, Del Castillo) to management experts (Robredo, Roco) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Background of Mayors**

<i>Mayors</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
Victorino Ojeda	1959-63	Landed	Naga	LIB	Lawyer
Ramon Felipe	1963-65	Landed	Naga	LIB	Lawyer
Vicente Sibulo	1965-79	Professional	Naga	LIB	Lawyer
Carlos del Castillo	1979-88	n.a.	Naga	LIB	Police/Lawyer
Jesse Robredo	1988-98	Business	Naga	MBA	Business Exec.
Sulpicio Roco	1998-	Agriculture	Naga	MA Anthropology	Consultant

Although it is not stated in the table, all Naga City mayors have a politician kin. Ojeda, Felipe, del Castillo have fathers who were political leaders (although del Castillo's father was only municipal board member). Sibulo's father was also active in politics and his elder brother, Ramon, was once appointed mayor of Naga City. And then, of course, Villafuerte is Robredo's distant uncle. Also, except for del Castillo, most of the mayors did not previously occupy the position of city councilor. Mobility between mayor and city councilor is low.

### **City Councilors**

Regarding socio-economic status, most of the city councilors belong to the middle class (more specifically the upper middle through the author's observation). Among three councilors classified as A and B, only one is involved in business; the other two are professionals. An examination of occupations reveals that almost all of them are professionals such as lawyers, medical doctors, and government employees. There are two ex-barangay captains, but one of them is a lawyer. Another one was Association of Barangay Captains chairperson before she was elected, meaning she was an *ex officio* member of the city council even before she got an elective position. Considering this, the mobility between city councilors and barangay officials is not noticeable.

With respect to birth places, surprisingly, only three of them are from Naga. Actually, among the three Naga-born councilors, only one has parents who are natives of Naga. The other two migrated from other municipalities. It is also noteworthy that they are not related to any politician in Naga City, though almost half of them have politicians as their kin in other places. Generally, city councilors in Naga City are professionals belonging to middle class, and owe their status as city councilor to their own capacity, not to kinship. One cannot find anybody from traditional landed wealthy families among city councilors. Furthermore, except for one councilor, representatives of the business elite cannot be found either.

### **Barangay Captains**

The background of 27 barangay captains are summarized in Table 3. As compared with mayors and city councilors, barangay captains belong to lower socio-economic groups. Nevertheless, those who belong to classes D and E are not necessarily from barangays of urban poor areas.

Some barangays even have subdivisions where a middle class population reside. Therefore, it is clear that people from middle and rich classes are not interested in barangay matters.

**Table 3: Background of Barangay Captains**

<i>Age</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Socio-economic status*</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>No.</i>
20-30	1	A & B	3	Naga	17
30-40	4	C	7	Outside Naga	10
40-50	11	D	7		
50-60	9	E	10		
60-70	2				

<i>Education</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>No.**</i>	<i>Politicians in Kin***</i>	<i>No.</i>
Elementary	5	Engineer	3	Yes, in Naga	3
High School	2	Gov't. employee	2	Yes, outside	0
Undergraduate	8	Teacher	2	None	24
College graduate	11	Nurse	1		
Units in Masters	1	Business (own)	11		
		Company employee	4		
		Agriculture	4		
		Barangay official only	1		
		Driver	1		
		Housewife	1		
		Barangay tanod	1		
		Barangay health worker	1		

\* Criteria are same as Table 2

\*\* Usually, one has several occupations. Occupations before being elected captain are also counted. Some captains are not involved in the occupations above as of interview.

\*\*\* Including barangay captain level

Among the barangay captains few are professionals and many are involved in small business. In addition to this, 13 out of 27 Naga City barangay captains have no occupations other than their elective posts. They either resigned or retired from jobs they previously held. This shows that the benefits derived from the post can sustain their households. It is facilitated by the increase of local autonomy under the 1991 Local Government Code.

Regarding birth places, not a few barangay captains are from outside Naga. This indicates that barangay captains are elected based on their personal capacity (like city councilors) and not by kinship. This argument is also augmented by the data that show only a few barangay captains having politicians as their kin.

Meanwhile, 15 out of the 27 barangay captains experienced the position of barangay *kagawad* before being elected as captain. The mobility among barangay officials is high.

### **The Robredo Style 1: City Governance and Organizations**

There are several aspects which cannot be explained by previous frameworks. In order to avoid simplification of the actual dynamism, this paper does not adopt a key word to describe Robredo's political style. This paper simply refers to his manner of political mobilization as the Robredo Style.

