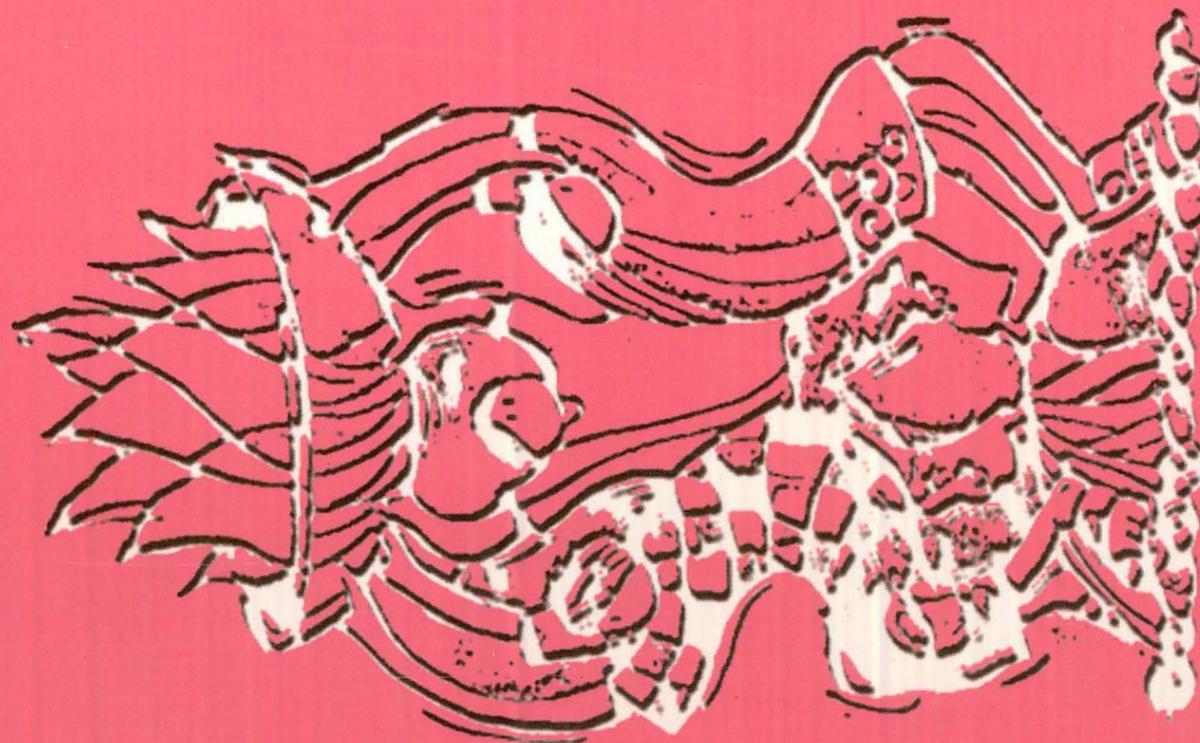


# SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION

VOL 32 NO 2 JULY-DECEMBER 2004



Maintaining Relationships  
in the Text Generation

Young Filipino Gay Men's  
Uses of IRC

Mainstreaming  
Gay Language

SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE FIFTH NATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE CONGRESS (NSSC V)

What's With the Filipino Youth?

VOLUME 2 NEW ICTS, LANGUAGE AND THE YOUTH

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## Preface

During the Fifth National Social Science Congress convened by the Philippine Social Science Council from 15 to 17 May 2003, several panels focused on the language and communication of the youth. Some of the papers presented at the sessions are printed in this issue of the *Social Science Information* to make them accessible to a wider audience.

Two of the papers included here deal in some way or other with the youth's construction of identity through the use of new communication technologies, while one paper focuses on the youth's adoption of a non-dominant language form.

In the paper "Maintaining Relationships in the Text Generation," Margaret Alvarez and Michelle Valbuena present some of the findings of a study that centers on the question of "how adolescents communicate through the use of cellular phones." They find that among 322 students in their sample, 86 percent of whom is below 20 years old, the cell phone is used primarily "as a tool for communication" than for "other things" and that "adolescents use cellular phones for maintaining relationships rather than establishing relationships as an aid in self-disclosure." And they conclude that adolescents "are aware of the consequences of technology and the importance of eliminating technology and using face-to-face communication in instances when issues are of a personal level."

Jozon Lorenzana's paper "Young Filipino Gay Men's Uses of IRC," meanwhile, deals with "life on the screen." In particular, he looks at "the uses of the IRC (Internet relay chat) and the social context of its uses, to arrive at the meanings of this new medium for this special group" - i.e., young Filipino gay men. How and why, put another way, do young Filipino gay men use the IRC? Based on his in-depth interviews with eight informants, aged 18-20 years, Lorenzana finds that his informants use "IRC to build relationships, to seek social support, to seek information and entertainment; for other uses arising from their personal circumstances. The data also revealed that these uses of IRC were embedded in the context of gay men's circumstances in the Philippines." That is, "...the participants' uses of the medium were in response to this condition of discrimination in Philippine society."

In the last paper, "Mainstreaming the Gay Language: The Invasion of the Youth's Communication System," Lourdes Portus discusses the extent to which gay language has been appropriated by the youth population, as seen through the lenses of the non-gay community. She notes that while gay language has "invaded the communication system of the youth," its usage is "limited to informal talks and light discussions." Portus maintains that gay language is not likely to become the mainstream language, but argues that it will continue to be adopted by segments of the youth population, both gay and non-gay, as it serves as an alternative, even oppositional, mode of expression.

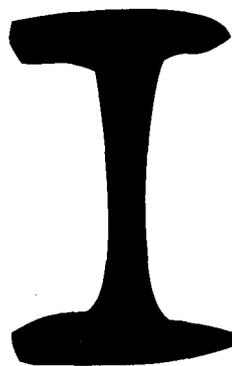
# Maintaining Relationships in the Text Generation

MARGARET HELEN F.U. ALVAREZ AND MICHELE JOAN D. VALBUENA

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*In a previous study by Abregana, Udarbe, and Valbuena (2001) on ego identity and technology-mediated communication, 322 college students responded to the 12-item Ego Identity Scale by Tan, et al. (1977) and a questionnaire on thoughts and feelings about technology-mediated communication, operationally defined as "information sharing that occurs via the Internet and cellular phones." Important findings from this study led to further analysis of the use of the cellular phone as a tool for establishing and maintaining relationships. It was found that adolescents used cellular phones for maintaining relationships rather than as a tool for establishing relationships and for self-disclosure. This implies that while technology is regarded as a convenient medium for communication, adolescents recognize the consequences of technology and also see the importance of face-to-face communication in confronting issues of a more personal level.*

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In a *Time Magazine* special issue on interactive technology, *Time Asia* editor Adi Ignatius (2001) raised thought-provoking questions: Is interactive technology uniting the world, or driving us apart? Is technology enhancing our ability to interact or blocking it? "Building the wireless future" reads an advertisement on the Internet. Social psychologists wonder whether this speaks about "wireless relationships."

In an earlier study, Abregana, Udarbe, and Valbuena (2001) explored the connection between Erik Erikson's ego-identity concept and technology-mediated communication, i.e., communicating via the Internet and cellular phones. The present study constitutes a further look at the adolescent identity and the widespread use of cellular phones in the so-called "text generation."



The text generation, also known as the "thumb culture," is in a frenzy over cellular phones. The issue is no longer about having access to cellular phones out of necessity but about what features particular phones carry. A consequence of rapid technological changes is that the present generation is faced with many more options. What are the implications on the social health of young people, notably in the development of their social relationships?

In this paper, we have attempted to view the concept of identity among adolescents in the context of the global changes in a world of technology. This research specifically investigated the mobile or cellular phone as a tool in establishing and maintaining relationships.

In writing about "The Text Generation," William Underhill (2001) states: "In defiance of all industry forecasts, today's user seems to want to *write*, not chat." Short Message Service or SMS has been around for a decade, but just recently spread like a virus throughout the globe. As Simon Buckingham of Mobile Lifestreams consultancy says, "this is the text generation."

The telecom industry adopted SMS as a standard technology in 1991 as a way to sop up extra network capacity, just in case somebody somewhere might find it useful. At first, subscribers were only able to send messages within their own networks. A year or so ago, young adults spotted potential, discovering "an efficient way of communicating that had the powerful charm of novelty" (Underhill 2001).

### **Technology-Mediated Communication**

In previous research (Abregana, Udarbe, & Valbuena 2001), the widely used term *communication* was applied to situations ranging from information processing within the individual to large-scale sociocultural systems, such as mass media and computer networks (Deaux, et al. 1993). The focus was primarily on the phenomenon of technology-mediated communication, defined as "information sharing that occurs via television or electronic mail" (Smith & Mackie 1995). The latter authors say, "the telephone, fax, electronic mail, and video conferences are displacing face-to-face interaction for brainstorming and resolving conflicts." They add that just like traditional channels of communication, electronic communication is used as much for socializing as for sharing task-related information. Despite some of the advantages of high-tech communication channels, face-to-face interaction is still viewed as most effective in many aspects in communication. "The opportunity to read nonverbal cues like approval and disapproval or tension and relief also gives face-to-face interaction an advantage in solving complex interpersonal problems. And face-to-face communication still seems most effective in negotiation and conflict-resolution situations" (Smith & Mackie 1995).



"If you look at technology," former Apple advanced research executive Donald Norman says, "the biggest wins have been in communication" (Levander 2001). Hence the rise of Internet services like e-mail and online chatting, the telephone and the cell phone, and systems like SMS and i-mode. But even as the Philippines has been touted as the text capital of the world (Salazar 2000), Stephen Gornick of NUSMS, a free Web-based SMS service, has declared that "SMS is a technology that is over a decade old and is due for a replacement."

Much of the appeal of technology-mediated communication has to do with user-friendliness, the convenience of cheap, easy access, and extra privacy. It is recognized, however, that technology-mediated communication has serious implications for human interpersonal relationships. Underhill (2001) says that SMS is a handy means of ducking those big emotional challenges. A survey in Britain found that 13 percent of users have used text messages to break off relationships. And Ignatius (2001) relates how, at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, he and a friend sent each other e-mails, saying they were seated side by side. "Pointless communication, yes," Ignatius says, "but isn't that what we do nowadays? Think how commonly we send e-mails to colleagues at work who might be as near as the end of our cubicle."

