

Department of Political Science
Ateneo de Manila University
Elections 2022

Why Leni-Kiko?"

Working Paper Series no. 1

**Matatag, Maginhawa,
Panatag:
A vision of the life
Filipinos deserve**

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Department of Political Science
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Preface

This is part 1 of a series of working papers on the 2022 Philippine National Elections. Each essay reflects the individual faculty's specialization and research interest.

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***Matatag, Maginhawa,
Panatag: A vision of the
life Filipinos deserve***

Filipinos are often described as resilient. It is a defining character that we embrace with pride, especially since it corresponds to our disposition in the face of crises, adversities, and even abject poverty. We are known to survive even the most devastating typhoons or earthquakes, and our resilience fuels us to rise up and fight another day.

Resilience is an enviable trait, a source of admiration indeed. But what if there is more to define Filipinos than being resilient amidst difficulties? What if Filipinos can describe themselves based on their aspirations and an envisioned life lived in comfort, stability, and security?

In 2015, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) led AmBisyon Natin 2040, a project that articulates the aspirations of the Filipino people within a 25-year timeline that culminates in the year 2040. The vision, from the time it

was conceptualized, involves four administrations, spanning leaderships from 2016-2022, 2022-2028, 2028-2034, and 2034-2040. It is a plan contingent on a leadership that will advance the sectors that promote and create opportunities for Filipinos to enjoy a better life for themselves and for the country, based on concrete platforms. The strategies defined toward achieving this vision are hinged on three overarching *frameworks* that characterize the kind of better life Filipinos aspire, that is, a life built on strong rootedness (*Matatag*), comfort

(Maginhawa), and security
(Panatag).

In visualizing Filipinos that are strongly rooted or *matatag*, the image that is pictured by the Filipino himself is that of “Filipino families living together, in a high-trust society with a strong sense of community”. Work-life balance in the family is the norm, where weekends are spent with “families and friends enjoying time together in parks and recreational centers”. As Filipinos thrive in volunteerism, naturally, a strongly rooted life is also one where

volunteer opportunities and community service to and for the people are championed. This notion extends to a life lived for various causes, particularly for the marginalized and vulnerable. In such a vision of life, there is space to celebrate and deepen the contribution of the Filipino people, particularly of women leaders and the youth, who serve in various capacities in the government, private sector, and civic organizations.



On the other hand, Filipinos visualize being comfortable or *maginhawa* to mean “no one is poor, no one is ever hungry”. Reducing poverty remains one of the most urgent national concerns of Filipinos, ranking 3rd overall in a recent interview conducted by Pulse Asia (September 2021). A comfortable life for the Filipino is when “families live in comfortable homes with the desired amenities and security of tenure”. Comfort is further characterized by the convenience and affordability of domestic and international

transportation that allows families to travel together. Also critical to achieving the vision of a comfortable Filipino are two elements: quality education and employment opportunities. This is not surprising, as education and a well-paying source of income are two of the most urgent personal concerns of Filipinos (Pulse Asia, September 2021). Quality education eventually capacitates children to become productive adult members of the society while decent employment or entrepreneurial opportunities become sources of sustainable income, giving Filipinos a better

chance to improve their and sustain a more comfortable lifestyle.

Panatag or being secure, the last framework in AmBisyon Natin 2040, is envisioned as “feeling secure over their lifetime”. Key to having a stable and sustained sense of security are systems in place that allow Filipinos to live long lives and have provisions for their daily as well as future needs. This mirrors Pulse Asia’s Ulat ng Bayan survey (2021), where staying healthy and avoiding illnesses topped the list of what Filipinos deem as their most urgent personal concern. This feeling could be aggravated by how the COVID-19

pandemic unexpectedly brought to the fore a weakness in the Philippines' health care system, which was greatly overwhelmed with the magnitude of cases it had to deal with, especially at the onset of the pandemic. Beyond having good health and a stable healthcare system, equally important to the Filipinos' sense of security is to feel safe wherever they are in the country. Avoiding being a victim of any serious crime is one of the most urgent personal concerns that Filipinos put premium on (Pulse Asia, 2021). Rounding up the elements that contribute to the vision of a secured Philippines would be that of

a government which every Filipino can trust. A government that is free of corruption and capacitated to fight corruption when needed, means a government that is able to consolidate efforts and resources in building a system that can deliver basic services to its citizens in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner, making development for all a more inclusive and sustainable experience.

Filipinos are resilient, yes, but we do not need to suffer through it. We can be resilient while being strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure.

Matatag, maginhawa, panatag – this is the life every Filipino deserves.

The race for the presidency and the vice presidency is a game changer that will both shape and shake our path towards a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life by 2040. The challenge now is, as succinctly put by the AmBisyon Natin 2040, "Where do we want to be?"

The faculty of the Department of Political Science, Ateneo de Manila University shares their insights to help answer this question, "Where do we want to be?"

The next seven articles in the department's "Why Leni-Kiko?" Working Paper Series looks at various areas and concerns of Philippine governance, namely, labor, gender, education, health, security sector, governing institutions, and democracy. Each article provides a critical understanding and appreciation of the issues confronting our country and all of us Filipinos.

The goal is to challenge and to inspire everyone.

About the Authors



Dr Pilar Berse an Assistant Professor with the Department of Political Science at the Ateneo de Manila University. Some of the courses she teaches regularly are Public Policy, Fundamentals of Public Management, Politics and Governance in Southeast Asia, Philippine-Japan Relations, and Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences. Her current research interests include international higher education, disaster policy/politics on women and education, and politics and governance in ASEAN.



Oliver Quintana is the Director of Ateneo de Manila's Korean Studies Program and Instructor of Political Science. His research specialization is in the fields of Southeast and East Asian studies.