Robredo was able to institutionalize organizations of residents by sectors, and incorporate them into the public services and city governance. This is his most remarkable accomplishment. The highly institutionalized organizations work as (1) a system to provide benefits to residents as part of public service, (2) an instrument to maintain ward leader<sup>24</sup> loyal to and active in the Robredo administration, and lastly (3) a mechanism to gather information. Then, in order to take care of the organizations, Robredo set up some offices in the city government. These offices facilitate the activities of organizations and provide several kinds of assistance to the members thereof.

### ***Lingkod Barangay Office and Organizations***

After assuming the mayorship in 1988, Robredo started building his own organizations. The existing ones were organized either by Villafuerte or his henchman del Castillo. But as confrontation with Villafuerte became inevitable, it became imperative for him to have his own network. Robredo regularly roamed the city after office hours and tried to establish contact and build personal relationships with ward leaders. Aside from former Villafuerte's leaders, he also tried to absorb Roco's leaders.

The previous mayors' style of maintaining ward leaders in Naga was neither well institutionalized nor organized. A political leader has to meet with each ward leader personally, and ask for mobilization assistance during an election period. Robredo realized the difficulties that come with dealing with each leader, especially with their respective "requests," but kept close personal contact with them. Having organized them, Robredo allowed the leaders to coordinate among themselves and at the same time, set up their counterparts in the city government.<sup>25</sup>

The first organizations were *Lakas ng Kababaihan* and the Barangay People's Organization. *Lakas ng Kababaihan* is a women's organization, which was organized by Robredo's wife, Maria Leonor in 1989, and formalized just before the 1992 elections. The original membership of 5,000 has swelled to more than 15,000. The Barangay People's Organization started as the Barangay Precinct Organization in 1988, a group of election precinct watchers. Robredo had 10 watchers in each precinct and Naga had 321 precincts in 1992. It began with about 3,200 members active only during election time. In 1995, it was reorganized into the Barangay People's Foundation and with livelihood projects among its activities, increased its membership to 6,000. Many of the members of *Lakas ng Kababaihan* also belong to Barangay People's Organization, and they sometimes belong to other sector-based organizations.

In 1992, the *Lingkod Barangay Office* was created to take care of these organizations, and taking over the function of the Office of the Mayor regarding organizations. Table 4 lists the organizations handled by the *Lingkod Barangay Office*. Its functions can be summarized as follows. During non-election time, it (1) organizes and maintains organizations by facilitating the programs of each like induction, festival occasions, etc.;

**Table 4: Organizations Handled by Lingkod Barangay Office  
(as of 1997)**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Founded</i>
Lakas ng Kababaihan ng Naga Federation	15,000	1989
Lakas ng Kababaihan Cooperative	5,000	n.a.
Senior Citizens League	10,000	1990
Naga City Youth Federation	3,000	1993
Rabuz Naga (zonal beautification group)	n.a.	1994
Barangay People's Foundation*	6,000	1995
Padyak Operators & Drivers Association	2,000	1993
Trimobile Operators & Drivers Association	4,500	1994
Karatela Association	150	1993
Market Stallholders Federation	6,000	1960
Metro Naga Vendors Federation	1,000	1995
Vegetable Planters Federation	4,000	1993
*Formerly known as Barangay People's Organization founded 1988		
Source: Lingkod Barangay Office		

and (2) accepts and provides members' request for assistance to them. If the Lingkod Barangay Office itself cannot do this, it refers the requests to the concerned department of the city government. Most of these requests are so-called "indigent services" like medicine, medical check-up, and funeral support. During election time it mobilizes organizations for the support of administration, detects and solves the problems of leaders in the organizations, sets the administration candidates' schedule of campaigning; gets feedback from members regarding the response of residents towards city government and broadens the mass base by recruiting new active ward leaders who transferred from other places or reached legal age.

Most of the members of the organizations are from the lower income groups. They are the ones who need the city government's public service the most. Women are more committed to the activities of organizations than men and play a more crucial role in mobilization at the ward level.<sup>26</sup>

### ***The Urban Poor Affairs***

Like in other urban centers, Naga has a huge urban poor population. According to the city government, as of 1989, there are 5,500 families regarded as squatters and slum dwellers in Naga City. They comprise about 25 percent of the city population.<sup>27</sup> As early as 1986, a non-government organization known as the COPE Foundation arrived in Naga City and started organizing the urban poor. Although it was able to achieve some success in organizing some residents, it had to face uncooperative, or sometimes antagonistic reaction from the del Castillo administration. It was only when Robredo assumed the mayorship that the city government became more supportive. Working together with Robredo, urban poor organizations were established and provided assistance to the residents, especially regarding land acquisition. In 1989, the city government set up the Urban Poor Affairs Office (UPAO) to respond to the needs of urban poor residents. The membership of Naga City Urban Poor Federation, which was founded in 1986, grew from nine urban poor communities to more than 70 member organizations during the Robredo administration.<sup>28</sup>