The assumption is that technology makes it possible for us to do more. But there have been many attempts to create new needs, "to exploit technologies to their maximum potential before it's evident anyone even wants them." And then the time does come when many a cellular phone user will say of the gadget, "I cannot live without it." As Guterl (2002) states: "What's different now...is how comfortable we've become with such complexity..."

### **The Search for Identity in Adolescence**

"This is how it goes with technology," says Ignatius (2001). Every invention is accompanied by passionate claims for its sensational applications." Where in the past the parental concern has to do with the age at which a child is old enough to go out unchaperoned or allowed to watch television without parental supervision, nowadays the question concerns how old a child should be to have a cellular phone.

The burgeoning sense of self, along with the capacity to reflect on individual qualities, serves as the nucleus for the construction of an *identity*—a broad, coherent, internalized view of who a person is, what a person wants to be, believes, and values (Bukatko & Daehler 1995). A sense of identity is said to solidify and give meaning to such fundamental questions about self as, Who am I? Why do I exist? And what am I to become?



A healthy identity, Erik Erikson (1963) pointed out, is fabricated during adolescence and young adulthood but builds on earlier progress in accepting and trusting others, in being encouraged to explore interests and desires, and in acquiring feelings of competence and skill. From bargaining over their choices of friends and activities to use of the telephone or the car, adolescents test new ways of communicating with and relating to parents and others in authority (Powers, et al. 1989). They do the same in negotiating for a cellular phone.

Being able to establish a point of view seems to promote a strong sense of personal identity (Hauser, et al. 1987). Erikson (1963) has referred to this concept as *ego identity*. Tan, et al. (1977) reviewed Erikson's concept of ego identity achievement and developed 41 pairs of forced-choice items with one item representing ego identity and one representing ego diffusion. Ego identity was defined as acceptance of self, a sense of direction. Identity diffusion implies doubts about one's self, lack of a sense of continuity over time, and inability to make decisions and commitments.

Based on a study of students ages 18 to 22 about their occupational choices and religious and political beliefs and values, Marcia (1967) classified students into four categories of identity status: identity achievement, foreclosure, identity diffusion, and moratorium. In *identity achievement*, the adolescent, ideally, establishes his or her own goals and values by abandoning some of those set by parents and society and accepting others. For many young people, however, identity achievement is quite difficult, and even the process of accepting some parental values while rejecting others is problematic. The result often is *foreclosure*, or premature identity formation. In this case, the adolescent accepts earlier roles and parental values wholesale, never exploring alternatives or truly forging a unique personal identity. Other young people experience *identity diffusion*: they typically have few commitments to goals or values – whether those of parents, peers, or the larger society – and are often apathetic about trying to find an identity. Finally, in the process of finding a mature identity, many young people seem to declare a *moratorium*, a kind of time-out during which they experiment with alternative identities without trying to settle on any one.

Extensive research, much of it longitudinal, confirms that many adolescents go through a period of foreclosure or diffusion, and then a moratorium, before they finally commit themselves to a mature identity. The process can take ten years or more, with many college students still not clear about who they are or what they want to do (Marcia 1980, Waterman 1985). Few differences between males and females have been found on measures of identity (Archer & Waterman 1988). Both genders are equally represented among the four identity statuses and seem to develop in similar ways.



According to Berger (1994), there is no doubt that the ease or difficulty of finding an identity is very much affected by forces outside the individual. One of the most influential of these is the surrounding society, which can aid identity formation primarily in two ways: by providing values that have stood the test of time and that continue to serve their function, and by providing social structures and customs that ease the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Seifert & Hoffnung (1997) assert: "Being identity achieved in today's society is probably rarer among teens than in previous eras." Their explanation is twofold. First, today's adolescents have far more options than ever before. Second, technological and social changes are far more rapid and complex that identity resolution takes a longer time to achieve.

In the face of these fluctuating standards in society about adolescence, the air of social instability, generated both by world events and technological progress, has lately made the phase of adolescence much harder than in previous decades.

However, we need not ask if technology and the search for identity are related. As Berger (1994) stated: "No matter what the age or identity status of the individual ... it is obvious that answering the question "Who am I?" is an important psychosocial task." Then as now, the Filipino youth is faced with this task. Today, however, the youth's head is also reeling from the sights and sounds of interactive technology: "Who am I?"

### **Technology Mediated Communication and Ego-Identity**

In the previous non-experimental sample survey research on cellular phone-based communication and computer-based communication (Abregana, Udarbe, Valbuena 2001), 322 students participated as respondents of the study of which 55 percent were female and 45 percent, male. Eighty-six percent were below 20 years old; 42 percent, 18-19 years old; and 44 percent, 16-17 years old.

*Ego identity levels.* Acceptance of self and a sense of direction describe ego identity. This is differentiated from ego diffusion which implies doubts about one's self, lack of sense of continuity over time, and inability to make decisions and commitments. Based on ego identity scores that could run from 1 to 12, majority of the students had average ego identity levels (72%). About 11 percent scored low in ego identity and 17 percent had a high score in ego identity scale. On the whole, respondents were average in their acceptance of self and in their sense of direction.

Further, we explored the respondents' attitudes toward technology-mediated communication, and ran a significance test to determine the relationship between their ego-identity levels and these attitudes.



The study indicated that technology-mediated communication fails to account for "so much of what colors the interpersonal," and that the ease or difficulty of finding an identity is very much affected by forces outside of the individual. It was assumed that the majority of young people who are still trying to achieve a separate identity would remain there for some years because of the many options open to them. Technology-mediated communication may be found to enhance relationships because of the quick and easy access; yet, they still do recognize the value of actual communication.

This paper will further explore the data collected from that research, exploring in detail how adolescents communicate through the use of cellular phones which is easier and quicker to access compared to the other medium.

### **The Use of Cellular Phones**

Text messages dominated the usage of cellular phone (98%), closely followed by personal calls (95%). Cellular phones were also popularly used for playing games (70%). A much lower number (9%) used the phone as alarm clock, organizer or scheduler, biocalendar, or for calculating, tone composing, and sending e-mail.

A cellular phone is viewed primarily as a tool of communication for general personal use (84%). One in three considered it useful in an emergency situation, still others deemed it a necessity (18%), and some used cellular phone for fun and to be in fashion (3%).

*Text messages received.* Text messaging, done by 98 percent of respondents, is the most common application of a cellular phone. Close friends (97%) comprise the majority of the people from whom respondents received messages, closely followed by family members and relatives (96%). A good number of text messages came from acquaintances (77%). Interestingly, respondents also received text messages from senders that they do not personally know (65%).

The biggest number of respondents reported that they received text messages from close friends "Always." They received messages from family members "Often to Always," from acquaintances "Sometimes," and from others they do not personally know "Sometimes."

With regard the type of text messages received, inspirational messages, together with humor and messages seeking or giving information and/or advice, were commonly received (39%, 29%, and 29%, respectively). The most common category of text messages received from close friends was inspirational-relational, followed by humor-green jokes, and inspirational-religious. From family members, the most common text messages were inspirational-religious, followed by giving/seeking information, and



inspirational-relational. The top three types of messages received from acquaintances were inspirational-relational, humor-green jokes, and giving/seeking information. Others not personally known to respondents commonly sent humor-green jokes, inspirational-relational, and inspirational-religious.

Text messages are so popular, recipients do not seem to mind (77%) if these messages are "canned" or "forwarded." In fact, 16 percent expressed preference for forwarded messages and only seven percent expressed outright dislike for these canned messages. When asked if they preferred messages made or composed by the sender, four said "No," and an equal number replied "Yes" (49%) and "Does not matter" (49%).

Respondents wished to receive messages on a regular basis from close friends (91%), family members (78%), acquaintances (32%), others not personally known (11%), and from a special set of friends (11%). On a continuum "Angry-Frustrated-Ok lang-Happy-Ecstatic," messages from close friends and family members generally made respondents "Happy" while those from acquaintances and others not personally known "Ok lang." Messages received from a special set of friends like a crush or special someone generally make recipients "Ecstatic."

When messages are not received from family members or from close friends, recipients generally expressed being frustrated or simply said "Ok lang." Not receiving messages from acquaintances and those not personally known would more definitely evoke a response of "Ok lang" while non-receipt of messages from a crush or special someone would stir feelings of anger and frustration.

*Text messages sent.* In terms of the frequency of sending text messages, the respondents sent messages to family members "Sometimes to Often," to close friends "Often to Always," to acquaintances "Sometimes to Often," to others not personally known, "Seldom to Never." Among those who had special set of friends, they would send messages to a special someone "Always" but would tend to "Never" send to a crush.

Inspirational messages, either religious or relational, were common types of messages sent by respondents (41%). Messages giving or seeking information or advice (31%) were the next commonly sent category of messages. Humor, whether political or "green" were sent by at least one in four respondents (26%). To family members and relatives, the most common types of messages sent, in descending order, were inspirational-religious, inspirational-relational, and giving/seeking information. To close friends, inspirational-relational was most commonly sent, followed by inspirational-religious and giving/seeking information. To acquaintances, they sent inspirational-relational, followed by inspirational-religious and humor-political messages. To persons like a special someone or a crush, inspirational-relational messages were commonly sent.



Acquiring a cellular phone was perceived as a need rather than a status symbol. In recent past, individuals with cellular phones were looked at as belonging to the social elite class, if not people engaged in business. This is no longer true today. Data reveal that on top of other necessities like food, clothing and shelter which take up a huge portion of the monthly allowance of students, ownership of a cellular phone and phone card spending are seen as equally important. It is observed that despite the below average monthly allowance they get, students spend almost half of it on cellular phones. Further, 49 percent of the users perceive owning a cellular phone as expensive, 21 percent view it as distracting and time consuming, 14 percent believes it has physiological and psychological effects, and 6 percent and 3 percent thought lack of signal and lack of privacy, respectively, make it disadvantageous. It can be gathered from these data that users were aware of its financial implications but its being expensive outweighs its significance, as data reveal that 79 percent of the users saw it as an important tool for communication. Only 3 percent of the users said that their acquisition of the cellular phone was mainly for fun and to be in fashion. Similar results are seen in responses to questions about their best experiences in the use of cellular phones. Majority of the users associate their best experience with it being a tool for communication. Experiences of fun and joy occupy the lowest percentage.

