



Paglaurum

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SEMINAR CITES PATH TO DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE



Taguig City, Philippines (By Clarisse Aquino). On November 28, 2024, the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG), in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and the University of Makati, convened a seminar on federalism, drawing 110 participants, including faculty, undergraduates, and Master of Public Administration students.

The seminar underscored federalism’s potential to reshape governance in the Philippines, offering insights into its principles and challenges, and was heralded as a pivotal moment in the ongoing national discourse on political reform.

The event marked another chapter in HSF’s steadfast support for fostering informed debates on governance, particularly federalism, as part of its mission to promote sustainable political development worldwide. **Turn to page 2**

Federalism gab Sparks Interest in Governance Reform

By Jay Dejaresco

General Santos City, Philippines — A seminar on federalism held at the Mindanao State University-General Santos City Campus last April 23, 2024 attracted 89 attendees, including students and faculty, with some participants joining from MSU-Maguindanao

Organized in partnership with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and the Philippine Institute for Local Governance (PILG), the event sought to deepen understanding of federalism and its potential role in the Philippines’ political development.

The seminar’s primary goal was to provide a foundational understanding of

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Federalism and the Fight vs. Malign Interference

By Clarisse Aquino

Manila, Philippines — In an era where governance challenges are increasingly global, a recent podcast hosted by the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG) shed new light on the intersections of federalism and national security.

Airing on July 11, 2024, and supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), the episode featured constitutional law expert Atty. Michael Henry Yusingco, who explored the potential of federalism to address emerging threats like malign interference.

Hosted by Atty. Gwen Pimentel-Gana, the conversation delved deep into how federal systems could navigate complex

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Seminar cites path to decentralized governance *From Page 1*

Unpacking Federalism: Philosophy and Promise

Moderated by Ms. Camille Navarro and Ms. Clarisse Aquino, the seminar began with a compelling call to action by Aquino, who emphasized the importance of engaging various sectors of society in sustained discussions about federalism. HSF Resident Representative Alexander Birlle highlighted the partnership's commitment to these initiatives, describing federalism as a potential tool for addressing the country's longstanding governance challenges.

The speakers tackled a range of topics, offering both theoretical and practical perspectives on federalism:

Dr. Ederson Tapia contextualized federalism by examining the existing unitary government system, where power is centralized in the national government. He emphasized the need for decentralization, noting, "Understanding federalism requires a recognition of its potential to address gaps in governance and promote greater citizen participation."

Dr. Alex Brillantes situated federalism within the Philippine political landscape, particularly its relevance in addressing regional disparities and conflicts, such as those in Mindanao. He characterized federalism as a "politico-administrative instrument" to deepen decentralization and strengthen local governance.

Atty. Francis Tom Temprosa linked federalism to human rights, advocating for self-governance and autonomy as essential elements for enhancing democracy and protecting individual rights. "Federalism is not just a structural change; it's a vehicle for affirming democracy and safeguarding human rights," he remarked.

Prof. Edmund Tayao provided a visionary perspective, emphasizing federalism's role in addressing historical inefficiencies in Philippine governance.



Atty. Francis Tom Temprosa



Prof. Alex Brillantes, Jr.

He called it "a critical opportunity to recalibrate our political institutions and embrace the diversity of our state-nation."

A Platform for Dialogue and Engagement

The seminar's open forum became a vibrant space for participants, especially students, to ask incisive questions and engage directly with experts. The discussions ignited enthusiasm and highlighted the youth's crucial role in advancing federalism as a solution to the country's political and societal challenges.

Participants expressed strong support for further dialogues, with one student noting, "This seminar has expanded my understanding of governance and opened my eyes to the possibilities that federalism could bring."

Hanns Seidel Foundation: A Pillar of Federalism Advocacy

The Hanns Seidel Foundation's role in supporting the seminar reflects its enduring commitment to strengthening democratic governance. By partnering with PILG, HSF facilitates platforms that not only educate but also inspire meaningful engagement with reform-oriented ideas like federalism.

The seminar concluded with positive feedback from participants, who praised the event's depth and relevance. Evaluations revealed a



Prof. Edmund Tayao




Dean Ederson Tapia

collective appreciation for the insights provided, underscoring the importance of continued discourse on federalism.

