

Palace fixers warned
Tuesday | November 2, 2004

The fixers

The second man took to his article of

PARTYLIST FIXING

Take death certificates

House seat for sale

Syndicate busted

floor for dumping car buyer

NBI appeals alleged

FIXING SOCIETY

The Inside World of Fixers in the Philippines

With fake Palace papers
man wants to take oath

warning Markets

Gang making

fake coffee

soap bust

Fake phone cards

FAKE!
FAKE!

mecha

to cost

Falger lives in

Fake land titles

The Laguna Lake Damaged Area

man with fake ex-cun or

ANNOUNCED



plus
Practical Tips
and
Dictionary
of Fixing

RONNIE V. AMORADO

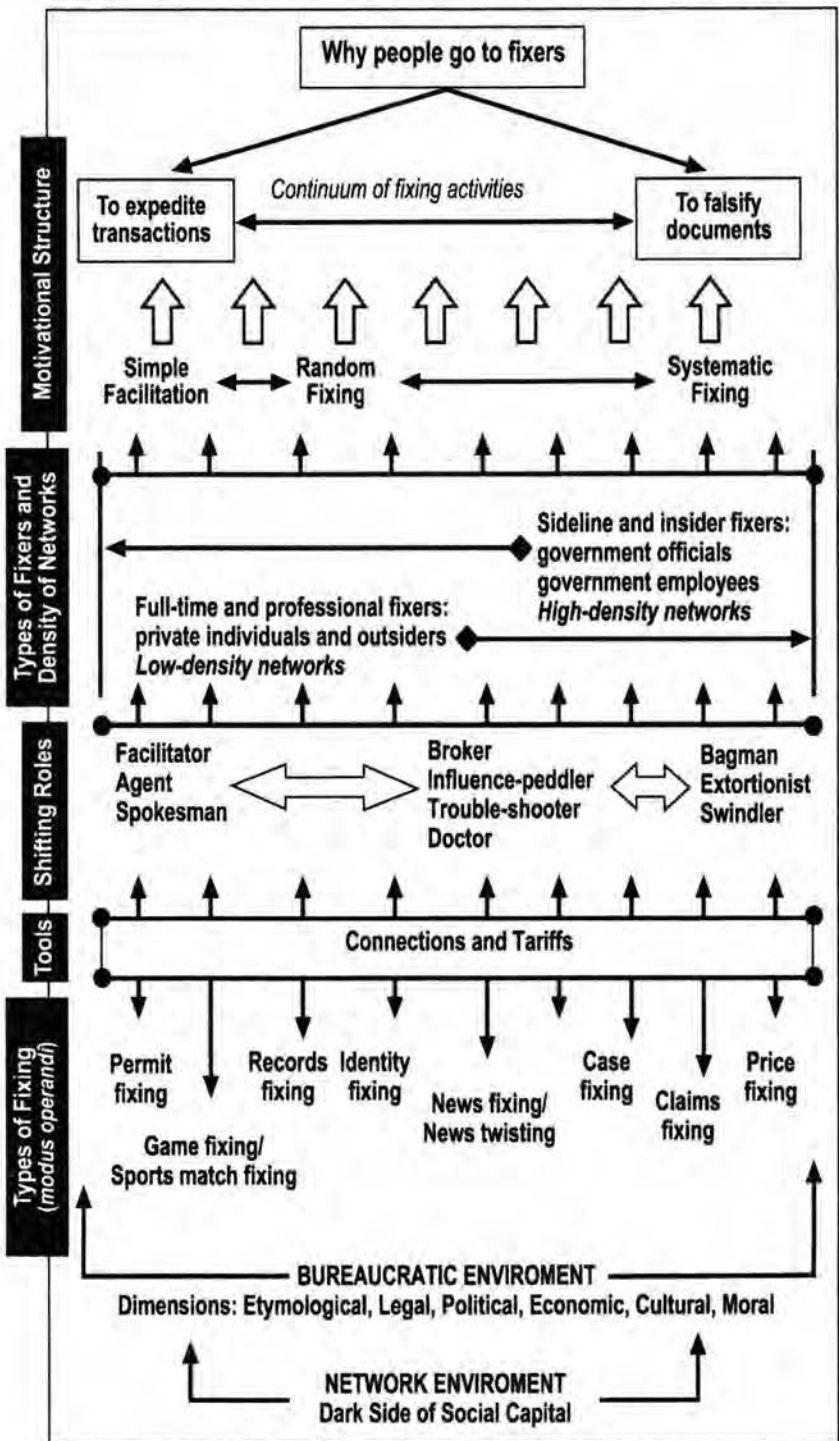
FIXING SOCIETY

The Inside World of Fixers in the Philippines



Ronnie V. Amorado
2007

A proposed schematic framework on the anatomy of fixing in the Philippines





Fixing Society: The Inside World of Fixers in the Philippines
By Ronnie V. Amorado, PhD

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From the Eminent Readers

Corruption in government not only gnaws at public funds devoted for the good of our people, it also undermines the essence of public service and erodes public trust in government. It is a plague that causes and perpetuates poverty and injustice; a crime that hits the poor the hardest for with the meager they have in life, they are the ones most in need. A cultural disease, corruption decays our social values and moral fiber as a people.

Interestingly, Fixing Society works like a pickaxe to provide piercing insight into the underground occupation of corruption through “fixing” and unearths the motivations, attitudes, worldview, techniques and even jargon of “fixers.” The deeper we penetrate through the topsoil of corruption, the better we can arrive at remedies that not only suit our formal and legal structures but also take into account our culture and social condition, remedies that not only palliate symptoms but uproot the malady of corruption. This book is a valuable tool for all because just as the problem of corruption affects us all, its radical and lasting solution also lies in us. Corruption breeds where people knowingly or unknowingly take part in it, or do nothing about it.

Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno

Supreme Court of the Philippines



When ordinary citizens feel they are dealing with an insensitive bureaucracy, whose procedures are too long, complex and rigid; when they feel that the government can do better than waste their time, effort and money by needless, worse, conflicting regulations, you can be sure that at the bottom of their frustrations is the existence of corruption that prevents government from discharging its mandate well.

