

Through The Lens of Local Historians: A Historiographical Survey of Master of Arts in History Theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University

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Abstract

This study is a historiographical survey of varying MA History theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University. The study aims to provide a background on how the MA History programs from both aforesaid universities started; more importantly, it seeks to provide an adumbration – and concomitantly a synthesis – of the different theses written by the respective MA History graduates. Much emphasis will be given to the categorization based on the various historical themes or frameworks done or used by each writer. The different historical themes include social history, political history, biographies (political/cultural), institutional/religious history, and sociocultural history. Suffice it to say, there are still some gaps – studies that have yet to be written – that may need to be filled. Moreover, some theses that have been written – especially from NORSU – need some form of improvement in the sense that they should not merely be an enumeration of data but should at least be a historical narrative that has meaning.

Keywords: Historiography, MA History Theses, Silliman University, Negros Oriental State University, Local History of Negros Oriental

INTRODUCTION

Dumaguete City is not only known as the city of gentle people but also as a university town. A multitude of students flocks to this small, if developing, city at the beginning of every semester (June/August) for the pursuit of knowledge and excellence in education. This city is also known for its rich history – due to the many universities located within the city. Because of its profound closeness to its roots, there are two universities in Negros Oriental that offer a Master

of Arts in History program – Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University. Being a relatively new program, the former still has a few graduates but has steadily kept its progress. On the other hand, the latter has already produced many graduates from different parts of the country, even internationally. Both universities have made it a point to require their graduates to produce a thesis (historical research) as the graduate student's final requirement.

Bernardita Reyes Churchill, a

renowned historian and current president of the Philippine National Historical Society, wrote a seminal survey on Philippine historiography focusing on the development of historical writing in the Philippines from the Spanish colonial period and then looking into some essential historical literature written mostly by Filipino historians in the 20th century and 21st century. Her article, entitled "Philippine Historiography – Looking Back and Looking Forward: The History of Historical Studies", traces back to the pioneers of Philippine historical research and even categorizes the various frameworks of historical writing from different generalized regions like Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao¹.

Her attempt to synthesize Philippine historiography based on the frameworks and themes used has indubitably influenced the researcher in his present study, although the researcher's present study on historiography delves more specifically at the local level in Negros Oriental. As a whole, Churchill's study serves as a foundation or a guide for this paper as it deals with the different themes, frameworks, and gaps in the various theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University; moreover, in a similar vein, albeit from a narrower scope, it also looks into the development of historical writing based on the history theses of both schools.

F.A. Gealogo, a history professor from Ateneo de Manila University, defines local history as "the field of study which limits the locus of the study to the history of the region, province, town, or locality."² This present study is

a history of history – that is, a work of historiography – at the local level. More specifically, it is a work of local history focusing on the history of local histories (theses) from the MA History students who graduated from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University.

By and large, this paper aims to enumerate and discuss, if in brevity, the MA History theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University. The researcher also aims to summarize and, of much import, *synthesize* them based on the various historical themes/approaches used by each writer. It is hoped that this paper will serve as a guide for students and professors of history as they do their own research along similar lines. The theses included in this paper are only up until 2022; hence, new theses published thereafter would have to be added in a subsequent paper.

METHODOLOGY

In his work *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought*, MC Lemon describes history as having "...to be the history of something, and what that thing is must, at least in part, determine the approach of the historian."³ Historians can write about many topics or subjects – one can explore political history, social history, institutional history, economic history, and other approaches. The scope can also vary from global history to national history and even go as far as local history.

In the present study, the researcher has decided to explore *historiography*, a study of historians and their works,

specifically the historiography of unpublished theses written by graduates of Master of Arts in History programs from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University. This scholarly endeavor on local history aims to provide structure and categories to the currently available historical literature from the respective graduate school libraries of the schools mentioned earlier.

Suffice it to say, the various studies on local history through the master's theses of history graduate school students show a variety of themes and frameworks in writing local history – from political biographies to political and social histories, institutional histories, and others. In consonance with that, this study – being a historiographical survey of the MA History theses of Silliman University and Negros Oriental State University – purports to collate and synthesize the various theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University.

This is primarily a work of local history, defined as “the study of past events, or of people or groups, in a given geographic area.”⁴ This is evident given that both schools are situated in Negros Oriental. More importantly, this study is a work of local historiography, one that has not been done for the nonce in Negros Oriental. It is indubitably clear that there is a lacuna in the historiographical studies in Negros Oriental, specifically in the survey of local unpublished theses of the Masters in History programs of Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University.⁵

Due to this, the researcher then

sees it as an opportunity to fill that gap by writing about the background of the Master's programs from the schools as mentioned earlier, enumerating and discussing the various unpublished theses, and, of much import, synthesizing them into different themes or frameworks, i.e., social history, political history, institutional history, and biographical works. The result, then, is a history of history, that is to say, an adumbration and synthesis of local historians' (MA History graduates') works.