UPAO is different from Lingkod Barangay Office because it does not initiate organizing. There is a so-called tripartite approach based on the cooperation of the city government, NGOs and People's Organizations. Hence, the office has less political color. But UPAO's projects have tremendous impact on the perspective of the urban poor towards the city government. By cooperating in organizing urban poor residents, their demands became clear and it became easier for the city government to respond as shown by the visible benefits it has provided to urban poor residents. During the period from 1989 to 1997, the city government disposed a total of 49.6 hectares of private- and government-owned lands to a total of 4,668 urban poor families.<sup>29</sup> Robredo's policy towards urban poor was well appreciated.<sup>30</sup> This situation prepares the foundation for mobilization by organizations handled by Lingkod Barangay Office.

### ***DOLECOM***

The Development Office for Livelihood, Employment, Cooperatives and Manpower (DOLECOM) was formally established in 1992, but its functions were handled by the City Planning and Development Office

**Table 5: Livelihood Loans Released by DOLECOM**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount Released</i>	<i>Collection</i>	<i>Efficiency(%)</i>	<i>Beneficieries</i>
1990	P 108,000	n.a.	n.a.	127
1991	638,000	P44,253	6	1,009
1992	531,900	79,725	14	1,063
1993	2,036,625	676,522	33	1,063
1994	3,753,202	1,394,613	37	2,261
1995	4,376,500	2,257,465	51	2,824
1996	3,526,125	2,499,660	70	2,843

*Source: DOLECOM 1997 Updated Office Briefer*

since 1988. Among its functions, providing livelihood programs is the most significant as it plays a crucial role in Robredo's organizations.<sup>31</sup>

A loan of up to P15,000<sup>32</sup> can be availed of by individual at an interest rate of 1 percent per month, without collateral. Majority of the clients own small businesses. Most of them are walk-in clients, and some are referred by other offices like Lingkod Barangay Office and the Mayor's Office. DOLECOM also provides loans to livelihood projects of *Lakas ng Kababaihan*.

However, it must be emphasized that DOLECOM was not created for any political purpose.<sup>33</sup> This kind of public service is badly needed by the residents of Naga considering their present situation. A livelihood program is the most important concern and its lending policy is a great relief to those who cannot avail of loans from private financial institutions. DOLECOM also performs well as a financial institution since it was able to collect payments from 70 percent of its clients in 1996 (Table 5).

### **City Social Welfare Office**

The field office of Department of Social Welfare and Development transferred to the city government under the scheme of devolution as

provided for by the 1991 Local Government Code. Like DOLECOM it provides assistance to Robredo's organizations.

As mentioned above, the so-called indigent assistance is indispensable to maintain organizations. The City Social Welfare Office handles 70 cases, and releases P10,000 per month on the average. Indigent assistance is mainly composed of providing free medicine and funeral support. These two are most in demand, and therefore appreciated by the low income class. Most of the cases are referred by Lingkod Barangay Office and some city officials like the mayor and city councilors.<sup>34</sup> The budget for the indigent assistance comprises 58 percent of the budget of the office excluding personal services.<sup>35</sup>

### **Robredo Style 2: Performance and Approachability**

The Robredo style has both hard and soft aspects. The hard aspect involves the incorporation of organizations in the city government while the soft aspect pertains to the resident's perception of Robredo's performance and personal character. Through interviews with 27 barangay captains and 28 ward leaders (leaders of Lakas ng Kababaihan and Barangay People's Foundation), two expressions emerged as reasons for supporting Robredo in their discourses. One is "*Maganda ang pamamalakad niya,*" and another is "*Madali siyang lapitan.*"<sup>36</sup> These are interpreted as "good performance" and "approachability," respectively.<sup>37</sup>

#### ***Performance of Mayor/City Government***

There is no question about the good performance of the Robredo administration.<sup>38</sup> Numerous innovations and projects were implemented during Robredo's terms. Actually, Robredo had already prepared a development scheme for Naga City even before running for mayor. His last project as BRBDP director was the development planning of Naga City.<sup>39</sup> He also brought with him some technocrats from BRBDP specifically to plan and implement the development scheme.

