

Cebuano Politicians' Sustainability in Power

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Abstract—The impetus of this undertaking is to determine Cebuano leaders' sustainability in power or position towards an emergent theory using a descriptive-qualitative cross-case research design where Cebu is the research setting. Local leaders in Cebu were chosen as 'actors' of the study verified through the use of shadowed data to understand power-politics administration of leadership in the area. Personal and professional backgrounds and style(s) of leadership are not absolute predictors for the leaders to sustain in power or position. Political sustainability is relative to each of the politician's personality and strategies. In the practice of politics, leaders use power directly or indirectly for the constituencies' interest in lieu of their (politicians) motives or desires over the position. Crave for power turns out to be addictive, a propeller for the leaders' intentions of prolonged political career, as such, its use takes in a form of discernment in both theory and practice in actual administration. Therefore, as an emergent theory, "*Sustainability in leadership is a result of a leader's unique responses to different situations using diverse strategies*".

Keywords: Cebuano leaders, sustainability in power, power-politics administration

1. Introduction

The inheritance of Philippine democracy from the United States of America and its independence from Spanish dominion since 1898 have brought to the emergence of its own politics in administration called "Philippine Political-Public Administration". It has adopted a presidential-unitary-bicameral democratic government type and a civil service system in/ter(dependent) from the control of the legislative, executive and judicial departments.

In its own political panoramic landscape of development, it is noticeable that Philippines marked its distinct identity of governance marked by shifts of leadership styles such for example from the Marcosian dictatorship that was toppled down by EDSA People Power in 1986 and the restoration of democracy and its practice until the present times of the Aquino administration.

Much have been written about national politics in the Philippines brought about by a centralized system of governance with less consideration to the local settings, a reminder that as a country, it is comprised of approximately 7, 107 large and small islands (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao).

Politics in public administration is not only concentrated in the national government but also to its component parts (the local government units) which contribute to the entirety of the country's

political development. This is to say that Philippine politics is so rich in theory and practice that it cannot be isolated to the national government only but “is supposed” a mirror of all politics, a summation of everything about a country.

This paper is an attempt to describe Philippine politics from the lens of public administration in local Cebu, a representation of theory and practice of leadership in one and more of the local government units in the Visayas region.

2. The Research Process Flow

Figure 1 shows the entire research undertaking intertwining the research informants (leaders), the method, the topic and the output.

