Jesuits in the Philippines: Politics and Missionary Work in the Colonial Setting

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Jesuits in the Philippines: Politics and Missionary Work in the Colonial Setting

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June 10, 2014

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts of the City College of the City University of New York
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Introduction

The Society of Jesus was no stranger to missionary work in foreign and distant places. Founded in 1540,\(^1\) the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, rivaled, even eclipsed, all of the more established religious orders in global missionary work: mainly the Order of St. Dominic, or the Dominicans; the Order of St. Francis, or the Franciscans; and the Order of St. Augustine, or the Augustinians. By the late sixteenth century, the Society already had mission stations in the Americas and India, and already had a presence in Japan and China. Their success in missionary work had been nothing short of extraordinary.

The Jesuits had a military-like organization. Owing to the background of their founder Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), who was a soldier of noble birth,\(^2\) the Jesuits, more than any of the other orders, were men of action. They did highly value their spiritual exercises but at the same time, they also maintained that communication with god, and the perfection of their relationship with him could also “be attained by the exercise of the natural human capacities.”\(^3\) In contrast, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Augustinians, having been founded in the thirteenth century, were rather devoted to the hermetic way of life; and for them, preaching the gospel to non-believers was simply secondary to their lives of contemplative prayers. Additionally, the very nature of their evangelization seemed to be geared toward a heavy-handed rebuke of what they considered to be heresies and idolatries. Their approach to evangelization was

\(^1\) Paul Van Dyke, *Ignatius Loyola: The Founder of the Jesuits* (Port Washington:
\(^2\) Ibid., 14-28.
one of the castigation and extirpation of these heresies. In not so many words, their method of proselytization was simple and clear – their Christian god was the one true god, and their Catholic Church the one true church; non-Christian deities were merely condemned as idols, and other religious traditions mere heresies. The Jesuits, however, were tolerant of other religious traditions, realizing that this was the most effective way to penetrate tightly knit societies and be able to preach and ultimately convert people to Christianity. Diplomacy and accommodation in dealing with non-Christians became integral features of their evangelization work. This was not at all surprising as social interaction and community service were important parts of their formation as members of the Society; these activities served as extensions of their personal prayers and spiritual meditations. This aspect of their missionary activity was most evidently demonstrated in their missions in China, Japan, and Vietnam.

In the Philippines, meanwhile, the presence of a Spanish colonial infrastructure demanded more than just mere diplomacy and accommodation. Exigent circumstances in the islands – state administration, civil and ecclesiastical conflicts, native pacifications and conversions, internal disagreements among the religious, among others – meant that community action had to assume a more radical guise – that of political maneuverings and strategies.

But ‘politics’ and ‘to be political’ have meant different things in different situations. Indeed, the word, ‘politics’, has been used to describe anything from affairs of state to inter-office relations. In this study, ‘politics’ refers to the alliances the Jesuits crafted with colonial powers and the tactics they employed to
either gain or maintain such alliances. It will also contextualize the term, establishing parameters for our usage of the word that is essential in understanding the argument and the support presented herein.

This contextual meaning of politics is historically placed in Counter Reformation Europe. The Society of Jesus was founded at a time when the Catholic Church realized the exigent need for change to stem the spread of Protestantism, and to adapt to the growth of humanist values. To these pressing concerns, the Church responded with measures to reform its organization, demonstrating an intention to accommodate progressive ideals, and a willingness to discuss and question traditional Catholic doctrines.\(^4\) The Society of Jesus, in its establishment and formation, therefore, took into consideration the prevailing reformist ideals in the period, but simultaneously, acknowledged the structures of the Catholic Church and the restrictions it imposed on its members. Between this legacy of conformity and this new idea of self expression, the members of the order found “wiggle room” for agency, discovered a middle-ground, a comfortable compromise. Politics, therefore, at least in the Jesuit sense, meant a form of agency that interacted with the powers of colonial governments. They may, in some instances, have overstepped in the execution of these expressions, but as we shall discuss in the following paragraphs, the Jesuit moral code provided a license for incursions into questionable extra-ecclesiastical regions.\(^5\)


Acting as ‘politicians’, the Jesuits have assumed the positions of advisors to heads of nations, confessors to kings and emperors, teachers to future rulers, state representatives, ambassadors, power brokers, and personal confidantes. These roles did not require the members of the order to directly effect policy, instead they provided the perfect avenue to influence policy makers. Through holding these offices, the Jesuits have successfully married their adherence to structure and tradition and their espousal of agency and humanist ideals.

The use of politics among the Jesuits should not come as a surprise despite the religious nature of the order. In fact, the moral philosophy of the Society, although not explicit about it, condoned the use of politics by its members:

The Jesuits now hold the view that in many instances, a good intention can justify even the choice of less good means. They contend that, in the abstract, man’s moral consciousness is certainly primarily disposed to regard the application of immoral means to a moral end as essentially to be condemned; in practical life, however, innumerable instances, have, over and over again, tended to lead to the opposite conclusion. How often does it not happen that we are compelled to tell a lie to avoid injuring someone, and it is easy to conceive of a case in which a lie might be the means of saving a person’s life.6

This political exposition becomes clearer and more precise: “… man’s moral consciousness may place the ultimate purpose of an act on a higher plane than the means by which it is attained.”7 In essence, for the Society, the end did justify the means. This notion of Jesuit moral philosophy may have different interpretations depending on the reader. But one thing is consistently gleaned, even extracted, from this short discourse – that political calculations, understood in the Jesuit sense, is an acceptable, moral tool in community and social relations,

7 Ibid.
or state relations at large, for the members of the Society of Jesus. Thus, in evangelization and for the survival of the Society of Jesus as a religious order, a more delicate and sensitive approach to missionary work – the employment of a political agenda – was more than necessary; it was practically essential.

The Jesuits, therefore, were a new breed of missionaries, very different from what the Catholic community had seen in the past. The very reason for their establishment was to help reform the same institution responsible for their founding. And yet, when they were established, the legacy of regulation and censure still very much pervaded the Catholic Church. This rather circuitous origin of the order provided them with a measure of liberation from the constraints of strict adherence to rules and dogmatic principles, but at the same time, placed them at the center of the institution from where all these authority and control originate. As such, this paper focuses on how, under these circumstances, this new breed of Catholic evangelists existed, adapted, survived, and even flourished. Throughout this paper, I argue that the Jesuits positioned themselves, at least during this period, in that middle ground of adherence to tradition and expressions of political agency, a middle ground between the Catholic Church’s dogmatic teachings and the emerging humanist values that increasingly became more important and influential in this period; and that expressions of this compromise were demonstrated in the Jesuits’ political activities to the extent that both traditional Catholic doctrines were respected and pragmatic virtues were integrated and applied. This new sense of agency reached its fullest expression as the Jesuits assumed the roles of advisors, government
agents, counselors, confessors, ambassadors, brokers, and other offices that require less than direct involvement in non-ecclesiastical affairs. This essentially was true for the Jesuits’ political activity in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – existing within the broader traditions of the Catholic Church, but working toward the acceptance and application of humanist ideals in response to an age where the interconnectedness of people, continents, and religious were becoming more important and more apparent.

In the succeeding discussion, I elaborate on how Jesuit understanding of their contemporary surroundings made them realize the importance to adapt politically, and to employ political machinations to survive in a constantly changing world. The following section is divided into three parts: the first part concerns Alonso Sánchez, a very talented, and persuasive Jesuit who gave legitimacy to Spanish colonial claims over the Philippine islands, and its succeeding occupation; the second part is about Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, a governor general of the islands, who found himself embroiled in bitter disputes with church officials but also found friends and allies among the Jesuit fathers; and the third part looks at the Jesuit expulsion from the Philippines, which showed the involvement of international developments in colonial cities. This paper demonstrates how Jesuit political activity and skill were manifested – using these three examples – first, as an active and vocal participant, in the colonial process, second, as a supporting element in colonial politics, and lastly, as an organization defending itself against external and internal threats. Strikingly different, yet equally effective, these political strategies yielded much benefit to
the Jesuits, from their arrival in the Philippines in 1581 up to their expulsion from the Spanish Empire in 1768.

**Historiography**

The history of the Jesuits in the Philippines remains understudied in the historiography of the global Catholic Church history. As such, there are only five main studies of the history of the order in the Philippines. In 1939, W.C. Repetti edited a three-volume tome called the *History of the Society of Jesus in the Philippine Islands*. Primarily relying on information found in the archives in Seville, he carefully reconstructed the events pertaining to the order in the Philippines for the last three hundred years. The last extensive work on the order was *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768*, published in 1967. The author, Horacio de la Costa, himself a Jesuit, naturally had an agenda in writing this book. Purging it of a lot of non-religious elements, he attempted to paint the history of his order using exclusively religious hues. The result was essentially a history of the missionary work of the Jesuits, and not a history of the Jesuits as an institution, as products of the tension between tradition and progress, between allegiance to the king and obedience to the pope, and between their moral responsibility to spread Christianity and their humanist value to respect the rights of the natives. It seemed de la Costa was conscious of this purging, for the sources he referenced made some mention of the non-religious activities of the

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order. These two works comprise the secondary sources exclusively dedicated to
the history of the order in the country.

Many of the materials still used date from the early modern period.

Claudio Acquaviva, the Society’s general in 1590, cognizant of the importance of
meticulous record keeping and documentation, instructed the Jesuits in the
Philippines to chronicle the activities of the order for posterity. The result was
a three-volume comprehensive history of the order, spanning the years 1582-
1716. The first one was Pedro Chirino’s Relacion de las Islas Filipinas y de lo
que en ellas han trabajado los padres de la Compañía de Jesus, published in
1604. In 1660, in response to a request of Philip IV, Francisco Cólin published
his work in 1663 under the title, Labor Evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los
obreros de la Compañía de Jesús. Fundación y progresos de su provincia en las
Islas Filipinas. And lastly, in 1749, Pedro Murillo Velarde published Historia
de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús, Segunda Parte, que
comprehende los progresos de esta provincia desde el año de 1616 hasta el de
1716. Murillo’s work “is a continuation of Labor Evangelica…, which at the

10 Pedro Chirino, Relacion de las Islas Filipinas y de lo que en ellas han trabajado los
padres de la Compañía de Jesus, 2nd Ed., (1604, repr., Manila: Imprenta de D. Esteban Balbas,
1890), 5. Chirino wrote: “Habiendo de dar cuenta a V.P. del estado y punto, en que esta nuestra
minima Compañía en las Filipinas (por la obligacion de mi oficio de Procurador, enviago para esto
el Julio pasado de seiscientos dos y como persona que he gastado en ellas catorce años de lo mejor
de mi vida,) seguiré el hilo de los sucesos que la Compañía ha tenido en aquellas partes; y de los
trabajos que ha pasado en la predicacion de nuestra santa fe, y del aumento que la misma
Compañía ha recibido a vueltas del que ha procurado para la Santa Iglesia.”

11 Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, “Las Crónicas Jesuíticas de Filipinas en el Siglo XVIII:
Pedro Murillo Velarde,” Líneas recientes de investigación en Historia Moderna. I Encuentro de
Jóvenes Investigadores en Historia Moderna. (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Catolico, 2013)
234.

12 Francisco Cólin, Labor Evangelica, ed. Pablo Pastells (Madrid: Joseph Fernandez de
Buendia, 1663).

13 Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J. Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de
Jesús. 2nd parte (Manila: Nic de la Cruz Bagay, 1749).
time built on the unedited, unpublished Chirino work, *Primera Parte de la Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de al Compañía de Jesús*. Thus, Murillo Velarde’s work completes the official chronicle of the first phase of the history of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines. ¹⁴ These three works are the most cited on the topic of the Jesuits in the Philippines. Although each had its bias, they are, nonetheless, significant in that they were written when the country was still a colony of Spain, giving the reader first-hand observations on how state and church relations, both with each other and within itself, affected colonial administration.