Negros Oriental State University Master of Arts in History Theses

Negros Oriental State University is the only state university in the province of Negros Oriental. It comprises eight campuses (Main Campus 1, Main Campus 2, Santa Catalina-Bayawan, Siaton, Bais, Pamplona, Mabinay, and Guihulngan), one offering a(n) MA History program. The MA History program of NORSU started in 1999⁶ when Dr. T. Valentino Sitoy – the Dean of the Graduate School at that time and a prominent historian – proposed to open an MA program that focuses more on Philippine History. The theses written since 1999 had primarily three themes: social, political, and institutional history. Dr. Sitoy encouraged the graduate students to research social history, as Silliman University – he would always say – is already focusing on political history. For the nonce, there are only four theses completed since 1999. Two of them are social histories of towns in Negros Oriental, the other is a political

history of a town in Siquijor, and the last one is an institutional history of a school in Dumaguete City. Despite having just four in production, these theses have significantly filled the gap in the social history of Negros Oriental, the institutional history of a school in Dumaguete, and the political history of Siquijor, as most of the municipalities and cities in the province still do not have any written social histories.

Social History

The study of social history is often described as looking into “the history of class formation, elite resiliency and social mobility.”⁷ Moreover, social history also includes studying the “conditions of the general population.”⁸ In Negros Oriental State University, the local social histories written so far do not deal much with the former – on class formation, elite resiliency, and social mobility – but focus more on the latter, which is all about the conditions of the general population.

So far, there are two finished works from NORSU entitled *Social History of Ayungon, Negros Oriental, Philippines: 1950-2000* by Hope A. Jandomon, which was done in 2010; and in 2017 – the *Social History of Bayawan City, Negros Oriental, Philippines: 1950-2010* by Reynaldo J. Navarro. Both theses have similar frameworks.

Apropos of the framework, the indicators dealt with writing social history are population, religion, literacy and education, housing conditions, agriculture & food security, peace and order, and infrastructure developments.

Both studies – which followed the same framework – aim to delineate the development or progress of the towns of Ayungon and Bayawan in terms of the aforesaid social indicators. It narrates the social conditions from the 1950s to the first decade of the 21st century. The most important source that both authors used is the data (i.e., census reports) from the National Statistics Office within the years 1960, 1975, and 2000. Moreover, both authors conducted personal interviews with the local folks from their respective areas of study – thus, using oral history as a source to corroborate and validate the data from the National Statistics Office. In doing so, they were able to provide a lengthy narration of the social progress that took place in both Ayungon and Bayawan. Both researchers concluded that certain factors (e.g., peace and order, education, infrastructure developments, etc.) served as indicators of the social development of their respective towns.

There are aspects in their theses, however, that need improvement, especially in the manner of writing since – perhaps due to the surfeit of sources or data made available – there is only the tendency to chronicle almost everything provided by the census reports. As a result, the authors failed to provide a clear and vibrant narration of *social progress* as they focused more on the statistical data.

Suffice it to say, there is still room for improvement for the graduate students of NORSU who intend to pursue the same framework of study (i.e., social history). Graduate students

should remember that historians are not merely concerned with chronicling facts alone but also should be mindful of their role in providing meaning and relevance to the data or facts they obtained. This becomes the challenge for the succeeding graduate students of NORSU: how could one refrain from just the mere chronology of facts and figures and instead focus on meaning and relevance through a clear and vibrant historical narrative of the data from the census reports?

Institutional History

In 2022, Jojie Saycon finished his work on the *Institutional History of Dumaguete City High School: 1967-2019*. His study is a reconstruction of the aforesaid school's history – a pioneering work since there has been no previous written history of Dumaguete City High School. He also included in his study the different achievements, contributions, and challenges of school administrators or principals apropos of enrollment, teaching and non-teaching personnel, physical plants and facilities, awards and citations, alum recognition, security and safety, students' welfare, and its maintenance and operation.⁹

One of the crucial things to note in his study is how he explained the various challenges and the corresponding responses from the administrators. Similar to other local historical works which also lack detailed sources on the history, the study of Saycon still bears certain gaps that could not be filled because of the limited sources. Also, it would have been better if more

respondents were interviewed; but the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions primarily affected getting more respondents. Nevertheless, the study of Saycon is a pioneering study in NORSU's Master of Arts in History program as it is the first to venture into an institutional history of a school that has no written history until now.

Political History

Moreover, only one thesis in NORSU deals with political history: Haidee C. Yap's *Political History of Larena, Siquijor, Philippines (1971-2004)*, finished in 2008. Interestingly, this thesis's framework or model is similar to the political history framework used by the MA History graduate students of Silliman University. In her narration of Larena, Siquijor's political history, the author looks into the various achievements of municipal mayors from 1971-2004 in health, infrastructure, education, peace and order, and livelihood programs. She also included discussions on the main events that transpired within the given timeframe. She also concluded that the municipal mayors indubitably played a vital role in molding the city into what it is today. Her research showed that there is no doubt that the local mayors were the impetuses of significant change in Larena, Siquijor.

Nonetheless, their elite rule was prominent in the city, as exemplified by the first two mayors who were relatives; similarly, there were the succeeding ones, who also belonged to the city's elite – or *principalia*. As the author averred, there was merely a "transfer

of power from one family to another and the need for the possession of the needed resources in order to obtain power." This powerplay and transfer were not uncommon among Filipino elites before and even today. This framework of political history – with much emphasis on the ruling elites – will be reiterated in the succeeding discussions of the MA History theses from Silliman University since most, if not all, of the MA History theses from Silliman University apropos of political history and political biographies follow the same theory and apply it in their respective study.