Sustaining the Momentum

As the Philippines grapples with the challenges of centralized governance, the federalism seminars organized by PILG and supported by HSF stand as beacons of hope. By fostering understanding and encouraging inclusive conversations, these initiatives pave the way for a more empowered and equitable governance model, reaffirming the transformative promise of federalism in the country's political future.




Paglaum

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Federalism gab Sparks Interest in Governance Reform *From Page 1*



federalism's principles and challenges while contrasting it with the country's current unitary system. This dialogue aimed to equip participants with insights into shared powers across different levels of government, a key feature of federalism.

Illuminating Federalism's Potential

Opening remarks by Atty. Gwendolyn Gana, PILG President, emphasized the relevance of continued discussions on federalism, particularly as the Philippines grapples with governance and development challenges. Carole Lee, HSF Coordinator, highlighted the partnership's commitment to fostering informed debates on governance reform.

Atty. Elmar Martin Jay Dejaresco set the stage with an overview of the current Philippine government's centralized structure. He highlighted the concentration of powers in the national government, leaving local authorities dependent on central directives. This, he noted, underscores the importance



Atty. Luis Gana and Atty. Jay Dejaresco

of exploring decentralization and shared powers as potential solutions for greater inclusivity and efficiency.

Following this, Atty. Luis Ma. Gila Gana delved into federalism's impact on human rights, underscoring its potential to enhance governance and protect diversity. He argued that decentralization under a federal structure could address persistent human rights issues by empowering subnational governments to take a more active role in governance.

Dr. Alex Brillantes, Jr. discussed federalism within the Philippine context, examining its applicability as a means to deepen decentralization, strengthen local governments, and address long-standing conflicts in Mindanao. He framed federalism as a tool to empower subnational governments and ensure more equitable resource distribution.

Rounding off the discussion, Prof. Edmund Tayao explored the philosophical underpinnings of federalism, highlighting its potential to address the country's historical and



Prof. Edmund Tayao and Prof. Alex Brillantes, Jr.

structural deficiencies. He emphasized federalism's promise as a political solution for diverse groups, particularly in a multi-ethnic nation like the Philippines.

Bridging Knowledge Gaps

Participants engaged enthusiastically during the open forum, posing insightful questions that demonstrated a strong interest in federalism. The discussions fostered a deeper understanding of the system's benefits and challenges, with students expressing a desire for more forums to broaden public awareness.

"Federalism offers a chance to reimagine our governance structures to fit our unique history and diversity," one participant remarked. The seminar's evaluation forms reflected overwhelmingly positive feedback, with attendees praising the event's informative and thought-provoking nature.

Sustaining Momentum for Reform

The Hanns Seidel Foundation, a long-time advocate for governance reform, continues to play a pivotal role in fostering dialogue on federalism. Its partnership with PILG underscores a shared commitment to engaging youth and other sectors in meaningful discussions about the country's future.

As calls for governance reform grow louder, seminars like these serve as crucial platforms for education and engagement. With sustained efforts, federalism could potentially offer a pathway to a more decentralized, inclusive, and empowered Philippines.

EXPLORING FEDERALISM: A MILLENNIAL'S JOURNEY TO A DISTINCT FORM OF GOVERNANCE

By Clarisse Aquino

Manila, Philippines — Federalism, a governance concept often debated in political circles, came alive in a recent podcast featuring Atty. Dominique P. Gana-Pabillore.

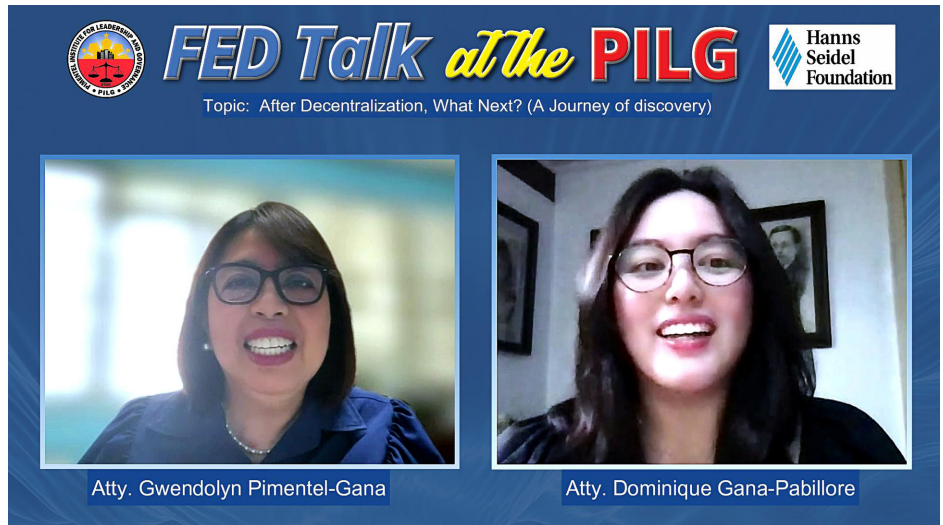
Hosted by Atty. Gwen Pimentel-Gana, President of the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG) on September 19, 2024, the episode provided a fresh perspective on federalism through the eyes of a millennial deeply engaged in its study.