These five volumes are the principal sources for the history of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines. Although written by members of the order with a specific purpose in mind, the information contained therein provides the contextual backdrop for this work. Further, the information they do not provide or deliberately withhold ascribes purpose and a measure of urgency to this research. Focusing on the political aspects of Jesuit activities in the Philippines, this paper aims to demonstrate a gap in the literature, while simultaneously filling that gap with original research and persuasive exposition.

Few, if any, comprehensive works have been published on the subject since de la Costa’s *The Jesuits in the Philippines*. If there were any, most of them were either book chapter contributions or journal articles. Apart from Repetti’s work, all other histories of the Jesuits have been written by members of the order.

¹⁴ Yuste, *Líneas recientes*, 238. Yuste wrote: “La Historia es la continuación de la Labor Evangélica del P. Francisco Cólin (1663), que a su vez retomaba la inédita Primera Parte de la Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús de P. Pedro Chirino. Así pues, la obra de Murillo Velarde completa la crónica oficial de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas en su primera etapa en Filipinas.”
which necessarily colors the narrative favorably to the Jesuits. This paper seeks to provide a different perspective, specifically an angle of non-Jesuit provenance, on the long history of the order in the islands.

*Early Spanish Philippines*

When Miguel Lopez de Legazpi founded the first Spanish settlement in the island of Cebu in 1565, he not only affirmed Spain’s temporal dominion over what would be the Philippine Islands, but he also established the Catholic Church’s spiritual mission to spread Catholicism throughout the region. As the representative of the king of Spain, Legazpi, who later became the first governor of the islands, embodied in him both political and ecclesiastical powers, as well as the responsibilities that accompany such an office. With that in mind, the Philippines became just as much part of Christendom, as it was part of the Spanish Empire.15

This duality in authority and purpose was in accordance with the agreement struck between the king of Spain and the Pope, known as *patronato real* or royal patronage. Historian Charles Cunningham, quoting from *Recopilacion de leyes de los reinos de las Indias*, described it as an arrangement whereby the pope assigns to the Spanish king the right to nominate candidates to church offices, to assign provinces to missionary orders, and to confirm junior religious appointments. In exchange the Spanish government sees to the well-

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being, and safety of all church personnel.\textsuperscript{16} As a result, royal patronage provided for the inextricable collaboration of the church and state in Spain’s colonies.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, this was the defining characteristic of Spanish imperialism – a kind of imperialism that went beyond the pursuit of national prestige and economic gain, a kind of imperialism that promoted European civilization through the spread of Catholicism, over than a mere annexation of foreign territories, and a subjugation of native inhabitants.

This kind of imperialism differed greatly from British or Dutch imperialism. It even differed with Portuguese imperialism where, although spreading the Catholic faith was considered of great importance, its primary purpose was to identify new sources for materials and markets for its domestically made goods; Portuguese imperialism did not seek to supplant the culture of the lands they conquered. Spanish imperialism, as hinted above, not only imposed Spanish culture on the lands they politically annexed, but they also sought to establish Catholicism as the only religion in the empire, and at the very beginning of each conquest, enlisted the support of the Catholic Church in its colonial enterprise.\textsuperscript{18}

Under this colonial framework, the religious orders of the Catholic Church established themselves in the Philippines. The Augustinians, who came with Legazpi in 1565, achieved much success in converting the natives to Christianity.

\begin{footnotes}
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In 1573, Guido de Lavezares, Legazpi’s successor as governor, wrote to Philip II requesting more missionaries, especially Jesuit missionaries, to be sent to the islands.\(^\text{19}\) The Spanish Crown responded by instructing religious personnel from other orders to come to the aid of the Augustinians in the Philippines: in 1578, the Franciscans arrived; in 1581, the first group of Jesuits; in 1587, the Dominicans; and finally, in 1606, the Augustinian Recollects.\(^\text{20}\)

To this chronology of religious mission establishment, however, an important caveat should be mentioned concerning the Jesuits. Although they arrived in the Philippines in 1581, a permanent Jesuit mission was not established until 1590. That first Jesuit mission was an exploratory mission to assess the practicality of establishing an active mission in the islands, “to be of assistance to the Spaniards there, and after familiarizing themselves with the conditions in that region, send back a report.”\(^\text{21}\) With the existence of Jesuit missions in nearby Macau and Moluccas, the economics of maintaining three locations in the region was a concern for the Society’s headquarters in Rome. Additionally, Jesuit superiors maintained that an exploratory study was normal for possible new Jesuit mission stations: “… these priests came to this land to see and consider the opportunity that may present itself here, and to determine the merit of sending missionaries, as is customary for us before establishing a permanent mission…”\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^\text{19}\) Cólin, Labor Evangelica, 1:166 note 3. Cólin-Pastells wrote: “Gran necesidad en estas partes de rreligiosos [sic], franciscanos, dominicos y teatinos y algunos clerigos para la conversion destos naturales en especial los teatinos.” (NOTE: Lavezares mistakenly called the Jesuits ‘teatinos,’ as indicated by Cólin-Pastell).


\(^\text{21}\) de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 5. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)

\(^\text{22}\) Cólin-Pastells, Labor Evangelica, 1:351 note 1. Cólin-Pastells wrote: “… estos padres bieron a esta tierra a ber y considerar la oportunidad que en ella puede aber para que la compañía
However, if one were to look at Jesuit missionary activities globally, the events in Spanish America may have also dictated this cautious approach from the Jesuit order. The failure of the Jesuit mission in what is now Florida may have influenced this Jesuit policy of gradual introduction. Indeed, there were Jesuit successes in Goa, parts of Japan, and even Macau, but these were all with the Portuguese or with the Italian. The Florida mission was their first partnership with the Spanish. That mission quickly turned sour and eventually failed, for the Jesuits witnessed firsthand how the Spaniards mistreated the natives of that land, and the results that brought. In what was supposed to be an evangelizing mission, hostilities and outright violence between the natives and the Spaniards became commonplace, essentially endangering Jesuit missionary work. And the Jesuits were quick to point out the reason: “Those missionaries with some experience in La Florida quickly came to believe that the greatest impediment to their work was not climate, Indians, or native priests, but their fellow Spaniards who antagonized even friendly Indians for seemingly little reason.”

As a result of this failed Florida mission with Spain, the Jesuits were reluctant to work with the Spaniards. The innate pride and haughtiness that the Spanish brought — Spanish hubris, a mentality that led them to believe that regardless of their stations in the old country they were all *hidalgos*, or noblemen, in the New World and the Indies — to the missions were essentially condemning the evangelization process to fail before it even started. Consequently, what followed in the Philippines was a

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decade-long feasibility study of the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a permanent mission in the new Spanish colony, of working with the Spanish conquistadores once again, and perhaps, of putting stock in the belief that Spanish conquistadores learned some lessons from their failed Florida mission.

This controlled and careful approach of the Jesuits demonstrated their understanding of the importance, and their use of a strategic approach to their missionary activities in the early modern period, a period marked by the struggle between traditional Catholic doctrines and humanist ideals. Against the background of exploration and colonization, these missionaries realized the indispensability of a well-laid out plan and a calculated strategy to achieve their goals, and of course, the importance of learning from past experiences, while furthering a Christianization agenda. Indeed, their exercise of prudence in establishing mission stations revealed an almost heretical acceptance that faith alone does not suffice. If it did, they, like the other missionary orders, would have blindly established their mission and proceeded to interact, communicate, and convert the native inhabitants of the islands without regard to language, culture and the many other factors that complicate the realities of the period.

The members of the Society of Jesus not only brought with them a fervent conviction to spread Christianity throughout the globe, but they also brought with them a praxis-oriented training that helped them in their missionary activities. If they entered the Society as a young man, they were educated, conditioned, and trained to be able to contribute to these apostolic endeavors. If they joined the Society as adults, they were already lawyers, theologians, educators, soldiers, and
mathematicians, among others. They were practical, just as much as they were spiritual. 24 “Their vocation was to a mixed life, a life of action as well as contemplation, in which prayer, to use a phrase of Nadal’s (one of the first Jesuits), ‘reached out to the external work.” 25

The first Jesuit mission to the Philippines consisted of four members: Antonio Sedeño, Alonso Sánchez, both priests, Gaspar Suarez de Toledo, a scholastic, and Nicolas Gallardo, a lay brother. However, nine days after the group set out for their voyage across the Pacific, Suarez de Toledo was stricken with a burning fever and died nine days later. 26

We now turn to Alonso Sánchez (1547-1593). The following section focuses on him and his indispensible contribution to the colonial process toward the end of the sixteenth century.

**Alonso Sánchez**

In 1579, Alonso Sánchez arrived in Mexico as part of a group of talented and capable Jesuit fathers from Spain. Even in that select company, Astráin, the historian of the Spanish provinces of the Society of Jesus, described Sánchez as standing “head and shoulders above them all by reason of his talent, and also by reason of his peculiar personality.” 27 He was of sound peasant stock who took to athletics and singing popular ballads in his earlier years. In 1565, at the age of twenty, he entered the Society in Alcalá as a novice. He completed his

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25 de la Costa, _The Jesuits in the Philippines_, 7. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
26 Ibid., 5.
27 Ibid., 6. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
theological studies with great distinction, and in 1571, was ordained to the priesthood. It was during this time that Sánchez exhibited peculiarities in his behavior. He began to extend his hours of prayer, and to withdraw from the social activities of the Society. His predilection to solitude and dedication to prayer earned him the nickname, “medio Cartujo” – almost a Carthusian.\textsuperscript{28} When he was sent to Mexico, Sánchez’s superiors ordered him to abandon his life of semi-retirement, and occupy himself with preaching and hearing confessions, and other community outreach ministries. Claudio Acquaviva, the Society’s general, once remarked: “any method of prayer which does not incline the soul to action and the ministries of our vocation in the service of God and the salvation and perfection of our fellow men may cause great harm to the institute of the Society and should be looked upon as a delusion, inasmuch as it is outside of and alien to the grace and purpose which God our Lord has given to the Society.”\textsuperscript{29} He obeyed without protestation. Upon seeing his obedience and deference, his superiors elevated him to rector of the college of San Gerónimo at Puebla. It was here that Sánchez received his order to travel to the Philippines as part of the first group of Jesuit missionaries. Before he left, however, his immediate superior, Father Juan de la Plaza, expressed reasonable fears of Sánchez regressing back to his heretical life if an ocean was placed between them. Sánchez responded with a written statement to Plaza, promising him that he would continue to exercise the

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 71-72. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
community outreach ministries of the Society under penalty of being labeled as not a real Jesuit.\textsuperscript{30}

However, Sánchez, to his core, detested conventional missionary and educational work. He strongly disliked ecclesiastical activities, opting instead to participate in the world of secular politics. He wrote in 1583 that the Jesuits should “engage in political work in favor of the king in order to win as much of his esteem…”\textsuperscript{31} Sánchez further rationalized his predilection for politics by explaining the benefits that a political alliance may bring to the Society. He saw it as an exchange of favors: the Jesuits would assist in the Spanish monarchy’s imperial ambitions, and in return, the Crown would grant the Jesuits royal rights to the conversion of the subjugated people.\textsuperscript{32} Sánchez would soon enough find the opportunity to exercise and demonstrate his political acumen, for he would be sharing the long voyage from Mexico to the Philippines with the future archbishop of Manila.