It is good that someone who has studied corruption in depth, and who has been actively involved in fighting corruption himself, wrote a book like this. With it, we can learn much why corruption in its many forms exists in our society and why it is so intractable, and perhaps all of us working together can find lasting solutions for the same.

Tanodbayan Ma. Mercedes N. Gutierrez

Ombudsman of the Philippines



Fixing Society is an exemplary work of a mature and committed public intellectual. Dr. Ronnie V. Amorado combines ethnographic lens with diplomatic sense to penetrate the ‘dark side of social capital’ among the insider and outsider fixers in the bureaucracy. It is amazing how he has managed to catch their voices, classify their roles, and decode their symbols, and then subject all this to a creative, critical and fairly sympathetic analysis. His dictionary and graphics on fixing further enrich his already readable text. The result is a convincing book that offers fresh insights not only in dealing with fixers, but more importantly in fixing society itself.

Fr. Albert E. Alejo, SJ, PhD, Team Leader

Ehem Anticorruption Project - Jesuit Commission on the Social Apostolate

This is indeed a bold and innovative book. As I read through each page, I felt the author's scrupulous passion and meticulous research work. I have never read a work infused with such integrity, credibility and professionalism. The methodology of undercover ethnography in investigating corruption is very impressive. I strongly propose that the Philippine government, especially the Executive Branch, will heed Dr. Amorado's recommendations to help solve the problem of fixing in the bureaucracy.

Dr. Constanca de Guzman, chairperson
Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC)



This anti-fixing work by Dr. Ronnie V. Amorado sends a strong signal for all of us to help cure a dreaded disease that has long afflicted the Philippine society. Dr. Amorado should be commended for the painstaking dissection and analysis of a worsening social malady that makes this book a must-read for all. As a local official, I saw from the front seat how fixers naturally disintegrated the moment transparency, accountability, lesser red tape and responsive public service programs are put in place. Fixers are like germs --- they exist and multiply in slimy and disorderly places, away from the bright rays of sunshine.