Silliman University Master of Arts in History Theses

For almost fifty years since its existence, Silliman University's MA History program has produced many graduates. It started in 1969 with other MA degree programs like MA in Education, MA in English, MA in Nursing, and MA in Sociology and Anthropology.¹¹ The MA History theses in Silliman consists of four major historiographical approaches or themes: a.) Political History b.) Biography (Political/Cultural) c.) Institutional History, and d.) Sociocultural History. This paper intends to arrange and narrate all the MA History theses of Silliman University based on the abovementioned themes rather than describing them chronologically by year. Lastly, some essential historiographical highlights of the Silliman University MA History program will also be noted and discussed.

Historical Theses before the Creation of the MA History Program at Silliman University

Before the MA History program of Silliman even began, there were theses that were already done which were particularly germane to historical research; these were not MA History theses, but MA in Education theses. Bhadra Dulyachinda, from Thailand, wrote the first one about the *History of Chulalankarana¹² University: 1902-1941*. Dulyachinda's study traces the development of the first state university in Thailand from its inchoative stage until 1941 (or before World War II). Aside from that, the study also looks into the reasons for its establishment—being known as the first state university in Thailand.¹³ In retrospect, it is safe to assume that the work of Dulyachinda is the first master's thesis at Silliman University written using the historical method.

The other theses in the MA Education program that are also considered historical in their approach and subject matter were Agaton Pal's study, entitled "A proposed unit about Communism to be incorporated in the course Philippine History and Government", and Caridad Rodriguez' "A critical analysis of textbook in World History with a view to proposed revision."¹⁴ These three MA in Education theses are considered as the early historical works that are not part of the MA History program but are still related to historical writing.

Pioneers of the MA History Program

The first graduate of the MA History program of Silliman University was Manuel Tawagon. His thesis, perhaps befitting as the first MA History thesis in Silliman, was a study with a national scope entitled *The Governor General in Spanish Philippines: An Administrative History*. By and large, the study looked into the administrative role or function of the governor general in the Philippines and his influence to the way the Philippines was governed. It must be noted that the scope of the study was for the whole three hundred thirty-three years that the Spaniards have colonized us, and much emphasis was given to, according to Tawagon the “unexplored knowledge scattered in different sources pertaining to the subject.” Hence, in his study, he included all the governor generals that ruled over the Philippines. Fortunately, he was guided and assisted by Dr. Leslie Bauzon (a prominent historian) who provided him the idea of pursuing a study on the governor generals with the thought that it was considered as pioneering study, which professors of Silliman University also averred.¹⁵

In 1980, after almost a decade, Prof. Carlos M. Magtolis Jr. became the pioneer in writing local history in the MA History program of Silliman University. His writing, entitled *Protestantism in Guihulngan: 1901-1959*¹⁶, focused on the United Church of Christ in the Philippines – its early beginnings and challenges, “the nature of the church organizations as a rural community... and the role of American Presbyterian

Missionaries... in the establishment of a strong Protestant enclave in Negros Oriental.”¹⁷ This historical work was the first work of local history in the MA History program of Silliman University, but it was not the last; matter-of-factly, it became the catalyst for the MA History program’s approach on focusing on local history. After Prof. Magtolis’ historical work on Protestantism in Guihulngan, many eager graduate students of history continued with what he started – thus, came in the cavalcade of local history write-ups that can be categorized, as hitherto mentioned, into four themes: a) Political History b) Institutional History c) Biographies (Political/Cultural) and d) Sociocultural History.

Political History

At present, the MA History program of Silliman University is known for its predilection for political history – especially at the local level. Graduate school professors for the MA History program encourage their students to pursue their theses in this particular field. Albeit there are still other themes – i.e., institutional and sociocultural history – the bulk of the MA History theses of Silliman University consists of political histories – i.e., political histories of cities/towns in or outside Negros Oriental and political biographies.

In 1993, Dr. Earl Jude Paul Cleope¹⁸ became the pioneer in writing political history of cities and towns after his work, *A Political History of the Municipality of Siaton, Negros Oriental from 1948-1992*. His framework looks into the achievements and contributions of the

Siaton's municipal mayors from 1948-1992. The achievements are measured by indicators that Dr. Cleope made and they include: infrastructure projects, educational services, municipal income, and peace and order. Moreover, aside from enumerating the achievements, Dr. Cleope also gave synthesis or comparison of each mayor's achievement in the municipality. It must be noted that the rest of the political history theses written after Dr. Cleope's work follow the same framework – eventually with only a few modifications and additions on the indicators. Hence, Dr. Cleope's pioneering work on the political history of Siaton served as the lodestar of the succeeding political histories of cities and municipalities, not to mention the political biographies – who also follow the indicators first made by Dr. Cleope.

After Cleope's pioneering work, a multitude of political histories on various towns and cities in and outside of Negros Oriental were subsequently written. What followed next was Roslino Villamil's thesis on Dumaguete City entitled *The Political Developments in Dumaguete City from 1972-1992: A Historical Study*, which was written in 1994. More or less, the study had the same framework as Cleope's since Villamil looks into contributions and impact of the different mayors of Dumaguete City. Villamil, however, pinpointed the shift in Dumaguete's political leadership as it went from a city dominated by traditional elites to one that of a "polyarchal leadership" which is a kind of leadership that "tolerates and even protects autonomy of individuals and organizations"

and relies on "persuasion than on coercion."¹⁹ Lastly, Villamil expostulated those non-traditional politicians who mostly came from the business sectors characterize polyarchal leadership. According to his findings, in the late 1970s, there was still an external political force that influenced and backed up these non-traditional politicians; hence, political patronage was still very much present even with the shift of the style of political leadership.