Sánchez sailed to the Philippines with a rather large contingent of religious personnel, eighteen Augustinians, six Franciscans, and most importantly, Domingo de Salazar, a Dominican, who had already received his orders to be the first bishop of the Philippines. In that voyage, Sánchez apparently made a favorable impression on Salazar, especially after the former delivered a sermon to the passengers, so much so that even before the end of the journey, Salazar was already consulting the Jesuit “on the quality and quantity of his prayer, his

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{31} AGI, Patronato, Sánchez to Father General, 22 June 1584, 25, R, 20 (1). In Aramayo. 2000 In Finibus Terrae.
penances, his diet and apparel, the conduct of his household, and the discharge of duties as bishop.” This was the first demonstration of Sánchez’s extraordinary gift as counselor and advisor, and at the same time, a presaging of the role he will be playing in the colonial politics.

When they reached the Philippines, the islands already began to exhibit early signs of Spanish colonial society: the seat of colonial government was along Calle Real; not far from it, a humble parish church that would, in a few years, rise to be a cathedral; Spanish noble ladies peeking out of their carriage windows; Spanish civil guards, ambling through the dirt streets; peninsulares and insulares; mestizos and mestizas; the principalia, the native ruling class; and the common people, all carrying on with their businesses. With the Spanish colonial enterprise seemingly chugging along in the islands, and the anticipated growth of the Catholic community, Philip II gave the order to establish the Philippine diocese in 1581. Domingo de Salazar, who came with the first group of Jesuits from Mexico, assumed the role of the first Bishop of Manila.

The Philippines despite its exterior calm, posed complications that authorities in Spain and Mexico were trying to understand and address: 1) the Philippines’ distance from both Spain and Mexico presented challenges over its effective administration; 2) the maintenance of the Philippines as a colony was a

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33 de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 9. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
34 Antonio de Morga, Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas (1609; repr., Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2007), 26 and note 11. Morga wrote: “Gobernando don Gonzalo Ronquillo fue electo el primer obispo de las Filipinas, llamado don fray Domingo de Salazar, de la orden de Santo Domingo, persona de muchas letras y santidad, que llegado a las Islas tomó en sí el gobierno y jurisdicon eclesiastica…” For more on Gregory XIII’s papal bull on the creation of the diocese of Manila, see BR, Volume IV, Bull for erection of the diocese and cathedral church of Manila.
losing venture – despite its ‘entrepot’ status, the Philippines could only be maintained by a monthly stipend, known as *situado*, from Mexico – in other words, the money the Philippines generated as an ‘entrepot’ was less than the amount needed for its maintenance and upkeep; 3) and because of the trade facilitated by the galleons, Chinese silk was flooding the American market, and undercutting in price the even inferior Spanish silk. Spanish merchants were pushing for the abandonment of the colony to secure the place of Spanish goods in the Americas.  

Further, even before the settlement, there was already the question of legitimacy: Spain, it seemed, had a tenuous claim over the Philippine Islands. In 1529, the Treaty of Zaragoza was signed by Spain and Portugal. It aimed to define the areas that fell under Spain or Portugal’s influence. But due to either miscalculations or confusion over the exact location of the longitudinal line that divided the world between the two Iberian kingdoms, the division was far from clear and fixed. Both kingdoms could make a convincing argument over where their “spheres of influence” ended, and where the other’s began. The Philippines, located almost exactly half way around the globe from the Iberian Peninsula, fell along this contested area. Eventually, modern scholars established the Philippines falling under the Portuguese side. Spain, through political maneuvering, managed to seize the islands under Portugal’s nose.  

Even as early as 1568, Legazpi reported to the king that trade cannot sustain the islands. The following year, he declared to the viceroy of Mexico:

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37 BR, Volume 1, Treaty of Zaragoza, 222-230.
“The Philippines ought to be considered of little importance, because at present the only article of profit which we can get from them is cinnamon.”38 Apart from the seeming scarcity of natural resources, the tropical climate made matters worse for the Europeans. One Spaniard exclaimed that the climate in the Philippines was simply “quatro meses de polvo, quatro meses de lodo, quatro meses de todo.”39 (four months of dust, four months of mud, four months of both.) An Italian Jesuit visiting the islands from Macau confided to a friend that, because of the unbearable heat and humidity, “… this country is the most apt to make a man a saint in a hurry.”40 Of course, hearing it Italian somewhat mitigated the gravity of the situation – questa è celeste per farsi l’huomo presto santo.

With all the complications and challenges posed by the new colony, its abandonment seemed inevitable. The arguments proffered by those advocating for letting the Philippines go were all either economic or political, an appeal to the practical sense of the Spanish Crown. However, sixteenth-century Spain was just as much occupied with the spiritual, as much as it was with the practical. Philip II, Spain’s reigning monarch, was just as much proud of being known as a descendant of Isabel, the Catholic, as he was of extending the Spanish Empire. The Philippines’ ecclesiastical community probably saw an opportunity to appeal to the king and convince him of the importance of the islands as a religious enterprise. To this end, Bishop Salazar convoked the Synod of Manila in 1581.41

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38 Schurz, The Manila Galleon, 23. (Translated from Spanish by Schurz)
39 Cushner, Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution, 4. (Translated from Spanish by Cushner)
40 de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 122. (Translated from Italian by de la Costa)
41 Ibid., 23.
Sánchez found in this situation the perfect opportunity to abandon missionary activities, which as mentioned earlier he loathed, and assume a more prominent role in colonial society, as counselor to the bishop, representative of the state, and broker between the metropolis and the colonial city. Sedeño, Sánchez’s superior, was obviously not thrilled with news that one of his priests would be taking on non-religious roles. However, based on what Sánchez articulated in Mexico, and Sedeño’s realization that if not given this opportunity, Sánchez would retreat to a life of hermetic existence, Sedeño agreed. Sánchez’s made himself available to his “high-placed friends among the laity [who]… were taken right to his room.”

His counsel was sought after, and greatly valued by the governor, and other citizens of note, but most especially by the bishop, on diverse issues from justice and commerce to the welfare of the natives.

Not surprisingly then, Salazar, based on the favorable impression left on him by Sánchez on their journey from Mexico, named the Jesuit to the council of the Synod, serving, together with an Augustinian and a Franciscan, as theologian and canonist. In addition to his official duties, Sánchez also became unofficial advisor to Salazar. The elder bishop would confer with the Jesuit sometimes until late at night on various problems besetting the colonial city.

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42 Ibid., 73. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
43 Cólin-Pastells, Labor Evangelica, II:263. Cólin wrote: “A su compañero el Padre Alonso Sánchez, como persona de mucho talento, y de particular gracia para atraer a sí los corazones de los que le comunicaba, le traían siempre ocupado en negocios publicos el Governor, y Obispo, y otros personajes de cuenta, particularmente el Obispo, que hallando necesitaban de asiento casi todas las cosas tocantes a la conciencia de los encomenderos, y sus cobradores; y de los Ministros de Justicia; y otras que pertenecían a la Doctrina de los naturales, determinó poco después de llegado, celebrar un modo de Synodo.”
Perhaps the most exigent of the concerns the Synod had to address was Spain’s claim of sovereignty over the Philippines, for on it rests the issues of legitimacy and rightful occupation; what title or titles does the king of Spain possess to justify his claim over the islands? Despite the islands’ distance, hostile climate, and the economic burden it imposed on the Spanish Crown, why did it maintain the Philippines as a colony for more than three centuries? Did Spain have legitimate claims to the Philippines to begin with?

The Augustinians were most dogmatic in their approach to conquest as compared to the Jesuits. They saw the ultimate goal of the Spanish conquest as a means of advancing Christianization. The pope had the divine right to preach the gospel to all people and nations: “the principal if not the only reason for bringing the Philippines under Spanish rule was in order that the Filipinos might be converted to Christianity; and whatever [the Spaniards] might have to say for themselves, [for] killing, beating, robbing, cheating, enslaving, and otherwise mistreating the Filipinos did not promote their conversion.”45 The Spanish monarch’s legitimate claim and the colonial government’s rightful occupation and just administration were simply subordinate to the enterprise of evangelization.

The Franciscans, at that time, were still new to the colony. Having just arrived in 1578, they were just settling in into their new home when the synod was convoked.46 There was also very little, if any, documented Franciscan participation in the sources I consulted.

45 Ibid., 22. (Translated from Spanish by de la Costa)
By virtue of elimination, the Crown’s rationale, as determined by the synod, for legitimacy in its occupation of the islands, and its continued colonization seemed to have a Jesuit provenance. In what is perhaps the first manifestation of political activity on the part of the Jesuits in the Philippines, Sánchez came up with practical and enforceable reasons and justifications for Spain’s presence in and continued occupation of the islands. Conveniently, he started out with the fact that Spain was already in the Philippines.

In *Tratados del Reino de la China y Filipinas*, of which a handwritten manuscript is housed in the Hispanic Society of America, Sánchez memorialized his thoughts, and positions on evangelical missions, and military excursions into foreign lands. Under the section titled *Razonamiento*, he maintained that Spanish presence in the Philippines was based on the needs of the four groups of people, which composed the colony. First was the community of Spaniards already in the islands. As loyal subjects of the king of Spain, this community had a presumptive right to maintain themselves as such. The second community consisted of the natives who already accepted Spanish rule and the Christian faith. The third were the natives who were already conquered but yet to be converted. And the last community consisted of those yet to be conquered and converted.\(^47\) Naturally, the first reason placed the issue of legitimacy and sovereignty on center stage. To this, Sánchez invoked the divine rights of the pope, which he wrote under a different section called *Memorial y Apuntamientos*, as the infallible caretaker of

\(^{47}\) HSA, HC 363/1528, Tratados del Reino de la China y Filipinas, Razonamiento. Sánchez wrote in his Razonamiento: “La primera es la Republica de los españoles, la segunda los yndios ya pacificos, christianos, la tercera los yndios pacificos… no christianos, la quarta los yndios ni pacificos ni christianos.
the spiritual well-being of all people, to communicate to all people and nations
about the Catholic faith, and his right to remove anyone who impedes or
contradicts this divine mission.48

Sánchez then proceeded to present his case for the necessary use of
violence in conquest and evangelization. As if responding to Martin de Rada
himself, the influential Augustinian writer, and his objection to the use of military
force, Sánchez argued that troops were indispensible to create a suitable
environment for the conversion of the natives. Quoting de la Costa:

The divine mandate by which missionaries went forth to teach all
nations would be meaningless if it did not imply an obligation in
those to whom they are sent not to hinder them in the execution of
their mandate. If obliged, they could be compelled; by moral
compulsion, where practicable, but if not then by physical. This
was what justified a military escort for the missionary, and, in a
larger sense, a civil protectorate of the missions. Its purpose was
not to despoil the pagans of what was rightly theirs, whether they
be goods of the temporal order such as property, or of the spiritual
order, such as liberty. Far less was it to intimidate them and in that
sense to compel them to accept the faith. It was merely to
command their respect for the person and function of the
missionary – a respect which mere moral suasion was ordinarily
powerless to command in primitive or savage communities – and
thus create the conditions whereby the faith could be freely taught
and freely received.49

Neatly summing up his exposition, Sánchez marshaled his arguments in
his Memorial y Apuntamiento, and in his Razonamiento to weave a quite seamless
and convincing narrative that made the empirical realities of the Philippines very

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48 HSA, HC 363/1528, Tratados del Reino de la China y Filipinas, Memorial y
Apuntamientos. Sánchez wrote in his Memorial y Apuntamientos: “El primer fundamento es que
el Papa tiene poder y derecho y aun precepto… para predicar el Sto. Evangelio a todas las gentes y
naciones del mundo…” He continued to enumerate more papal rights: “… el papa es señor
absoluto del gobierno espirituales de los hombres, si fuese necesario para esto modificar o mudar
o quitar del todo el gobierno temporal puede hacerlo.” And finally, “[el papa] puede quitar las
personas como haberes lo ha hecho por el mismo fin si se lo impiden o contradizan.”
49 de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 94. (Translated from Spanish by de la
Costa)
well suited for future evangelization. He wrote that the Spaniards in this city were only few; the pacified and Christianized natives outnumbered them; and still, the natives who are yet to be pacified and Christianized outnumbered them all. For this reason, the king had the right and the responsibility to maintain able and sufficient military personnel to establish peace and order for the sake of these communities. What was most interesting, though, was that Sánchez went further than just establishing the rationality for the maintenance and use of military force. He elevated this heretofore tentative arrangement into an obligation of the king himself.⁵⁰

Curiously, though, Sánchez gave a fifth reason for the retention of the Philippines as a colony, which de la Costa not quite inexplicably left out. The fifth reason had to do with state security. Sánchez pointed out that there was a very real threat of incursion from powerful foreign enemies already in the region. The Japanese, the Chinese, and the English have all been spotted in the area, and did possess motives to claim the islands. Sánchez reiterated that a strong and ready army was necessary to meet these very real challenges head on. Spanish authorities of the practical persuasion perhaps responded positively to this argument. A fifth argument that appealed to the more temporal and pragmatic

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⁵⁰ HSA, HC 363/1528, Tratados del Reino de la China y Filipinas, Razonamiento. Sánchez wrote: “Los españoles son pocos, los yndios pacificos y christianos son muchos, los pacificos y no christianos son muchos mas, los no pacificos ni christianos muy muchos mas. Pues si por razon de alguna destos quatro comunidades su Magestad tuviese derecho allí para tener gente de guerra… bueno y bastante… [su Magestad] tiene el mas justo total y derecho que se puede tener y escusa que por razon de todas quatro [illegible] de gente su Magestad puede y aun tiene obligacion de tener allí poder y fuerza.”
concerns of the empire would have been a welcome addition to the strictly four religious-cum-missionary arguments.  

