

Fostering Internationalization of Research and its Implications for Localization Practices: A Case of an Aspiring Christian University

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Abstract: This article examines current practices of research and scholarship in an institution aspiring to become a research university (De La Salle University, Manila, owned by the Brothers of the Christian Schools) by viewing these against the background of globalization of research, state and market funding, research commodification, and colonial history. This informed viewing enables sight of the effects of a globalizing direction of scholarship 1) for the practice of local community-based scholarship, like BEC studies or local theologies and 2) for one's attachment to or detachment from the local culture/society. It is explained that DLSU's brand of localization is more of a top-down delivery of resources on the local, than a bottom-up recognition of and reliance on the local as a fountainhead of knowledge. Thus, this study offers a critical reflection on a university's globalizing drive that 1) fosters the pursuit of the global and 2) unwittingly cultivates dispositions that tend to conform to an "application" approach to localization and miss the indigenous pools of knowledge or local community-based transformative practices as resources for the global.

Keywords: Academic Developmental Conformism • Research University • Globalization • Localization • Local knowledge • Scholars • Grants

Introduction

Since the last ten years, De La Salle University has become more aggressive and vocal in its push for

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internationalization¹— as it has opened up and adjusted itself to the format and challenges of globalization, which is central to the character of world-renowned research universities fastened to dominant global economic and political forces. De La Salle University has assumed internationalization as a value and has not paid attention to its contradictions and requirements that may be imposed on local agents, communities, and geographies. Even if it has taken a position in the local Church as purveyor of Christian education, its goal of becoming a research university is already saddled with a globalizing thrust—not to mention the Roman Catholic tradition’s global grip on the churches outside of Rome.

De La Salle’s University’s global push and tenuous grounding in the local are replete with problems that affect, in a more fundamental fashion, faculty members whose disciplines (like Theology and Religious Education) and identities cannot be detached from the local (ecclesial) communities. These problems may stem from the tension between the local ecclesial mission and the global thrust which is generally regarded as positive but due to its interlocked nature with globalizing interests are in fact loaded with problems and potential triggers of crises. Some of these problems can be clearly identified if we examine closely the character of De La Salle University’s emphasis on research and scholarship against the *implicit backgrounds* of: global research universities, private and public funding, our post-colonial status, and our local problems. In this way, we may be able to use the relevant historical data and current developments to explain and put at the foreground things assumed as “good” for or “friendly” to the local.

This paper will thus examine De La Salle University’s

¹ De La Salle University, *DLSU Primer*. Manila: Office for Strategic Communications, 2012; De La Salle University, *Graduate Admissions Viewbook*. Academic Year 2011-12 edition. Manila, 2011.

posturing as “an internationally recognized Catholic university” or an institution whose aspirations are formulated with a direction towards globalizing and localizing research programs.² This is DLSU’s organizational drive that highlights its push not only towards market competition and acquisition of greater prestige and status but also towards its own defined strategies and goals that conform to standards set by the global players in higher education.³ Thus, this study will raise some global, national, and local issues/matters that will help put DLSU’s global positioning in a better perspective and to judiciously assess DLSU’s location and real capabilities vis-à-vis its higher education/research goals.⁴

For the simple reason that research universities exhibit a variety of institutional forms, this study refers to their common features rather than differences: they have a strong scholarly base which exhibits dependence on research funding from the State, corporate and private

² Ibid.

³ Cf. Igor Chirikov, “How Global Competition is Changing Universities: Three Theoretical Perspectives,” *Research & Occasional Paper Series: CSHE.5.16*. University of California, Berkeley, June 2016.

⁴ It is helpful to mention the “glonacal agency heuristic” developed by Marginson & Rhoades. In the “glonacal” perspective, the “intersections, interactions, mutual determination of these levels (global, national and local) and domains (organizational agencies and agency of collectivities)” are emphasized. Simon Marginson and Gary Rhodes, “Beyond National States, Markets, and Systems of Higher Education: A Glonacal Agency Heuristic,” *Higher Education* 43 (2002) 289 (281-309). With the “glonacal” model informing this study, DLSU’s status and vision-mission may be better understood and alerted for its dream to become a research university within a developing country surrounded by dominant global forces. See also Simon Marginson, “Competition and Markets in Higher Education: A ‘Glonacal’ Analysis,” *Policy Futures in Education*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2004) 175-244.

donors, endowments, and fundraising assets. A research university's teaching, research, and community service components are primarily measured in terms of the quality of its faculty research productivity and awards that they receive, doctoral degrees conferred, as well as the standards set for undergraduate students recruitment. It is against this picture that we view DLSU's dream of becoming a future research university.

Towards a Research University: Global-Local Research/Scholarship

An excerpt from De La Salle University's *Graduate Admissions Viewbook*⁵ will serve as starter. This text reflects De La Salle University's intention or commitment to research and scholarship. It also reveals its plan to be part of a global story of scholarship with *local* significance and application:

De La Salle University is an acknowledged producer and publisher of quality research projects. The University has five priority areas in research: 1) poverty-alleviation, 2) environment and safety, 3) youth-at-risk, 4) globalization, and 5) applied technologies.

We embark on researches that deepen our understanding of, and frame an informed decision-making and positive direction towards globalization. *Our researches provide the ground for concrete interventions that will preserve ecological balance, conserve and enhance the diversity of our natural resources, and altogether guarantee a much safer and sustainable environment. We look at how technology can be used as tools for the improvement of lives, especially of those who are considered to be the least, the last, and the lost in our society.* (italics supplied)

Our faculty members are partnered with

⁵ De La Salle University, *Graduate Admissions Viewbook*, 2011.

academics from foreign and local institutions on various research undertakings. Graduate students are also engaged in this scholarly endeavor through participation in international research conferences and collaboration with faculty members.⁶

It is not difficult to analyze the above text in terms of the tensional or polar elements of globalization and localization. We do not know whether the framers of this text have thought about this tension and its effects on the practices of Filipino scholars. This issue of tension will be raised, as well as some hidden backgrounds of globalization and localization, in order to gain a better awareness and understanding about their deeper and wide-ranging implications (of the opposition or complementarity) for research and scholarship. It is thus assumed in this study that by its intention to become a Research University, De La Salle University today (cf. www.dlsu.edu.ph/research) considers the two paths of globalization *and* localization as indispensable.