Mayor Jesse M. Robredo, Naga City
Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Public Service, 2000



For the first time, here is a book that penetrates deeper into the philosophical, moral and ethical dimensions of the very specific problem of fixing and bureaucratic corruption in the Philippines. It is a very striking revelation that fixers (including their cohorts and clients among the citizens) exist with a selective morality that justifies short-term benefits without regard to long-term consequences. People need to understand that fixing is by nature morally wrong (teleological) because it violates common good and institutional integrity. Fixing is also gravely anomalous because of its intrinsic motivation (deontological) to earn by breaking the governmental processes and through irregular connections -- all in the name of facilitation. The author's recommendation to shift the issue of fixing to the level of teleological and deontological morality should be a call for serious reflection among Filipinos.

Archbishop Antonio J. Ledesma, SJ, D.D, PhD
Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

This book is a first of its kind in the Philippines, and probably in the world. Dr. Ronnie V. Amorado has provided us with a deeper scrutiny and analysis of one of the major causes of corruption --- the problem of fixing and fixers inherent in government. His most valuable contribution is the set of recommendations that are practicable and doable, and will certainly help make government systems more efficient, transparent and accountable to the people. I sincerely hope that all heads of government agencies and related organizations should take his recommendations on board seriously.

Tony Kwok, SBS, IDS

Chief Anticorruption Adviser to the Philippines, 2005-present;

Former Deputy Commissioner & Head of Operations,

Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), 1996-2002



Dr. Amorado's book reveals through in-depth and scholarly analysis that illegal fixing and its underground network thrive where there is a wanton lack of transparency in government procedures and transactions. His recommendations are a call for state agencies to become more transparent and accountable in governance. This book is a unique contribution to anticorruption research and bureaucratic reforms. As a matter of fact, by digging deeper and bringing forth this phenomenon of fixing into people's awareness, the author has effectively produced a book on transparency.

Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen, chairman and founder

Transparency International



This is a very timely piece that provides invaluable insight into the world of fixers and the anatomy of bureaucratic corruption in the Philippines. This manuscript uncovers the inner workings of so-called "corruption brokers" by going to those who know it best – the fixers – and constructs a credible representation of the institutional underpinnings of this "gray" profession. Fixing Society offers social scientists and practitioners alike an analytically attractive yet practical and entertaining way of dissecting that complex animal we call bureaucratic corruption.

Dr. J. Edgardo Campos, Governance Adviser – The World Bank

Corruption: The Boom and Bust of East Asia (2001) and

The Many Faces of Corruption: Tracking Vulnerabilities at the Sector Level (2007)

'To fix' is the euphemism used to designate nearly every corrupt practice in Philippine society. It highlights the functional side of corruption, the main reason for its persistence. Here, for the first time, is a detailed exploration of the world of "fixers." The fascinating insights of this richly-documented work can be the starting point of a meaningful agenda to combat corruption.

Prof. Randy S. David, sociologist and columnist



*In his book *Fixing Society*, Dr. Ronnie V. Amorado theoretically accounts for the 'efficiency' of corruption by borrowing the notion of 'social capital,' but he turns it around by emphasizing its negative (dark) side. While social capital is a critical component in nation-building, it can also be employed by corrupt people to maximize their personal gains at the expense of society. The scheming and the wheeling-dealing malpractices are but by-products of social capital that has gone awry. The terrifying realization is that fixing seems to pervade at all levels of the bureaucracy.*

Dr. Fermin D. Adriano, political economist



Political culture teaches us to accept as normal and good that which is wrong. But Dr. Amorado's book challenges cultural dictates. His compelling narrative penetrates the clandestine world of the fixers, describing their social networks and language, including a dictionary of undercover terms, gestures and symbols. And beyond an excellent read, Amorado's book is a solid scholarly piece. He carefully employs first-rate ethnographic research strategies as he enters the daily lives of fixers. For pragmatists, the book offers various tools for investigating fixing practices, concrete suggestions to combat fixing, and exciting new horizons for future research.