The podcast, supported by the Hanns Seidel Foundation, traced Pabillore's journey through the 2024 Winter School Program on Federalism and Sustainability, a two-week intensive held in Austria and Italy. There, she explored how federalism could address complex governance challenges in the Philippines.

Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future

Atty. Pabillore's interest in federalism was sparked by her late grandfather, former Senator Nene Pimentel, a staunch advocate for the system. He saw federalism as a unifying framework for the Philippines, a nation of diverse islands, cultures, and religions.

The Winter School deepened her understanding. "Institutions matter because they solve problems," she recalled from a lecture. This idea prompted her to question whether the Philippines' current structure meets the country's needs and to consider if federalism might offer a better fit.



Lessons from Abroad

The program brought together participants from around the globe, offering insights into how federal systems function in different contexts. Pabillore learned about fiscal decentralization and innovative concepts like "digital twins," tools that model infrastructure impacts on communities.

For her, the exchange of ideas with peers from Asia, Europe, and the Americas was invaluable. "It was inspiring to see how federalism adapts uniquely to each country," she said.

The Case for Federalism

Pabillore believes federalism deserves serious consideration in the Philippines. Even if the country doesn't fully transition to a federal system, she emphasized the value of decentralization, already enshrined in the Constitution.

"There's no one-size-fits-all federalism," she noted. "We need to study how it could work specifically for the Philippines."

Yet, she acknowledged the hurdles: constitutional amendments, legislative action, and capacity building at the local government level.

A Call to Study and Educate

For Pabillore, the journey doesn't end with advocacy—it begins with education. "Federalism needs to be understood by the public and the youth," she said. "We need to explore if it's the right fit for our country and how it could make governance better for Filipinos."

As federalism continues to spark interest, voices like Pabillore's ensure the conversation remains relevant, grounded, and forward-looking.



Federalism and the Fight vs. Malign Interference From Page 1



FED Talk at the PILG



Atty. Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana



Atty. Michael Henry Yusingco, LLM

governance dilemmas, particularly in the Philippine context.

Understanding Malign Interference

Yusingco began by unpacking the concept of malign interference, describing it as foreign interference with ill intent, manifesting through disinformation, paid media influencers, and other covert tactics. While not yet a codified term in international law, its implications for sovereignty and governance are increasingly evident.

“Malign interference challenges traditional notions of national security and governance,” Yusingco noted. “It necessitates a rethinking of the responsibilities of federal and subnational governments in safeguarding democracy.”

Federalism and Subnational Diplomacy

One of the key insights was the vulnerability of subnational governments in federal systems to malign interference. In many federal setups, subnational entities, such as states or provinces, engage in diplomacy or international relations to address local concerns. While this enhances their autonomy, it also exposes them to external threats.

“Federal systems must develop robust mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between federal and

subnational governments to protect against malign interference,” Yusingco explained. He highlighted how some federal systems integrate national security oversight into subnational diplomacy, ensuring unity in addressing external threats.

A Philippine Federalism for Philippine Challenges

Drawing from real-world examples, Yusingco stressed that federalism must be tailored to a country’s unique needs. For the Philippines, this means designing a system that addresses not only national security but also food security, climate change, and governance inefficiencies.

“We need a federalism that works for the Philippines,” Yusingco emphasized. “Advocacy for federalism must evolve beyond textbook definitions. It must show how this system can address current challenges like malign interference, not just in theory but in practice.”