The table below, culled from the *Viewbook*, represents the opposing columns of globalization and localization:

Globalization	Localization
Researches...towards globalization	...researches...for concrete interventions
applied technologies (global technologies, like ICT?)	technology...for the improvement of lives, especially of those who are considered to be the least, the last, and the lost in our society .

⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

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Our faculty members are partnered with academics from foreign ...institutions on various research undertakings	Our faculty members are partnered with academics from ... local institutions on various research undertakings
Graduate students...participation in international research conferences	collaboration with [De La Salle University] faculty members

From this text we observe two main paths designated for research work and for the researchers' involvement: the global and the local. It is not clear, however, which trajectory is primary. There is an assumption, by its face value, that the global and the local concerns are not opposites or are not competing against each other. At least, the text does not show a problematic relationship between the global and the local.

Nevertheless, a closer look at the localization column could yield more information about what is actually characterized as local.

We have the following:

Localization
...researches...for concrete interventions
technology...for the improvement of lives, especially of those who are considered to be the least, the last, and the lost in our society .
Our faculty members are partnered with academics from ... local institutions on various research undertakings
collaboration with [De La Salle University] faculty members

The word “concrete” in the first row is assumed to

refer to what is particular or specific, as against the universal or global. The second row supports this interpretation when it points to “those who are considered to be the least, the last, and the lost in **our society**”—the specific reference to a group of people in our society pulls the application of technology towards the ground. The last two rows referring to local (institutions) and faculty members and graduate students [of De La Salle University] are pairs of the foreign (institutions) and international (research conferences)—rows under the globalization column.

But we may ask: Do these pointers for localization represent what is *really* local—in the grassroots and indigenous sense of the local? This is very important to ask because it raises the question about the *Viewbook*’s implicit reference to what constitutes as local. What is clear is that the *Viewbook*’s discourse is more concerned with the *local application* of research (see <http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/offices/urco/>). Its main concern is to make globally-relevant research as locally significant or useful in dealing with social/ecological issues. It draws our attention to the importance of making the global locally applicable. Localization, as an intention to move towards the local, thus refers to a trajectory of application or utilization—it does not refer to local in terms of *origins* but to the local in terms of *destination*.

The *Viewbook*’s emphasis on the point of destination does not really talk about what makes up local. It mainly brings up the need to pull the global towards the ground. Thus, it summons the dominant to become useful for the dependent. But,

- it exhibits a certain forgetfulness about the hierarchy involved in the relationship between the global and the local;
- it does not take into account the possibility of localization as a move from the local to the global;

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- it does not pay attention to the capabilities of the local people, their culture, in general, and their technologies, in particular;
- it neglects and overshadows the implicit background of the *grassroots, native, and indigenous* as wellspring of life-enhancing practices and habits of the mind.

We cannot deny the fact that a moving object cannot take its trajectory and momentum without having been driven by a force—normally, coming from its launching pad (that presupposes ancient or native *origins or birth*). A satellite launched into space cannot reach its designated orbit if an appropriate force did not push it from the ground. The global has its own origins, as well as trajectories, orbit, and paths; the same is true for the local. Origins, however, are usually unarticulated and just remain as general assumptions that are neither examined nor established as foreground issues; unless we explicitly recognize our post-colonial status. We can just surmise that globalization and localization are givens, as driven by and following logical movements and directions. But as two divergent movements, they logically follow opposing directions that create tensions. We may further inquire:

1. “Which is the more powerful force?” The global, of course. What will happen to the local? This question assumes the presence of asymmetry or hierarchy.
2. “Which is the more important movement?” Application of global/globalizing technologies (in the local situation) or the improvement of lives *whatever* form of technology is available (whether global, local, or indigenous)? This question assumes the value of the global and the “usually”

forgotten or subordinated value of the local and indigenous.

3. “What can we do to avoid being *totally* dominated or subordinated by global forces?” Is it still valid to ask this question under the present environment? Is it really possible to avoid it when it is already deeply ingrained in us: in our private lives and in our institutions; in our consciousness/ unconscious and in our collective consciousness/ unconscious? This is a question that assumes the presence of a pre-established relationship between the global and the local: of dominance and dependence.⁷

We cannot expect these questions to be fully answered by a textual analysis. We need a longitudinal study about the trends in De La Salle University scholarship as well as data from lived settings in order to validate the abovementioned suspicious assumptions. Nevertheless, we can still enter into an academic discussion and possibly derive some insights by further probing into the assumptions of the *Viewbook* regarding globalization and localization. We can actually make some reconstructions of hidden settings or some genealogical elements⁸ that could help us clarify some

⁷ This global-local relationship can no longer be ignored in the ongoing 4th Industrial Revolution characterized by the internet of things in a global arena. The 4th IR has emerged from the Digital Revolution that introduces new processes in which technology becomes embedded within societies, geographies, and even the human body. Its utilities includes robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, quantum computing, biotechnology, 3D printing, and autonomous vehicles. See Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2016).