Although Sánchez’s *Razonamiento* could easily come across as overly simplistic –indeed the four communities he mentioned were *everyone* in the colony – his presentation revealed a good measure of understanding of court politics. He framed the conquest and maintenance of the Philippines as a religious endeavor, and appealed to Philip II’s idea of a Hispanic world:

> The conquest of the Philippines was also the expression – perhaps the fullest expression of Philip’s vision of how the Hispanic World would develop under his kingship… It was a matter of deepest regret to Philip that Charles V had refused to confer on him the succession to the title of “Holy Roman Emperor,” for the title carried with it the unquestioned secular leadership of Christendom. As a mere king, Philip was only one among many monarchs in Europe, although perhaps the most powerful. In the Indies, and more especially in the Philippines, he reclaimed his heritage… It is likely that in prioritizing the reconquest of the Philippines Philip was also expressing his determination to be unequivocally the leading ruler of his time – that although he was not Holy Roman Emperor he would rule an empire that was truly worldwide. Unlike Philip’s territories in the Indies, the Philippines was not rich in gold and silver but their possessions allowed Philip to extend Spanish power into Asia and to enhance and deepen his own stature as the leading monarch of his day. On many levels, therefore, the conquest of the Philippines held profound importance to Philip, both as a monarch and as a man.  

Sánchez traveled to Madrid and presented his recommendations to Philip II and a special commission just a few months after the great loss of the Spanish armada to the British. Additionally, he emphasized the outside threat from other

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51 HSA, HC 363/1528, Tratados del Reino de la China y Filipinas, *Razonamiento*. Sánchez wrote: “Fuera destos quatro razones… hay la quinta que aunque parece extrinsica no solo da este mismo derecho pero aun pone un grave obligacion y necesidad de que su Magestad tenga aquella tierra y christianidad fortificada y segura por razon de los enemigos estrangeros, y muy poderosos que suelen y pueden cada dia acedir y acabarlo todo, como son los japones…, los chinos…, y navio o navios de los ingleses.

foreign powers that had their own agenda in claiming the islands for themselves. Under this circumstance, Philip II would have embraced the opportunity to redeem himself and his kingdom, and welcomed any distraction from that embarrassing defeat.

Sánchez, as envoy or chargé d'affaires, made Philip II realize the importance of keeping the Philippines a part of the Spanish empire. He presented the struggling colony as an opportunity for the monarch to prove himself worthy to be named “Holy Roman Emperor,” a title denied to him. Maintaining the Philippines as a Spanish colony was the perfect vehicle for Philip to demonstrate that he was a martyr for the faith despite the burden it imposed on the royal treasury, despite the protestations of the Seville merchants for its abandonment, despite its distance, and its lack of accessible natural resources. Philip was still willing to support the islands as the personal cross he bore, to the detriment of his wealth. By voluntarily burdening himself and his treasury with a losing venture for the sake of his Catholic faith, Philip not only proved himself more than worthy of the title denied to him, but also very deserving to be recognized as the rightful heir of Ferdinand and Isabella, the first of the Catholic monarchs.

In the end, more than anything else, what Sánchez achieved was to informally recast the Philippines as an evangelical enterprise, and not as a colonial one. He did not argue against the economic and practical reasons for abandoning the colony. For he very well knew that he could not dispel them. Instead, he deemphasized them, and highlighted the religious, spiritual, missionary duties of the empire. Obviously, he did an excellent job in convincing
the Spanish crown to maintain the islands as a colony: colonists never again seriously entertained thoughts of abandonment. As a result, Spain remained in the Philippines for three hundred and thirty years, owing in no small part to Jesuit argumentation and reasoning.

**Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera**

Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (d. 1660), the 22\textsuperscript{nd} governor of the Philippines, and the Society of Jesus had an unusual alliance. It was unspoken, informal, and yet quite significant. The entire colony knew about it, and Corcuera did not have any qualms in demonstrating his preference. Perhaps what drew Corcuera to the Jesuits was the military origin and structure of the Society. Himself a soldier, Corcuera was a “knight of the Order of Alcantara, and member of the Council of War in the states of Flandes [sic], where he had served many years with great credit, being one of the most renowned captains in the siege of Breda. He had afterward been master-of-camp of the port of Callao in Peru, and captain-general of the cavalry of that kingdom, and lastly governor of Panama.”\textsuperscript{53}

He obviously had a military disposition and also the temperament that went with it: he was rigid and austere, strong-willed, and quite stubborn in his judgments.\textsuperscript{54}

Unsurprisingly, his administration was known to be the most tumultuous with regard to state-church relationship. Outright hostility between the archbishop and

\textsuperscript{53} BR, Volume XXV, Conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, 1635-1636, 159.

\textsuperscript{54} Casimiro Diaz, *Conquistas de las islas Filipinas... parte segunda* (Valladolid: Luis de Gaviria, 1890), 326. Diaz wrote: “Era este caballero al paso que muy entendido, muy rigido y austero, muy tenaz en las determinaciones y casado con sus dictamenes, ocasion en los principes de los mayores yerros; pues por no ceder en lo que el amor propio prohijó por aciertos, se dejan llevar a cualquier precipicio.”
the governor was common place, and in the ensuing confusion, fractures within the ecclesiastical community began to emerge.

Throughout Corcuera’s administration, the Society of Jesuit positioned itself strategically to take advantage of the precarious situation in the colony. Whereas before, as demonstrated by Sánchez, the Society chose to take an active and vocal role in the colonial enterprise; this time, however, the Jesuit fathers chose to play a supporting role in the saga taking place in the colonial stage – more of a passive role, true, but no less political than what they had played in the past. As the state, represented by the governor, and the church, represented by the archbishop, battled it out, the Jesuit fathers stood on the sidelines and waited for the winner, to collect the spoils of the battle with him.

Before Corcuera set foot in the Philippines in 1635, he made a promise to Fray Diego Collado, from the Order of the Preachers, who shared the voyage from Mexico with him. Collado, although not in possession of any formal paper work from Rome, sailed to the Philippines to divide the colony’s Dominican province, and put himself as the superior of the newly formed part. This new congregation, headed by Collado, would have been dedicated solely to the conversion of China and Japan, using only the Philippines as a base. Corcuera presented, and pushed for, this proposal to the local church authorities. Hernando Guerrero, archbishop of Manila, and Fray Diego de Duarte, a local Dominican bishop rejected it without reservation: the archbishop, because Collado lacked the
necessary paper work from Rome and was just relying on the promise of the
 governor, and de Duarte, because it was his province to be divided.\textsuperscript{55}

The Society of Jesus may not have been involved in any way in this
narrative, but the outcome informed the strategy they applied during Corcuera’s
administration. Had the proposal been approved, the Jesuit superiors in Rome and
the Jesuit fathers in China would have harshly chastised their Philippine
counterparts for endangering the already precarious China mission.\textsuperscript{56} After all,
these regional mission fields were interconnected through the constant flows of
maritime trade and migration. But the Jesuit fathers in the Philippines seemed to
know that archbishop Guerrero would reject the proposal outright, for lack of
necessary documentation. Indeed, Guerrero’s appointment as archbishop was
very much delayed, for the authorities in Rome took their time in preparing the
paperwork, and sending it to the Philippines.\textsuperscript{57} With the proposal’s rejection by
almost all sections of the ecclesiastical community confirmed, Corcuera was left
dejected. It was his first clash against the church, and they handed him a
resounding defeat. The Jesuit fathers may have seen an opportunity in Corcuera’s
defeated state, but decided to wait a little longer before stepping in.

It did not take long before Corcuera saw an opportunity to even the score
with the church. The story of Francisco de Nava, which started out as a lovers’
dispute, eventually escalated into one of the most controversial state-church
conflicts, and more importantly, for this study, internal religious fragmentation in

\textsuperscript{55} AGI, Filipinas, Carta de Corcuera sobre auxilio a Diego Collado 8, R, 3, N.95. Also
see BR, Volume XXV, Conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, 1635-1636, 161-162.
\textsuperscript{56} For a short discussion on Jesuit missionary activities in China, see next section.
\textsuperscript{57} BR, Volume XXV, Conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, 1635-1636,
160.
Spanish Philippines: Nava, a Spanish artilleryman, maintained an illicit relationship with his native slave girl. Their affair scandalized the entire city, and the archbishop of Manila, Fray Hernando Guerrero, had to order Nava to sell (or send) the girl away. Stricken with grief of passion, Nava proposed to marry the slave girl to legitimize their relationship. The girl refused, choosing to remain a slave with her current owner, than to be his wife. Blinded by disbelief, his love for her turned to madness. And seeing her on the street one day, he came up to her and stabbed her to death. Nava fled the scene and took refuge in a nearby convent.\textsuperscript{58}

Corcuera demanded that Nava surrender to the civil guards, as he thought that the right of sanctuary was not applicable in this case. For some reason, Corcuera seemed to believe that Nava’s action amounted to treason and, therefore, was not protected by the right of sanctuary. The Augustinians, in whose convent Nava took refuge, did not agree with Corcuera and refused to give up the artilleryman, a decision supported by the archbishop. Corcuera responded by sending a detachment of soldiers to extricate Nava from the convent and deliver him for trial. Nava was quickly sentenced to death by hanging, in a

\textsuperscript{58} Murillo Velarde, \textit{Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús}, 86. Murillo Velarde wrote: “[el Arzobispo D. Fr. Hernando Guerrero] dió principio a esta inquietud la causa de Francisco de Nava, Artillero. Aviale obligado el Arzobispo, a que vendiese, y echase de su poder una esclava, con quien tenía mala comunicación con escándalo del Pueblo. Y era tal su passion, que porque se le bolviesen, pretendió casarse con la esclava. Ella no quiso, eligiendo primero la esclavitud con dueño ageno, que al casamiento con su amo antiguo. De aquí se convirtió en rabia el amor, y encontrándola un día en la calle, le dió muerte alebosa a puñaladas, y luego se refugió a Sagrado.
special gallows erected right in front of the Augustinian church where he initially sought refuge.⁵⁹