The Role of the Hanns Seidel Foundation

The podcast also underscored the Hanns Seidel Foundation’s vital role in advancing discussions on federalism in the Philippines. Known for its commitment to democratic governance and sustainable development, HSF has been instrumental in creating platforms for critical conversations, such as this

one, that shape public understanding and policymaking.

Looking Ahead: Cooperation and Coordination

While Yusingco refrained from claiming that federalism is a definitive solution to malign interference, he argued that enhancing intergovernmental cooperation and coordination could strengthen the country’s defenses against such threats.

“The success of federalism in addressing issues like malign interference lies in its ability to foster synergy between different levels of government,” he concluded.

Charting a Course for the Future

As the Philippines continues to grapple with pressing governance challenges, discussions like this serve as a critical reminder of the need for innovative and context-specific solutions. The podcast exemplifies how federalism, when thoughtfully adapted, could offer a framework to navigate the complexities of modern governance.

With the support of institutions like the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the conversation around federalism and its relevance to the Philippines remains vibrant, offering hope for a governance system that not only empowers but also protects its people in an increasingly interconnected world.

2024 PILG ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

By Clarisse Aquino

Herewith is the annual report of the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG) in partnership with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). This report highlights our accomplishments and key milestones achieved during the year 2024. It reflects our dedication and partnership in advancing leadership and governance initiatives.

The PILG, jointly with the HSF, remain dedicated to keep the public informed and engaged in the national conversation surrounding federalism, local autonomy and governance, and other significant national issues.

In this connection, PILG and HSF HAVE successfully implement various projects centered around the themes of federalism, devolution, decentralization, and local governance.

The goals of the PROJECTS were to educate, inform, and stimulate peoples' awareness of the importance of Federalism and local governance, as well as how it can affect and enhance their lives through strengthened collaborations with various Local Government Units across the country. These initiatives have raised awareness, sparked interest, and fostered a deeper understanding of Federalism and related issues of concern.

1. Two (2) Seminars on Federalism 101 Course.

- **April 23, 2024** – Seminar on Local Governance, Decentralization and Federalism WAS done in Mindanao State University – General Santos City, with 89 attendees, students and faculty members and joined by some students from MSU-Maguindanao.
- **November 28, 2024** - Continued DISCUSSION on federalism WAS conducted in University of Makati, Taguig City, participated by 110 attendees, including MPA students, undergraduates, and faculty members.

The discussions on federalism focused on the current government framework as contrasted against the



fundamental principles of federalism, which ADVOCATE for the division and distribution of powers among THE various levels of government.

The seminar AIMED TO EQUIP THE participants with a foundational understanding of its significance and the challenges within the realm of THE Philippine political EXPERIENCE.

The intention is to foster both broader and deeper insights into the philosophy and principles underlying federalism as a governance model. Additionally, it aims to raise awareness among the youth regarding the Federal System, with the hope that sustained discussions will enhance the collective understanding of federalism across THE diverse sectors of Philippine society.

2. Two (2) podcasts were aired.

- **July 11, 2024: Fed Talk at the PILG: Topic: Malign Interference in the Context of Federal System.**

The Podcast was aired via PILG YouTube and PILG Facebook Page, last July 11, 2024 at 10:00am, with special guest, Atty. Michael Henry Yusingco, and hosted by Atty. Gwen Pimentel-Gana.

The podcast illustrated how a federal system operates in practice, highlighting its functionality or shortcomings through a real-life example. Today, the real-world issue

at hand is malign interference. In our fast-changing society, malign interference has emerged as a pivotal topic in public discussions. As we confront the implications of this issue, it has sparked passionate debates among experts, policymakers, and the general public. This matter transcends academic curiosity; it carries tangible consequences that influence our daily lives, our future, and the very foundation of our communities. The podcast explored the various facets of malign interference, examining the arguments, the stakes involved, and potential pathways forward.

- **September 19, 2024: Fed Talk at the PILG: After Decentralization, What Next? (A Journey of Discovery)**

The Podcast was aired September 19, 2024 at 10:00am, with special guest, Atty. Dominique P. Gana-Pabilloro, a lawyer in the Gana Manlangit Law Office, a lecturer in Lyceum College of Law, Vice-president and a member of the Board of Trustees of PILG. The podcast was hosted by Atty. Gwen Pimentel-Gana.