⁸ Genealogy is a concept that Michel Foucault borrowed from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, but made it his own. It may refer to the following:

- an attempt to consider the origins of systems of knowledge, and to analyze discourses;

issues or questions that the *Viewbook* seems to beg. Yes, readers of the *Viewbook* text are “requested” to have known what is not self-evident. Although, I suspect that the framers themselves have no full awareness of their assumptions, much less about the implications/consequences of their assumptions for local (culturally-sensitive and community-immersed) researchers/scholars.

We have a text (*Viewbook*), seemingly full of authority derived from the De La Salle University administration. But we have three bigger source-texts; more authoritarian than the *Viewbook*—older stories and preceding the *Viewbook* by centuries, namely: 1) the West’s globalizing (colonizing) origins and power, 2) our local origins, history, and cultural memories of everyday life, of the painful stories of colonizations, and 3) the continuing neo-colonization and rationalization of societies by economics and concurring politics. These bigger stories are also the implicit backgrounds of divisions, conflicts, domination and dependence.

Such stories are not cited by the *Viewbook* but will always be the authoritative backdrop of or platform for its call for globalization and localization. But in a stage conceived by the *Viewbook* the global backdrop is dominant. This does not mean, of course, that the local is totally dominated. The local may be subject to the

-
- it attempts to reveal the discontinuities and breaks in a discourse, to focus on the specific rather than on the general;
 - it aims to show that there have been other ways of thinking and acting, and that modern discourses are not any truer than those in the past;
 - most importantly, it aims to show that many modern ideas are not self-evidently “true”, but the product of the workings of power.

See Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in D. F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

dominance of the global but it is a very powerful backdrop that could disturb, in more ways than we realize, the global stage. In other words, the attempt to apply global-quality researches and technologies is not a simple story of beneficence extended by a lord to a docile vassal or by the rich to the voiceless poor. Look at the tirades of “Da One” (cf. TV advertisement of Solmux cough syrup) directed at “Dahon” (Lagundi leaf, a herbal remedy for cough) and see how the indigenous disturbs the claims of the global; or how modern Western medicine is shaken by the recognized healing approaches from the indigenous grounds.⁹

Nevertheless, the story of the global extending its hands to the local has already affected us even before today’s forms of globalization have entered our consciousness. This story of the global has also affected our understanding about our calling as professionals called to serve the local society and culture.

Calling and Personal Response/Commitment

Most, if not all, of those who have decided to become educators or professors have heard and responded to a certain call. It is not that businessmen or entrepreneurs have not heard any voice at all. Yes they would usually hear a very strong voice, but this is mainly coming from the marketplace or from their significant others who represent some place in the market. Students who aspire to become teachers/professors (in the Philippines) would often hear remarks from others, like: “You’ll go hungry with that kind of choice.” Or simply, “Why?”

Why indeed would educators/professors devote themselves to a career that promises no material success

⁹ See Jacqueline L. Longe, project ed., *The Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine*, 4 volumes, 2nd ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 2005).

or abundance of comforts in life (at least in the Philippines)? The familiar answer is: Because of a mission or a dream, or because of social-cultural relevance (a local trajectory), or simply because they are Filipinos committed to the fostering of a better world for fellow Filipinos. As educators, most of us have heard the call of service and our teaching career is our response to that call—and we certainly hope that we could make a difference in the lives of our students. Shouldn't this call be the driving force of our practices in research and scholarship, and also hope to *make a difference* in that area of involvement?

This point may be raised because, nowadays, to embark on research/scholarship is to face situations (cf. *Viewbook*) that expose our local commitments to globalizing voices or calls. Several factors which have increasingly shaped the nature of today's creative research and publications could also shape us and expose us to certain life-changing forces that carry or represent the West's globalizing origins and power: the market institutions, global economy, academic internationalization, and foreign funding. In other words, doing research today is also exposing ourselves to things that could force us to turn our faces away from the truly local (indigenous/grassroots) voices.

While the public and private sectors offer resources and greater impetus for “progress” in a University setting, these unintentionally and unfortunately bring about problems, like turning local research as part of academic developmental conformism—forcing Filipino scholars to become dependent scholars in the periphery, that is, beholden to the European/Anglo-American Center of scholarship and learning.¹⁰ While the mentioned factors that shape research/scholarship could

¹⁰ See Marginson, “Competition and Markets in Higher Education: A ‘Glonacal’ Analysis”.

actually further strengthen the commitment of teachers or researchers who bring into the academe their own personal backgrounds and dreams for the future, they are also pushed to use international measurements for quality *and* relevance. While the pursuit of topics that are close to one's heart may characterize a Filipino academician's creative research, s/he may be forced to compose the publication material to conform to the quality and relevance set by the international academic journals and assessors like Thomson-Reuters or Scopus (Thomson-Reuters and Scopus offer bibliographic databases containing abstracts and citations for academic journal articles. DLSU gives incentives to faculty members whose articles are published in the journals listed in Thomson Reuters and Scopus databases. It is interesting to note that some universities—Stanford, Harvard, Duke, and University of California—have protested against Elsevier's [owner of Scopus] practices of charging “exorbitant and exploitative” subscription rates for its journals and database).

The life-experiences of serious local scholars also mark the quality and relevance of their works, but these may not be automatically recognized as part of the global trends set by the institutions of developed countries. Even academic journals that use Filipino languages may not necessarily be catering to local relevance and advancement of local fountainheads of knowledge.

The problem even becomes more acute in the case of theologians and religious educators who cannot but fulfill or attempt to fulfill what they have heard as their calling to proclaim the Good News to the Poor or work towards the formation of the Church of the Poor as envisioned by the *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*¹¹—necessarily tied to local ecclesial issues or

¹¹ *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Pasay City: Catholic Bishops Conference of the

faith community-bound interests (not global interests of business or international politics). What is in store for the theologian and religious educator in De La Salle University when they are both pressured to globalize and conform to the localization trajectory of application?