This whole affair divided the Spanish population in the Philippines, some siding with the governor, and others with the archbishop. The religious orders, particularly the Augustinians, were at the center of the controversy. Unsurprisingly, they, the Augustinians, together with the Dominicans, and the Franciscans sided with the archbishop. The Jesuits, however, did not. They reached out to Guerrero to broker a peace, and to settle ancillary issues that arose from this controversy. The archbishop rebuffed the Jesuits, and accused them of siding with the governor (to which, de la Costa admitted: “Possibly, they did.”)⁶⁰

This fragmentation within the church unsettled the ecclesiastical community, especially the archbishop, who, in his wisdom, summoned all the superiors of the religious orders to decide whether the governor overreached in his authority as royal patron of the colony. All the orders’ superiors attended, except the Jesuit superior, Luis de Pedraza, who in his absence sent a letter:

> Very illustrious Lord: It seems that the more the Society tries to be of service to your illustrious Lordship and your vicar general by promoting peace in the commonwealth and harmonious relations between its ecclesiastical and civil heads, so much the more do certain parties (I do not know whether with the same good intention) persist in misinterpreting our efforts, extracting, as the saying goes, poison from the antidote. I therefore fail to see what useful purpose will be served by our attendance, or what difference it will make if our views are not heard; for whatever may be said is

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⁵⁹ BR, Volume XXV, Conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, 1635-1636, 164-165.
bound to be received in the same spirit as our recent well- intentioned attempts at mediation.61

This response from Pedraza was very much at odds with the spirit of the Society, whose emphasis on obedience was integral in the formation and training of its members. Surely, there would have been no harm if Pedraza attended the meeting. The worst possible thing that could have had happened was to be rebuffed once again. And even more so, if the Jesuits were truly sincere in their efforts to keep the peace, Pedraza would have attended the meeting, if only to soothe Guerrero’s hurt feelings of being betrayed by them. Instead, Pedraza chose to excuse himself, and the Society, from the meeting, demonstrating a clear signal to Corcuera that they were on his side.

Pedraza’s decision was really a stroke of genius: a remarkable demonstration of his understanding of colonial politics and the benefits of what a sound political strategy could bring. He managed to deliver two important achievements for the Society: 1) realizing that Corcuera, through his sheer stubbornness and strength of will may once again attempt to send missionaries to China and Japan, he may very well have used this incident as leverage to dissuade him from doing so, or at least to keep him in check; 2) and without personally reaching out to Corcuera, yet still expressing loyalty to him, Pedraza essentially avoided accusations of ingratiating the Society with Corcuera and his administration.

Rejection of the archbishop’s invitation did not come without harsh repercussions. The archbishop responded with a vengeance that placed the Society’s missionary activities in jeopardy. Guerrero prohibited the Jesuits from preaching throughout the archbishopric, thus confining them within their churches and convents; he stripped them of the title of synodal examiners, a position of counsel for ecclesiastical matters; and he forbade interaction between them and the rest of the religious community – all under penalty of excommunication.\footnote{Murillo Velarde, S.J. Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús, 87. Murillo Velarde wrote: “[el Arzobispo] se determinó que no acudiesen Clerigos, ni Religiosos a los Actos, Conclusiones, o fiestas, que se celebrasen en la Compañía, no los combidases a los funciones, que se celebrasen en la Cathedral, o Parroquiales sugetas al Arzobispo, o a los Prelados de las Religiones. Los privó su Ilustrisima de los Sermones de Tabla de la Cathedral, y que no pudiesen predicar en ninguna Iglesia de su Jurisdicion, y les quitó el título de Examinadores Synodales de todo su Arzobispado. Y por Auto de veinte y seis de Octubre, mandó su Ilustrisima intimar a los Superiores por justas causas, que a ello le movian, que no predicasen los Jesuytas, fuera de sus Iglesias, en parte ninguna de todo su Arzobispado, ni en plaza, ni en cuerpos de guardia, por modo de platica, ni Predicacion, ni en otra manera alguna. Lo qual cumplan precisamente pena de Excomunion mayor…”}

The Jesuits, understandably angered by the archbishop’s excessive penalties, appealed to Corcuera and his advisors. Here, Pedraza’s gamble paid off. For the governor stood by the Jesuits all the way (and the way was quite extended and circuitous), culminating in the archbishop’s dramatic forced removal from office – or rather, the archbishop’s throne, where he was found clothed in full pontificals, complete with the blessed host in a pyx for his protection – and eventually, his banishment from the city.\footnote{de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 380-381.}

With the archbishop’s departure, Jesuit privileges were reinstated. But a new sense of order now fully emerged: it was the administration of Corcuera, with his Jesuit advisors on his side. The other orders knew too well that their actions were restricted so long as Corcuera was in office; and that it would serve them...
well to fly under the radar until Corcuera was replaced, which happened shortly thereafter. As for Guerrero, he did come back to Manila, and to this post, but not without concessions. He was a changed man upon his return – a bit more submissive, sometimes even deferential. Perhaps a personal letter from Philip IV, the reigning Spanish monarch, tempered his character. In it, the king strongly reprimanded Guerrero for his blatant disrespect of his royal patronage, and for his careless execution of his ecclesiastical duties. The king made plain that his letter was a clear warning for Guerrero, that if he did not act and behave in a manner benefiting the Crown, “and that if this admonition was not enough, I would bring the issue to His Holiness to bring about good government and welfare for the colony.”

The letter from Philip IV to Guerrero was such a stinging rebuke for anyone not to have taken it seriously. It was a clear demonstration of how much the king valued the cooperation and harmonious relationship of his civil and religious personnel throughout his empire.

Meanwhile, Corcuera showered the Jesuits with prized appropriations, most notable were: 1) the entrustment to the Jesuits of the island of Mindanao for missionary and pastoral work; 2) and the endowment of a royal college under

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64 Murillo Velarde, S.J. *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, note 340. Murillo Velarde wrote: “Y si la amonestacion, que asi os hago, no bastare a reprimiros, y morigeraros, sera fuerza pasar a mayor demostracion con vos, llegando, si fuere necesario, a valerme de su Santidad para la ejecucion de ella, que sera la que pareciere mas conveniente mi servicio, buen gobierno, y satisfaccion publica…”

65 AGI, Filipinas, Carta de Corcuera sobre evangelizacion de Mindanao. 8, R, 3, N. 92. Corcuera wrote: “… este año como otro tengo dado conquista sean ganado las yslas de Mindanao y Basila, y esfuerzas poner en ellas. Los ministros evangélicos fueron menester, [illegible] encargado estos ministerios de ambos yslas a la religion de la Compañía de Jesus.”
the order, named the College of San Felipe de Asturias. The island of Mindanao is the largest in the archipelago, thus giving the order more than enough room to grow and expand their operations. The endowment of a royal college under the order’s charge, meanwhile, helped establish the order as the leading educators, a role to which they aspire in all their mission stations, in the colony. These two grants alone were enough to sustain the Jesuits in many ways – generate income to support their Philippine province, keep their members occupied with missionary activities, and maintain, even further, their influence throughout the islands.

The island of Mindanao, located in the southern part of the archipelago, has always been a coveted missionary area for the religious in the Philippines. Even in 1591, then Governor Dasmariñas realized the immense potential in that island:

… the island of Mindanao is so fertile and well-inhabited, and teeming with Indian settlements, wherein to plant the faith, and of so great circumference – namely, three hundred leagues – and distant two hundred leagues from this island of Luzon; and is rich in gold mines and placers, and in wax, cinnamon, and other valuable drugs. And although the said island has been seen, discussed, and explored (and even in great part given in repartimiento), no effort has been made to enter and reduce it, nor has it been pacified or furnished with instruction or justice – quite to the contrary being, at the present time, hostile and refusing obedience to his Majesty; and no tribute, or very little, is being collected.

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66 AGI, Filipinas, Carta de Corcuera sobre Colegio de San Felipe de Asturias. 8, R, 3, N. 108. Corcuera wrote: “… la creación del colegio de S Felipe de Asturias se [illegible] al principio deste año de veinte collegiales hijos de los ministros de su Magestad y de los mas benemeritos destas yslas… que con la doctrina de los padres de la Compañía de Jesus a quien e encargado el otro colegio real.”

67 BR, Volume 8, Articles of Contract for the Conquest of Mindanao, 73-74.
Mindanao, then, was virtually unsullied, pristine, and raw. The appeal of this heretofore virgin island was understandably irresistible for the Jesuit missionaries who were latecomers in the colony. Preceded by the Augustinians and Franciscans (and the Dominicans, if one were to consider the formal establishment of the orders), the Jesuits did not experience the early cross-cultural collision between East and West as other religious orders had encountered. Corcuera offered this singular opportunity to the Jesuit fathers, to experience what the other orders before them had experienced. This, perhaps, after Sánchez’s successful persuasions to remain in the colony, was the Philippine Jesuits’ greatest achievement.

Besides the obvious opportunities that the island presented – abundance in land, livestock, and vegetation – for both religious and secular activities, Mindanao posed a unique challenge to the order. Being close to Indonesia and Borneo, Mindanao was home to a large Muslim population who maintained friendly relations with their Islamic neighbors. For the Jesuits, this was their very own version of the Reconquista (a historical event that preceded their founding), a holy war, which appealed to the soldier in them. The order set themselves up in the northern part of the island with some military troops from the civil government. There were a few clashes between the Catholic Spaniards and the Muslim natives, but the advantage never seemed to remain on one side. A loss in one battle was followed by a victory in the next for both camps. In the end, although the Jesuits were never really able to Christianize the entire island of Mindanao, the order was able to contain Islam to the southern part of the colony.

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68 BR, Volume IV, Expeditions to Borneo, Jolo and Mindanao, 150.
and maintain a sizable Christian population in the northern part of the island, quite an admirable feat given the internal division in the Spanish colonial administration and the support the Muslims in Mindanao received from other Muslims in the region.  

Pedraza’s strategy benefited the Society during Corcuera’s administration. The Jesuit father perhaps understood that soldiers did not respond very well to strong-arming, and that the way to elicit a positive response from Corcuera was to demonstrate that the execution of the responsibilities of the governor’s office is of utmost importance. This was exactly what Pedraza did. In letting Corcuera carry out the duties of his office, Pedraza supported Corcuera’s actions, and in refusing to conspire against Corcuera, Pedraza validated them. Corcuera’s trust in the Jesuit was implicit and indubitable, and he expressed this in a letter to Philip IV:

The Society of Jesus serves his Majesty with much love without complaints; whatever is asked of them in his royal name. Not only as chaplains for the galleons for the wars, but also for the wars and whatever else is entrusted to them. They do not complain when their stipends are reduced. They are good vassals, through good or mistreatments. They do not accept novices from these islands, for those worthy are very few, and they easily reject those who do not follow the righteous path. For this reason, your Majesty’s governor’s conscience is discharged from the need to be informed or to inquire of the quality of their members for royal service, for the order’s superior has adequately vetted them, and knows to replace them if need be. This is not the case for the others [other orders]. I therefore beseech your Majesty, with all humility and reverence, to furnish these islands with more members from this order from Spain, and fewer from the other orders. Your Majesty will be well served, as also will God. I assure your Majesty, as a good vassal, that I make this known to you without prejudice, but

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69 For a detailed narrative on Spanish incursions in Mindanao, see BR, Volume XXVII, Conquest of Mindanao, 253-305.
the belief that I am discharging the responsibilities of my conscience.\textsuperscript{70}

At the end of a governor’s term, a residencia took place. A residencia is a quasi-tribunal, composed of the incoming governor and other Spanish officials that assessed the present state of affairs of the colony, and evaluated the actions of the outgoing governor during his term.\textsuperscript{71}