Robredo summarized his three terms as follows:

First term was basically building the foundations for the city hall. We did not have enough money, but we told ourselves that we should build the right attitude as far as people are concerned. And during my first term

it was a learning period. We focused on what is the most important for the people of the city. During my second term, we had access to more resources. We focused more on infrastructure building. All the roads in the city were paved except those going to the mountains. We built new schools... hand in hand with this is our constituency from the urban poor. We have one of the strongest urban poor...in the country. My third term focuses on sustaining development in the city. We are more open on quality rather than getting everything. We have defined our role in relation to other towns and the city. We've defined our role in relation to the development of the region. So, we are focusing more on banking service. We are focusing on quality education, we are focusing on preventive health care. We are taking a look at cleaning the rivers, improving the sewage management. These things are more on creating a healthy environment, a high quality of life rather than just the purpose of having.<sup>40</sup>

However, there are some questions about the content of “good performance” and, moreover, “development.” There are varying perceptions toward these depending on the individual’s socio-economic class. Generally, the middle class tends to look at performance in terms of integrity of governance (no graft and corruption), public safety (peace and order situation), and increase of investments in the city. But, lower income class takes performance as cementing roads, or several kinds of assistance being provided by the city government.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, Robredo’s administration was able to show performance in both contexts. It may be pointed out that some of the business elite in the city are not contented with Robredo’s administration. The main issue is tax.<sup>42</sup>

Although the tax rate was not increased, the amount of tax, especially real property tax, increased because the market value of land went up along with Naga’s booming economy. Regarding the differences of perception according to class, Robredo himself explains:

Most of the middle class are professionals. I guess, they are to a certain point are happy with what we are doing. That is my gauge basically. Normally, during election time, we do not campaign in the subdivisions. The reason why we do that is because these people have made up their minds. They hardly care. What is important to them is I collect garbage, pave the streets, provide lights and other facilities. What is important to them is they see their taxes are well spent. So, we hardly campaign

**Table 6: Revenue and Expenditures**

Year	Cash Inflow	Increase	Cash Outflow	Administration
1977	P 6,844,720.72		P 6,084,364.94	Sibulo
1980	16,194,605.58		11,631,643.97	1st year of del Castillo
1987	19,254,111.62	18.9%	20,203,764.49	last year of del Castillo
1988	25,213,484.46		23,203,746.49	1st year of Robredo
1991	60,964,191.89	141.8%	59,897,837.52	Naga returned to 1st class city
1993	126,344,646.26	107.2%	107,982,744.62	Increase of IRA by LGC
1996	188,845,116.48		177,950,634.17	

Source: City Planning and Development Office, *Naga City Statistical Profile*, n.d.

in the subdivision but we get normally 80 to 90 percent of their vote. But there are big businessmen in the city who are not happy with me personally. Because you know, we have always insisted, since 1988, that people should pay taxes. And whether you like it or not, we will do it. Some people are very happy with us. And again, it's a matter of choice. Whether we allow them to cheat the government, or we make them unhappy. But we get the results we want. Basically the principle in taxing them is a means of transferring wealth. They have taken advantage of the growth of the city. If there is one group who benefitted from the economic developments in the city, it's basically the businessmen. So, we are saying that you have an obligation to return to the constituents the benefits of taxes.<sup>43</sup>

Discussing performance, the increase of revenue is regarded as Robredo's first achievement. When Robredo assumed his post, Naga City was a third class city in terms of revenue. He improved the tax collection system including a stricter assessment of the tax base. Before the implementation of the 1991 Local Government Code, Naga was able to improve to the status of a first class city. As Table 6 shows, the city government's revenue drastically increased from 1988 to 1991.

The increase of investment is also noteworthy. Although such increase cannot be solely attributed to the governance of Robredo since the activities of the private sector also contributed to this, the cooperative attitude of the city government provided a conducive atmosphere for the increase. Proof of this is the increase in the number of business establishments in Naga City from 2,397 in 1988 to 4,710 in 1997.<sup>44</sup>

Improvements in road construction were very visible. Table 7 shows the road inventory, and it can be seen that the number of concrete roads significantly increased during Robredo's administration. The cement-paved paths in urban poor areas are especially appreciated by slum residents to whom a cemented road is almost synonymous to development.

Aside from these, there are countless award winning projects like the "Productivity Improvement Program," a scheme designed to improve effectiveness of management of the city government; "Government Computerization Program," "Metro Naga Development Council,"

**Table 7: Road Inventory (in kms)**

Type	1977	%	1987	%	1996	%
Concrete	20.121	14	36.174	23	114.850	71
Asphalt	42.968	31	61.935	40	20.225	12
Gravel	49.482	36	53.882	35	20.442	12
Unsurfaced	25.766	19	3.348	2	8.553	5
Total	138.337	100	155.879	100	164.070	100

Source: Naga City Government, *Restoring Pride in the Nagueño, The State of the City Report*, n.d.