Some theologians/religious educators are indeed endowed with skills and qualifications to move towards scholarship with international or global significance; but then somehow at the expense of the local-origins. Others who would have the energy to focus on the local are still pulled towards the global by force of necessity: they have to submit their scholarly articles to academic journals that have international coverage. The latter may experience the stress of still facing the global even if they are committed to local issues. An unfortunate development could result: global and no local; local and no global; or none at all.

Moreover, Philippine history is not in our favor because it has made our biographies (and thus our calling) more vulnerable to the multiple pressures that have burdened the colonized.

The Philippines has been greatly shaped by the sustained presence of the two dominant nations: Spain and the United States of America. The Philippines is, politically, economically, and culturally, a dependent and divided nation. Filipinos are constantly shaped by their everyday-life pursuits that adapt to or adopt a foreign language, foreign beliefs, foreign values, foreign lifestyles, and foreign standards. Those who are able to participate in this adaptation process may succeed as winners because of their resources, connections, skills, and positional capabilities.¹² Those who fail may have to

Philippines, 1992).

¹² Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital." In J.G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 241-258.

resign to their fate as “losers” or band together to form various communities of survivors; or retreat to local or indigenous enclaves where the more traditional values and lifestyles could assure themselves of survival. The “winners”, on the other hand, will trumpet their successes and proclaim that national development should follow the path of progress taken or imposed by the developed nations, like the United States of America—thus turning their hearts and minds away from their origins as fountainhead of development and liberation. Unfortunately, their win also serves to reinforce conformism’s agreeable status.

The Philippines’ status as a formerly colonized nation puts a heavy load on culture and education. Filipinos are still forced, by habit or by sheer weakness, to follow an uncriticized Romanized religion; to use English as the standard language of education, politics, and commerce; not to mention being overpowered by the ubiquity of what Rome or English language represents. The dominant Roman Catholic priestly ministry still follows the patriarchal model notwithstanding the fact that the local religious ministry of antiquity was also open to women.¹³ Prospects for employment, especially abroad, are tied to the mastery of English and adaptation to foreign lifestyles. It is no wonder that parents, especially those from the educated middle class, would communicate to their children in English despite their poor command of the language and the unfortunate effects of this practice on their children’s language facility, cultural integration, and self-expression.

It is interesting to note that cultural integration has taken a reversed meaning in many colonized nations—instead of getting integrated into their own culture, the dominated majority has to exert much effort to follow the

¹³ Carol Penner, ed., *Women & Men: Gender in the Church* (Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 1998).

language of their masters “visitors”. Some unfortunate bloopers have resulted because of this reversal:

The “visitor’s” word	The host’s interpretation
Motherboard	mother bird
Luncheon meat	lechon meat (lechon = roasted pig)
Perforation	Korporasyon
Coal tar	Cortal (a pain killer medication)
Violence	Violins
Diskette	Biscuit
Devastation	The Bus station
Cappuccino	Kape tsino

In the field of research and scholarship, academic conformism (that is, a practice that makes the developed world’s standards as the standards for academic development and progress) may also dictate. A global-developmental kind of environment promoted within a university may not only open academicians to the promises and resources of globalization but also expose them to subjection under the more dominant global players and towards a trajectory of dependence and lack of cultural and political power. This negative side of exposure to globalization (as a design, resource, and operations of the dominant) cannot fail to intimidate local scholars as well as put constraints on De La Salle University’s effort to localize and be available to the “the least, the last, and the lost in our society.” In other words, globalization may also mean to get exposed to one’s inferiority or to be forced to capitulate to global interests at the expense of local origins and resources.¹⁴

This is the circumstance surrounding De La Salle University professors who, in more ways than they could imagine, are really pressured and pulled towards the Research University dream and thus towards academic

¹⁴ See Gerald Graff, *Clueless in Academe: How Schooling Obscures the Life of the Mind* (London: Yale University Press, 2003).

obligations that could stifle or compromise desire to be of service to the local culture and communities. The “List of Faculty Research and Creative Work Output from 2010 to 2013” [<http://www.dlsu.edu.ph/research/publications/faculty-research-output.pdf>] shows some research trends in DLSU and the research outputs indicate lesser attention given to the indigenous/local, understood as fountainhead of knowledge. One may have to take a closer look at this list in order to get a better picture of the character of such trends. However, such a task is already beyond the scope of the present study.

How do practices in research and scholarship pull researchers/professors towards the global and thus expose themselves to their handicaps or vulnerabilities? Let me focus on the influential (or colonizing) presence of business and politics in the areas of funding and practical application of research.

Research University and Conformism to the Global: the Authority of Business and Politics

Today’s universities are increasingly pressured by the standards set by Research Universities abroad, especially the top universities classified under Times Higher Education World Ranking (www.timeshighereducation.com). It is a fact that such universities have become research universities because of the usefulness of their work/research outputs for the global market or dominant political “communities”. Some universities in the Philippines are gradually moving towards this Research University trend purportedly for the benefit of their own faculty and students and for the external “communities” pursuing economic and political interests.

In the case of De La Salle University, research for dissemination/publication is a pressure that is increasingly felt by the faculty. Within a research university, one

should be actively contributing to new knowledge (because progress could mean falsifying previous pools of knowledge and affirming new ones); this may be realized through winning state-funded or business-initiated grants. This is basically the American route exemplified by the Ivy League (Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, Yale University) and the “hidden Ivy’s” (like Johns Hopkins, Boston College, Stanford, or CalTech) path towards gaining the status of a research university.