In 1644, Don Diego Fajardo arrived in the Philippines, succeeding Corcuera as governor.\textsuperscript{72} One of his first act as the new governor was to oversee the residencia of his predecessor. Corcuera’s past conflicts with church officials, and his unbridled demonstration of favoritism for the Jesuits did not help in this inquest. Perhaps the people whom he had slighted, offended, and neglected saw an opportunity to even the score. Found guilty of misappropriation of funds, abandonment of governmental responsibilities, and receiving the blame for the loss of Spanish Formosa, Corcuera was ordered to pay a hefty fine, and was sent

\textsuperscript{70} AGI, Filipinas, Carta de Corcuera sobre que se envien solo Jesuitas. 8, R, 3, N.31. Corcuera wrote: “La Relixion de la Compañia de Jesus sirbe a su Magestad con mucho amor sin [illegible] jamas. Lo que se le pide en su real nombre. Ansi capellanes para log galeones como para las gueras, misiones y qualquiera otra cossa que se les encomienda sin repugnar, que se les reformen parte de los estipendios quando combiene. Son vassallos para bien y mal tartar. No reciben en estas yslas suxetos por que son muy raros los que prebalezen y como su Magestad sabe, despiden con facilidad a los quien no andan por el camino real y derecho. Ya esta caussa descarga su governador de su Magestad su concencia quando pide algun suxeto por ocupalle en su real servicio no teniendo necesidad de ynformarse ni inquirir las calidades del que le dan por que el superior lo tiene bien mirado y les conocen los pensamientos para mudarlos qundo conbiene y este descanso del que gobierna no le tiene con todos: por todo lo qual: suplico a su Magestad con toda humildad y reverencia se sirba de mandar prober estas yslas de suxetos de españa para esta relixion que quantos mas embiare mas de ella y menos de las de mas. Sera su Magestd servido y Dios Señor tambien, y aseguro a su Magestad como buen vassallo que ni me muebe amor ni passion para hacer este ynforme sino entender que descargo mi conciencia con haverle esto.” Also see BR, Volume XXV, Request for Jesuit Missionaries, 298-299.

\textsuperscript{71} de la Costa, The Jesuits in the Philippines, 18.

\textsuperscript{72} Murillo Velarde, S.J. Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañia de Jesús, 136, note 338. Murillo Velarde wrote: “El año de 1644, llegó á estas Islas, su Governador Don Diego Faxardo…”
to prison for five years.⁷³ Never had the colony seen as much detestation directed toward a governor: all his property confiscated, guards placed outside his cell, and abandoned by everyone in his circle, Corcuera was left without money, without friends, and almost without recourse.⁷⁴

Curiously, throughout the whole proceedings, like it was at the beginning of his term, the Jesuits, which Corcuera favored so much, were silent once again – perhaps waiting on the sidelines to see how the pieces of the old governor’s crumbling administration would fall.

**Expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines**

Indeed, the topic on the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines is one of the most challenging to revisit and analyze in the nation’s history. Not only are the records scant and scattered over different archives, but scholars in the field are also in dispute over some crucial details that led to, and that happened during, the actual expulsion. Further, at least one of these respected scholars questions the veracity of a decisive primary source, which, when proven, could render the research done on the subject thus far essentially inaccurate.⁷⁵

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⁷³ BR, Volume XXV, Conflicts between civil and ecclesiastical authorities, 1635-1636, 192.

⁷⁴ Murillo Velarde, S.J. *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 136. Murillo Velarde wrote: “Creció tanto el odio, que se hizo un exemplar nunca visto en estas Islas con otro Governor, pues le prendieron, le embargaron sus bienes, le pusieron una compañía de guardia en la fuerza de Santiago, y le apartaron, y le desterraron a sus criados, amigos, y confidentes. Y hallándose sin dinero, sin tener de quien fiarse, sin testigos, y sin Letrado, acudió como indefenso, apelando al Real Consejo de las Indias, donde esperaba, le oyesen con benignidad, y justicia…”

⁷⁵ Jose Montero y Vidal and Nicholas Cushner have sparred over the expulsion of the Jesuits in their respective works, which will be referenced and cited in this section.
More complications arise from the fact that the expulsion of the Jesuits did not only happen in the Philippines, nor exclusively in the Spanish dominions; rather, it was a concerted move of the Catholic monarchs of Europe to expel the Jesuits from their dominions because of the perceived threat that the Jesuits might pose to their power and influence. Additionally, the expulsion decree came immediately after the Seven Years’ War between Spain-France and Great Britain (1756-1763), the proceedings of which greatly informed the general narrative of the expulsion of the order.

It was, therefore, surprising to see how limited, and cursory, Horacio de la Costa’s treatment on the topic was. In *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, de la Costa briefly discussed how the members of his orders obeyed without protestation the royal edict; how they fell in line, packed up their belongings, and wrapped up their missionary work in the Philippines. For reasons known only to him, he did not, not even in passing, mention the origin or the reasons for the king’s royal decree, a very conspicuous oversight on de la Costa’s part, for the other chapters in his book went to great lengths in expounding events of tangential relevance to the primary subject matter. His chapter on the expulsion of the Jesuits was one of the shortest, if not the shortest. Further, whether ironically or sarcastically, he titled this chapter, “The King’s Good Servants” – an obvious commentary on regalism, a concept which we shall discuss soon enough, and its anti-church ideals. In either case, his bitterness was palpable.76

Still, I shall attempt to present a coherent and, if not complete, at least a discernible picture of the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines. Although

focusing on the Philippine experience, I shall begin by providing a brief account of the antecedents to the expulsion of the order, namely: the political and religious climate in Europe; and a short discussion of the Seven Years’ War that eventually led to the British occupation of the city of Manila in 1762.

*Regalism*

By the time Charles III gave the order to expel the Jesuit fathers from his dominions, anti-Jesuit sentiments and expressions had already been firmly established and demonstrated in the kingdoms of France and Portugal. The members were already expelled from the Kingdom of Portugal in 1759, and from the Kingdom of France in 1764. At the heart of the matter, it seemed, was *regalism* – that modern European idea that an absolute monarch, guided by the ideals of the Enlightenment, may rule with little or no counsel from the church. This idea gradually undermined the political importance of the Church in monarchial rule. Isabel and Ferdinand demonstrated the first signs of regalism during their reign. The Spanish royal couple began to reclaim civil responsibilities and privileges that the church, at the height of its power in the Middle Ages, had appropriated for itself. This measured and careful growth of royal power and influence continued through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and became fully realized in the eighteenth century when Enlightenment

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78 Regalism is the doctrine of monarchial supremacy especially over the Catholic Church.


80 BR, Volume L, The Expulsion of the Jesuits, 270.
thought was sweeping throughout Europe, a fitting age for championing individualism, modernity, and reason, and most relevant of all the, loosening of the centuries-old grip of Rome on the crown and society. Naturally, the institution that stood to lose the most was the church; and the organization within the church that stood to be most negatively affected by this development was the Society of Jesus, as demonstrated by the previous discussions was the most political and the most likely among religious organizations to be embroiled in non-religious matters. Unsurprisingly, the Jesuits guarded themselves against this threat, and preached against its growing influence.\footnote{Ibid., 273.}

However, even the powerful Jesuit fathers could not stop the inevitable. Riots in Madrid involving the Jesuits made the situation worse, and Spanish court officials already hostile to the order succeeded in convincing Charles III to follow the lead of France and Portugal in expelling the Jesuits from his empire. On February 27, 1767, the king issued his special royal decree, also known as the Pragmatic Sanction. His reason for issuing the decree was oblique: “for great, exigent, just, and necessary causes that I reserved solely to my royal person.”\footnote{Manuel Danvila y Collado, Reinado de Carlos III, Historia General de España, Tomo III (Madrid: El Progresso Editorial, 1893), 88. Danvila y Collado wrote: “… por gravísimas, urgentes, justas y necesarias causas que reservó en su [del rey] real ánimo…”}

But the text of which was quite the opposite. It was clear and unhesitating:

I have come to order the expulsion, from all my domains of Spain and the Indies, and the Philippine Islands, and all else that may fall under my rule, of the members of the Society of Jesus, as well as religious such as coadjutors or lay brothers who had already undergone their initial profession, and the novices who would like
to follow them, and all secular activities of the Society that they perform in my domains.  

It took the entire following month of March to plan out the execution of the decree. In early April, officials dispatched copies of the king’s order throughout Spain, the Americas, the Philippines. In Spain, the expulsion of the Jesuit fathers was swift and with very few complications: “… the Jesuit expulsion was being carried out with total efficacy as is appropriate, and with the uneventfulness that one could hope for. The officials from both sides have been complying to the word of the law, and it was very rare for a town to experience disruption.” 

In the colonies, however, matters were more complicated. In the Philippines, in particular, although the expulsion went relatively smoothly, the event, and the circumstances surrounding it, revealed Jesuit political machinations of a different kind.

**Seven Years’ War**

In the years 1756-1763, Europe was in the midst of the Seven Years’ War between the allied forces of Spain and France, on one side, and Great Britain, on the other. Rooted in acquiring the most colonies, and cornering the largest market share in global trade, these nations not only waged war in Europe, but also in their

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83 Montero y Vidal, Historia General de Filipinas, 163. Montero y Vidal wrote: “He venido en mandar extrañar de todos mis dominios de España e Indias, e Islas Filipinas y demás adyacentes, a los Regulares de la Compañía, así Sacerdotes como Coadjutores o legos que hayan hecho la primera profesión, y a los novicios que quisieren seguirles; y que se ocupen todas las temporalidades de la Compañía en mis dominios.”

84 Danvila y Collado, Reinado de Carlos III. Danvila y Collado wrote: “… la expulsión jesuita proseguía con toda la eficacia conveniente y con la quietud que podia desearse. Las justicias de todas partes habían cumplido exactamente lo que se les encargó, y era raro el pueblo donde por alguna equivocación…”
This war had more lasting effects than some of the previous wars before it that dragged on for a longer period of time. Within less than a decade, alliances in Europe drastically changed, and the map of the continent was essentially redrawn. The casualties were countless, and still, in the end, a definitive victor was difficult to identify; although it seemed Great Britain benefited the most when a peace accord was reached. The consequences of this war caused more than mere ripples across oceans as they reached the colonies. Sleepy colonial cities, usually unaware of the developments in Europe, were shocked to wake up to the presence of new colonizers, bringing with them an abrupt and swift change in government affairs and colonial administration.

The war in Europe had a far-reaching impact on the Philippines in 1762:

“Placing too great a confidence in their distance from Europe, the city of Manila was more puzzled than alarmed on the morning of September 22, 1762, when an armada of thirteen English vessels appeared in the Manila Bay anchorage. The Seven Years War was on between France-Spain and England, but the colony was blissfully unaware that Spain had been dragged into hostilities by the French in 1761.”

The English commanders, Samuel Cornish and William Draper, immediately demanded surrender from the city. Spanish city officials responded, “… to the effect that the vassals of Charles III were prepared to lay down their lives in defense of their religion and honor, [and with that] the bombardment of

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85 For a discussion on the Seven Years’ War, see Montero y Vidal, Historia General de Filipinas.
Manila began.\textsuperscript{87} The Spaniards returned fire, and soon after, the British realized how “woefully unprepared the city was for war.”\textsuperscript{88} On October 4, a senior Spanish official, Simón de Anda y Salazar, left Manila to enlist more Spanish and Filipino soldiers from the provinces, and continue to resist the British from outside the city. As we shall see later, this would prove to be a crucial detail to our narrative. Within two weeks, Manila fell to its knees. The British army disembarked from their ships; the British commanders demanded four million pesos, and the fulfillment of certain conditions to spare the city from sacking. But apparently, even as late as the eighteenth century, the natural next step for the victor was a celebratory plundering of the conquered land. Four thousand British soldiers and two thousands sepoys, South Indians in the military service of the British crown, spent forty hours pillaging Manila. From house to house, church to church, nothing was left untouched. One could only surmise what they discovered and took with them, for at that time, the faithful spared no expense in adorning the churches with gold, silver, and precious stones. Despite the pillaging, the British commanders still insisted on the payment of four million pesos. Only in this instance, it was in exchange for the freedom of the city.