“Emergency Rescue Naga,” and “*Naga Kaantabay sa Kauswagan*,” a housing and urban development project. These projects might not be easily recognized by ordinary residents, but the awards they received are indicative of the capability of the Robredo administration. Among the ward leaders the honors that easily come to mind include “The Outstanding Young Persons (TOYP) of the World” given by the Junior Jaycees International in 1994 and “Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of the Philippines” given by the Junior Jaycees Philippines in 1991.<sup>45</sup>

Robredo does not ignore the significance of awards. He formed a “propaganda group” from members of the BRBDP and local media. They prepared articles about these awards, and sent them to the national media. This “propaganda group” played a very crucial role during elections as well. They drew strategies to counter opponents’ black propaganda and misinformation campaign.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Approachability***

Robredo is often seen in a T-shirt and shorts at the city hall. One does not need to make an appointment to see him. The process of meeting the mayor involves entering his room and waiting for one’s turn. Robredo walks the street like a normal resident and plays basketball with the children. These help make people see Robredo as a very approachable mayor. Past mayors were not as open to contact. One ward leader recalls the time when she wanted to talk to Mayor Sibulo, she was only allowed to talk to his driver. Another ward leader said Mayor del Castillo always wore *barong tagalog* and never met with people who did not have an appointment. There is a talk going around that Ms. Magtuto during her failed bid in the 1992 elections washed her hands with alcohol after shaking hands with residents.

Approachability is closely related with organizing people, especially people from the lower income class. On this Robredo said:

We are one of the best organized. I guess, our secret really is not just our performance, I think it's the organization. Although we do perform well, without a good organization I can not win a straight ticket.<sup>47</sup>

Adding:

You know I put a lot of time on it (organization). I never refuse any invitations. If I'm alone, I pay visits. I suppose the advantage of being like this is that people can approach you and just tell you anything. I can joke with young people. I enjoy talking to anybody. In fact, sometimes my meetings extend beyond what is necessary. And most of these are small talk only. Let's say for instance, the official agenda should cover only 30 minutes. But sometimes for more than an hour you are talking nonsense already. It's just an exchange of banter. And people like it, I guess. I have been to the farthest place in the city. I've been to a place where no other mayor has been. In fact, my only constraint right now is that I got a lot of assignments. I hold a lot of positions. So, this, to a certain extent, controls my schedule. But, if not for that, almost every night, I am out.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The study of local politics in Naga indicates the following points.

Firstly, there has been a change in the city's leaders, particularly their background. From the 1960s to the 1970s, leaders came from the old landed wealthy families (Ojeda, Felipe). In the 1980s, there emerged a leader (Villafuerte) backed by state power and utilized the relations with Malacañang to achieve political success and employed fraudulent means to stay in power. This same leader hung on to power despite the fall of his original benefactor by allying himself with the new regime. But with Robredo, came the dawn of a new leadership. Not dependent on wealth or state influence, Robredo introduced a new political framework. The administrations of Ojeda, Felipe and Sibulo may be explained by the patron-client framework. On the other hand, Villafuerte may fit the framework of patrimonialism/bossism. Robredo came in with a political machine factor, but has several attributes which have been missed by previous frameworks like good performance and approachability. At any rate, what should be emphasized here is that there is no framework covering all the past leaders in Naga. The political styles shifted as leaders changed. However, there are some similarities among them. One, most of the leaders have influential politicians in their kin. Two, some of them have development-oriented tendencies regardless of their socio-economic origin. Felipe was a lawyer who later became Minority Floor Leader of the House of Representatives and Comelec Chairman. Sibulo devised a development scheme and built the public market. Villafuerte was a

successful lawyer in the field of investment banking. Naga was accustomed to capable administrators, and this worked when Robredo came in the political arena.<sup>49</sup>

Secondly, there is separation of economic and political elite in the city. Robredo comes from a Chinese business family that was not part of the dominant business elite. Almost all of the city councilors are professionals from the middle class, except for one who comes from a rich business family. This situation was not implied in previous frameworks. In Naga, there are roughly two types of economic elite. One depends on the leasing of land in the commercial area, while the other is basically involved in commerce, like trading and retail. The former includes the Abella, Felipe, Diaz, Jimenez, and Sison families, mostly of Spanish descent. The latter includes the Tan, Enrile, Lee, Sia, Biedo, Prieto, Bichara, Ohvan families, mostly Chinese. In terms of the number, the latter is more than the former. The De Guzman family is also prosperous, but it is neither Spanish nor Chinese.<sup>50</sup> This rich class is not directly involved in politics nowadays or even if they ran for elective positions, they do not win on the basis of their socio-economic status alone.<sup>51</sup>

Thirdly, with regard to the birth place of political leaders, while all mayors were born in Naga, most of the city councilors and many of the barangay captains are from other places. Even among the ward leaders who were interviewed, 17 out of 28 are from outside of Naga. This shows that kinship is not a crucial factor in mobilization. Needless to say, this situation is created because of Naga's urban setting, especially, the migration of population. But the fact that all mayors have politicians as kin indicates that it is necessary or, at least an advantage to do so in order to win the mayorship. On the contrary, city councilors and barangay captains do not need this factor as shown in the data. This discrepancy regarding politicians as kin between mayors and city councilors/barangay captains can be explained by the low mobility of mayor and city councilors/barangay captains. No mayor, except for del Castillo, experienced being city councilor. It implies that there are different standards or criteria in electing a mayor and city councilor. This is also observed in the case of city councilors and barangay captains.