External factors drive faculty members to do research. Invitations to deliver a paper, to attend a conference, to evaluate a school program, to facilitate a workshop/seminar, etc. are occasions to do further research. One cannot just rely on stock knowledge or personal opinion when s/he gets invited to share insights about an issue. The state of the question and the various authors’ perspectives must be reviewed. By taking part in the discussion one also gets into the academe’s ways of dealing with knowledge and the course of its development, progress, or transformation. In other words, one may have to be familiar with what Boyer calls as the scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching.¹⁵

It is not infrequent though that majority of the faculty would not be in sync with the institutional priority for research and scholarship *for publication*. Faculty members, in general, would actually not be able to confirm *in their habits* this avowed primacy of research and scholarship for publication. The following statement of Tighe may be true inside a research university but it may

¹⁵ Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (New York: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990), pp. 16ff.

not have an appeal to the ears of those who “teach to the test”.

The primacy of research stems from the recognition that the cumulative research, scholarship, and creative activity of the faculty is ultimately the source of what is taught and the source of an institution’s ability to add value to society by way of public service. That is, universities teach and apply the results of long-term disciplined inquiry.¹⁶

Various internal funding offices and schemes and the external-funding opportunities do not only stimulate research and knowledge production because of financial gain, but also because these are mechanisms that help faculty members in their promotions founded on internationalized criteria. We have several criteria for promotion, which include the quality of teaching, service inside De La Salle University community (department involvement or college-wide involvement) or outside (consultancy, talks, TV interviews), and research and publications in academic journals. The most important of these is, of course, academic journal publication. One may deliver lectures in several national or international conferences, assiduously prepare class lessons (complete with organized notes and Powerpoint presentations) and get an “Outstanding” evaluation from students, burn seat inside one’s cubicle with daily research and visibility, but if one doesn’t have a published work (that makes some kind of “noise” in the academic circuit¹⁷) there will be no forthcoming promotion.

¹⁶ Thomas J. Tighe, *Who’s In Charge of America’s Research University: A Blueprint for Reform* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), p. 16.

¹⁷ See William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 373ff.

External research grants

The public (State and its agencies) and private (business and philanthropy) sector funding are very stimulating because of the pecuniary benefits involved. However, these research opportunities are difficult to obtain. One's research skills and reputation must have already been recognized before winning a grant. NGOs and the churches are bridging the sources of public and private funds by acting either as local clearing houses or as dispensers of private and public grants. Let it be noted that academic research also provides resources for these sources of funds, in terms of the growth and transformation of knowledge provided by research-intensive universities. The economic, political, and moral impact (destination) of research-knowledge in universities are products much-solicited by businesses, state, and NGOs and churches.

a. From the Public Sector: State and its agencies

As a whole, the Philippine government neither has the money nor the real/capable sense of giving importance to production of newer knowledge except when it is penetrated or influenced by insights coming from the academe. State agencies, like the Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Science and Technology, National Economic and Development Authority, etc., are also sources of research grants, but much of these are also sourced from external or foreign funding institutions. It is no wonder that local NGOs and their researchers are aggressively competing for their share in the externally-funded pie grants.

Nevertheless, some government endeavors would really need the expertise of academicians and so

stimulate researchers-professors into grant-seeking activities. For example, the problem of pulmonary TB or malaria infestation or the spread of HIV-AIDS is not just a medical problem confronting the Department of Health; it is also a social problem and its complexity needs serious study. To be able to effectively address these problems through available medical technologies, the social dimensions of the problems must first be clarified. To illustrate, TB infection may be cured through Refampicin medication, but to ensure its effectiveness patients must have to take their medicines regularly. Many less-educated and poverty-stricken patients could not comply with this because of negligence or enterprising schemes to address hunger—they sell their free medications at cheaper price. That is why health centers require their patients to visit them every day and in their presence take their anti-TB medications. They have devised this DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short course) strategy after having undergone some study on their medication practices. Researchers may also point at poverty's contribution to TB infection. In doing this, they may have to deal further with the social-structural factors or the socio-economic dimension of pulmonary TB—thus, also expanding teaching, research, and scholarship.

Such a picture may convince us about the positive symbiosis between the State and research in the academe. What is not transparent in this apparent mutuality is the power of the global funds dispensed by the state over local concerns and resources. In other words, even when local problems are being examined and addressed by scholarship, some cultural resources are easily ignored and rendered non-platforms for knowledge expansion. Localization does not really mean just dealing with the local, but also affirming the local as a fountainhead.

Too much reliance on globally-tested solutions could make one blind to the soundness of some local methods. The religious-communitarian interventions of the local healers may not produce Refampicin tablets but these would surely bring back patients to a wider *pakikipag-kapwa* (neighbourly solidarity) support system or to the healing effects of religion. A globally-orientated “scientific” approach easily slides into forgetfulness or ignorance about what is obvious to the locals.

b. From the Private Sector: Grants from Businesses and Individual philanthropy

Business and industry have their own research offices mainly devoted to product development. Some would also call these as corporate laboratories like those found in Bell, IBM, GE, Xerox, Exxon, Microsoft, Google, Phillips, Samsung, etc. Their scientists and researches would normally publish their findings in academic journals and contribute to the flow of people and ideas around the academe, government, and industry triad; occasionally, the church would come in and pitch in their five cents worth of information sharing. Sometimes business and industry will be in need of outside “experts” from the academe, who could provide them with the needed information to help them develop products, to boost their sales or reputation, or to assess their competitors, or to be clarified about business feasibilities.

Carnegie Foundation for the Improvement of Teaching would call this applied aspect of research as “improvement research.” (One may consult their website of various downloadable materials relevant to teaching and research: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/improvement-research/approach>.) Take note of this mainly top-down understanding of the origins of resources for improvement (application).

Other business firms have their own so-called Foundations (Toyota Foundation, Bill Gates and Melinda Gates Foundation, etc.) which they create in order to absorb some of their tax liabilities or to answer to the call of Corporate Social Responsibility or, as Smillie writes, to pacify the conscience of their billionaire owners.¹⁸ Oftentimes, these firms approach research centers with outstanding track records. A problem with this kind of research work is that, more often than not, research findings are appropriated by the funding institutions.