In 2001, Ma. Sarah Fatima Valencia wrote on the *Political History of Bais City, Negros Oriental, from 1968-2000*. Following the same framework of Cleope, she traced the achievements of the various mayors of Bais from 1968-2000 in terms of health services, peace and order, infrastructure, education, and – a new addition to the indicators which was not found specifically pointed out in Cleope's thesis – *tourism*.²⁰ From 1968-2000, Bais City was dominated by two political families – the Goñis and the Villanuevas – who primarily focused on the development of Bais' infrastructures, which led to the inevitable rise of its tourism industry. After the work of Valencia, eight other studies that looked into the political histories of the municipalities and a city in Negros Oriental followed suit. They are as follows: *A Political History of the Municipality of Sibulan, Negros Oriental, 1947-2004* by Dino Mondarte; *Political History of Sta. Catalina from 1948-2010* by John Barry Nuico; *Political History of Canlaon City from 1967 to 2012* by Philner Salindo; *A Political History of the Achievements and Challenges of Municipal Mayors of Zamboanguita,*

Negros Oriental, 1946-2014 by Jobien Dayao; *A Political History of the Municipality of Amlan, Negros Oriental from 1948-2016* by Norris Wagas; *A Political History of the Municipality of Vallehermoso, Negros Oriental (1913-2015)* by Bern Anne Rhea Q. Escorial; *Political History of the Municipality of Dauin, Negros Oriental (1948-2018)* by Lizbeth D. Devela; and *Political History of the City of Guihulngan (1948-2020)* by Von Ryan T. Gomez.

The aforesaid studies on political history, in general, looked into the achievements, contributions, and challenges of the mayors of the respective municipalities/city. The researchers of these theses – following the framework of Cleope, which Valencia modified by adding *tourism* as an indicator – also looked into the five indicators of achievements: infrastructure projects, health services, educational services, peace and order, and tourism.

Mondarte and Nuico basically followed the same framework of Cleope and Valencia without any changes in the achievement indicators. But Salindo, in his political history of Canlaon City, added *public services* as another indicator. Dayao, in his study on the political history of Zamboanguita, also made modifications in the indicators by adding *agriculture and fisheries*; this was later on used Wagas in his study on his political history of Amlan. Escorial, on the other hand, added sources of income²⁰ as an indicator of her study on Vallehermoso and additionally looked into the challenges (i.e., economic, political, and social) encountered by the

various administrations from 1913-2015. It must be emphasized that Escorial's thesis has the widest scope in terms of years as she covers the political history of Vallehermoso all the way back from 1913 (the end of the Taft Era) to 2015. As to her explanation why she started from 1913, unlike majority of the other political histories in the MA History program which started after World War II, she said that she chose 1913 because it was on 1 January 1913 that "Vallehermoso separated from the municipality of Guihulngan."²¹ Lastly, Devela's recent work on the political history of Dauin included a new indicator in the achievements of the mayors from 1948 to 2018, that is, *environmental protection programs and projects*.²²

There were also a few theses on political history conducted outside Negros Oriental, they are as follows: *A Political History of Binalbagan from 1951-2002* by Manuelito Murillo (2004); *Political History of Katipunan, Zamboanga del Norte: 1946-2006* by Carina Romarate (2007); *A Political History of Valencia City, Bukidnon: 1961-2001* by Bobby Visayan (2005); and *A Historical Study of the Political Elites in Larena, Siquijor: 1948-1992* by Jesa Samson (1994). Again, similar to the previously discussed political histories on the towns and cities of Negros Oriental, the framework used by Murillo, Romarate, and Visayan were based on Cleope's thesis. They all focused their discussion on the contributions, achievements, and challenges of the mayors in their respective towns/cities and highlighted their achievements based on the

indicators with slight modifications from Cleope's original indicators such as the addition of *agriculture* by Visayan and *livelihood opportunities* by Romarate. Lastly, Samson's study on the political elites is a first in the list of many political histories, since it is the only study that clearly looks into the lives of the political leaders as she examined their "socio-economic and political characteristics". In her study, she gives a vivid description of the political (power) structure of Larena and delineates the shifts or changes in the town's political structure. Her indicators for the socio-economic and political characteristics include: age, sex, religion, education, income, landholding, occupation, political party/affiliation, and kinship ties. All in all, she used these nine indicators to study the political elites of Larena. Samson's study is the only one among the plethora of MA History theses that specifically looks into the nature of political elites in a certain town/city. In the main, all political histories of towns and cities in and outside of Negros Oriental point out that immediately after World War II, the primary thrust of the mayors was to develop infrastructure projects which, to the mayors, would eventually ignite economic and social growth and lead to the development of the other indicators hitherto mentioned. Eventually, after they were able to recover from the ruination of war, the mayors then had to establish themselves politically, thus paving the way for the rise of political elites/families during the Third Republic to the present. Studies have been conducted already on the rise of the political elites from a national scope

and, without a doubt, these local studies would complement and strengthen the argument on the political elites' ascent right after the war.²³ The rebuilding process also led to them regaining their power and influence.