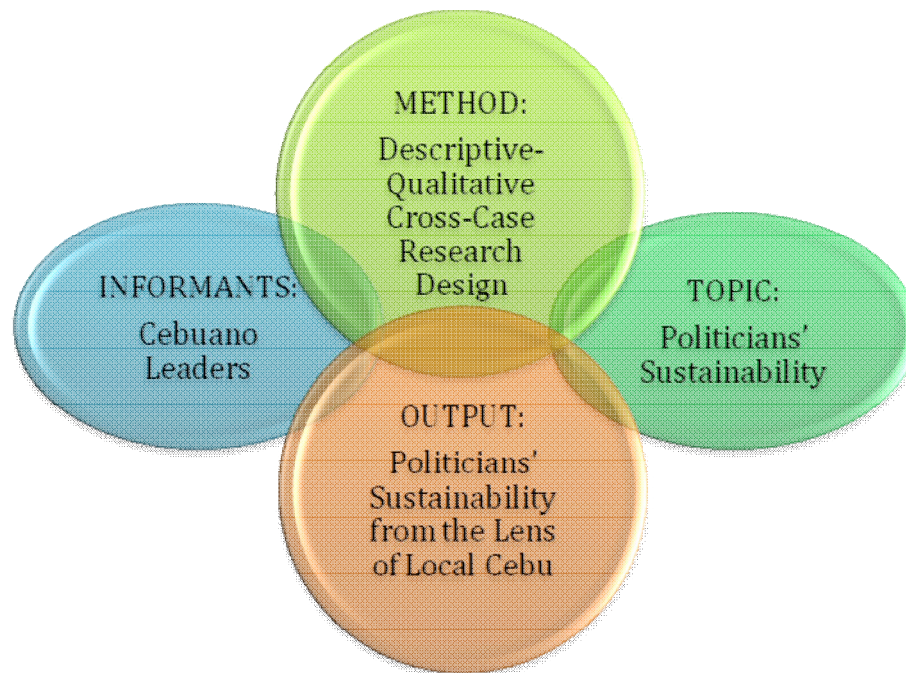


Figure 1: The Research Process

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-qualitative cross-case research design on the Cebuano politicians' use of power, a way for them to sustain in leadership.

2.2. Research Setting

Cebu is the center of commerce and trade in the Visayas region of the Philippines blessed with abundant resources and strategic location along with its immense population, its leaders have proven good governance in their areas of political jurisdiction where Cebuanos are considered to be “critical voters” during elections and the presence of many civic organizations that operate based on the needs of the Cebuano people. The place of study was concentrated in Cebu City and the Province where the research informants were affiliated, reside or work. Although political mapping was used to locate the informants' affiliation to the agencies of political socialization, it was held undisclosed in order to protect the privacy, security and interest of the politicians.

2.3 Research Informants

The researcher employed a non-probability purposive “snow-ball” sampling in the selection of the informants that befitted the study using shadowed data on the process from the people and experts in the political field. Each informant should be available and willing, conversant and has a leadership experience of at least three terms regardless of the period of duration in each term or its equivalent. Common referrals were made from one leader to another listing all potential qualified informants. In the end, sixteen (16) leaders emerged to have met the inclusion criteria and were distributed equally into the two different agencies of political socialization namely: political entities and civic organizations. Prior to the actual interviews, the informants who qualified for the study were determined through a background investigation for validation.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study made use of a researcher-constructed interview guide. The research instrument comprised structured and unstructured questions that pertain to the Cebuano politicians’ sustainability in power including questions related to each of the informants’ personal and professional characteristics. The interview guide consists of three (3) unstructured or open-ended questions since each informant’s answers were based on their insights; there are neither choices nor alternatives. For the informants’ convenience, all the items in the instrument are translated into Cebuano vernacular version. All Cebuano translations were perused and validated by an expert Cebuano professor. Prior to the final administration of the instruments of the study, a pre-administration testing of the instruments was conducted to some professors and students of Cebu Normal University who were classified according to their affiliation to the agencies of political socialization to establish rigor of the instruments. For content validity and reliability of the unstructured questions and the corresponding translations of all items to Cebuano vernacular, expert Social Science professors evaluated the research instruments.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher asked permission from the leaders through letters for an interview schedule stating the date, time and venue. In each interview, responses were noted and tape recorded, then, analyzed according to similarity of ideas and typology. After each interviews, in some cases when necessary, the focused-group discussion (FGD), delphi technique or triangulation were adopted for the shadowed data in determining the validity and reliability of each of the leaders’ answers to questions.

In the process of determining each of the politicians’ sustainability in power, their practices were asked, then, after the collection of all data, all their answers were clustered as analyzed in order to see which were common among Cebuano politicians in terms of power usage. After, it was on its latter part where intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions were culled coming from the politicians’ dominant utilization of power.

In times when needed, the researcher assisted the informants who found certain difficulties in answering the instrument for whatever technical and other extraneous reasons such for example: the interview format, the language used, the meaning and the content of the interview questions careful and certain not to alter the informants’ substance of responses expressed through the convenience of their (the informants) language either in English, Filipino or the Cebuano vernacular or the mixed version known as “code switching” of languages.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Cebuano Leaders

Figure 2.A. shows the list of Cebuano leaders from political entities coded as specified with tag names to describe each of the leader's personality.