The latest data presented show a very interesting aspect of the adolescent. Adults often view adolescents as thrill seekers and as vulnerable to many things especially when they have feelings of fun and joy. Adults usually contend that adolescents do poorly in rational decision-making. This cultural connotation is unconfirmed here. While one may expect a large percentage of adolescents citing fun experiences in cellular phone use as their best experience, the data show the opposite. They know that a cellular phone is more a tool for communication than other things. This is also seen in the data on adolescents' worst experiences with cellular phones. Most of them consider loss or damage of cellular phones as the worst experience (25%), closely followed by receiving bad news (20%), with only a few (8%) claiming fights and breaking up a relationship through cellular phone as their worst experience.

Another interesting result in the research was that adolescents use cellular phones for maintaining relationships rather than establishing them, and as an aid in self-disclosure. Technology-mediated communication was initially perceived as an avenue for expression of thoughts and feelings so personal and deep. In fact, it was assumed that one of its come-ons had to do with the degree of privacy and anonymity it provided. It was thought that individuals would find it easy to reveal their feelings and thoughts through a medium. Adults today are alarmed at how adolescents deal with the world and present-day technology. They judge adolescents as less and less personal in their



relationships and in the way they live their lives. However, it now appears that adolescents do not usually go through this medium for establishing relationships or for self-disclosure. Adolescents appear, therefore, to be more careful in such matters than had been earlier theorized.

Unlike in the West, adolescence among Filipinos is generally not a turbulent stage that is characterized by tension, rebellion, and confusion (Medina 1995). It is asserted that problems and difficulties associated with adolescence are largely prevalent among adolescents in the urban areas where the rate of change is faster and the social structure more complex. The stress and strains of growing up are more felt in the urban areas. However, young people today have not entirely relinquished the values they have acquired from their elders despite their modern orientation.

### **Maintaining Relationships with Family Members**

In Filipino culture, parents are the authority figures in the home and are found to be influential in molding and shaping children into becoming better students, better partners, and/or better citizens. Even when children grow into adulthood, become independent and establish their own families, parents continually look after them to ensure that they are fine. Present-day technology therefore alarms parents. Because children have many options nowadays, parents are afraid that they will lose their values and make wrong decisions.

In turn, adolescents continually look up to their parents and respect their authority. Their interaction with family members through texting to maintain relationships continues to be "moralistic." Data show that the most common text messages received from family members were inspirational-religious followed by giving/seeking information and inspirational-relational. This data can be attributed to the level and kind of intimacy adolescents have with family members. Relationships in the family are observed to lie within formality and morality ideals. Inspirational-religious messages represent moral obligation of parents to their children. Giving/seeking information connotes authority-subordinate relationship and inspirational-relational messages may be associated with the desire of family members to maintain open lines of communication with the adolescent.

A similar pattern is seen in the adolescents' sending of text messages to family members. The most common text message sent was either inspirational-relational or inspirational-religious followed by giving/seeking information. Again, the same formality and morality lines are seen in their interaction with family members. The giving/seeking of information messages sent to family members from the adolescent again represents the authority that they perceive in their parents, or perhaps, older brothers and sisters.



Family members rank second among persons from whom respondents receive the most number of messages. Respondents send messages to family members "Sometimes to Often."

### **Maintaining Relationships with Close Friends**

Similarly, research show that adolescents' use of cellular phones is primarily to communicate with their close friends to maintain their relationships and not to establish relationships nor as an aid in disclosure. Close friends rank first among all those who send messages to respondents. Like messages received from family members, respondents receive inspirational-relational (as the most common) and inspirational-religious (as the third common) kind of messages. Unlike the messages they receive from family members, humor-green jokes register as the second most common type of messages received while Inspirational-relational and inspirational-religious kind of messages may be thought of as essential in intimacy in relationships, the humor-green jokes break down the walls of formality and morality ideals in relationships. Their close friends were most likely the same age as theirs, hence their parallel understanding of the world. In terms of messages sent, data show that respondents send inspirational-relational and inspirational-religious messages to their close friends as well as humorous messages. Another type of message sent to close friends is one that gives/seeks information.

### **Maintaining Relationships with Acquaintances**

Research show that 77 percent of messages received came from the respondents' acquaintances. Usually, they send to respondents inspirational-relational messages followed by humor-green jokes and giving/seeking information messages. Again, inspirational-relational messages may imply its importance in intimacy at a certain level but the giving/seeking messages explain this level better. The sense of formality in the relationship is again seen. However, this sense of formality is changed; humor-green jokes were also received from acquaintances, earlier explained as the kind of message which breaks down ideals of formality and morality in relationships.

Inspirational-relational messages are the most commonly sent to acquaintances and inspirational-religious and humor-political messages rank second and third, respectively. The variation between humor-green jokes as received and humor-political messages as sent by respondents may be associated with the level of familiarity with their acquaintances. Although there is a repeated sense of formality obvious in the users' relationship with acquaintances, this is of a different degree and nature than that with family members.



### **Impression Management in Texting**

A significant relationship was found between ego-identity among adolescents, and the feelings evoked when they fail to receive messages from acquaintances. Identity diffused individuals reacted with anger when they did not receive messages from acquaintances. There were no significant results found in the relationships between ego-identity and feelings associated in not receiving messages from family members and close friends. It was suggested that the identity diffused person presumably could rationalize these people's behavior but the same is not seen among acquaintances. The person who has made only few or no definite commitments to goals or values feels affronted when ignored by someone who does not even know her or him; hence, identity diffused young people are highly sensitive. While they could figure out why they do not hear from relatives or close friends, they became suspicious about the motivation of their acquaintances.

The respondents, who generally belonged to the average level of ego-identity, were described to be in the moratorium stage. This is reinforced by the results of this research. Their interaction with family members through texting was based on what is termed as impression management. Impression management is a strategy for avoiding embarrassment or shame and is inspired by pride or a desire to look good (Wallace & Wolf 1995). We adjust our words and actions to suit our audiences, self-monitor our performance and adjust to create a desired impression (Myers 1996). Family members expect the adolescent to continually behave within the bounds of religiosity and morality, and the adolescent meets these expectations not only in personal interactions, but also in the use of technology in communicating with their family. Their behavior is a little lenient in their interactions with their close friends—they are found to be loose and relaxed. However, this leniency is controlled by the impressions adolescents want to project to close friends through the kind of text messages they send to them. This is similarly seen with acquaintances. There may be a slight difference in the kind of messages received from and sent to acquaintances but the process of impression management is again made obvious. The difference between the kinds of humor messages received and sent may be attributed to the irregular, unclear, and undefined roles and rules in relationships with acquaintances. Those kinds of messages from the users were based on the "it's safe" attitude with regard the reaction of the receiver.

Another interesting finding is the adolescent's interaction with their special someone or crush. Although only a small number indicated texting their special someone or crush, it was found that apart from feeling happy when they received messages from family members and close friends, they experienced a feeling of ecstasy when getting it from their special someone or crush. They felt thrilled and their emotional state is "high" when relating to people in this kind of intimacy. The data also show that respondents found themselves



sending messages to their special someone "Always" but "Never" to their crush. This pattern (in addition to the fact they only send inspirational-relational messages), can be similarly explained through the impression management adolescents make with acquaintances.

### **Conclusion**

How can we raise identity-achieved adolescents in a highly technological environment? Adolescents are more responsible and disciplined individuals than adults perceive them to be. Technology should not be seen as a threat in raising children these days. Technology such as cellular phones is only a medium in communication and how individuals use it always depends on inner values and beliefs. The vast majority of adolescents are sociable, well-adjusted individuals on their way to adopting the mores and values of their culture and effectively coping with the pressures and demands placed on them by society (Bukatko and Daehler 1995). Adolescents know when and how to behave and with whom. They also know when or not to cross boundaries with others. They are aware of the consequences of technology and the importance using face-to-face communication in instances when issues are of a personal level. Adults may see a different kind of adolescent in this generation, but it is best to assume that the events of adolescence are not a deliberate corresponding feature of puberty but a cultural consciousness. As Simon Buckingham of Mobile Lifestreams Consultancy puts it, "every generation has its own way of expressing itself."

Although adolescents desire more freedom than younger children, they do not want to be emotionally detached from their parents. Instead, "they desire a gradual increase in the opportunity for self-determination and participation in decision-making and rule-making" (Eccles et al., 1993). Adolescents develop best when these opportunities occur in environments that are emotionally supportive. Therefore, a fit between individual identity and social identity comprised of the opportunities accorded to adolescents by the social environment is salient to their optimal development.

Technological changes are inevitable; the cellular phone has not lost its novelty. That adolescents are faced with many more options in their search for identity should not be a cause for concern. Parenting adolescents remains no easy task, but is not necessarily made more difficult by technological changes. We continue to be faced with a formidable challenge, as in previous times, knowing "...that adolescents are largely a product of the way we treat them, that interactions between the adult world and adolescent world too often form a vicious circle, and that some of the conflict between these two worlds could be eliminated to everybody's benefit" (Stone and Church 1975).



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# Young Filipino Gay Men's Uses of Internet Relay Chat

JOZON ANGELES-LORENZANA

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*This exploratory study investigated how young Filipino gay men (aged 18–20 at the time of the study) creatively appropriated Internet Relay Chat (IRC). IRC is an Internet-based program that allows anonymous, synchronous, interactive, text-based communication. Users meet a chatmate by selecting “channels” based on common interests. Creative appropriation is the utilization of technology in ways different from its intended use. The study also explored how Filipino gay men created and formed gender identities and personal relationships through this medium.*

*Eight gay college students purposively selected from the Ateneo de Manila University were interviewed using an interview guide. Saved conversations were also solicited from the participants. Their responses and conversations were content-analyzed.*

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**S**cholars have expressed the lack of empirical studies on how special groups (like young people) use new media like the computer. Apart from being an information-processing machine, the computer allows access to networks of computers through an application called the Internet. Through linking computers, a new communication context is created – computer mediated communication (CMC). CMC takes various forms like the electronic mail, bulletin board services, discussion groups, and the Internet relay chat. On these virtual platforms interactions and activities can be carried out. This new space is commonly called cyberspace. What happens in cyberspace? Just about anything from doing business, learning, chatting, to forming relationships.