However, there is still a need – and it is indeed highly encouraged by the history professors at Silliman University – to complete the political histories of towns and cities in Negros Oriental. For the nonce, there are still around fifteen municipalities/cities of Negros Oriental that don't have any official history. These municipalities and cities are San Jose, Tanjay²⁴, Manjuyod, Bindoy, Ayungon, Tayasan, Jimalalud, La Libertad, Bacong, Valencia, Bayawan, and Basay. It would be a remarkable achievement if all the towns and cities of Negros Oriental would have their own political – not to mention, updated – histories. Suffice it to say, this remains a herculean task and challenge of present and future MA History graduate students of Silliman University.

Biography (Political/Cultural)

With regard to the biographical approach/theme, Prof. Victor Emmanuel Enario started it all by writing a study on *The Political Career of Jose Pro Teves: 1947-1978*. As a biographical study, Enario traced back Mayor Jose Pro Teves' early years and the factors that led him to enter politics. Moreover, he also looked into the contributions, achievements, and challenges that Mayor Teves faced during his nineteen years of service. Enario used four indicators – that were also derived from

Cleope's pioneering thesis on political history – in measuring the achievements of Mayor Teves, they are as follows: education, healthcare, infrastructure, and peace and order. His work is a pioneering study/thesis on political biographies in Silliman University's MA History program.

Using Enario's aforementioned study as a model, Justin Bulado was able to write another political biography of a notable figure in Dumaguete City and Negros Oriental as whole entitled *The Political Career of Mariano Perdices: 1932-1972*. In tracing the political career of Governor Perdices, Bulado first looked into his early life to make a connection as to what drove Perdices to enter politics and why he opted to stay in politics for most of his life – given that he continued to serve the public for 40 years, first as councilor, then mayor, and then as governor. Bulado, in his study, also used the four indicators in Enario's framework to measure the achievements of Perdices as Mayor of Dumaguete and Governor of Negros Oriental.

Trizer Mansueto's study entitled *Cong. Ramon M. Durano's Legacy in the History of Danao City (1959-1969)* can also be considered as biography, irrespective if, at the outset, it included a narration of Danao City's development from a settlement to a full-fledge town, then to its conversion to a city under Cong. Ramon Durano's influence. As a biography, Mansueto connected Congressman Durano's role in the development of Danao City by looking at his political and socio-economic contributions. Lastly, he also identified

and discuss the challenges the Cong. Durano faced while in power.

The only biographical work that does not necessarily deal with politics is Charity Jereza's study entitled *A Biography of Sultan Omar Kiram a.k.a. Captain Vicente Austria (1914-1986)*. It is a full-blown biography that not only focuses on the political career of a certain individual, but his whole life story. It is also the first biographical work in the MA History program of Silliman University that covers the entire life of a notable individual. In her study, she narrated the life of Vicente Austria who fortuitously found out that he came from a royal lineage as a Maranao Sultan. What makes the study of Jereza quite interesting is the fact that Sultan Kiram was the only one in the Maranao states that had a Christian background and foundation. Nevertheless, the thesis of Jereza is a welcome change from the political biographies or histories that are prevalent among the MA History theses in Silliman University.

By and large, like the political history theme/approach, there is still a need for more studies on significant/notable political/non-political figures preferably inside or even outside of Negros Oriental. Enario and Bulado have already written about two prominent public servants from Dumaguete City, but a lot of notable politicians/political elites still remain without political biographies (e.g., Lamberto Macias, Emilio Macias II, Agustin Perdices, Senator Lorenzo Teves, Serafin Teves, and many more) Though it is impossible to write about all of the political elites from Negros Oriental, it would be

of great contribution to add more biographical studies to the list. Again, that remains to be the challenge to the MA History graduate students of Silliman University. There is still a very huge gap to fill, but it is not impossible to do.

Institutional/Religious History

The third theme/approach amongst the MA History theses in Silliman University is the writing of the Institutional/Religious History which includes narratives of various institutions like churches, organizations (e.g., business), and schools. The writing of institutional history was pioneered by Prof. Regan Jomao-as who wrote a thesis entitled *Silliman University Church through the Years: 1901-1994*.²⁵ In his study, Prof. Jomao-as narrated the early beginnings of the Silliman University Church with the coming of the American Presbyterian Missionaries in 1899 and eventually the creation or founding of the present Silliman University Church as a result of the establishment of the Dumaguete Evangelical Church in 1911. Moreover, Jomao-as also delineated the difficulties/challenges faced by establishment and how the missionaries were able to overcome it. More importantly, though, he described and explained the role of Silliman Church inside and outside the Silliman Community. By and large, being a pioneering study on institutional history, the study of Jomao-as became an impetus for further studies on church organizations and other works that would follow years after.