Figure 2.A.: The Cebuano Leaders from the Political Entities

3.1.1 Personal and Professional Background of Political Leaders

Case 1. Alpha, the Political Widower

Alpha, 56 years old, male, a widower, has an estimated annual income in year 2010 as 396,000 pesos. He has served the government for 32 years. He became a barangay councilor, a barangay captain, an executive assistant to the mayor and currently one of the city councilors in one of the local government units in the province of Cebu. He graduated along with his educational achievement in his post college degree. As perceived, he has high relationship/low task as his leadership style.

Case 2. Beta, the Man of Electronic Vision

Beta, 54 years old, male, a man of electronic vision, married, has an estimated annual income in year 2010 as 456,000 pesos. He has served the government for 21 years starting in 1989 as a barangay captain and is currently one of Cebu City's councilor. He graduated along with his educational achievement in his college earning two major degrees in his fields of specialization. As perceived, he has a high task/low relationship behavior as his leadership style.

Case 3. Gamma, the Strongly-Willed Libran

Gamma, 50 years old, male, a strongly-willed Libran, annulled, has an annual income in year 2010 as more than 400,000 pesos. He has served the government for 13 years. He started as a barangay captain and is currently the mayor in one of the local government units in the province of Cebu. He graduated along with his educational achievement in his college degree. As perceived, he has a high relationship/high task as his leadership style.

Case 4. Delta, the Serious Comedian

Delta, 65 years old, male, a serious comedian, married, has an annual income in year 2010 as 456,000 pesos. He has served the government for 28 years starting as a barangay councilor in 1982, incrementally running consecutively to different higher positions (elected and re-elected) being a municipal councilor to becoming a provincial board member starting 2001 up to the

present times. Although, he lost in 2004 for the vice-gubernatorial race, he still sustained being in government service when he was appointed as the consultant on barangay affairs in the province of Cebu. He earned his high school diploma in one of the government schools in Cebu. As perceived, he exhibited a high task/low relationship behavior and a high relationship/low task behavior as his leadership styles.

Case 5. Epsilon, the Man of Divine Wisdom

Epsilon, 70 years old, male, a man of Godly words, married, is uncertain of his annual income. He has served the government for 30 years. He started serving as a municipal councilor in 1980 and has continued his political career until now being the elected consecutively as a city mayor in one of the local government units in the province of Cebu. He graduated along with his educational achievement in his college degree. As perceived, he exhibits a leadership style, i.e., high task/low relationship behavior.

Case 6. Zeta, the Fearless 38 Caliber

Zeta, 74 years old, female, fearless with her 38 caliber gun against opposition, widow, has an annual income in year 2010 including allowance as 492,000 pesos and a monthly pension of 16,000 pesos. Although, she worked as an employee in one of the bureaus of the government, she served as an elected politician in her place for 12 years. When she started in politics in 1969, she ran as an independent candidate and won as a barangay councilor. Later, after she served one of the bureaus of the government, she ran again for city councilor which she won consecutively, holding office until the present times. She graduated along with her educational achievement in her college degree. She exhibits a leadership style that has a high task/high relationship behavior.

Case 7. Eta, the Undefeated Master

Eta is 62 years of age, male, undefeated in local elections who groomed politicians to become politicians, married and has 600,000 pesos as an estimated annual income in 2010. He has served as a political servant for 15 years already. He became mayor and recently a Congressman in one of the cities of Cebu. He is a college graduate in one of the prestigious universities in the Philippines. His leadership style shows that he has a high relationship/low task behavior.

Case 8. Theta, the Miracle 69

Theta is 69 years old, male, miracle as he sustained in leadership despite pressure, married and has an annual income at approximately 324,000 pesos in 2010. He has stayed serving the people of Cebu for 16 years already. He served as a provincial board member and is currently the Vice-Governor of Cebu. He graduate in college with his fervent desire to practice his profession but fate has brought him to the limelight of his political career to present times. Mr. Theta is high in his relationship to others maintaining a high task behavior as he perceived his leadership style.