Sometimes, researchers-professors who already have “names” (*magni alicuius nomini vir or nominis celebritate*)¹⁹ and are attuned and “addicted” to grant-seeking market research may no longer perform as critical knowledge-contributors but merely act as providers of information that further support and improve business activities. This is not entirely bad; but it is unfortunate if researchers become “employees” of profit-seekers who commodify human and natural resources; for they could be the concrete base of academic commodification.²⁰ Professors-researchers of this mold become partners of money-making firms and become tools of their own schemes. Research of this kind would thus tend to choke the original calling that has inspired individuals to get into research and scholarship.²¹

¹⁸ Ian Smillie, *The Alms Bazaar: Altruism Under Fire—Non-Profit Organizations and International Development* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1995), p. 28.

¹⁹ See Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, pp. 374ff.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 373ff.

²¹ See Angela Brew and Lisa Lucas, eds. *Academic Research and Researchers* (New York: Open University Press., 2009).

**c. From Secondary and Religious Sectors:
NGOs, Churches, and religious groups**

NGO's need for research investigations is even more acute because of the nature of their advocacy work. They could not afford to remain simplistic in their approaches to the many social problems that researchers could unpack in varying complexities. If an NGO dealing with Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) only think of the OFW problems as merely economic, it will be blind to the political, cultural, or gender aspects of the problem. In maintaining the link between theory and practice, the members of the academe will have to be sensitive to the issues that call for their specific contribution useful for the various stakeholders.

It is the same story when it comes to Church work or Church personnel's involvement in social/community problems. In this regard, we have to remind ourselves that "applied" research inside the Church is best exemplified by the Papal encyclicals, liberation theology, feminist theology, and other forms of culturally-sensitive and practice-oriented research. Thus, research for the Church is best promoted if praxis is its primary consideration.²²

There is this saying: "Practice without theory is blind; theory without practice is idle/sterile/dead." The more progressive writers in various fields are already sensitized to this dictum. Some would even insist that if theory encounters walls or obstacles, then a more appropriate and novel practice is needed. In this sense "practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another; and theory is a relay from one practice to

²² See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, 15th anniversary edition (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988); Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987).

another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall.”²³ The sensitivity to a liberating service or action despite contrary scholarship is admirable. This may be the defining character of every local community-based scholar.²⁴

A Further Critical Outlook

It was mainly the moving away from the classical and traditional sources and leaning towards the more scientific ways of inquiry that propelled the newer approaches in research. This would entail moving away from the conventional source of endowments: the cathedral; and moving towards the modern sources: state and business. But then, we realize here the change not just in terms of sources of finance and application of research but also in terms of the procedures of hiring and cultivation of qualities among the hired.²⁵ Such dynamics have not only transformed the universities but also, and mainly, in the ways faculty have to package themselves

²³ Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, “Intellectuals and Power,” in Donald F. Bouchard, ed., *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 206.

²⁴ See Steven S. Coughlin, Selina A. Smith, and Maria E. Fernandez, eds. *Handbook of Community-Based Participatory Research* (New York: Oxford, 2017); Meredith Minkler and Nina Wallerstein, eds., *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: From Process to Outcomes*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008); B.A. Israel, et al., eds., *Methods in Community-Based Participatory Research for Health* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005); Kerry Strand et al., *Community-Based Research and Higher Education Principles and Practices* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2003).

²⁵ Cf. Margaret Thornton, “The Mirage of Merit: Reconstituting the ‘Ideal Academic’,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 28(76) (2013) 127-143.

for bureaucracy and the market which are, in the first place, bastions of globalizing activities. This would result into formation and acquisition of new institutional habits and the cultivation of personal habits and charisma according to the secular institutions' dispositions and expectations. The university would thus become one of the social resources available to those who could compete for opportunities. The state and business sectors would largely put bureaucratic and commercial color to the former ways of higher education which usually exhort for the needs of religious ministry or missionary work. In other words, higher education opened itself to the practical needs of a highly globalized secular society as state bureaucracy and business would understand and respond to such needs. Slowly, the professors/researchers have shed off their transcendental purpose and status and took on the garb of worldly scientists and secularized authorities (with charisma) responding to the strategized calls of globalization. The globalized ways of thinking within bureaucracy and business gradually infected that of academe's ways of thinking. This hybridized character of the academia would result into cross-fertilized personalities who are either too state-orientated or too-profit orientated. But all the same, modern academics who would become agents of the state or the global business, still preserve what to them are qualities that uniquely define themselves as researchers and scholars. The university then would possess its own stamp of character, all the while already dependent on the public and private sectors for its maintenance and advancement. Such developments would indeed expose academics not only to greater challenges but also to their own limitations.

This discussion about the University's transformation does not mean that traditional or religious sources of authority and endowments no longer exist. Christian centers of learning are still around. The

original charism of religious institutes could never be erased even as they cater to the needs of society that is largely steered by modern/advance-modern political and economic interests, as shown in the studies of Giddens²⁶ and Bauman.²⁷ The vision-mission of their founders would still claim as the higher reason for the Catholic schools' existence even if it caters to individuals with highly secularized dispositions.

