

# CLEANSING THE NON-TAGALOG NATIONALITIES

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In 1998 I published "Ethnic Cleansing in the Philippines" on the internet under the name Herb Mantawe and revised this in 2005. (This was on the defunct website [philippines.com/ColonialRP](http://philippines.com/ColonialRP).)

I have been questioned on several occasions on how appropriate the term ethnic cleansing is in regard to state-directed discrimination against language groups or ethnic nationalities that stand in the way of the national language. Has there ever been mass murder in the forensic sense?

The Yugoslav and Rwandan examples educate us that ethnic cleansing is achieved by actions that eliminate ethnic groups you despise. For a country like Japan to formalize a national language is tantamount to ethnic cleansing yet so what, they are almost entirely Niponggo in the first place. But for the multicultural Philippines to maintain a national language is a vocation to get rid of all non-Tagalog "impurities."

Ethnic Cleansing in the Philippines

The United Nations Convention on Genocide drafted in December 1948 mainly defines the physical means by which governments or rogue militia weed out ethnic or cultural communities. With bullets or bladed weapons, separation of younglings from their elders, we've heard it all before from the news and read it in the history books.

But there is one more form of genocide or ethnic cleansing that we are less familiar with. Article Two of the convention declares genocide "acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." An example stated therein is "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction." Should not one-sided national language policies in multicultural countries fall into this category?

Cases from countries with aggressive national language policies like mainland China best illustrate this. Let us ask if the enforcement of exclusive Mandarin-Putonghua usage across China has resulted in decline of native use of non-Mandarin languages. The totalitarian government of China does not have to round up entire communities of the Minnan language group and summarily execute them to accomplish ethnic cleansing. It only has to continue imposing Putonghua or Mandarin.

If ethnic cleansing means eliminating an ethnic population, the aggressive imposition of one nationalized language to the disadvantage and eventual weeding out of other languages not so privileged should also be called by the same name. There are reasons why the mainland Chinese government labels the languages it does not favor as dialects. To show its contempt for these and to condition everyone into accepting that they are unworthy of existence. In the Philippines, the same holds equally true.

The Philippine government has hardly ever wavered in its campaign to eradicate its non-Tagalog population through language conversion. First it went through the motions of developing a national language misleadingly called at present as Filipino. Armed with provisions in the defect-ridden 1987 Constitution that nakedly favor Tagalog, the Philippine government busily orchestrates the final destruction of all non-Tagalog culture groups.

Its principal task has been to prevent educated non-Tagalogs from being able to read, write and to create in their own mother language. To make them forget their own tongues, the government coerces local schools to instruct only in Tagalog and English from the primary up to the tertiary level. By design this confers an inferior social status on citizens who are not Tagalog and discourages them from cultivating their local way of life, their downgraded culture.

In 1903 when there was no mass media dominated by Tagalog yet, the Americans' census of the islands figured the native Tagalog population at just over ten percent of the total. The last census in 2000 by the National Statistics Office counts Tagalogs at 28.15 percent of the population. This certainly did not even reflect the greater number who shifted to Tagalog-Filipino as their primary medium of communication at home and outside. For someone to grab a bigger share, somebody else has to decline. As those unfortunate ones become fewer and fewer, the Philippines continues on its way to becoming a purely Tagalog country. In that other country, they disguise Mandarin as Chinese; here the disguise is Filipino.

China and the Philippines have another thing in common. Their capital cities consider outlying provinces their practical colonies. Television, the movies, newspapers and radio are consistent in their constant depiction of non-Tagalogs as being less civilized. Modernization is portrayed in terms of thinking, acting and speaking like a Manila person. The better it will be then for Manila to control its provincial colonies once their languages have been replaced by its very own Tagalog. Keeping the provinces poor and coercively promoting Filipino-Tagalog there go hand in hand under the present framework of internal colonialism.

But why in the name of nationalistic nonsense are we allowing this atrocity? Even the Soviet Union had not dared impose an official language on its republics nor does the United States have one today. And those who bother to be fair about it have several to accommodate their internal ethnic nations - India, Singapore, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada to name only a few.

Hope remains for countries like China and the Philippines. All that needs to be done is to reverse their national language madness. Or in time they will both be like the Middle East where practically only Arabic is spoken now. Only through pluralism can the death of the cultural identities of non-Tagalogs be averted. The law should be based on pluralism in our multicultural country. Not on language apartheid. Not on Tagalista supremacism.

**Major Mother Tongues of the Population:**

Censal Years 1960, 1975 &amp; 1990

Language	1960	1975	1990	CY%
Tagalog	5,694,072	10,019,214	16,911,871	21- 23- 28
Cebuano	6,529,882	10,262,735	14,713,220	24- 24- 24
Ilocano	3,158,560	4,685,896	5,923,511	11- 11- 9
Ilongo	2,817,314	4,204,825	5,656,103	10- 9- 9
Bicol	2,108,837	2,507,156	3,519,236	7- 6- 5
Waray	1,488,688	1,945,005	2,437,688	5- 4- 4
Pampanga	875,531	1,442,607	1,897,378	3- 3- 3
Pangasinan	666,003	948,820	1,164,586	2- 2- 1
Others	3,748,817	5,633,313	8,335,523	13- 12- 13