Fourthly, Robredo's style is composed of mainly two aspects, namely performance and approachability. There is no doubt that the organizations and the city government's support are the main pillars of Robredo's

political mobilization. The question is whether these organizations are political machines. Basically, they are. Organizations work as routes to distribute patronage to ward leaders and residents in a sense, and members are required to be loyal to the Robredo administration. In addition to this, the fact that the members are mostly urban poor is a typical feature of the machine like the one which appeared in urban cities of the U.S. They are not civic groups, definitely. But there should be a reservation in the discussion. It should be noted that there is no corruption. Members of the organizations are provided formal public services, not private favors. As regards the services, even non-members can avail of them. On the other hand, if the qualification required for receiving the benefits are not satisfied, even members cannot enjoy the services.<sup>52</sup> The difference between members and non-members is that the members have easier access to the city government, since they already have connections. Moreover, the provided services must meet the needs of the constituency as public policy. If this is seen from the view point of public administration, utilizing residents' organization is the effective way to provide public services to people, rather than dealing with them individually. Demands become clearer and more organized within the organizations. Most importantly, Robredo basically does not allow benefits to be doled out. Although there are indigent services, others like livelihood loans and land acquisition are not provided for free. In short, Robredo's organizations have two aspects, one as a political machine, and another as an instrument of effective public administration.

Fifthly, the perplexing aspect of the Robredo style is the perception of residents toward performance and personality, and its impact on political mobilization. In the first place, the problem with this aspect is consciousness. Hence, it is not easy to prove the causal relationship between their perceptions and political mobilization. The expressions of *"Maganda ang pamamalakad niya"* and *"Madali siyang lapitan"* are almost fixed expressions. Through the interviews, it appears that ward leaders do not have abundant vocabulary to describe their perceptions. So, there is a certain limitation to the discussion on residents' behavior which is merely based on some expressions found in their discourses. However, in the case of Robredo, it is easily proved that he has good performance and approachability as shown above. So, the probability that these two factors motivate residents to support Robredo is quite high. In addition, the previous mayors are not as good as Robredo in these

aspects, therefore, performance and approachability distinguish him from others.

The second question is that even good performance and approachability eventually provide material benefits. Good performance elevates the standard of the residents' life, and approachability makes residents' access to resources easier. On that account, it is possible to discuss that political mobilization is attained by means of materialistic benefits, not by idealistic admiration, in the end. This issue has to be scrutinized further. Nevertheless it is clear that the residents prefer the long term benefits provided as public services to short term benefits like money and goods provided as vote buying activities during the election period. In other words, residents know that the former benefits are more substantial than the latter. Here, it should be emphasized that this situation was not created by residents' spontaneous awareness, but by Robredo's initiative and determination. In short, Robredo performed and people learned.

Robredo's style is successful in the circumstances shown above, and in more general terms, within the urban setting. At the same time, Robredo's style has complex feature in itself which cannot be explained by previous frameworks. There is a complicated web of causal relations. Deliberate study is still needed in the field of local politics. ❁