Figure 2.B. shows the list of Cebuano leaders from civic organizations coded as specified with tag names to describe each of the leader's personality.

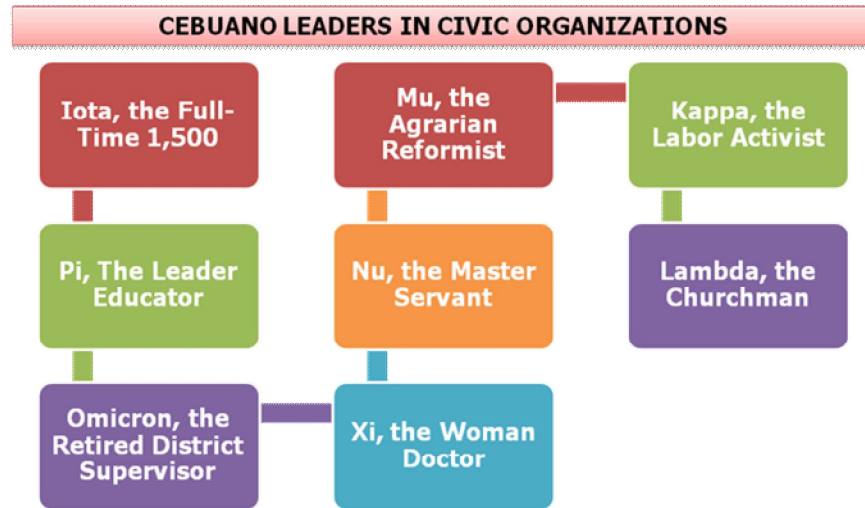


Figure 2.A.: The Cebuano Leaders from the Political Entities

3.1.2 Personal and Professional Background of Civic Leaders

Case 1. Iota, the Full-Time 1,500

Iota, 27 years old, female, single with no income but with allowance that amounts to 1,500 pesos a month. She has served being part of the Non-Government Organization (NGO) for 7 years since her graduation as a spokesperson. She earned her baccalaureate degree in education. As she perceived, her leadership style reveals a high relationship with a low task behavior.

Case 2. Kappa, the Labor Activist

Kappa is 57 years of age, male, a labor activist, married and has a simple living with no income but with livelihood to sustain himself and his family. He claims to receive 4,000 pesos as his monthly allowance coming from the local funding of his organization where he holds chairmanship for 27 years since 1983, simultaneously serving as National Vice-Chairman of his organization's affiliation in the national level. He is an elementary graduate. His leadership style shows a high relationship with a low task behavior.

Case 3. Lambda, the Churchman

The 28 year old Lambda, male, a churchman, single, has an estimated annual income of 216,000 pesos. He is serving the church organization as head for 8 years since 2002. He graduated in his college degree and is currently working as a call center agent. He exemplifies a high task with high relationship behavior as his perceived leadership style.

Case 4. Mu, the Agrarian Reformist

Mu is a 39 year old married woman (an agrarian reformist) with 180,000 pesos as her yearly income working as a current full-time leader in her organization for 17 years already, where she is a member since 1993. She graduated in college earning her diploma in Social Work. She has a high task with a high relationship behavior as exhibited in her perceived leadership style.

Case 5. Nu, the Master Servant

Nu, 39 years old, male, one who serves than to be served, married and has 312,000 pesos as his estimated yearly income. He worked in the Non-Government Organization (NGO) for 18 years. Out of his experience in civic leadership with no plans in joining politics, it paved the way for his current political career. He studied Master of Public Administration earning units in it. His leadership style is an evident high task/low relationship behavior.

Case 6. Xi, the Woman Doctor

Ms. Xi, 28 years old, married with an annual income at approximately 336,000 pesos. She is the current public relations officer in her organization where she has been a member for 7 years. She has a doctorate degree in management and is currently pursuing her Doctor in Philosophy in one of the schools in Cebu City. High task with a high relationship behavior is her leadership style.