The podcast focused its discussion about Atty. Pabilloro's Federalism journey as one of the participants in the 2024 Winter School Program on Federalism and how federalism impacted on her as a millennial.

The two podcasts were broadcasted on the official PILG

YouTube and Facebook pages. Furthermore, PILG invited local government units (LGUs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government offices, and other social media contacts through posters and mass email communications.

The two podcasts were successfully broadcast on our official PILG YouTube and Facebook pages. This is a significant step in increasing our visibility and engagement with our audience.

In addition, we have proactively reached out to various stakeholders to expand our listenership and public engagements. PILG has sent out invitations to local government units (LGUs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government offices through posters and mass email communications, to ensure that our social media contacts are well-informed and encouraged to participate.

We believe that these outreach strategies will not only help in promoting our podcasts but also foster stronger connections with our community partners.

Following the premiere of our latest podcast episode. The analytics have shown that it continues to attract viewers, which is encouraging.

While the initial viewership for this particular episode may not have reached the levels we had anticipated, there are several positive aspects to consider. One notable advantage is that the episode has been uploaded on YouTube. This makes it easily accessible for anyone who wants to watch it at their convenience, allowing for reference and repeated viewing. Furthermore, the YouTube platform enables our audience to share the content with others, which can broaden its reach significantly.

In light of these factors, it's clear that podcasts maintain a high level of relevance in our content strategy. They represent substantial potential for exposure and engagement with an already interested audience. Each episode serves as a valuable touchpoint that can grow our community and intensify our visibility.

3. PILG in support of Hanns Seidel



Foundation participated in the two-week Winter School on Federalism and Governance 2024 - Federalism and Sustainability program, that took place from 5 to 16 February 2024 in Innsbruck (Austria) and in Bolzano/Bozen (Italy).

Atty. Dominic Gana-Pabillore was the delegate of PILG at the Winter School Program. The Winter Program, spanning two weeks, FOCUSED on federalism and sustainability. The first week TOOK place in Innsbruck, Austria, hosted by the University of Innsbruck, followed by ANOTHER WEEK in Bolzano, Italy, at the EURAC Research Center. Throughout these two weeks, participants engaged IN lectures, workshops, activities, and games designed to enhance THEIR understanding of federalism. The program WAS particularly enriching because it PROVIDED the opportunity to connect with diverse individuals, including young leaders and experts in the field of federalism from various countries and cultures. Overall, it WAS A fascinating and beneficial experience.

4. Meeting with Dr. Susanne Luther, Director of the Hanns Siedel Foundation Institute for International Cooperation, last July 2024 at the Dusit Hotel, Makati.

PILG President Gwen Pimentel-Gana and Atty. Dominic Gana-Pabillore had an engaging meeting with Dr. Luther. During THEIR discussion, they exchanged insights on the impact of the project activities with PILG and explored plans to expand and enrich the dialogue on federalism and decentralization in the country.

5. PILG will also prepare a year-end Newsletter "Paglaum" that will feature the activities conducted by PILG and HSF for the year 2024, to be posted at the PILG Website and Facebook Page.

All activities carried out in 2024 have been documented, and comprehensive reports, including accounting details, were sent to HSF.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the ongoing support we receive from HSF. Your commitment has played a vital role in our endeavours, and we truly value this partnership.

Looking ahead, we are eager to continue our collaboration on programs and projects that focus on Local Governance, Decentralization and Federalism and may also consider other project like Youth Leadership Program. With the steadfast support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation, we aim to sustain and expand our initiatives in these critical areas. Together, we can ensure the growth and impact of these programs.

Moreover, the ongoing assistance from HSF has been crucial in furthering our shared goal of enhancing awareness and understanding of local governance, decentralization and federalism and the associated national issues. We are enthusiastic about what we can achieve together in the future and are committed to maximizing the effectiveness of our collective efforts.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. We look forward to the continued partnership and to making a meaningful difference together. Thank you. GOD BLESS.

RECENT PICTORIAL EVENTS



April 6, 2024: PILG Core grup meeting



July 5, 2024: Dinner meeting with Dr.Susanne Luther Director of the Hanns Seidel Foundation Institute for international Cooperation.



December 10, 2024: PILG-HSF year-end meeting.