## Endnotes

- 1 But some have already pointed out the significance of moral appeals. See Mark M. Turner, "Politics During the Transition in Zamboanga City, 1984-1988," in Benedict J. Kerkvliet and Resil B. Mojares eds., *From Marcos to Aquino: Local Perspectives on Political Transition in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), pp. 13-35; Mark R. Thompson, *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp.29-32.
- 2 James Scott, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 66, No.1, March 1972, p.32.
- 3 Carl Lande, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: The Structure of Philippine Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1965), p. 2.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 5 Thomas C. Norwak and Kay A. Snyder, "Clientist Politics in the Philippines: Integration or Stability?" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 68, No. 3, September 1974; and Thomas C. Norwak and Kay Snyder, "Economic Concentration and Political Change in the Philippines," in Benedict J. Kerkvliet ed., *Political Change in the Philippines: Studies of Local Politics Preceding Martial Law* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1974).
- 6 K. G. Machado, "Changing Aspects of Factionalism in Philippine Local Politics," *Asian Survey*, No. 11, December 1971, p.1183.
- 7 Willem Wolters, *Politics, Patronage and Class Conflict in Central Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984), pp. 198-199.
- 8 John Thayer Sidel, *Coercion, Capital, and The Post-Colonial State: Bossism in The Postwar Philippines*, Ph. D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1995, pp.42-43.
- 9 Though Sidel deals with Cebu City as one of the cases in his dissertation (Sidel, *Coercion, Capital and the Post-Colonial State*, pp. 137-221). On the other hand, the political machine framework recognizes the importance of commercialization, but it still discusses this phenomena in rural setting.
- 10 Data of 1995, Naga City Planning and Development Office, *Naga City Statistical Profile*, n. d.
- 11 Interview with Mayor Ojeda's youngest son, Paco, Naga City, March 17, 1998.
- 12 Republic of the Philippines, *Sixth Congress Official Directory of the House of Representatives, 1965-1969*, Editorial and Publication Service, House of Representatives, 1997, pp.79-80.
- 13 Interview with former Naga City mayor and incumbent Human Rights Commissioner Vicente Sibulo, Pasig City, October 28, 1997.
- 14 Interview with Atty. Alfredo Tria, Camarines Sur Provincial Administrator, Naga City, August 3, 1997.
- 15 Robredo's grandfather (father side) and Villafuerte's mother have a common father, but different mothers. When Robredo was studying at De La Salle University, he stayed at Villafuerte's residence in Makati. Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 16 This anti-Villafuerte coalition was formed by gubernatorial candidate Felix "Nancing" Alfelor, Jr. and was composed of some members of the UNIDO, Liberal Party, PDP-Laban in Camarines Sur and Naga City.
- 17 Interview with Commissioner Vicente Sibulo, Pasig City, October 28, 1997.
- 18 A barangay reported that Villafuerte on several occasion was seen scolding Robredo at the Naga City Hall and Provincial Capital regarding city administration.

- 19 Michael Dueidas, "Maceda exposes 'unholy alliance' in Bicol: PC Top Brass Coddling Gambling Lords?" *Philippine Free Press*, September 19, 1989, pp.6-7.
- 20 Robredo pointed out that this issue is one that he cannot tolerate. Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 21 Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 22 This was confirmed by several interviewees, though their names cannot be disclosed. Allegedly, P500 (maximum amount) was distributed to each family at the last phase of elections. According to a reliable source, the Villafuerte camp spent a total of P10-12 million for city elections. On the other hand, it is not clear how much the Robredo camp spent for elections because resources of the city government cannot be counted as his own expenditures. According to a source person in Robredo's group, approximately P1 million was spent. But another source mentioned P5 million as a realistic estimate of Robredo's campaign expenses. It is assumed that the real amount may be between the two figures.
- 23 However, this time, more sophisticated tactics were used in addition to the conventional method of distributing money and grocery items (rice, coffee, milk, noodles etc.) by visiting each house. The Villafuerte camp reportedly distributed a paper marked "Application for Precinct Aide" during the election campaign period. When a resident signs the paper, he receives P100. And on the eve of voting, Villafuerte set up a distributing center inside the campus of University of Nueva Caceres. If a resident brings this application, another P100 or a bag of groceries is given.
- 24 In Naga, a ward leader is merely called "leader." The word "*lider*" is not commonly used at least in the city. See, Mary Hollsteiner, *The Dynamics of Power in a Philippine Municipality*, Community Development Research Council, University of the Philippines, 1963, p.41.
- 25 Before this system was set up, many people go directly to the mayor to get assistance. When the office's capacity failed to keep up with the requests, this system was put in place. Interview with Mr. Vic Cabrera, Chief of Lingkod Barangay Office, Naga City, August 11, 1997.
- 26 Interview with Mr. Aton Nabua, Officer, Lingkod Barangay Office, Naga City, August 18, 1997.
- 27 Naga City Government, *Restoring Pride in the Nagueño: The State of the City Report*, n. d.
- 28 Interviews with Mr. Nathan Sergio, Chief of Urban Poor Affairs Office, Naga City, April 8, 1997, August 19, 1997; Mr. Honesto Perez, Sr., President of Naga City Urban Poor Federation, Naga City, August 24, 1997; Mrs. Salve Almanía-Cadag, Community Organizer, COPE Foundation, Naga City, September 1, 1997. Jocelyn Vicente Angeles, "The Role of the Naga City Urban Poor Federation in the Passage of Pro-Poor Ordinances and Polices," in Marlon A. Wui, Ma.Glenda S. Lopez, eds., *State, Civil Society Relations in Policy-Making* (Quezon City, Third World Studies Center, 1997).
- 29 Naga City Government, *Restoring Pride in the Nagueño, The State of the City Report*. City Government provides assistance under the scheme of either (1) direct purchase, (2) land swapping, (3) land sharing, (4) land sharing, or (5) community mortgage.
- 30 However, there was a disputed case in 1997. The area called Marasigan in Barangay Sabang was once declared a blighted area, which means people in the place cannot be relocated. But the city government allowed the dwellers relocation to a nearby location. As a consequence, Robredo's appointed mayoral candidate, Roco, lost in Bgy. Sabang in the 1998 elections.
- 31 Interviews with Mr. Florencio Tan Mongoso, Jr., Chief, DOLECOM, Naga City, August 14, 1997; Mr. Wilfredo C. Moraño III, Livelihood Program Officer, DOLECOM, Naga City, August 25, 1997.