Dr. Cristina J. Montiel, political psychologist

Philippine Political Culture: View from Inside the Halls of Power (2002)



Changes in government policy do not come about merely because of an obvious and sensible need for change. Bureaucrats and politicians worldwide require extensive and well-researched reports, study papers and scholarly dissertations from recognized experts before they even begin to consider a shift in their policies or procedures. Dr. Amorado has skillfully fulfilled those requirements in the form of this book. Though geared to address the rampant, corrupt and ingrained practice of fixing in the Philippines, other governments affected by graft would also be doing their citizenry a disservice not to implement its many valuable and practical recommendations.

Les Henderson, fraud investigator

Crimes of Persuasion: Schemes, Scams, Frauds (1999)

Fixing Society is an empirically grounded and theoretically informed study of a shadow topic that is of central importance for democracy and economic development. The book is rich, not only in the variety of methods it uses for probing a rarely studied topic, but also in its ethnographic documentation, its understanding of the ironic complexities of fixing, and in its suggestions for policy. I hope it will be widely read and its lessons applied.

Prof. Dr. Gary T. Marx, professor M.I.T.

The Use of Undercover Methods in Corruption Investigation (1995) and
Undercover: Police Surveillance in Comparative Perspective (1995)



Corruption is widely recognized not only as an economic, but also as a political and social problem. In this excellent book, Dr. Amorado uncovers how 'bribes' and 'tips' are handled through fixers in the Philippines, which is perceived as one of the most corrupt societies in the world. Without being judgmental, he describes and analyzes the structure of corruption in a creative and convincing way. Dr. Amorado also derives policy advice from his analyses of Philippine corruption, making his insights highly useful throughout the developing world. As such, this book deserves to be read worldwide.

Prof. Christian Bjørnskov, professor Aarhus School of Business

Corruption and Social Capital (2004)



The work utilizes the science and art of ethnographic fieldwork, in-depth interviews, and focus group research in the service of cultural analysis, theory building, and public policy reform. Only a tenacious and devoted researcher could have gained such access to and could so richly describe the culture of fixing.

Dr. Lisa Tilmann-Healy, professor Rollins College

Friendship as Method (2003)

More and more companies in the business sector are now seriously addressing the need to control and eventually eliminate corrupt practices. A compliance program to penalize corrupt practices has been put in place, while an ethics program complements for the needed values formation. The fixing behavior that Amorado's engaging book has dissected with an expert surgeon's scalpel is the target of both compliance and ethics programs. Reading this book leads us to gain a deep and empathetic understanding why fixing should be addressed. We are fortunate in having Amorado lend us the needed helping hand in working toward a solution.

Dr. Ned Roberto

How to Make Local Governance Work (2002)



I have known Ronnie Amorado as a patient and meticulous researcher. These traits were clearly manifested in his new book, "Fixing Society: The Inside World of Fixers in the Philippines." From the frame of dark social capital and network theory, he weaves an analysis of fixers and facilitators found in various government agencies. This is pioneering in the study of corruption literature in the Philippines. Another valuable contribution is a list of pragmatic recommendations to "fix our fixing society." This is surely a "must read" book for academics, policy makers, and the public at large who want to understand corruption in the Philippines.

Dr. Fernando T. Aldaba

Rent-Seeking, Corruption and the Economics of Cronyism (2000)



The culture of corruption is sustained by a subculture that persists in Philippine politico-administrative system which includes gift-giving, reciprocity, clientelism, networking, fixing, and facilitation used in a way that serves private regarding. Dr. Amorado's book is an exposition of this stark reality. It helps the reader understand how corruption takes place in the context of Philippine culture. To a certain extent, it gives a mixed feeling of disgust for why and how fixing occurs, and at the same time a hope that such practice can be put to a halt. Still, one continues to wonder, how?

Dr. Edna C. Co

Philippine Democracy Assessment: Minimizing Corruption (2007)

Reality hits us hard --- that while we hate fixers, we run to them when we are in need.