With these possibilities, what do young people do with this medium? This study focuses on a special group and one of the CMC's applications, young Filipino gay men and Internet relay chat, respectively. It veers away from technological determinism, which sees technology as the cause of social changes; rather, it emphasizes how and why individuals and groups utilize ICTs.



IRC is a program that allows text-based, anonymous, and interactive communication online. Users choose a channel that is classified according to interests. Channels provide chatrooms for chatters. Users are identified by their nicknames or "handles." A user chooses a chatmate based on this primary identification. Conversations on IRC are carried out through typing words on the screen. Like a playwright's script, texts appear beside the nicknames. As the conversation progresses, the screen rolls up to make room for new lines (Shaw 1997).

### Gay men and CMC

Synthesizing reports from the popular press, Gross and Wood (1999) suggest that gays and lesbians are one of the avid users of the medium. Steve Silberman (1999) had observed that young gay men and women utilized the electronic mail to join online communities which have "provided gay teens [with] opportunities to exchange views with other gay individuals, explore and create their own identities through discourse, and gather information important to their lives." Shaw (1997) notes in his empirical study that IRC was used for entertainment, to meet people and to widen their circle of friends and significant others. Gay men were able to be themselves online; IRC was integral to their coming-out process or their acceptance and declaration of their gay identity. Moreover, gay men's IRC experiences and real-life experience shared a symbiotic relationship. "That is, relationships formed within the exterior gay community lead the users to the interior CMC gay community, where they in turn, develop new relationships which are nurtured and developed outside the bounds of CMC" (Shaw 1997).

Indeed gay men have used or creatively appropriated new media like e-mail and IRC to seek social support, to establish networks, to express their identities, to gather information, and to meet fellow gay men. This study attempts to explore how young gay men\* in the Philippines use IRC.

### The uses of IRC

How do we make sense of people's activities online? Scholars have observed that people creatively appropriate information and communication technologies (Baym 2002, Feenberg 1999). In the course of these technologies' adoption, they acquire new functions and meanings. According to Baym (2002) interpersonal

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\*For this study, I use the term gay men rather than homosexual to refer to men who are attracted to the same sex. According to Neil Garcia, a Filipino scholar of gay studies, the term homosexual is a Western concept that does not fully correspond to the local term for Filipino gay men, the *bakla*: "The homosexual cannot be *bakla* because *bakla* denotes an identity which is effeminate and sexually oriented toward other males, while homosexual merely signifies orientation. In other words one can be a male homosexual and yet not be *bakla*, while being a *bakla* necessarily means one is also a male homosexual" (Garcia 1998).



interaction is among the greatest appeals of CMC. Users engage in identity play, relationship and community formations. The beliefs, values, social practices and purposes of users define the types of identities, relationships, and communities formed online. This research narrowed its investigation to identity and relationships. However, other uses that had been observed by scholars and the popular press were also incorporated.

*Formation of identities.* Identity is simply defined as one's sense of self; while self means the characteristics or nature of an individual (Random House Webster's Concise Dictionary 1997). The anonymous terrain of cyberspace affords individuals the opportunity to invent and reinvent their characteristics like age, sex, race, class, physical characteristics, and other personal information. The nature of online identities is thus consistent with a postmodern definition that sees identity as fluid and constructed (Rheingold 1993, cited in Jones 1995, Turkle 1999). This is in contrast to the traditional or essentialist view that acknowledges a fixed and stable self. This study takes a closer look at how gender is constructed online.

Gender identity will be the focus of inquiry; Gender refers to a person's masculinity or femininity – categories that are based on biological attributes of male and female.

Gender, however, takes on a different conceptualization in cyberspace, where identities are constructed and presented through language. Rodino suggests that gender should be "reconceptualized as performative to break out of binary categories (of male and female)."

Acknowledging online identity as constructed, fluid, and multiple, this study will not confine the definition of gay gender identity to specific categories. The study relies on data gleaned from the key informants themselves. However, as Baym asserts, external contexts like existing speech communities and practices influence online activity, and so I also acknowledge the different ways Filipino gay men identify themselves.

What is the Filipino gay identity? Garcia's model of Filipino homosexual identities is useful: "There are different identities with which gays have characterized themselves and been characterized by their significant others." Using the same constructivist approach and adopting Kinsey's model of "sexual acts continuum," Garcia views Filipino gay identity as a spectrum. Contemporary Filipino gay identities range from the effeminate *effem* to the straight-acting *butch*, and says that "this universalizing view stays clear of labeling people as homosexual or heterosexual, for both are constructs that do not objectively exist..." (Garcia 1996).



Shaw reports that gay men use IRC to formulate and/or to try out their gay identity. The medium is an integral part of their coming-out process. (Coming-out is a term that signifies a gay man's acceptance and disclosure of his gay identity.) Gay men who normally hide their gender identity come out in cyberspace.

What types of gay (gender) identities do Filipino gay men create on IRC?

*Formation of relationships.* Relationships can also be sustained and constructed online. People may have pre-existing relationships like the case of colleagues in the same office or people may have known each other in different contexts prior to their CMC interaction. Participants also create new relationships within computer-mediated groups. People who meet online may then take that relationship offline if an opportunity arises. Shaw has noted that gay men use IRC to meet people, to increase their circles of friends and significant others.

What types of relationships do young Filipino gay men form on IRC? How do these relationships develop?

*Social support and entertainment.* Other creative uses of IRC in the context of gay men include entertainment (Shaw 1997). The popular press has also included [social] support as one of the uses of CMC for gay men (Hammer 2002; Silberman 1999). Social support is defined as "giving and receiving tangible or emotional assistance, empathy, validation, or information" (Vaux 1988 cited in Wright 2000). It is usually sought in times of uncertainty and stressful events.

What are the creative uses of IRC for Filipino gay men?

## Methodology

This research is qualitative. The researcher obtained data on young Filipino gay men's uses of IRC in narratives and interpreted the meanings of these uses through a conceptual framework. Data were generated through in-depth interviews and an analysis of IRC threads or conversations solicited from participants.

Eight Filipino gay men from the Ateneo de Manila University were selected as key informants for this study. A set of criteria was used in selecting the participants to establish their credibility as key informants. Participants should be gay, Internet users for at least a year, and articulate.

My own identity as a Filipino gay person and my familiarity with most of the informants allowed me to establish trust among them. This element was crucial because of the personal nature of the information that respondents shared.



The interview guide was divided into three sets of questions. The first set focused on the key informants' personal background: when, where, and how they used IRC, with the goal of soliciting spontaneous responses to account for creative uses of IRC.

The second set of questions probed into the construction of Filipino gay gender identities on IRC. Participants were asked if they were truthful or not about their gender identities on IRC. They were also requested to explain the reasons for their behavior.

The third set asked about the type of relationships formed by Filipino gay men through IRC. The participants were also requested to describe and explain their relationships. The final set probed into the importance of IRC as a medium for Filipino gay men.

An interview schedule was pre-tested on one participant. Some questions were refined to solicit more responses from the participants. Interviews were conducted for one week, with each interview session lasting about 30 to 45 minutes.

To generate additional data, respondents were also asked to save chat transcriptions (logs or chat threads). They were given three weeks to record their conversations. Five participants were able to give samples of their transcriptions which were used in content analysis. The texts provided other useful information for the study.

Participants were informed of the nature of the study. Their identities were kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used to identify their responses and chat threads.

Content analysis was used to organize and interpret data. Responses of participants to the interview questions were clustered thematically and analyzed based on the conceptual framework.

### **A. Profile of Participants**

*Personal Background.* Eight gay men, who were undergraduate students from Ateneo de Manila University, participated in the study. Most of the participants, five of eight, were juniors whose age ranged from 18 to 20 years old. Six were based in Metro Manila; two lived in the dormitory or had their permanent addresses in the provinces. All but one of the participants belonged to a barkada (peer group) of gay men. Participants presented varying descriptions of their being gay.



Table 1 summarizes their pseudonyms, type, and level of disclosure of gay identity. Although the participants came from the same locale (the Ateneo de Manila University), their varying gay gender identities and personal background informed this investigation.

*Access.* Most respondents have been using IRC since they were in third year high school, and most of them were introduced by friends to the medium. Six owned computers at home; while two used the school's computer terminals. Most participants accessed IRC through their own computers. However, they also reported that they occasionally went to Internet cafés to log on to IRC. Use of IRC was also a communal activity; participants went along with their friends to chat in an Internet café.

Table 1. *Gay gender identity profile of participants*

Pseudonym and Age	Type	Level of disclosure
Rica, 18	Effeminate, cross-dresser	Limited to friends
Aticus, 19	Straight-acting	Full
Sue, 20	Effeminate, cross-dresser	Full
Anthony, 20	Gearing toward straight-acting father than <i>pa-girl</i> (girl-like)	Limited to friends
Harold, 20	Dresses up as a guy acts effeminate	Full
Karl, 18	Discreet, bisexual	Limited to friends
Babs, 19	Depends on the company: straight-acting when with straight male friends, effeminate when with gay friends	Full
Smart, 19	Effeminate, open to possibilities with the opposite sex	Full

*Usage.* Time spent on IRC in one session varied from two to eight hours. Most respondents logged on to IRC in the evening, after classes or work. Participants preferred to chat after work or study, usually from 9:00 p.m. until the following morning. *Aticus* said that more people of his age chat in the evening. They stayed up until the morning during weekends or holidays. In the case of *Babs*, chatting at an earlier time allowed him to look for a prospective partner for a face to face encounter at night.



Frequency and duration of IRC use varied along two time dimensions: during and prior to the time of data gathering. Participants tended to compare early (from high school to freshman and sophomore years in college) and present use of the medium. Some of them used IRC to supplement online activities.

All participants have been using IRC for more than two years. Use of IRC has become part of their routine, but frequency of IRC usage decreased with time. Participants still used the medium, but only on certain occasions.

*Channels frequented by participants.* Participants entered channels which usually catered to gay men. These channels included #gaymanila, #gaypinoy, #gaynetmeeting, #dollnet, #boysroom, #broadpack, #discreetguys, #gayteensex. Channels were specific to the type of gay identity. Effeminate types frequented #gaymanila, #dollnet, #gaypinoy; #bimanila was for bisexuals and straight-acting gays; #discreetguys for discreet gay men. However, users also explored other channels that did not cater to their type. Effeminate gays also visited #bimanila.