- 32 The available loan is between P1,000 to P3,000, upon application, and between P3,000 to P5,000 upon renewal. Fifteen thousand is the maximum limit for individual clients.
- 33 Regardless of the non-political intentions of DOLECOM, it can be utilized for political purposes. For example, loans (under City Planning and Development Office at that time) were provided to some crucial ward leaders in order to counter the virtual vote buying of Magtuto's *Bunyog Banuaan* in 1992 elections, according to reliable sources.
- 34 Interview with Ms. Minnie Palacio, Chief, City Social Welfare Office, Naga City, August 20 and 29, 1997.
- 35 Naga City, *Annual Budget CY 1997*, p.34.
- 36 Interviews with Barangay Captains and ward leaders were conducted in Tagalog.
- 37 These two factors were also pointed out by the City Information Officer. He used the words "performance" and "human relations." Interview with Mr. Joselito del Rosario, City Information Officer, Naga City, November 27, 1997.
- 38 Some critics of Robredo claim that Naga could have developed even without Robredo because of the potential of the city, the devolution and development plans formulated by previous administrations. It is hard to verify this statement since it is a historical "if." But by saying this, the critics also admit that there has been development under Robredo's administration. Interview with Blandino Maceda, Provincial Local Government Operations Officer of Camarines Sur, Naga City, November 22, 1996. Interview with Gil Basmayor, DZGE Radio broadcaster, Canaman, Camarines Sur, November 23, 1996.
- 39 Interview with Councilor Gabriel Bordado, Jr., Naga City, September 4, 1997. Councilor Bordado transferred from BRBDP to the City Government with Robredo and played a crucial role as City Administrator.
- 40 Discussion with Mr. Frank Mendoza, Program Coordinator, Metro Naga Development Council, was very insightful regarding this point. Naga City, May 11, 1998.
- 41 Interview with Mr. Antonio Concepcion, Chairman of Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Naga City, November 28, 1997. But on the other hand, one of the officials of the chamber said, "You will not find a businessman that will say their taxes are low. All businessmen will say they are overtaxed. But, if you compare with other cities, we might be lower or competitive." Interview with Mr. Fidel Yu, Board Secretary, Metro Naga Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Naga City, August 21, 1997.
- 42 Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 43 Naga City Government, *Restoring Pride in the Nagueño: The State of the City Report*.
- 44 As of 1997, Naga City has won one international award, 25 national awards, 12 regional awards for its programs and projects. Robredo himself has earned seven awards as of December 1996. "A City of Innovations and Excellence," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, December 18, 1996.
- 45 Interview with Councilor Gabriel Bordado, Jr., Naga City, September 4, 1997; and Mr. Frank Mendoza, Naga City, November 27, 1997. Bordado and Mendoza have been key persons in the propaganda group.
- 46 Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 47 Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 48 Interview with Mayor Jesse Robredo, Naga City, August 19, 1997.
- 49 Robredo said that the deciding factor in his victory against Ramon Roco in 1988 was his well-prepared development scheme which he earlier presented during the Public Forum for mayoral candidates before the elections. Interview with Robredo, August 19, 1997. This was also mentioned by Councilor Bordado. Interview with Councilor Gabriel Bordado, Jr., Naga City, September 4, 1997.

- 50 It is very difficult to determine who are the rich in the city based on figures. The author tried to find them out at the City Assessor's Office and Treasurer's Office. However, since most of them set up companies to operate businesses like trading and retail, and even the title of the lands are placed under different names, it was impossible. It is also surprising that some of the land titles are registered under the names of dead persons. The names of the rich families are indicated by a high ranking official of the city government.
- 51 A member of De Guzman family was city councilor with Robredo group. But he bolted the group and ran for vice-mayor in 1998 elections and lost. Likewise, members of the Sison and Bichara families ran in the same elections and also lost.
- 52 The qualifications depend on what service is sought. For instance, to get indigent services, income level has to be below a certain level.