Church ministry used to deal with the market, that is, the pre-modern market. In today's modern settings, ministry will have to deal with modern/advance-modern bureaucracies and markets. Ministry must have to contend with bureaucracy's and market's expectations that academia will turn itself into their own appropriate ally. Today, if one indeed is marked as a useful ally, funding could follow. But researchers and scholars have in fact not only responded because of funding. Distinction, in terms of ceremonial honors and titles, has also drawn them towards productive endeavors for society. Rather than just encouraging basic research to advance knowledge, research universities have harnessed basic research into applied research mainly because of the push of the state and global business which, by the way, moves towards calculation rather than automatic sharing of resources²⁸ (cf. patenting of local products and natural resources). This further defined the character of research as potentially useful but progressively proprietary. Criteria for hiring faculty and for the admission of students will also be shaped by this

²⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

²⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

²⁸ See Ferdinand D. Dagmang, "Christian Compassion and Solidarity within Capitalist Contexts," *Asia Pacific Social Science Review* 6(2) (20070: 53-72.

definition. Thus, our employers expect us to become researchers and scholars; in turn, we expect our students to be skilled researchers in dealing with scholarship.

In response to the needs or funds-infusion of extra-mural entities like the state, businesses, and other bodies (NGOs and churches) research in universities have grown by leaps and bounds. But compared to the more “practical” sciences, liberal arts continued to supply the general curriculum. This doesn’t mean that humanities have been supplanted by the sociological and the hard sciences that became the torchbearers in the creation of research universities. However, the partnership with the state and businesses has largely defined the nature and fuelled the activities of a modern/advance-modern research university. Their role in academic research has shaken the calling of scholars and the meaning of community itself. Before the fragmenting presence of business, community was understood to mean “traditional community”—which generally refers to a group of people sharing the same culture, traditions, and a common region or territory. After business has effectively drawn people out of their common contexts, the meaning of community has been expanded to mean those groups that share a common (even if fleeting) interest (Facebook or Twitter community), common career or employment (community of laborers), common pursuit (community of profit-seekers), common goal (community of educators), etc. In other words, one may no longer be based and stabilized in a common culture, language, and geography but still belong to a “community.” The De La Salle University scholars (and other local scholars) must deal with such ways of understanding a community and be able to avoid axiomatic and imposed definitions.

Research University and Localization: Underground Authority of Local Culture

It is my contention that a most promising launching pad towards globalization, especially for the culturally-sensitive and community-immersed scholars, is that of the local—understood as an affirmation of the identity and integrity of the grassroots, native, and the indigenous. Localization of research and scholarship should be able to face or tap the fountainhead of knowledge in the subjugated facets of culture. Thus, research in a Research University (or schools of Theology) may have to be grounded in the local communities recognized as a fountainhead of knowledge and practice. This assumes the fact that the local community offers, through its culture and praxis, sustenance to every form of education/scholarship. This is different from a “glocal” strategy that adopts the global for local adaptation. Localization is to affirm what is truly local. This is our contribution to the international community. Let me develop this with the use of two examples: 1) the indigenous phenomenon of *babaylan/sapi* and 2) the socio-cultural habitus, *hiya*.

The *Babaylan/Sapi* Phenomenon

I am in favor of recognizing the *babaylan* (indigenous/local priest, healer, and moral leader) and *sapi* (spirit-possession) as sources for the enrichment of the Christian tradition.²⁹ At least on the level of theological reflection, the local may open up worlds not disclosed by the Christian biblical perspective. I am not saying here that we should become folk Christians

²⁹ I am reproducing here portions of my article: Ferdinand D. Dagmang, “Babaylanism Reconsidered,” *Diliman Review* 42(1) (1994) 64-72.

ourselves to be able to effectively live out our Christian faith in the local context. From our discussion I may just emphasize that we have to listen to what the local folks tell us by their tenacity in clinging to their memories in their most cherished indigenous beliefs and practices.

What are some of the things that we can learn from them?

Regarding the common folks' religion as characteristically immediate and sensuous. From this we can learn to criticize the traditional ways that overemphasize Latinized and cerebral approaches to religion. When folks gather around the *sinasapian* (medium) to encounter the possessing spirit they actually are bringing their whole *katawan* (body) before a deity who can also be touched in the *katawan* of the medium. The deity becomes alive as it dwells in the *loob* (interior) of the modern “babaylan” who now allows herself to be used. Our way of celebrating the liturgy is so often foreign to the mentality of our folks that when they are inside the churches to hear mass they still need the more material and sensuous rosaries and scapulars. When the deity is presented as a healing spirit in the person of the *babaylan* the liturgy becomes a dramatic, i.e., sensual encounter, with the sacred. We need to retrieve this kind of sensuality in our religion not just to make our liturgical celebrations more alive but really to be able to reach and touch the minds, hearts and flesh of our local folks.

Regarding the babaylan's qualification as a model of formation for religious leaders. The way a *babaylan* is recognized as leader of a community is a rich indigenous resource for the re-evaluation of our models of formation. Many of our Greek Fathers of the Church in the formative years of the Christian communities have regarded the philosopher (male) as the secular model of spiritual perfection. Religious communities established in those times have internalized the ways and world-

views of these philosophers who emphasized self-mastery, moderation and even purification through purgation and illumination as in the case of St. Augustine who idealized the ways of Plotinus. These philosophers were cultural models of behavior whose ways have entered into the practices of Christian monks and contemplatives.

On the other hand, our indigenous folks offer the person of the *babaylan* as the model of behavior and religious leadership. Can't we also follow the examples of the Fathers of the Church (in the way they chose Plotinus) by valuing the ways of the *babaylan* as a rich resource for the rethinking of our ways of recognizing and identifying religious leaders? Think of the way a Roman Catholic cleric is chosen—the candidate is not “required” to pass through life's testing through the “crucible of suffering” before he gets ordained. Thus, even if his *labas* is not congruent with his *loob* he may still be ordained; and we ask the folks—actually we order them—to impute by imagining in the canonically ordained priest those qualities of a leader who will bring them close to God. The more sensible folks actually marvel at the idea of many ordained priests not being tested in the crucible of suffering but who are still to be recognized as their wise leaders. Much more, their religious leaders are now male priests. They had their own priestesses who are now marginalized and supplanted by priests whose qualities they cannot recognize as bearing the qualities of their formerly revered moral and religious leaders.