Considered as a pioneering study on the history of buildings in the MA History program of Silliman University, Delvietha Sabanal's *The Buildings of Silliman University, An Institutional History: 1901-2001* was a timely thesis since it was finished a year after Silliman University celebrated its centennial founding anniversary. Sabanal's study looked into the histories of the buildings of Silliman University their roles in the university's history. Moreover, Sabanal also explained the importance of the names of the buildings apropos of Silliman University's history. Sabanal justified the significance of her study by saying that the study's aim is to "... bring the past to life and to relate this to the present so that one may learn how to appreciate the beautiful memories these buildings have and to be able to give importance to these edifices..."²⁶ By and large, Sabanal's study is not only considered as the first MA History thesis of institutional history with buildings as its framework, but it is also the only one that deals with buildings. So far, there are no other studies that followed suit. Hence, it is highly encouraged that present and future graduate students conduct a study following the same framework – perhaps they can even narrate the stories of old buildings in – or even outside – Dumaguete City.

In the year 1999, Joseph Raymond and Clementino Balasabas, who were faculty members of the History-Political Science Department of Silliman University, both finished their theses which were considered as institutional histories. The former looked into *The Central Azucarera de Bais, 1918-1979*,

while the latter pursued a study on *The Catholic Church in the History of Jimalalud, Negros Oriental: 1946-1992*.

Prof. Joseph Raymond's ²⁷ study on the Central Azucarera de Bais is a narrative of the company's history from its early beginnings to becoming the largest producer of raw sugar in Negros Oriental. In retrospect, Dr. Raymond was able to trace its roots to the Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipina – otherwise or famously known as *Tabacalera*. Lastly, not only did Dr. Raymond trace the history of the company, but he also elucidated the socio-economic, political, and sociocultural development – all external forces/factors – that took place from 1918-1979 and which influenced the Central Azucarera de Bais' (CAB) growth as a sugar company.

Prof. Balasabas' study, on the other hand, is a study of the Catholic Church in the context of Jimalalud's (a northern town in Negros Oriental) social history. His study showed that the Catholic Church indubitably played a vital role in forming Jimalalud's community. That being said, Prof. Balasabas measured the Catholic Church's contribution by using four indicators: a) Education, b) Health and Sanitation, c) Economic Involvement, and d) Political Participation. Lastly, to further verify the performance of the Catholic Church, Prof. Balasabas also had to corroborate the Catholic Church's documents with government documents – this undoubtedly strengthened the findings of his study.

In the first half of 2000, two other institutional histories of church/

religious organizations were written by Kwak Choonshik and Sarreal Soquiño. Choonshik's study entitled *The Korean Methodist Church and the Samil Movement, 1884-1945*, is considered the first MA History thesis dealing with a topic outside the Philippines. ²⁸ The study deals with the history of the Methodist and the succor of the Presbyterian Church in Korea with its early beginnings in 1884 and its development with the cavalcade of missions that ensued afterward. The study also looked into the challenges that the protestant missionaries faced, especially with the colonization of Korea by Japan in 1910. The Japanese occupation proved to have been a great challenge not only for the Koreans but also for the missionaries who willingly helped and assisted the people – even the independence movement – to alleviate their suffering. Lastly, the study also examines the Samil Movement and the Methodist Church's participation. The Samil Movement was a nationalist movement supported by various religious groups – especially the Korean Methodist Church. Hence, the study of Choonshik – by looking into the role of the leaders and members of the Korean Methodist Church – sought to connect the Korean Methodist Church with Korea's struggle for independence. Indeed, in his findings, there is no doubt that the Korean Methodist Church awakened the nationalistic fervor of the Koreans and influenced their beliefs and attitudes, especially during the Samil demonstrations.

On the other hand, Soquiño's thesis is a study of the *History of the*

Basic Christian Community in the Diocese of Bacolod from 1970-2002. Like all the other theses on institutional history, Soquiño narrated how the Basic Christian Community (BCC) in the Diocese of Bacolod came to be and pinpointed the factors that led to its development. Moreover, Soquiño also gave a vivid discussion on its development into a social movement by looking into its primary characteristics as an organization/movement. Suffice it to say, Soquiño concluded that the BCC started from humble beginnings – as it was engendered as a result of poverty and that it was primarily a church-based organization – given that the Diocese of Bacolod played a vital role in its existence and influencing its core beliefs.

Grace Nenita Banogon's *Historical Development of Cooperatives in Negros Oriental from 1935-2005* is also considered an institutional history as she attempted to look into the growth and development of cooperatives in Negros Oriental's history by tracing back the origin of the various cooperatives in Negros Oriental from 1935-2005. More specifically, Banogon delineated and explained the programs approved and promulgated by the different presidential administrations from 1935-2005 – starting from President Quezon until the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. In tracing back the programs, she then identified the responses of the Oriental Negrenses.

Lastly, and the most recent of all institutional histories, include Cornelio Gosiaoco's *Bago City College: An*

Institutional History, 1980-2007, which is a study that highlighted the development – physical and administrative – of Bago City College from 1980-2007, and Liezl Beth Eunice Bantilan's *History of the San Isidro Labrador Parish of Lazi, Siquijor (1884-2018)*, which is predominantly an oral history on the San Isidro Labrador Parish of Lazi, Siquijor.