Six respondents cited #bimanila as a channel they frequently visited. Aticus, a straight-acting type, attributed its popularity to the variety of gay men in the channel, unlike #gaymanila where one could find mostly effeminate gay men. Choice of channel depended on one's gay identity and interest. *Karl*, a discreet gay man, tended to log on to #discreetguys. *Anthony*, however, preferred international channels like gay.com.

## B. Uses of IRC

Participants used IRC to build relationships, to seek social support, to seek information and entertainment and for other uses arising from their personal circumstances.

*Build relationships.* Data showed that the respondents searched for, initiated and built relationships on IRC. They chatted with strangers from local and international channels. Sometimes it was also used as a space where gay men met their real-life friends.

Respondents had different purposes in meeting and talking to people on IRC. Most of them said that they were looking for sexual, friendly, and intimate relationships: "It's an opportunity to meet people. Gay people mostly. And possibly develop friendships, casual relationships, sexual relationships" (*Smart*).

Why did participants look for partners and relationships on IRC? Anthony explained that IRC was the most accessible medium and place for gay men to look for possible partners: "...it's so hard to make new links in a world filled with heterosexual people...you are assured that [the] person understands you in some way because both of you have the same orientation as homosexuals."



Babs also provided his own explanation: "...When you're not a virgin you have a tendency to have an urge to have sex...*Tapos wala namang puwedeng ma meet na harap-harapan bigla*. [Then you don't find someone who's readily available]...(on) IRC you can meet people with the same interest, with the same urge most probably."

Aticus also suggested that Filipino gay men would look for sex partners in the chatroom because participants were anonymous. Anonymity mattered because inviting someone to a tryst is embarrassing. Anonymity was a significant factor that made conversations easier with people, especially strangers. "I think one thing that draws me to chat is that it's anonymous. You're starting from a clean slate in knowing this person. He doesn't have a face yet" (Anthony).

*Harold*, however, was critical about anonymity. Because chatters were faceless, one could not be sure if they were truthful about their identity unless they sent pictures or met in person. Nevertheless, anonymity guaranteed him security.

These responses showed ambivalent attitudes toward anonymity. It could be beneficial because it reduced participants' inhibitions to disclose their identity or to express their intentions. Although construed as impersonal, a faceless interaction was a condition for participants to be sincere. Thus IRC and its anonymity permitted new ways of behavior and relating with people.

*Seek social support*. Participants in this study reported instances of seeking social support from their chatmates. Most of them dealt with uncertainties about being gay. Online social support helped them through this stage of their lives. Anthony resorted to IRC to relieve himself from stressful events: "You're just letting steam out by just talking to someone to hear you out. Fortunately there are a lot of people who do that. But then after that, if you don't need them again, it's no big deal."

IRC was a means for them to come to terms with their gay identity. Karl, a discreet gay man, and *Rica*, an effeminate, met fellow gay men who enlightened them about their gay identities. "I used to ask gay persons: Have you been into a relationship? How was it? What age? I was amazed with what's happening...I understood myself more through that" (*Rica*). "*Kasi identity crisis, eh. Tinulungan ako. Akala ko mahirap talaga maghanap ng partner...*[It was an identity crisis. It helped a lot. I thought it was difficult to find a partner]." (*Karl*).

On the other hand, Smart helped gay men through their identity problems.

And I guess being gay, it's also an opportunity to help out other people. There are closeted people who chat. Some people don't



know if they are really gay. They need some outside input. They don't know if they should come out. Sometimes you give advice... (Smart)

*Aticus* sought validation and feedback from his friends on IRC. Feedback from people other than his real-life friends gave him confidence, enabling him to overcome his fear of rejection. "Sa chat na realize ko na there are certain qualities na likable sa akin; there are certain qualities na hindi likable about me. So ayon para ma overcome ko yung fear na baka hindi ako ma-like [In chatting I realized that there are certain qualities that were not likeable about me. So in a way it was overcoming the fear that I would not be liked]."

*Uses arising from personal circumstances.* Rica found IRC instrumental to his personal development: "it helps me to be more introspective about life." However, he doubted the quality of interactions and relationships in the chatroom.

One used his IRC experiences as material for his writings. "When you meet people you get to know more. So yon nadadagdagan yun aking stock o material for writing [It adds to my stock or material for writing]." Participants also used to practice language skills; Smart logged on to French channels while Rica honed his English in local and international channels.

*Seek entertainment and information.* Participants also said that they chatted when they were bored or when they wanted to pass the time. Other activities of participants also included sharing of information such as pictures, MP3 files, stories, and video and playing games online.

*Importance of IRC.* What is the importance of this medium in the lives of Filipino gay men? What is the meaning of IRC? Most participants gave positive assessments of IRC. A few, however, were critical of misuses and abuses arising from the medium.

IRC was a medium and space where Filipino gay men, effeminate or straight-acting, were free to be themselves as shown in the following responses:

For the most part it's a liberal experience for homosexuals themselves because a lot of them who chat are still in the closet. It is a means for them even for about two hours or fleeting moments to come out, have fun and just smell everything and experience everything (Anthony).

This response implied that the participant defined IRC as a space for gay men against real life, the domain of heterosexuals. The use of "liberal" to describe IRC clearly indicated that gay men experienced a form of emancipation from a dominant [heterosexual] culture that limited and repressed gay men.



Sue articulated how IRC relates to the condition of gay men in the Philippines: "Let's face it *pare-pareho tayong bakla at hindi naman tayo ganoon ka rami*. [We are all the same and we are not that many]. We're discriminated [against]. So, I think there is strength in numbers...*Nakakatuwa na* [It's amazing that] I'm not alone you know."

Sue recognized that IRC was a space where Filipino gay men affirmed each other's homosexuality. The presence of fellow gay men in the chatroom gave a sense of security, which allowed gay men to be themselves.

Participants used IRC to meet fellow gay men to develop possible relationships and to fulfill their sexual needs. The nature of the medium – its interactivity and anonymity – allowed faster and more accessible ways for gay men to meet each other. Anthony particularly raised this point. "...it's their means of making new links. Especially with gay people, it's so hard to make new links in a world filled with heterosexual people."

However, not all perceived IRC as beneficial. Rica expressed a change in his perception of the medium: "I see the whole thing as a sick thing *na*... Because it seems people are chatting just to find sex partners. They don't respect." Rica, an effeminate gay, noted that a strong bias existed against effeminate types on IRC. Because the medium was anonymous, users tended to be insincere in their interactions with fellow chatters. Rica also singled out the fact that gay chatters have a strong inclination to physical characteristics, a similar observation noted by Shaw in his study of American gay men.

Why is IRC a medium used for building relationships and seeking social support? Participants' responses to IRC's importance revealed insights into their social contexts. Respondents (Karl, Babs, Anthony, Sue) consistently compared the space provided by IRC with real life spaces. They suggested that Filipino gay men have difficulty being themselves and relating with fellow gay men in real life. "It's so hard to make new links in a world filled with heterosexual people," bemoaned Anthony. Moreover, Karl reported, "Since Christian country *ito, mahirap. Kasi tingin nila sa amin* very abnormal. *Iba kami. Sakit ito* [Since this is a Christian country, it's hard. We are viewed as very abnormal. We are different. This is a disease]." Sue explicitly said, "gays are discriminated [against]."

Young Filipino gay men's creative uses of IRC should thus be seen in the context of their status in Philippine society. Tan (1994) argues that gays are discriminated against in Philippine society. He says that religious and medical institutions promote stigmatization of Filipino gay men through the labels they ascribe to them. Homosexuality is labeled as a sin and sickness by the religious and medical institutions. (For the Catholic Church, the homosexual act is



considered a sin, not homosexuality per se). In this predominantly Catholic population, the Church wields a powerful influence and thus exercises social control. Stigmatization complicates the process of self-acceptance and social integration of gays who are in the process of coming out.

Indeed, participants' use of IRC could be interpreted as a response to difficulties arising from their condition in Philippine society. Most participants used this medium to seek partners or social support. Where there was difficulty in looking for partners and support in real life, IRC became a social space to fulfill these needs. Babs candidly reported, "...*Mas nakakakita sila ng place* [They find a place] where they can act, they can do whatever they want without taking *kung anong tingin ng mga hetero* [the perceptions of heterosexuals]." Discreet gay men like Karl, saw IRC as beneficial: "*Kasi yun yung* [because that's our] medium *namin* for communicating."

Anthony comments, "You are assured that if you're talking to someone, that person understands you in some way because both of you have the same orientation as homosexuals—straight-acting or *pa girl* [girl-like]." Karl also added, "When you're in the chatroom, you know that these persons are gay and are open to these relationships." By sharing common experiences, beliefs, and problems with fellow gay men on IRC, participants found strength in facing Philippine society's negative perceptions of gays. Moreover they also found security. Sue best described the value of this social space; "*Di ba* [Don't you think] meeting other people *na pareho kayo ng* [with the same] ideas...situation, *Makakarelieve ng pain. Kahit papaano...* [In a way it relieves pain]."

Anonymity was a factor why participants used the medium. It made participants less inhibited to build relationships with and seek social support from chatters. An anonymous medium like IRC thus works for Filipinos that are less confrontational or self-assertive. Participants felt less stigmatized as gay men thus were able to pursue activities (such as looking for sex partners), on IRC that were usually impossible offline.

### C. Identities of Participants on IRC

What types of identity did the respondents assume on IRC? Why? Results of the interviews revealed that five of the eight participants tended to be truthful. Their identities in real life were consistently communicated on IRC. "I tell them I'm 5'11, *chinito, balbon* [Chinese-featured, hairy], as honest as possible because I just find that it's better to get things straight from the start rather than trying to revise things" (Anthony).

Respondents were truthful not only in presenting their gender identity, but also their personal information and physical characteristics because, according to Babs, giving false identities and personal information disappointed



their chatmates. However, effeminate participants reported that they have also tried presenting other gender identities. Rica, Sue, and Smart (who previously claimed to be truthful) also disguised themselves as women in the chatroom. Rica revealed: " You have this image of a girl and you think that you are... All you have to do is to project it. *Tapos naniniwala yung kausap* mo [Your chatmate believes you]. It's a great feeling. I'm a girl..."