Regarding the healing rituals. Today's emphasis on holistic health and the more ecologically sound sourcing of medicines put the modern *babaylans* at the forefront. Their approaches to healing also confirm the insight of today's integrative medicine by their recognition of the moral and physical aspects of healing, not to mention its religious aspect. Our rituals, which

still overemphasize the working of the left part of our brain, render our spirituality fragmented and partial. There is too much rationality (in terms of predictability and control) in the ways we approach the divine).³⁰ The intuitive and symbolic ways of approaching the sacred as part of our tradition may be re-emphasized by the ways of the *babaylan* and their followers who put great emphasis on the “presence” of the sacred in the immediate moment. This we need to recapture. The local also points to a healthy direction.

The *Hiya* Habitus

Another example of an assumption based on a pre-established Western knowledge is the negative appraisal of the value and capacity of *hiya*. This has to be critically assessed. We offer here a research on *hiya* that illustrates the indispensability of appropriating the richness of the local.³¹

Hiya is routinely translated into English as *shame*, *embarrassment*, *shyness*, *timidity*, *bashfulness* and *feeling inferior*.³² These translations compel our understanding to equate *hiya* with dispositions and emotions normally associated with a more passive, than active or aggressive, subject. These also focus on “what happens” to the subject rather than on “what a subject is capable

³⁰ See Matthew Fox, *All the Way Home: A Guide to Sensual, Prophetic Spirituality* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear and Company, 1981).

³¹ See Ferdinand D. Dagmang, “Hiya: Daan at Kakayahan sa Pakikipagkapwa”, *MST Review* 1(1) (1996) 66-90.

³² Robert B. Fox, “The Filipino Concept of Self-esteem,” in *Area Handbook of the Philippines* (Chicago: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1956), pp. 430-436; Jaime Bulatao, “Hiya,” *Philippine Studies*, 12 (1964) 424-438; George M. Guthrie, and F. M. Azores, “Philippine Interpersonal Behavior Patterns”, in W.F Bello and A. de Guzman II, eds., *Modernization: Its Impact in the Philippines III*, IPC Papers No. 6 (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1968), pp. 3-63.

of,” since *hiya* connotes being “subjected” rather being a “subject” possessing a certain quality or capacity. Translations further highlight the felt emotion of *hiya* and the person who feels overwhelmed by the feeling of *hiya*. As a result, the stress is on the inferior worth or negative quality of a person suffering from *hiya*. This kind of translation/interpretation would pin down *hiya* as part of a person’s reactive component or, to use a model in psychology, a defense mechanism (reaction formation). Therefore, *hiya* is a form of vulnerability, that is, an indication of weakness in character, and not a quality of a strong character; it is a lowly or negative component in a person’s behavior or personality.

There is a Filipino saying which says that “one’s weakness is a source of strength” or “one’s weakness is one’s strength.” In this line of argument, the lowly bamboo is usually the model. In the face of a raging storm, the bamboo’s resilience (a form of passivity) is its survival, while the rigidity or solidity of a hardwood is its weakness. Thus, *hiya*, seen from the native’s cultural standpoint, is also a form and a substantive source of strength. This perspective does not mean that *hiya* has no limitations.

We could also cite the study of Enriquez and Marcelino which highlighted a dimension of *hiya* in its more active form as ethical/moral behavior: as *propriety*.³³ Or, take the phrases, “*may kahihayan*” (has propriety) or “*marunong mahiya*” (knows what is proper) or “*hindi marunong manghiya*” (does not belittle or humiliate others) as indicators of an active subject’s moral power.

³³ Virgilio Enriquez and E.P. Marcelino, *Neo-Colonial Politics and Language Struggle in the Philippines: National Consciousness and Language in Philippine Psychology* (Quezon City: Akademya ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Philippine Psychology Research and Training House, 1984).

Thus, if research seeks what is positive in our local culture, we must also be able to furnish a more accurate qualification of what is positive in our origins, the *truly* local or indigenous. It must be informed by a scholarship based not just on researches that “globalize,” but on a rigorous research that localize and recognize history and origins. Scholars in humanities, arts, and the social sciences may have to recognize this need for serious research towards localization.

Conclusion

A Filipino scholar may not necessarily be called to respond to the market-State’s rational-technical interests. He or she may have heard the call from grassroots communities or from local culture-rich communities. In other words, a Filipino scholar will be able to contribute internationally if s/he will be rooted and driven locally. In this way, a locally-based research would be a most promising enterprise, as exemplified above.

Disconnection from communities is a result not only of internationalization but also because researchers have become captive to the standards set by powerful globalized academic forces. Even if we name this internationalization game as a form of “integration,” the playing field is actually dominated by the standards and rules set by the players with more skills and resources. Being embedded in the local is one sure way of developing our strength and sense of pride. Others will take notice of us only if we come from this local point. A response to develop every scholar’s capacity for localization may also be construed as a move not only against conformism towards global demands that detach people from local fealties, but also in recognition of community connectedness as formative and more humanizing,

nationally and culturally.

This is clearly aligned with De La Salle University's priority areas of research that include poverty alleviation, environmental/safety, and youth-at-risk advocacies. Members of communities who share a common disadvantaged position are not lacking in the local settings. Filipino scholars who may devote themselves to a local community-based research will surely be aligned with De La Salle University, with the local communities, and with the expectations of the global community of researchers.

But then skills, competence, and commitment to do local community-based research would be necessary. Those are matters that local scholars must acquire for themselves and seek assistance from localizing sources of funds to further their vocation and foster scholarly pursuits.