Manila archbishop, Manuel Antonio Rojo del Rio y Vieyra began collecting the four million pesos ransom money. But Anda, the Spanish official holding out beyond the city limits with his army of Spanish and Filipino soldiers, refused to accept the terms of surrender.\textsuperscript{89} Instead, he sent an impassioned plea to Rojo for aid and additional supplies to supplement his war fund and the ammunitions that

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 16-17.
he collected for his planned retaliation on the British forces. He underscored the great influence wielded by the curas (parish priests) on the natives, and how this influence could be used to preserve loyalty to Spain.90 Almost all of the colony’s religious and non-religious communities voluntarily complied, and provided financial aid and actual soldiers to Anda’s request, seeing it as an act of patriotic duty.

The Jesuits, however, were more welcoming and accommodating to the British forces. They refused to participate, opting instead to establish and maintain harmonious relationships with the invading power. Also, even while negotiations were still underway and the Spanish colonial administration was still very much in charge of the Philippines, the Jesuits already took down the Spanish flag, and hoisted the British flag in its stead. This significant fact in the narrative further proved how the Jesuits were comfortable existing in that middle-ground between structural limitation and institutional agency. Waving the British flag not only meant surrender to the invading British army, as some might interpret it to be, it was also a signal of a receptiveness to communicate, a recognition of a very realistic change, and more importantly, a willingness to be part of whatever political and social order that was imminent. Not surprisingly, historian Montero y Vidal labeled them as traitors and accused them of sharing a common cause with the enemy, underscoring their failure to follow the laws of honor, loyalty and patriotism.91

90 BR, Volume XLIX, Anda and the English Invasion, 1762-1764, 133.
91 Montero y Vidal, Historia General de Filipinas, 36. Montero y Vidal wrote: “Las Corporaciones religiosas de todos los órdenes que durante asedio de Manila contribuyeron con sus exhortaciones, con sus bienes y aun con su esfuerzo personal á la defense y sostenimiento de la
Further, during the British occupation of the Manila, Spanish civil and religious officials suspected the Jesuits of carrying on treasonous relationships with the British. Indeed, in “The Summary of Excesses of the Jesuits Sent to Rome for the Pope,” officials cited this illicit communications as one of the reasons why the Society was expelled from the colony. The allegation singled out Bernardo Pazuengos, the Jesuits Provincial during the British occupation and at the time of the expulsion. He had indeed acted as an intermediary, a broker in the truest sense of the word, between Draper and Anda, as the two were trying to reach a settlement. A very unusual aspect of this negotiation proceedings was the refusal of the British to commit anything at all into writing. This caused Anda to be highly suspicious of the British and Pazuengos and their true intentions. And rightfully so. Out of all the demands of the British, outrageous some of them might be, this refusal to put into writing the settlement agreement was perhaps the biggest obstacle of the negotiation proceedings between the two parties, and it was equally unthinkable for the Jesuits to agree to negotiate a verbal contract, given their meticulous recordkeeping tradition and penchant for histories, unless something were to be gained.

Danvila y Collado, Reinado de Carlos III. Danvila y Collado wrote: “De Filipinas constaron, no sólo sus prediciones [sic], contra el Gobierno, sino las inteligencias ilícitas de su Provincial con el General Inglés durante la ocupación de Manila.”

However speculative, it seems that the Jesuits did have something to gain from forging an alliance with the British, and not having any paper trail of their communications. Perhaps recalling the pillaging of Manila at the beginning of the British occupation, the Jesuits likely wagered that a friendly relationship with the British would preserve their churches, which were the most adorned of all the religious orders:

At a fiesta held in the Jesuits church in Manila, in 1623, the statues of canonized Jesuits were placed at the altar. Their garments were richly embroidered with gold and silver thread in intricate designs, and were all covered with jewels – diamonds, pearls, rubies, emeralds, seed-pearls, and other precious stones – arranged in such a manner that their luster and varied colors gave them a most pleasing and beautiful appearance. On the image of St. Xavier were faithfully counted more than 15,000 precious stones and pearls, among them more than a thousand diamonds. On that of St. Ignatius there were more than 20,000 jewels, and of these over 800 were diamonds.  

Recovering even half of this Jesuit wealth would mean placing the Jesuit order way ahead of its rivals, who lost nearly everything. They would have been both, well-connected and well-funded. Jesuits’ posturing would have made them uncontested in matters of religious, even non-religious, policies in the colony.

Indeed, the Jesuits had already used this particular political strategy in the past, and it would serve them well in the future. As we shall see, similarities could be drawn between their actions during this event and those of the post-war period – their slow but clear support for the victors within shifting alliances had contributed to the success of the order in the Philippines, and the Jesuits hoped that these same moves would once again for them. They were essentially banking on history repeating itself.

94 BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 305 n. 149.
The British occupation of Manila met an anti-climactic end. While the negotiations between Spain and Britain were still happening, the signing of the Treaty of Paris on February 10, 1763 essentially ended the Seven Years’ War. Rumor flew fast that the British already received their orders to evacuate the city, and Anda was quick to recognize the opportunity in this development. He stalled in his negotiations. The continued posturing of the British general and his local intermediary (which happened to be the Jesuit Bernardo Pazuengos) lasted for more than a year. Eventually, in March of 1764, the British fleet raised anchor and sailed for India; Anda then marched triumphantly back into the city.

Expulsion

Throughout the centuries, the Society of Jesus had exercised its extra-ecclesiastical activities – in varying capacities, to varying degrees, and with varying results. Inevitably, the Jesuit fathers’ participation in court affairs led to disagreements and clashes with the non-religious members of royal courts in Europe, which eventually grew to intense resentment against the order:

The hatred of ministers, favourites, mistresses, and intriguers against the Jesuits had by this time grown powerful in all Catholic courts, for the holders of these positions, in which, before the days of Jesuit court confessors, it had been possible to exercise unlimited control over the sovereigns, saw their positions more and more seriously endangered by the influence of the fathers. It was inevitable that people in every country who were being adversely affected by the Jesuits should stretch out their hands to one another, over the frontiers, and should unite in a firm league against the order.95

Under the guise of regalism and against the backdrop of the Enlightenment, these high court officials rejected religious interference in state affairs and, through the suppression of the order, successfully extirpated Jesuit elements from governing councils.

Charles III’s Pragmatic Sanction, mentioned earlier, reached Manila on May 17, 1768. It came by way of Acapulco through the viceroy of Mexico. Addressed to Governor Jose Raón from the Conde of Aranda in Madrid, it contained the text of the king’s decree, and instructions on how to proceed with the order. The execution of the order was allegedly swift and efficient, and followed the Conde’s instruction to the letter. From the account provided by Fr. Francisco Puig, whose diary provided a first-hand narrative on how the order had received the news and how the Jesuit fathers had responded to the decree, it seemed the whole affair went without incident: On May 19, 1768, Puig wrote that at nine-fifteen in the morning, the college of San Ignacio in Manila was occupied by two companies of soldiers who stationed themselves in the inner part of the college. The commanders of the troops ordered for the doors of the church to be locked from the outside, and confiscated all keys and guarded all the exits. That same morning, Don Manuel Galvan, a Spanish court official of the Real Audiencia (Appellate Court) of Manila and entrusted appointed judge of the governor arrived at the college of San Ildefonso, with other Spanish officials to

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96 BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 293-294.
serve as witness to the announcement of the royal decree. At this point, Puig couldn’t have relayed it better himself:

As these were all present and the whole community gathered together in obedience at the sound of the bell, he informed and imposed upon us the royal decree of banishment with the occupation of all of our property, as well as the other royal dispositions about our exile contained in the Pragmatic Sanction. All of these were read as well as the decree of the king in which His Majesty authorized the Conde de Aranda to be in charge of the execution of the expulsion of all Jesuits from the kingdoms and domains of the king. The said royal ordinance was solemnly announced in all the streets and posted in the usual public places of the city, the governor adding a decree which ordered under pain of grave penalties that anyone who held or knew anyone who held Jesuit property or who owed anything to them was to present himself to the authorities within two or three days to make such information known. And the Archbishop… published an edict in which he ordered that all his subjects under pain of major excommunication latae sententiae should punctually obey the said decree of the governor. After hearing the royal disposition with due reverence Fr. Provincial with the whole community obeyed with all submission, bowing their heads to the sublime and inscrutable designs of God.

The events following the announcement of the royal decree and its execution seemed to have gone, as mentioned earlier, without incident. By

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98 Diary of Fr. Francisco Puig, SJ in Cushner, Philippine Jesuits in Exile: The Journals of Francisco Puig, SJ, 1768-1770, 56. Puig wrote: “Y presentes éstos y convocada toda la comunidad al son de la campan de obediencia, intimó al real decreto de destierro y expatriación para todos los jesuitas con la ocupación de todas las temporalidades; como también nos leieron todas las demás regias disposiciones contenidas en la Pragmática Sanción, como también el decreto del Rey con que Su Magestad autorizaba al Conde de Aranda para la ejecución del destierro de todos los jesuitas de todos los dominios y reinos de Su Magestad. La dicha Pragmática fue promulgada solemnemente por todas las calles y fixada en los puestos públicos acostumbrados de la ciudad, añadiendo el señor Governador un decreto con que so gravísimas penas mandaba que compareciese dentro de dos o tres días ante Su Señoría a la denunciaci ón cualquiera que tuviesse o supiera quién tuviesse cualesquiera bienes temporalis de los jesuitas, o quien les debiesse algo. Y el señor Arzobispo publicó un edicto en que ajo excomunión mayor latae sententiae mandaba que todos sus súbditos obedeciessen al dicho decreto del señor Governador. El Padre Provincial con toda su comunidad después de oída la real disposición con la devida reverencia dieron con toda submission el obedecimiento, adorando los más altos e inescrutables consejos de Dios.
August 1, 1768, the first batch of Jesuit fathers set sail for Mexico, then overland to Havana, and from its port, crossing the Atlantic to their final destination in Italy.\textsuperscript{99}

However, this seamless, uneventful narrative of the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Philippines is highly suspect. Normally, the Jesuits would have expressed some sort of disapproval, or intention to appeal, or outright disobedience, much like what transpired in Mexico.\textsuperscript{100} Therefore, the disquieting uneventfulness by which the expulsion took place invites a closer look at the actual event and the circumstances surrounding it.

The most compelling reason why the Jesuits acquiesced to the expulsion decree was that they received advance warning from the colonial government, enabling them to put their affairs in order. Indeed, if they could not fight the expulsion order, then the next best thing was to be well-prepared for it. Allegedly, the Jesuit fathers were able to burn incriminating documents, put away their wealth for safekeeping, and arrange for a very comfortable and smooth journey back to Europe. All this was made possible by a network of Jesuit operatives in place in colonial Manila, a group of people who, although not members of the order in the strictest sense, maintained allegiance to the Jesuits through membership to lay organizations affiliated with or sponsored by the Society.