The anticorruption milieu has changed. The key players now involve civil society and the academe, and the strategies have started mixing preventive and punitive approaches. The fight against corruption is not the sole responsibility of government. If we want to help the government, we must avoid fixers, and shun fixing by adopting the book's recommendations and practical tips. Fixing Society can be a rich sourcebook for unconventional approach that may actually hold the key until we finally fix the problem of corruption.

Heidi L. Mendoza

A Guide to Investigation of Common Procurement Fraud and Irregularities (2004)



While Ronnie V. Amorado has painstakingly and meticulously documented fixing as a way of life for Filipinos, he has also successfully shown that it need not be so. Were the bureaucracy only half as efficient as the nameless, faceless fixers who with their accounts demystified fixing for all of us, this covert operation would be rendered obsolete. And if this (monkey) business were not as infuriating as it is, Fixing Society would be a grimly humorous book. Just consider its fixer's dictionary of over a hundred entries. The title alone is typical of the Pinoy sense of humor – a clever pun on the sullied image of society and a call for reforms by fixing what is not right.

Yes, you know you're Filipino if you can hold your head high with integrity - and say thumbs down to fixing! There is much the Filipino can be proud of and the valiant, quixotic attempt to overpower fixing is just one of them.

Neni Sta. Romana Cruz

You Know You're Filipino If (1997)

*Those who die for a cause,
awaken to life
the dead among the living!*

Syed Hussein Alatas (1928-2007)
Corruption and the Destiny of Asia (1999)

Foreword

Fixing Society is a bold and innovative book. It has something for everyone. More importantly, it has the capacity to provoke interest on the hazy world of fixing, satisfy queries on its why's and wherefore's, and inspire participation in Ronnie V. Amorado's scholarly and crusading pursuits.

For the academics and theorists, it dissects the relationship of corruption and social capital. Specifically, it follows the latter to its dark side, where few students have dared to tread. After reading the book, one learns to divest this concept of the myth of pure virtue (as in a related context, Lester Salomon did to the concept of "civil society"). Henceforth, as with many other concepts newly introduced to the exciting world of governance, it would not be enough to find social capital and expect good things to follow. As not all push for the public good, and since "governance" is not necessarily "good" or "effective," so we now find that the dense networks of relationships of trust and solidarity – a standard definition of social capital – may support not only public trust but also its betrayals.

The book should also interest theologians and students of ethics. It delves into moral philosophy and applies deontology and teleology to the society of fixers. However, it is academic enough not to be judgmental, and manages to study fixers and their activities with objectivity and dispassionate interest. This leads to recommendations that are compassionate, practical – and moral. Thus, those outraged by the unabated corruption in our society will likewise find enlightenment and support from this book.

Those interested in qualitative methodology will also learn something here. Amorado uses a number of methods that advance the understanding and practice of qualitative research, not just on corruption and fixing, but on other social issues as well. Aside from undercover ethnography, he uses decoy conversation with key informants, focus group discussions and institutional immersion. He tells us of the difficulties of finding and convincing live sources. He gives us a glimpse of how to conduct research on an underground occupation, while keeping one's credibility and ethics intact. He describes his informants so well that the reader would know their family and personal circumstances, their fixing techniques, their earnings, and their qualms – or lack of them – about their work. Knowing their

motivations and attitudes helps us to see them as persons. However, we are not allowed to wallow in sympathy for them for the consequences of their work are also computed and presented for us to cringe at.

The book is complete with definitions of the peculiar language of fixing and pictographs of its nonverbals. Unfortunately, one can say of it what a student once said to me when I compared the standard operating procedures and the corruptive deviations from the SOP – “you have now taught everyone how to undertake corruption.” Fortunately, Amorado does not stop there, but lays out workable recommendations as well. This book should add inputs to *EheM* and to other anticorruption initiatives in the Philippines.

Fixing Society is a must-read for all interested in understanding the theory and practice of corruption. It is an indispensable help to those whom it challenges to move from knowledge to action against this scourge.



Ledivina V. Cariño, PhD

Author and Editor, *Bureaucratic Corruption in Asia:
Causes, Consequences and Controls* (1986)

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