Case 7. Omicron, the Retired District Supervisor

Omicron is 65 years of age, male, married and has an annual compensation of 204,000 excluding his retirement benefits. He used to work as a district supervisor, member of the board of director and is currently one of the leaders of a teacher association taking his leadership post as a manager for 9 years already. He earned 42 units in his doctorate program in Philosophy. He has a high task/high relationship leadership style as manifested in his perception towards his behavior in handling subordinates.

Case 8. Pi, The Leader Educator

Pi is a 33 year old man, single and has an estimated annual income that amounts to 200,000 pesos. He is currently pursuing his doctorate degree in Public Administration and has served as a leader in different designations for thirteen years already since 1996. In terms of leadership style, he manifests a high task/high relationship behavior.

3.2 The Personal and Professional Characteristics of Cebuano Leaders

There are eight Cebuano leaders in each agency of political socialization namely political entities and civic organizations for a total of sixteen informants. Each of them correspond personal and professional characteristics.

Table 1. Case-Ordered Matrix: Personal and Professional Characteristics of Leaders

Cebuano Leaders in Political Entities	Personal Characteristics				Professional Characteristics	
	Gender	Age	Civil Status	Annual Income (2010 Estimate)	Highest Educational Attainment	Years of Experience as a Leader
Alpha	Male	56	Widower	396,000	Post College Graduate	32
Beta	Male	54	Married	456,000	College Graduate	21
Gamma	Male	50	Annulled	400,000	College Graduate	13
Delta	Male	65	Married	456,000	High School Graduate	28
Epsilon	Male	70	Married	Uncertain	College Graduate	30
Zeta	Female	74	Widow	492,000	College Graduate	12
Eta	Male	62	Married	600,000	College Graduate	15
Theta	Male	69	Married	324,000	College Graduate	16

Cebuano Leaders in Civic Organizations						
Iota	Female	27	Single	no income	College Graduate	7
Kappa	Male	57	Married	no income	Elementary Graduate	27
Lambda	Male	28	Single	216,000	College Graduate	8
Mu	Female	39	Married	180,000	College Graduate	17
Nu	Male	39	Married	312,000	Master's Level	18
Xi	Female	28	Married	336,000	Doctorate Graduate	7
Omicron	Male	65	Married	204,000	Doctorate Level	9
Pi	Male	33	Single	200,000	Doctorate Level	13

Under political entities, Zeta is the only female and others are males. She is the oldest at the age of 74 and Gamma turned out to be the youngest of them all at the age of 50. In terms of civil status, Alpha and Zeta are widowed, Gamma is the only annulled and the rest are married. The highest in income is Eta at 600,000 pesos, Epsilon is uncertain and Theta being the lowest at 324,000 pesos. All of them went to school being Alpha as the highest educational attaineer and the rest except Delta who is a high school graduate are college degree holders. In terms of experience as a leader in the political entity, Alpha is the highest who has served for 32 years and Zeta has served for 12 years in politics.

Under civic organizations, there are more males (5) than females (3). Omicron is the oldest at the age 65 while Iota is the youngest at the age of 27. Of all leaders, five are married while three are single. Two of them (Iota and Kappa) claimed to have no income, only minimal allowance from their organizations and other external sources. In terms of educational attainment, Xi is the highest who graduated in her doctoral studies and Kappa is the lowest being an elementary graduate who, conversely is the highest in terms of experience as a leader for 27 years. Iota is the lowest serving as a leader for 7 years.

Personal and professional characteristics of all leaders in each agency of political socialization vary accordingly in terms of gender, age, civil status, annual income, highest educational attainment and years of experience as a leader. There turned out to be highest except for gender and civil status which are nominal in nature which is true to the data as presented in Table 1. All are factors, relative according to each of the politician's personal and professional characteristics. All of them sustained, therefore, all of the aforementioned factors (personal and professional characteristics) are determinants for one to sustain in each of their respective positions.