The idea of lay people affiliated with a religious order started in thirteenth-century Europe. Given the supremacy of the Catholic Church at that time, it was

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 23.
no surprise that the laity would want to be more involved in the activities of the Church. Identifying with a particular order and its particular religious tradition provided lay people a deeper and more meaningful connection with their faith, and thus, the Catholic Church. This was achieved without completely divesting themselves of their secular lives and pursuits.\(^{101}\) Thus, a formal means for the laity to lead a more religious life was established through the formation of 3\(^{rd}\) order (the 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) orders being the regular priests and the nuns, respectively) brotherhoods or lay organizations. These lay organizations functioned as a secular arm, enabling the orders to attract people who could not fully commit to their religious vows: the vows of chastity and poverty were understandably difficult to keep, and obedience was a close second. But loyalty, which was not a religious vow, could be solicited. And for the Jesuits, with their emphasis on education, eliciting and nurturing loyalty from people should come quite naturally.\(^{102}\)

The members of these organizations carried on with their ‘regular’ lives, but they also clearly followed a particular form of religious devotion, depending on the religious order to which they are affiliated. They were, in essence, hybrids – part religious, part laity – who were just as comfortable in convents and churches, as they were in the governor’s mansion or any non-religious environment. The Jesuits saw this as an opportunity to legitimately extend their


\(^{102}\) For modern-day lay apostolic communities in the Jesuit tradition, see Ignatian Associates or Christian Life Community.
influence further into non-religious affairs. By placing their brothers into positions of power or actively courting people in these positions, the Jesuits were essentially growing a large network, beyond the confines of their convents and churches, that could grant favors to the order and be called in its service in times of need. The following paragraphs are devoted into exploring the validity of the idea of a Jesuit network that protected the order and its members from the full impact of the expulsion decree.

When the governor of the Philippines, Jose Raón, received the special royal decree of Charles III regarding the expulsion of the Jesuits, he allegedly sold the contents of the message to the Jesuits for a huge amount of money: “Raón, an extraordinarily venal man, who had little scruple over enriching himself, saw in this instance an opportunity to exploit the situation by revealing to the Jesuits the secret of their expulsion in exchange for a substantial amount of money.”

Owing to this covert deal, not only were the Jesuits able to keep jewelries and precious objects that could easily be transported, but they were also able to safeguard documents that were potentially incriminating and damaging to their order. Following this illicit exchange, Raón supposedly had his secretary Juan Antonio de Cosío draft a response to the Conde de Aranda of his faithful and expedient execution of the Charles III’s royal decree, which he dated July 1768. This document carries on its shoulder the entire Jesuit argument “that the

103 Montero y Vidal, Historia General de Filipinas, 185. Montero y Vidal wrote: “Raón, que era un hombre extraordinariamente interesado y venal, y muy poco escrupuloso en el cumplimiento de sus deberes, vió en este asunto un negocio exploitable, y lo utilizó en provecho propio, revelando á los jesuitas, por una fuerte cantidad, el secreto de su expulsión.”

104 Ibid. Montero y Vidal wrote: “Merced a esta perfidia, pudieron poner a salvo una buena parte de su caudal, al menos lo que poseían en metálico y en alhajas de fácil ocultación, hicieron desaparecer documentos y papeles que les comprometían, ó hubieran acreditado, de serles cogidos, sus planes y malas artes en determinados asuntos.”
governor had duly executed the royal commands regarding the Jesuits, in accordance with his [Charles III’s] instructions; and this was sent to [the Conde of Aranda, with a letter in which he threw the blame upon Galvan [a Spanish court official in the Philippines] for any defects which might be found in the conduct of the expulsion.\(^{105}\) Montero y Vidal questions the veracity of this document, not as a forgery, but as a blatant false statement of Raón addressed to the Conde of Aranda to cover his wrongdoing.\(^{106}\)

In as much as Raón was the most venal man in the colony, he was not the only corruptible one. Surrounding him were some members of the appellate court, also functioning as a quasi-advisory council for the governor, whose moral wherewithal could not stand the weakest of breezes. They were Juan Antonio Cosio, Francisco Henriquez de Villacorta and Domingo Blas de Basaraz. Cosio was a fiscal and the governor’s personal secretary; Villacorta was the court’s auditor; while Basaraz was a court judge. As cited earlier, Raón did not experience a crisis of conscience in amassing wealth through whatever means possible. And together with Cosio, who was “more subtle and malevolent than can be expressed,”\(^{107}\) Manila was left in the same decrepit state in 1768, as it was in 1763, when the British left for India.\(^{108}\) These two men maintained no allegiance to anyone, and masterfully pitted various organizations in colonial

\(^{105}\) BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 298.  
\(^{106}\) Ibid, 295-296.  
\(^{107}\) BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 299.  
\(^{108}\) Ibid., 294.
society against each other, as a form of distraction from their illicit activities.  

Villacorta and Basaraz, however, maintained relations outside of that little circle.  

Villacorta was a recognized friend of the Society of Jesus. Besides having taken the side of the Jesuits regarding disputes against the state or the church in the past, he censured the archbishop for the latter’s insistence on episcopal visitation, which meant interference in the way the Jesuits and other regular orders run their parishes. Basaraz, one of the resident magistrates, was more than a mere friend to the order. He was a Jesuit brother as he was a member of that order’s lay organization. (The name of the lay organization was not mentioned in any of the sources I consulted but all identify Basaraz as a 3rd order Jesuit brother.)

Thus, given Basaraz’s close relationship with the Jesuit fathers, he was the most likely person to have facilitated the covert transaction between the governor and the Jesuits. Establishing who made the first move, however, whether it was the governor looking to make an unexpected profit or the Jesuits sensing an impending disaster for their order based on transoceanic whispers, is difficult to determine. It could have also been Basaraz himself who initiated the exchange, recognizing a mutually beneficial outcome for both the governor and the Jesuits. Indeterminacy notwithstanding, the transaction proved how effective the Jesuit political network was in an early modern colonial setting.

Basaraz’s demonstration of loyalty to the Jesuits did not stop there. Allegations of his interference in the process of expulsion immediately surfaced

\(^{109}\) BR, Volume L, Events of 1764-1800, 29-32.  
\(^{110}\) BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 300.  
\(^{111}\) Ibid.
after the last Jesuit priest left the colony. Among them were: Basaraz allowed the Jesuits to take papers and books from their archives which had already been seized; proceedings of the expulsion, to the extent to which he had oversight, went according to the preference of the order; he clandestinely met with members of the order; and he permitted them to take money and documents with them on their trip to Mexico.\footnote{Montero y Vidal, \textit{Historia General de Filipinas}, 207. Montero y Vidal wrote: “... dio a los Jesuitas los Papeles y libros que quisieron de los ocupados cuyos Archivos les franqueó; que en los asuntos que ocurrieran a estos procedía según ellos querían; que todos los días los empleaba en hablar en secreto, y encerrado con los Padres; que les permitió sacar dinero, y papeles cuando se embarcaron...”}

Indisputably, Basaraz’s actions softened the harsh decree of expulsion issued by Charles III. He was part of a larger Jesuit political machinery that the order carefully established through the years to buttress, if not shield, them from the attacks that would have inevitably come as the Society expanded in power and influence. It could have very well been an Augustinian or Franciscan or any of the other orders occupying the seat of magistrate judge in Raón’s advisory council. But it was a Jesuit, and that was not happenstance. Basaraz was part of a quasi-sleeper cell, to use modern parlance, whose tentacles extended far, wide and deep. No doubt, the many organizations and institutions the Society established and founded – the colleges, the charities, lay organizations – form part of this complex Jesuit network, acting as the order’s eyes, ears, and sometimes even muscle.

Simon de Anda y Salazar, the Spanish hero of the British invasion of Manila, succeeded Raón as governor of the Philippines. As was customary, the incoming governor conducted a residencia of the outgoing head of the colony.
Anda found Raón, Cosio, Villacorta, and Basaraz guilty of various treasonous crimes, especially regarding the proceedings of the expulsion of the Jesuits. The former governor found it necessary to salvage his reputation by drawing up and pointing to documents that exculpate him of any wrongdoings. But Raón, Villacorta, and Basaraz all died of sickness (which, due to the slow communication between Madrid and Manila and the conditions of the cell, was not uncommon during this time). Cosio was the only one who lived long enough to serve his sentence. He died in exile in Africa.

To further cast doubt on the Jesuits’ surprise over the expulsion decree, the Jesuits were very comfortable in the journey back to Europe, which means they had enough time to adequately prepare for the voyage back home. Even Cushner admitted: “But the Jesuits were well prepared for their trip. They travelled “first class” for 250 pesos each (taken from their confiscated funds) and were well supplied before leaving Manila. Among the rations given the 130 Fathers were 24,000 eggs, 428 picos of wheat, 3,000 chickens and 50 large pigs. They were also allowed eleven Chinese servants who had to return to the Philippines once they reached Acapulco. Among the servants were two cooks and one barber.”

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113 BR, Volume L, Expulsion of the Jesuits, 299-301.
114 Ibid., 299, n146.
115 Cushner, Philippine Jesuits in Exile: The Journals of Francisco Puig, SJ, 1768-1770, 4. (Translated from Spanish by Cushner)
Conclusion

The members of the Society of Jesus clearly played various roles that benefited their order by advancing its agenda, protecting its interests, and shielding it from hostile elements. As ambassadors, counselors, confessors, brokers, the Jesuit fathers were able to influence policy indirectly, leaving their religious integrity intact. Working closely with people in very high places, the Jesuits were sometimes seen as more political than religious, as the real power behind the throne.\footnote{Robert Bireley, SJ, “The Jesuits and Politics in Time of War: A Self-Appraisal,” \textit{Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits}, Vol. 34, No. 5 (Nov. 2002), 1.}

In the colonial setting, the Society was at the forefront of evangelization. Realizing that a policy of diplomacy and accommodation was the best way to spread Christianity to non-believers, it was more effective than the other orders in attracting followers. This resulted in its enviable position as the wealthiest and most influential religious order in the Philippines, which, in the Philippines, said a lot, as the power of the church was recognized to be much stronger than that of the state.

With wealth, influence, and the favor of the colonial government, the Society of Jesus established its supremacy over the Philippine Islands. Indeed, it took a Pragmatic Sanction, a special royal decree of utmost importance in exigent situations, from the king to take it down. But even then, the order was able to rely upon the extensive network it had established to buttress it from the full impact of that external force.
Further still, the Jesuits demonstrated a level of political sophistication that even the colonial civil authorities did not possess. They were not merely political; they were *strategically* political. The political tactics and strategies they implemented were skillfully devised and constructed to suit specific conditions. Truly, their decision to have a more active part establishing Spain’s sovereignty and legitimacy over the Philippines, and then switching to a more restrained, subordinated role during the Corcuera administration, was nothing short of masterful. Their participation in these two dramatically different instances unequivocally displayed their political adroitness and talent in politics.

What is more, the Society of Jesus did value the end over the means, the destination over the journey. Based on its moral philosophy, as discussed at the beginning of this paper, it probably did not matter to the Jesuit fathers that some of their means or journeys were not as Christian as they should have been. They probably saw the importance of a well-funded and well-connected organization to do god’s work, as they interpreted it. In the Constitution of the order, Ignatius, its founder, affirmed the Society’s need to win “the good will and charity of all,.. especially of those whose favorable or unfavorable attitude toward it is of great importance for opening or closing the gate leading to the service of God and the good of souls.”¹¹７ This passage clearly articulates the order’s stance on matters of moral ambiguity. The Jesuits believed that things are not always black or white; decisions, methods, courses of actions – not entirely moral or Christian – are made and followed.

¹¹７ Ibid., 5.
If the Society of Jesus was indeed more political than its rival religious orders in the early modern setting, then what was further proven here is that the order was able to recalibrate its involvement as needed, to tailor its practices to a specific situation, and to recognize when to be on the offensive and when to be on the defensive. This suggested a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness brought about by conquest and evangelization. Furthermore, the Jesuit fathers were not limited by their immediate geographical and temporal conditions. They saw past these physical barriers; they planned ahead, and were not discouraged by any setbacks. As missionaries, they were exemplary; as politicians, they were enviable. In the early modern world, where religiosity and pragmatism comingled in a precarious balance, these Jesuit fathers, indubitably, had the upper hand over their rivals and proved themselves to be remarkably successful in managing their global religious enterprise in an Asian colony.
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