Seeing himself as a "woman trapped in a man's body," Sue used to chat in straight channels as a girl. However, when his conception of his gay identity changed, he started to be consistent with his effeminate gay identity. "Before, (I used to chat in) straight channels. I am a girl. So *noong natuto talaga ako* [When I finally realized] I tell the truth." Sue's response implied a new understanding of her gay identity from that of psychic reversal (a woman in a man's body) to an acceptance that he could never be a woman, but always a gay man.

Three participants reported that they were straight-acting on IRC. According to Aticus, Harold, and Babs, Filipino gay men in #bim Manila usually preferred the straight-acting type. Although Babs admitted that he could also be effeminate, he presented himself as straight-acting in the chatroom. "*Kasi* [Because] most of the chatters *sa* [in] bim Manila they are not open *sa mga effem* [to effeminate types]. *Medyo ayaw nila ng effem* [They don't like effeminates]. *Gusto nila kahit papaano* [they like] discreet (gay men). I don't know why (Babs)."

As previously mentioned, participants used the chatroom as a place to meet people for sex and relationships. Chatters usually presented themselves as straight-acting types, an identity sought after. According to Babs, interactions progressed whenever one declared himself as the straight-acting type.

The following interaction between Karl and Soulfire, an effeminate chatter, however, illustrated the tendency of straight-acting types to reject effeminate gays.

Session Start: Wed Oct 17 19:05:12 2001

<SOULFIRE> eto pic ko

<LAD[-]DER> ?

<SOULFIRE> [www.geocities.com/hollywood/film/6839/whatever.jpg](http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/film/6839/whatever.jpg)

<SOULFIRE> ako yung nasa left na chubby na maputi ok

<LAD[-]DER> effem ba kayo???

<SOULFIRE> nope

<LAD[-]DER> wala lang

<SOULFIRE> sorry ha if u find me effem



<LAD[-]DER> ok lang

<LAD[-]DER> effem hater kasi ako

Effeminate gay men were less privileged in the chatroom, especially in channels like #bim Manila, because gay men tended to hold on to stereotypes. If one presented himself as gay, chatters immediately conjured an image of a cross-dressing and effeminate gay man. Karl and Babs explained that discreet gay men feared being associated with the effeminate types. Moreover, Babs refused to have sex with them.

Sue, an effeminate, confirmed that effeminate gay men have a negative stereotype. He thought that effeminate gay men were construed as parlor gays or the *balahura* (vulgar) type. Most chatters are looking for sex partners and would prefer the straight-acting type.

Table 2 presents the gay gender identities that participants tend to present on IRC.

Table 2. Gender identity/ies of participants on IRC

Name	Type	Level of disclosure	Identity on IRC*
Rica	Effeminate	Limited to friends	Consistent, also invents-girl
Sue	Effeminate	Full	Consistent, also invents-girl
Aticus	Straight-acting	Full	Consistent
Anthony	Straight-acting	Limited to friends	Consistent
Harold	Effeminate	Full	Consistent
Karl	Discreet	Limited to friends	Consistent, withholds personal information
Babs	Straight-acting/	Full	Consistent
Smart	Effeminate	Full	Consistent

\*Consistent means that participants tend to be truthful in presenting their gender identity type. Participants may also have the tendency to invent their gender identities.

Responses of the participants indicated that identities in the chatroom were not fixed, but constructed for specific ends. They either presented identities consistent with real life, or projected the straight-acting type image to attract gay chatters. In previous discussions, participants cited their primary reason for chatting as looking for sex partners and relationships. As Baym noted, group



purposes determined ways participants presented their identities in the chatroom.

On the other hand, participants were also consistent with their gay gender identity. This correspond's with Shaw's observation that IRC is a medium in which gay men can be themselves. Effeminate gays like Sue and Rica could be feminine online and be affirmed by others. For discreet gay men like Karl, who make very limited disclosure of their gender identity, the IRC was a space where they could explore their gay identities without fear of being stigmatized by society. However, some inconsistencies were also observed. Babs, who reported that he was effeminate, projected a straight-acting identity online. Rica and Sue also tried female identities on different channels or chatrooms. These inconsistencies implied that gender identities could be negotiated further on IRC. The purpose for engaging in online interactions determined how identity was negotiated. For example, since Babs wanted to get sexual partners, he would project a straight-acting image.

Why was there an inclination to straight-acting types? This would lead to another insight about gay identity dynamics online. Accounts of participants revealed a tension between effeminate and straight-acting gay men which informed their presentation of identities. As in offline situations, straight-acting types, discreet gay men or bisexuals easily found partners for sex or company. Garcia explains that masculine-behaving gays are more privileged because of the

...qualities of the present gender set-up otherwise described by feminists as patriarchal or macho. Macho culture decrees that anything feminine is by its very nature inferior to masculinity; hence, the effeminate man (in this case, the bakla), like the woman, finds himself at the losing end of the relationship simply because he lacks the essential qualities of being macho (Garcia 1998).

Moreover, Sue clarified earlier that effeminate gays have a reputation: "Well I think *may* stereotypes *ang* effeminate people as parlor gays, (or) *balahura* type [I think there are stereotypes of effeminate people as parlor gays, (or) the vulgar type]." In the Philippines, most gay men are typecast as cross-dressers, beauticians, and screaming faggots. These attributes are equated with femininity and thus "*parloric*" [found in beauty parlors]; effeminate gays – even if they are decent looking – are seen as inferior. Conversely, straight-acting gays are less likely to be noticed as gays because their behavior still conforms to masculine standards. This hierarchy of identities on IRC was a strong indication of emerging trends in Philippine gay culture. Straight-acting types enjoyed privileged status as they attracted more intimate or sex partners than effeminate gays. This arrangement placed effeminate gays like Rica and Sue in less privileged positions inside chatrooms.



#### D. Relationships of Participants on IRC

What happens to interactions of participants on IRC? Findings show that if participants and their chatmates found their conversations promising, chatroom interactions migrated to other settings. Based on the accounts of participants, chatters exchanged mobile phone or landline numbers, e-mail addresses, or met in person. Conversations continued over the phone, e-mail, or face-to-face. The actual encounter between two chatters was referred to as EB or eyeball. Actual encounters that led to sex was called SEB or sex eyeball. Channels also organized grand eyeballs where chatters gathered at a public venue and met their chatmates. All participants have met up face-to-face with one to 17 chatmates. Six out of eight admitted having sex with at least one in three of their chatmates during their initial encounter.

*Factors in choosing a chatmate.* Choice of a chatmate depended on several factors. Since chatters were faceless, with only words to express themselves, the first indicator was the attractiveness of their nicknames. ASL (age, sex, location) or basic personal information came next. Personal qualities and background of the chatmate (as revealed in the conversation) like height and appearance, school, fluency in the English language, and place were also considered. The chatmate's picture was also a factor in deciding whom to pursue.

Smart and Sue did not have the tendency to choose chatmates. They just allowed other chatters to click on their names. Sue explained, "it's the girl thing in me..." (implying that women tend not to make the first move.)

*Patterns of development of the relationship.* If chatmates liked each other, interactions progressed and participants exchanged mobile or landline numbers. If a chatmate was inaccessible, say from another country or province, e-mail was used as a means to keep in touch. After initial contact through phone or short messaging service (SMS), they met in person (eyeball) and decided what to do next.

*Types of relationships.* What types of relationship do Filipino gay men form online? How do they compare with real-life friends? Most respondents reported having sexual relations, and friends, boyfriends or intimate partners as well. All respondents reported that they had met at least one chatmate in person. Seven admitted having sex with at least one partner during the initial encounter. Aticus, Sue, Rica, Babs, and Smart described their friendships formed through IRC.

Sue met a bisexual online and eventually became his friend: "He was so nice to me. He calls me at home. I text him *ganoon*. Sometimes *magdadate kami*. [we date]. [We're] Good friends."



Rica met a transsexual. He said that his new friend was like a mother figure in his life: "...she's older than me...she's my mother. *Anak niya din ako* [she treats me like her daughter]."

Babs, whose sex partners became his friends, respected and treated them like his usual friends. Moreover, Smart regarded his friends from IRC as special because they tended to be sincere than his other offline friends.

Anthony had a relationship with an Italian guy and two others – one was a friend and the other a prospective partner: "Very intimate, very passionate; we did have sex. But we turned out to be good friends...But since he was not sure of his stay here and I was still studying, we didn't see any grounds on which to build a relationship outside of friendship."

Among the participants, Karl was the only one who had a serious relationship with a partner. Although his partner was from the United States, they constantly communicated through phone and SMS.

However, for Harold distance was an issue. He did not have a relationship because "most of them (chatmates) are far away." Although he has met up with some chatmates to have sex, he was hesitant to have a relationship because of his perception of IRC: "What do you mean fall in love *sa* (on) IRC?...Falling in love? *Ay stupid yon* [That's stupid]. *Kailangan* you [should] know the person first *di ba* [right]?"

Aticus also presented a critical view of relationships formed through IRC. He based his assessment on his disappointment with his first *cyberbubfra* or cyber boyfriend. They met in an international gay channel. His chatmate was Filipino, 40, and was based in San Diego, California. Aticus thought that age would not matter in their relationship, so he pursued the relationship. However, their relationship as *cyberbubfras* did not last long. The forty-year-old guy sent pictures and Aticus felt disappointed. "*Nashock ako nang hindi siya* [I was shocked when I found out that he was not] as good looking and as manly as I thought he would be."

Although IRC allowed people to meet and establish links, physical presence was important to build a relationship. The imagined presence of a chatmate tends to create false expectations. Based on Aticus' experience, the attempt to build relationships on IRC presented the need to know a prospective partner face-to-face.

Table 3 summarizes the types and status of participants' relationships on IRC.