Table 2. Checklist Matrix: Strategies Used by Leaders to Sustain in Power

Typology of Power Sustainability	Political Leaders Responses	Civic Leaders Responses
A. Social/Intellectual/Spiritual Dimensions	<p>Leaders are either dependent on His Divine Providence, higher official(s) who they treat as their (local officials) true leader(s), and the people who voted them.</p> <p>"..The Sto. Nino gives me stupid opponents." (Eta)</p> <p>"...The Congressman is our true leader. We are just his followers..." (Alpha)</p> <p>"..Firstly, it's the people. Secondly, it's God..." (Zeta)</p>	<p>Leaders rely either on the Lord, the superior(s) of the organization or to its members.</p> <p>"...You are grateful to the Lord..." (Pi)</p> <p>"I have the trust of the parish priest..." (Lambda)</p> <p>"If there are disagreements, majority rules..." (Iota)</p>
B. Social/Intellectual Dimensions	<p>Leaders appeal to their (constituents) interest in order to further their own interest especially during elections.</p> <p>"... I sustained because of my performance for the people." (Theta)</p>	<p>Leaders appeal to their (constituents) interest in order to further their own interest especially during elections.</p> <p>"..you have to deal properly your colleagues because they are the one who will be electing you if in case there are elections..." (Lambda)</p>
	<p>Leaders recognize the danger of too much isolation.</p> <p>"...It's difficult when you are independent most especially in terms of sustainability." (Beta)</p>	<p>Leaders recognize the danger of too much isolation.</p> <p>"...it is important that you are grounded with community issues..." (Nu)</p>
	no response	<p>Leaders are sensitive to the members of the organization. Even if they cling to their (leaders) principle(s) but they still depend on the consensus of the body.</p> <p>"...it is control and care in terms of interpersonal relationship..." (Iota)</p>
	no response	<p>Leaders recognize their imperfection(s) for improvement.</p> <p>"...You never assume that you are already a master at a given one point in time." (Iota)</p>

	Leaders tend to be very unpredictable, tend to act according to the needs of time. "...if I trigger the gun, I'll shot it, you might use it ahead against me... (Zeta)	Leaders tend to be very unpredictable over time especially with the idea that no position is for a lifetime. "...Sooner or later, that position will be handed on and be given to somebody else." (Pi)
C. Social Dimension		
	Leaders value reputation in leadership. "...they were proven wrong through the service and attitude without arrogance..." (Gamma)	Leaders value reputation in leadership. "...you can earn the trust, just by working so hard and just be sincere." (Mu)
	Leaders manifest attention to their constituency (ies) "I always greet people with the use of my motor vehicle..." (Alpha)	Leaders manifest attention to their constituency(ies). ("It is on the interpersonal values.")
D. Intellectual/Spiritual Dimensions		
	Leaders utilize weakness as a way to manifest strength. "so good in deceiving me..." (Zeta)	Leaders utilize weakness as a way to manifest strength. "You just have to setback first before you confront it (in times of pressure)." (Xi)
	Leaders act with courage. "...a determination to object or execute the plans for the project." (Epsilon)	Leaders act with courage. "there had been threats in my life..." (Kappa)
E. Intellectual Dimension		
	Leaders delegate their tasks to others. "...I'll just delegate the work to the social workers..." (Gamma)	Leaders delegate their tasks to others. "...Delegate tasks, that is why there are officers that will help you. (Pi)

This shows that the intellectual dimension has more influenced on sustainability concomitant with the social and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, leadership in both agencies involves more of both intellectual and social dimensions.

4. Emergent Themes from the Analysis

In the study, themes emerge in the process of the analysis of all Cebuano leaders in both agencies of political socialization namely: political entities and civic organizations. This is important in the formulation of the theory.

A. Use of Strategies to Stay in Power/Position

Each of the leaders of both agencies namely political entities and civic organizations used varied strategies for them to sustain in power or position.