In brief, Gosiaoco, in his history of Bago City College, elucidated the different stages of the school's growth and development and, more importantly, looked at the impetuses of – and the administrators responsible for – its development. On the other hand, Bantilan looks into the history of San Isidro Labrador Parish by inveterately relying on oral history, as there were limited written records of the church in Lazi. Suffice it to say, Bantilan was still able to reconstruct the history of the parish by identifying the various challenges the parish had encountered through the years, the religious role it played in developing the municipality of Lazi, Siquijor, and to look into the parish's influence apropos of the cultural, social, economic, and political life of Lazi, Siquijor.³⁰

All the aforementioned institutional histories have, in one way or another, influenced each other's framework. Starting with Prof. Jomao-as' pioneering work on Silliman Church, followed by Sabanal's other pioneering work on the history of Silliman University's buildings, and then came Raymond's narrative on the history of the Central Azucarera de Bais (CAB). Basing its model from the previous religious-themed studies of Magtolis and Jomao-as, there were then

more histories of religious institutions/ organizations that were written, like Balasabas' history of the Catholic Church in the context of Jimalalud's social history, Choonshik's history of the Korean Methodist Church in relation to its role in Korea's struggle for independence, and Soquiño's narrative on Basic Christian Community in the Diocese of Bacolod.

After that, Banogon then wrote a history of the cooperatives in Negros Oriental; Gosiaoco developed a historical study of Bago City College, and Bantilan wrote an oral history of the History of San Isidro Labrador Parish of Lazi, Siquijor. With all these studies, it now seems easier for Silliman MA History graduate students to develop new topics based on the framework provided by the aforementioned studies on institutional history.

Sociocultural History

Among the many MA History theses at Silliman University, only two somehow delve more into the sociocultural aspect of history. They are Bernadette Cabrera's *The Peasants' Movement in Bukidnon (A History of Agrarian Struggles)* and Felipe Romanillos' *Early History of Bohol from Foreign Eyes (1565-1600)*. Cabrera's study revolves around the peasant movement in Bukidnon and is written from the perspective of those peasants. She did this by looking into the agrarian-related problems in Bukidnon from the 1960s to the early 1990s. As a result of these problems, the peasants then resorted to forming organizations that consolidated their efforts against

all forms of injustice. After the numerous organizations and the causes for their creation, Cabrera then examined the initiatives they took to achieve agrarian reform and the ramifications of their initiatives. The study of Cabrera is the only thesis that deals with the history of the peasantry. Thus, it behooves other aspiring MA History graduate students to follow the framework of Cabrera and pursue a similar study, this time in Negros Oriental or in one of the cities/ municipalities in the province.

Felipe Romanillos' study on the early history of Bohol is also considered a pioneering study – together with Tawagon's study on Governor Generals – on (early) colonial history among the different MA History theses at Silliman University. In his study, Romanillos examined the early settlers of Bohol by looking at their beliefs, practices, customs, and traditions before the coming of the Spaniards. Moreover, the study highlighted the significant events that took place before and during the arrival of the Spaniards and that it primarily relies on chronicles written by Spanish friars assigned to the various barangays and towns in Bohol.

The sociocultural theme/approach in the MA History program of Silliman University has the least number of theses, with only two so far. It is then imperative for the present and future MA History graduate students to pursue similar studies with the said theme. However, given the MA History program of Silliman University's proclivity for political and institutional histories, it is unsurprising that only a few works venture toward sociocultural

histories. Nonetheless, that is probably why NORSU's MA History program intends to focus on social history to fill the void. With the two schools helping each other out, it is possible, indeed probable, that in the near future, there will be a consolidated political and social history of Negros Oriental.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the beginning, this study is not merely a compilation of theses from Negros Oriental State University and Silliman University, but a synthesis of the theses written from both universities. From the data gathered, it is apparent that Silliman University has produced exactly thirty-three (33) theses in MA History from 1972 until 2021.³¹ The researcher categorized those theses into four historiographical themes: a) Political History, b) Institutional History, c) Biography (Political and Cultural), and d) Sociocultural History. While Political history has the greatest number of theses written, containing sixteen (16) titles for the nonce, the Sociocultural history has only two (2) theses in its list. Again, as hitherto mentioned, these numbers are not surprising, given the MA History program of Silliman University's proclivity for political histories.

Since 1999, Negros Oriental State University, on the other hand, has only produced four (4) theses all in all. Two (2) are social histories, one (1) is an institutional history, and the other one (1) is a political history. However, the MA program of NORSU opted to focus more on social history. This decision to

focus on social history is beneficial and advantageous since it will necessarily fill the lacuna in the historiography of Negros Oriental. It must be noted that history professors of both MA programs of the said universities encourage their graduate students to pursue the study of local histories when they write their respective theses.

In retrospect, the writing of local history was started by Prof. Carlos Magtolis Jr. at Silliman University back in 1980. It was further developed by Dr. Earl Jude Paul Cleope in 1993 when he provided the framework of study for political history, which most, if not all, of the ensuing MA History graduate students of Silliman University – even NORSU – followed.

The decision to emphasize local history is a good decision since it is vital to complete the history at the local level to strengthen the foundation of national history. Without a complete narrative of history at the local level, there will always remain a lacuna at the national level. Hence, the MA History theses from Silliman University and Negros Oriental State University greatly contribute primarily to the local historiography of Negros Oriental and the surrounding areas in the Philippines. It is also of great contribution to national history in general.