Table 3. *Types of relationship\* formed by participants on IRC*

Name	Type of Relationship	Status
Rica (effeminate)	Friend	In progress
Sue (effeminate)	Friends	In progress
Aticus (straight)	Cyberbufra (cyber boyfriend)	Terminated
Jonas (straight)	Intimate	As friends
Harold (effeminate)	None	
Karl (discreet)	Intimate/boyfriend	In progress
Babs (straight/effeminate)	Friends	In progress
Smart (effeminate)	Friends	In progress

\*Relationships as of the time of the study

IRC was used by respondents as a medium to form relationships. Their primary purpose was to look for prospective partners. Participants reported having friends, sexual partners, or intimate relationships. They pursued chatmates who conformed to their real-life standards in choosing partners. Participants reported that they had a strong bias for good-looking chatmates. Thus they had the tendency to request physical descriptions or pictures which were accessible online. These results confirmed Shaw's findings that gay men have a strong visual bias. Chatmates were selected based on their face and body measurements. However, participants like Anthony also reported that they chose chatmates who could carry out intelligent conversations.

Participants' perceptions of relationships formed through IRC varied from positive to critical. The very nature of the medium and its anonymity could hasten the development of relationships. Non-verbal or physical cues that people use to gauge in face-to-face interactions are filtered out. Chatters could focus on building their relationships through their meaningful interactions. However, this situation allowed chatters to conjure idealized or constructed images of their chatmates which were most likely without actual physical basis. This presented opportunities for deception, unless chatters agreed to meet in person or to exchange photographs or images. In the case of Aticus, chatters who were distant from each other exploited the anonymity of the medium.

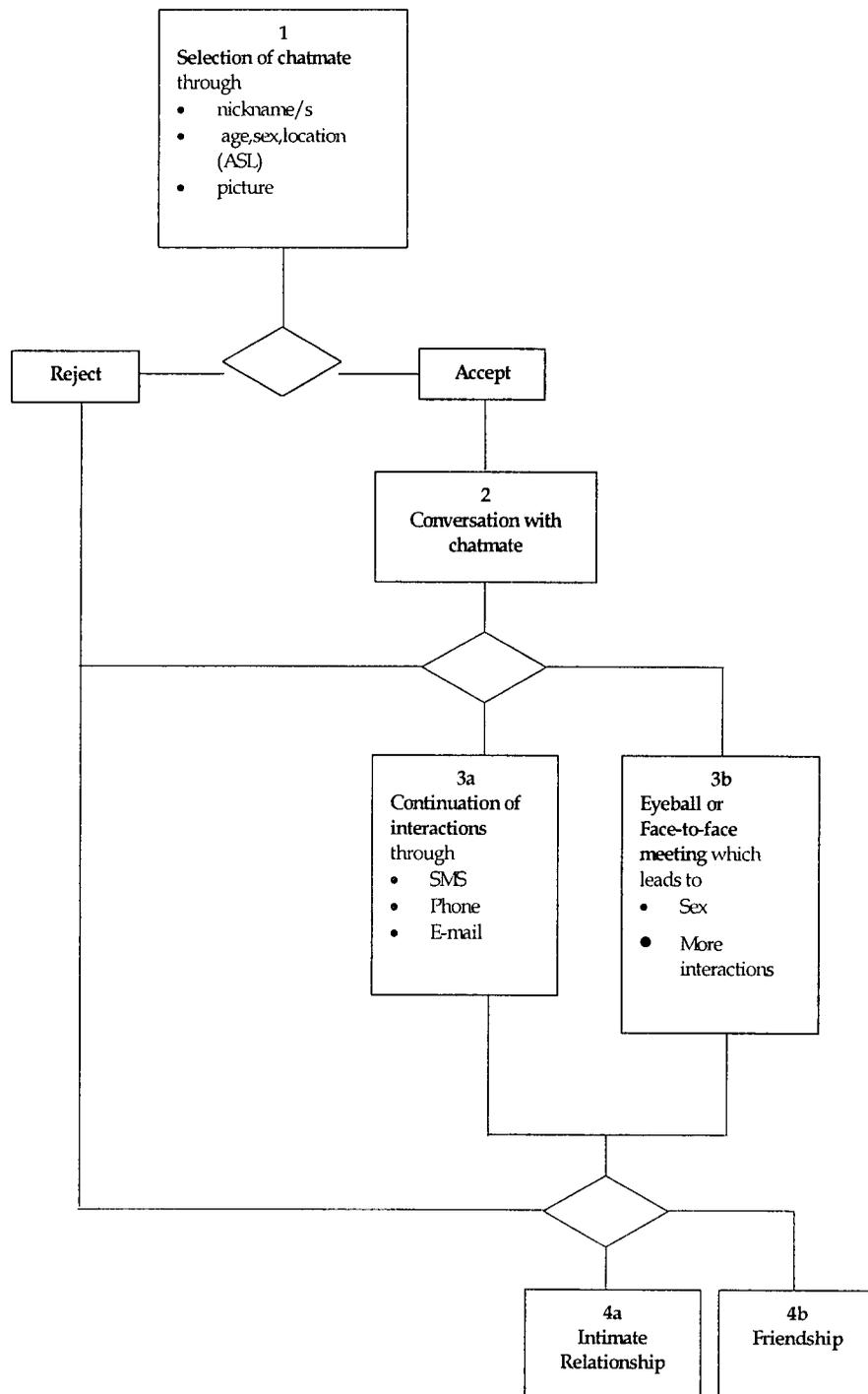
Participants have maintained ties with their online friends. Successful and ongoing intimate partnerships are rare, except for Karl's. This study, however, was unable to probe more deeply into the dynamics of the relationships. It only described the factors that influenced the choice of prospective partners and the status and types of relationships formed through this medium.



Nevertheless, the participants' narratives clearly indicated that there were many opportunities for Filipino gay men to find prospective partners through IRC.

Figure 1 illustrates the patterns of relational development between gay chatters on IRC.

Figure 1. Process of development of a relationship on IRC



## Conclusions

This study investigated how a select group of Filipino gay men creatively appropriated Internet Relay Chat (IRC), a new interactive communication medium. The following observations were derived from the eight participants:

*Creative uses of IRC by participants.* IRC was appropriated for building relationships, seeking social support, seeking information, and recreation. Data showed that participants primarily used IRC to meet fellow gay men and form sexual, intimate and friendly relationships. The participants argued that IRC was a more convenient way of meeting fellow gay men than meeting them in public spaces like bars. IRC also facilitated social support for these participants. They received advice and validation, and found someone to listen and talk to, in cases of uncertainty or emotional distress. Participants also used IRC as a medium for entertainment and to obtain information.

The data also revealed that these uses of IRC were embedded in the context of gay men's circumstances in the Philippines. Participants reported that gay men in the Philippines were "discriminated [against]" (Sue). Society perceived them as "abnormal" (Karl). Thus, participants like Anthony were prompted to say: "It's so hard to make new links in a world filled with heterosexual people." Through IRC, the participants were able to surmount the challenge of finding prospective partners. The anonymity and accessibility of the medium were factors that enabled participants to pursue such activities on IRC. Indeed, the participants' uses of the medium were in response to this condition of discrimination in Philippine society.

Originally intended as a medium for two-way interactions, IRC has become social space for Filipino gay men. Jones (1995) defined this space as a virtual community shared by participants based on common meanings. Participants were assured that they were not alone (Sue). IRC facilitated "faster links with fellow gay men" (Anthony).

## Identities on IRC

Data showed that identities were constructed online. Participants usually looked for sex partners or relationships on IRC; thus they tended to present identities that made them attractive to other chatters. According to the participants (Karl, Aticus), the straight-acting type was more likely to get a partner (sex or relationship) online than effeminate gays.

Most participants were consistent in their gender identities and personal information. However, there were instances when they invented identities as in the case of effeminate gays (Sue and Rica) disguising themselves as women, or a discreet one trying to hide personal information (Karl). Babs, who was effeminate, tended to project a straight-acting image. These practices showed that identity on IRC is sometimes negotiated.



Data also revealed that straight-acting types were more privileged than effeminate gays on IRC. Participants explained that effeminate gays were disadvantaged because they were typecast as the *parloric* and *balahura* type, a common Filipino stereotype of gays. As suggested by scholar Neil Garcia, effeminate gays are inferior because of the prevailing macho culture that sees anything feminine as inferior.

### **Types of relationships**

Participants have formed friendships, and intimate, or sexual relationships through IRC. They have mixed perceptions of these relationships. Participants with online friends reported that these friendships were "more meaningful than other real-life friends." Some like Karl and Anthony experienced and have formed intimate relationships through IRC. Other held a negative perception of relationships formed through IRC like Aticus, who spoke of his disappointments with a chatmate whom he expected to be good-looking, but who turned out to be older and less attractive than what he seemed to be in the chatroom. Disappointments because of deception, unrealistic expectations and misconceptions of a chatmate also characterized gay men's attempts to build relationships on IRC. The lack of nonverbal and physical cues posed difficulties and challenges to chatters. Like offline settings, the quality of relationships on IRC varied.

Relationships on IRC occurred in stages. Interactions begin through the choice of a chatmate which depend on attractiveness of nicknames, ASL (age, sex [whether effeminate, discreet, or straight-acting], location), physical characteristics, and ability to carry out good conversations. Anonymous interactions on IRC lead to face-to-face encounters that may end up in sex and/or companionship. On the other hand, interactions also continue through other channels like e-mail, SMS, the mobile phone and telephone. Chatmates may be rejected at any point in these stages. Gay men may pursue relationships as friends or as intimate partners with their chatmates.

### **Implications**

The IRC was used to build relationships and to seek social support from fellow gay men. Their interactions and activities on IRC affected their real lives. Participants have gained friends and intimate partners through the medium. It also facilitated access to fellow gay men who provided them with social support in times of uncertainty. Why did the respondents look for relationships and support on IRC? Analysis of data revealed that participants experienced difficulties in being gay in Philippine society. IRC was the most convenient and a faster way to establish connections between fellow gay men.



The IRC was a means of communication which allowed Filipino gays to be less inhibited in expressing their sexual preferences and desires, which are labeled as sin and sickness by religious and medical institutions.

Straight-acting gay men were more likely to benefit from the use of the medium. They easily won partners. Effeminate gays could only enjoy the medium in so far as realizing their fantasy as women or gaining friends. These observations implied that technology – new media – is not neutral so long as its users assert power relations which tend to benefit privileged groups. The beliefs, values, and attitudes of users shape the culture of a particular channel or chatroom. Chatrooms like #bim Manila privilege straight or discreet gay men. The distinction between straight and effeminate gay men is thus clear on IRC. Indeed, as Baym observes, external contexts or cultures of users are manifested on IRC.