This means that a certain strategy cannot be isolated to one situation only; it could be essentially used in different scenarios in order for a leader to sustain in power.

War, or any kind of conflict, is waged and won through strategy. Your mind is the starting point of all war and all strategy. A mind that is easily overwhelmed by emotion that is rooted in the past instead of the present, that cannot see the world with clarity and urgency, will create strategies that will always miss the mark (Greene and Elffers, 2008).

But management is about power, its proper and prudent use to attain worthwhile objectives (Franco, 1986).

B. Culture of Respect for God, Authority and the People

Each of the leaders of both agencies namely political entities and civic organizations manifested respect for any higher authority in office, God and the people to whom politicians serve.

C. Personal Gains is Greater than Communal Benefits

In the practice of politics, leaders use power directly or indirectly for the constituencies' interest in lieu of their (politicians) motives or desires over the position. Crave for power turns out to be addictive, a propeller for the leaders' intentions of prolonged political career, as such, its use takes in a form of discernment in both theory and practice in actual administration.

The feeling of having no power over people and events is generally unbearable to us-when we feel helpless we feel miserable. No one wants less power; everyone wants more. In the world today, however, it is dangerous to seem to power hungry, to be overt with your power moves. We have to seem fair and decent. So we need to be subtle—congenial yet cunning, democratic yet devious (Greene and Elffers, 2000).

Thus, a lot also depends on your objectives. If you have evil intentions or wrong motivations, you can probably succeed if you know how to bulldoze the enemy and put on the power play. But how long will the situation last in your favor? Not too long because people and supporters loyal to you will soon discover your personal ambitions and misguided intentions and they will desert you and leave you. *Laban* (fight) becomes a whimper. Nothing like a good cause for a strong power play (Franco, 1986)!

5. Emergent Theory

The Uniqueness Theory on Power Sustainability

“Sustainability in leadership is a result of a leader’s unique responses to different situations using diverse strategies.”

This means that a certain strategy cannot be isolated to one situation only; it could be essentially used in different scenarios in order for a leader to sustain in power. And in times of crises, it depends on the leader on how to use power contingent to the situation(s) or circumstance(s).

Greene and Elffers (2008) stress the strategy so called as: “Do Not Fight The Last War The Guerilla-War-Of-The-Mind Strategy”. This, the authors mentioned, “What most often weighs you down and brings you misery is the past, in the form of unnecessary attachments, repetitions of tired formulas, and the memory of old victories and defeats. You must consciously wage war against the past and force yourself to react to the present moments...--make everything fluid and mobile.” In the same manner, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) said that, “My policy is to have no policy.”

When Napoleon was asked what principles of war he followed, he replied that he followed none. His genius was his ability to respond to circumstances, to make the most of what he is given—he was the supreme opportunist. Your only principle, similarly, should be to have no principles (Greene and Elffers, 2008).

In Pinoy Management (Franco, 1986), the manager has to deal with management problems with no fixed formula, it depends on the situation. There are times that the manager makes subjective decisions or else objective decisions depending on the circumstances.

6. Recommendation: Politicians’ Sustainability in Power from the Lens of Local Cebu

Power-play in public administration is not confined to national leaders but at the same time in the local setting of governance which is recognized to be unique and distinct upon the leaders’ strategy. The researcher recommends wider horizon and in-depth theoretical discussions on political sustainability especially for those aiming for electoral positions.

With the aforementioned objective, sessions for focused-group discussions will help neophytes aiming for any elected political career to learn from experts that constitute experienced politicians who sustained in power for three terms regardless of the duration in each period and social science theorists and analysts from the academe.

In like manner, the researcher recommends to those parties who are interested on power sustainability, in which, the content concentrates, gravitates and revolves around, “The Uniqueness Theory on Power Sustainability”, a theory that emerged in this research study. Such can be used in academic papers, discussions, seminars, forums and any other undertakings that are thematic on power sustainability.

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