The challenge now – or the task ahead – is for the future MA History graduate students from both universities to complete the social and political histories of the towns and cities of Negros Oriental. It is also encouraged that they should write biographies of the political elites of Negros Oriental. There

is no problem anymore concerning the framework as it has been written and used by many already; the problem, however, lies in whether there will be MA History graduate students who are willing to pursue scholarly endeavors of writing local history and eventually contributing to fill the gaps in the local history of Negros Oriental as a whole. Although national history is important, there is undoubtedly a need to write local history as there are stories in the localities that are left unwritten. Therefore, the writing of local history must also be given equal importance as local histories pose as the missing pieces needed to complete the puzzle of our national history.

Endnotes

1. Bernardita Reyes-Churchill. "Philippine Historiography – Looking Back and Looking Forward: The History of Historical Studies." In *Philippine Social Sciences: Capacities, Directions, and Challenges*, eds. Virginia A. Miralao and Joanne B. Agbisit (Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council, 2012), 141-164.
2. F.A. Gealogo, "Local History in the Philippines," in *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Volume II*, eds. Rosario M. Cortes and Leslie M. Bauzon (Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council, 1993), 105.
3. M.C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 1995), 5.
4. Terry Barnhart, foreword to *On Doing Local History*, by Carol Kammen (New York: AltaMira Press, 2003), 4.
5. Matter-of-factly, there has been no local historiographical work on the different journal articles and even books published about the history of Negros Oriental in general.
6. Resolution #0016, Series 1999. Office of the University Board Secretary, Negros Oriental State University.
7. F.A. Gealogo, "Social History in the Philippines," in *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Volume II*, eds. Rosario M. Cortes and Leslie M. Bauzon (Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council, 1993), 108.
8. *Ibid.*, 109.
9. Jojie Saycon, "Institutional History of Dumaguete City High School: 1967-2019" (master's thesis, Negros Oriental State University, 2022), 5.
10. Haidee Yap, "A Political History of Larena, Siquijor, Philippines (1971-2004)" (master's thesis, Negros Oriental State University, 2005), xiii.
11. Crispin Maslog, T. Valentino Sito, and Edilberto Tiempo, *Silliman University: 1901-1976* (Dumaguete City: Silliman University Press, 1977), 130-131.
12. Also known as Chulalongkorn University
13. Bhadra Dulyachinda, "A History of Chulalankarana University: 1902-1941" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 1950), 9.
14. Prof. Rodriguez, a prolific writer/local historian, was then able to

- produce a four-volume series on the History of Negros Oriental from the Spanish period up until the Martial Law Years. She was also able to write a book about the History of Dumaguete and on the Legends and Myths of Negros Oriental.
15. Manuel Tawagon, "The Governor General in Spanish Philippines: An Administrative History" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 1972), 3-4.
 16. Prof. Magtolis thesis can be categorized either in the institutional history or socio-cultural history as it not only talks about Protestantism as an institution but also its impact to the socio-cultural development of Guihulngan.
 17. Carlos Magtolis, "Protestantism in Guihulngan: 1901-1959" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 1980), 4.
 18. Dr. Earl Jude Cleope went on to finish his Ph.D. in History at University of Santo Tomas in the year 1999 – graduating Summa Cum Laude. He is now the Vice President for Academic Affairs of Silliman University.
 19. N. Jayapalan, *Comprehensive Modern Political Analysis* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002), 199.
 20. Dr. Cleope's indicator for this is called *municipal income*.
 21. Bern Anne Q. Escorial, "A Political History of the Municipality of Vallehermoso, Negros Oriental: 1913-2015" (master's thesis, Silliman University), 7.
 22. Lizbeth Devela, "Political History of the Municipality of Dauin, Negros Oriental: 1948-2018" (master's thesis, Silliman University), 10.
 23. See Rolando Simbulan, *The Modern Principalia* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2005) and Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines," in *Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1998), 192-226.
 24. There is a study on Tanjay as a municipality by Elias Saycon. It was an MA History thesis written in 1986, but even when it is listed in the Silliman University's library catalog/index, the researcher was not able to find a copy of it in the SU Main Library and Graduate School Library. See Elias Saycon, "A Comparative Study of the Municipal Administration of Tanjay, Negros Oriental, 1946-1972: Its Implications to Good Government" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 1986).
 25. This thesis was eventually updated and developed into a book. See Regan Jomao-as, *The Foundation of God Standeth Sure: The Silliman Church Story, 1901-2003* (Dumaguete City: Silliman University Church, 2003).
 26. Delvietha Sabanal, "The Buildings of Silliman University, An Institutional History: 1901-2001" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 2002), 3.
 27. Dr. Joseph Raymond went on to finish his Ph.D. in History at UP Diliman in 2009.
 28. Albeit, it was not the first in the

- graduate school of Silliman University as Dulyachinda had already written about the History of Chulalankarana University: 1902-1941 in 1950. 29. Kwak Choonsik, "The Korean Methodist Church and the Samil Movement, 1884-1945" (master's thesis, Silliman University, 2001), 6.
30. Liezl Beth Eunice B. Bantilan, "History of the San Isidro Labrador Parish of Lazi, Siquijor 1884-2012" (Master's Thesis, Silliman University, 2021), 3-4.
31. It must be noted that there is one missing thesis that is not included in the count and, from the researcher's memory, it was written Prof. Gerard Pamate. The researcher tried looking for a copy of it in the Silliman University Main Library and the Graduate School Library, but to no avail. The thesis is not even included in the OPAC or the Index of MA History thesis.
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