Despite the power relations expressed on IRC, it has enriched the participants' experience of being gay. By exploiting this interactive and anonymous medium, participants have explored their gay gender identities, and have formed relationships with fellow gay men. IRC has been instrumental in linking participants with fellow gay men in a symbolic space where they can share the same realities and meanings.

Indeed, users of technology modify its original intention based on their values and interests. IRC is an interactive communication technology designed to facilitate conversations. As Filipino gay men have adopted and adapted it, it has transformed into a social space where they pursue activities such as forming relationships and finding prospective sex partners, which are difficult to realize in society.

From a larger perspective, only Filipino gay men with access to IRC could benefit from this experience. Karl sympathized with [discreet] gays without access to IRC. "*Naaawa nga ako sa mga* [I feel sorry for] gays and bisexuals in the province [where there is limited access to the Internet], it's so hard for them to interact." New media could be beneficial only to the extent of users' access to and familiarity with these technologies.

### **Recommendations**

As an exploratory study, this paper suggests questions could extend inquiry. Further research should also pursue an in-depth study of relationships of gay men on cyberspace. Researchers may also study the process and dynamics of gay identity formation in cyberspace, specifically gay men whose process of coming out was accomplished through this medium. Future research could explore other populations of Filipino gay men, as those of gay men in the workplace, college students from different schools, or even a younger population like high school students.



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# MAINSTREAMING GAY LANGUAGE: The Invasion of the Youth's Communication System

LOURDES M. PORTUS

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*The study inquires into the ways in which the gay language has permeated the communication system of the youth, particularly among the non-gay population. It explores how gay language either contributes to a better communication among the youth and other non-gay sector of the population or how it widens the gap between those who use it and those who do not.*

*Using quantitative and qualitative methods, including literature review, the study takes a look at the perception and experiences of the non-gay sector. One hundred forty-four respondents were surveyed and approximately 10 key informants (sociologists, linguists and communication scholars, among others) were given in-depth interviews to gather insights on how the gay language has invaded the non-gay system of communication.*

*The findings of this study have bearing on the language that will link or alienate the youth and the adults in the future and will have implications on the possible transformation of the gay language into a dominant formal and informal language. Moreover, issues on the use of gay language as facilitating or hindering communication and adversely affecting common understanding are brought to fore in this study.*

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his paper attempts to look at how gay language influences and shapes the youth's worldview and mode of thinking.

How has gay language affected the youth's communication, relationship and understanding? How does gay language enhance and promote agreement amongst them? How does it facilitate or hinder communication?

This paper seeks to determine the extent of mainstreaming of the so-called "gay language" with the dominant or straight language spoken by the youth in selected Metro Manila colleges and universities. In doing so, the paper has privileged the non-gay's perspective in an attempt to find out whether or not gays —



and gay language — have indeed influenced heterosexuals in using gay language and in changing their attitudes, values and outlook. Most of the studies on gay language have been conducted from the point of view of the gays themselves. This time, the voices of the straight are given space on a topic such as gay language.

The paper, therefore, assumes the following: a) the prevalent use of gay language among the youth in certain Metro Manila colleges and universities, and b) by extension, the occurrence of the mainstreaming process.

Operationally, the gay language in this study refers to the spoken or written words employed by homosexuals (i.e., gays) in their interaction either with fellow homosexuals or with heterosexuals (i.e., straight). It includes the symbols and styles used in the delivery of the words.

Meanwhile, the term “mainstreaming” refers to strategies and processes to integrate the gay language in both formal and informal conversations or interactions. It is also a process by which members of a group are trained to “think gay.”

The paper draws inferences and insights from a survey of 144 heterosexual or non-gay respondents and a series of focus interviews with selected key informants.

Enriching the insights in this paper are two other studies done by graduate and undergraduate students of the College of Mass Communication in UP under supervision of this researcher, as well as several literature dealing with gay language.

### **Profile of Respondents**

The 144 respondents were chosen based on the following set of criteria:

- a) That they belong to the youth sector as indicated by their age range of 15 to 25 years old, and
- b) That they are not gays, meaning, their sexual preference is for the opposite sex, either male or female, and not gays or lesbians.

Hence, all respondents are straight: 53 percent female, and 47 percent male. The survey determined the status of the respondents (i.e., whether heterosexual or homosexual) from the respondents’ own declarations, coupled with the attestation of the interviewers.

The respondents are young: 84 percent are between 18 and 23 years old.

Majority of them are Roman Catholics, followed by Born Again Christians and Iglesia ni Cristo members.

All come from middle-class families, with incomes ranging from Php 10,000 to Php 30,000 per month.



All respondents are students from various colleges and universities in Metro Manila. Ranked in terms of their numbers (quantitatively, in descending order), the respondents from UP-Diliman top the list, followed by respondents from Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), University of Santo Tomas (UST), AMA University and Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Manila (PLM).

The biggest number of respondents are fourth year College students or Seniors, followed by the Juniors, the Sophomores and the Freshmen.

The most dominant collegiate courses are Communication and Engineering.

Sixty percent of the respondents come from Metro Manila, i.e., from the National Capital Region (NCR). Twenty percent (20%) come from the Visayas and Mindanao. Another 20 percent come from various parts of Luzon.

### **Gay Language Awareness and Definitions**

When asked whether they were aware of the existence of gay language, all of the respondents (100%) said "yes."

When asked to define it, majority of the respondents said that "It is a language that comes from the gays themselves." They regard it as a set of abstractions and codes known only to the users (i.e., the gays) as well as their associates and friends. Those who do not belong to the circle of users would have difficulty understanding the language.

Some respondents define gay language as "creative," "artistic," "ingenious" and "funny language." They hint at the ability of the gays to invent unique words that most often elicit laughter and lighten the mood of any gathering or conversation. It thus broadens the vocabulary of the users.

Others define gay language as an endemic way of gay communication which the gays developed from certain dialects common to them. It may, at times, simply be distorted words meant for jokes, or indistinct words used for sharing secrets.

The above definitions reflect how the youth regard the gays – experts in creativity and in disguising the meaning of words. While some respondents may negatively view the concealment of meanings, a majority still sees the ability to obscure meanings in a positive light. It is an ingenious and unique skill, some respondents said.

The definitions also imply a favorable attitude towards the gay language as it eases tension and makes conversations among the respondents jolly and fun.

However, not all respondents regard gay language favorably. Almost half of the respondents (almost an equal number as those who define the gay language favorably) describe it as "cheap," "vague," "annoying," "weird," "intriguing," "vulgar," "sarcastic" and "deviant." Some even say that it is "a



corruption of the dominant language and subverts the meanings that are embedded in the Filipino language.”

Given these multiple or subverted meanings, a word like, *papa*, for instance, would be used differently by those who use gay language. It does not refer to father or the male parent, but, rather, to boyfriends or male lovers.

Another example, the word *dakila* which means “great” actually means a large sexual organ – the word emanating from the word *daku* in Visayan term or *dakula* in Bicol or *dakil* in Ilokaño. Hence, saying a person is *dakila* means that the person spoken of is well-endowed and not necessarily noble or great. Still another example, *Luz Valdez*, the name of an actress, is used in calling a person a loser.

Still other respondents discourage others from taking (or using) gay language seriously. They say that it is not a language at all, as evidenced by its absence from the standard international dictionary, not part of the Filipino language, and not universal. They regard it as an informal language or lingo, and relegate its use to the informal setting.

Others abhorrently call it a nonsense language and associate it with street language - the language of the uneducated and low class in Philippine society.

These less favorable definitions, though contentious, may be construed in light of how “language” is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (1995):

It is a system of symbols and rules; it is a method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in an agreed way; the language of a particular community or country; and a style or faculty of expression.

Does gay language satisfy dictionary definitions?

The informants in the focus interview emphasized that there are no rules, as yet, on gay language use, no system of conjugation and no syntax. Some gay terms, fleeting as they are, fade away if not constantly used and are rarely resurrected as new ones are continuously created and become in vogue among the gays.

The dictionary definition also echoes the belief of the respondents that the so-called “gay language” is more of a gay “lingo” or “jargon” rather than a standard or real language.

### **Benefits Derived from Gay Language**

To a majority of the respondents, gay language accords certain benefits, the most common of which are as follows: the sense of enjoyment derived from the alteration of the words, the joy and laughter it evokes from the users and listeners as well as the easy and tension-free conversations that it engenders.



One respondent puts it succinctly as follows: Gay language breaks the ice in a boring discussion or lecture and makes the conversation livelier. Gay language or lingo has helped users to become oblivious of their daily problems and to spice up their interactions.

Gay language also addresses the desire to belong to a group, to keep a secret, or to disguise word meanings, particularly sex-oriented ones. Austria, et al. (2001) confirm this finding when they established in their research that the youths use the gay language or lingo to demonstrate group solidarity, to “maintain a boundary against outsiders” and to be an “effective shield against enemies.” The use of codes or gay language is based on the gay’s experience of periodic suffering from ridicule and persecution. Hence, there was a need for a coping mechanism, a system of codes and symbols to maintain secrecy and avoid discrimination.

Likewise, gay language is seen as an effective venue for free expression. Taking a more critical view, some respondents said that it is the feeling of freedom to say what they want and being “out of the closet” that make the gay lingo popular among gays. This relates with their incessant struggle for free expression without society’s condemnation. It reflects the desire of the gays to be recognized as members of Philippine society – as citizens with human rights.

It is moreover a tool for empowerment and liberation – to be identified and accepted in society. This relates to the study that Abaya, et al. conducted in 1998 where they portrayed the gay language as liberating and empowering. They situated gay language in the context of the gay’s struggle for gay human rights in a dominantly patriarchal society.

Lastly, there are respondents who believe that gay language accords a certain status symbol to its users. Bordering on the elitist perspective, they think that using the gay language has helped gays acquire prominence in society because both gays and straight imitate their language and manner of speaking. Austria, et al. (2000) affirmed the above finding by discovering that: “There is a wider popularity of the gay language as a status symbol (emphasis mine) for gays in Metro Manila” (Abstract). In their study, they found out that the youth, whether gays or straight, use gay language because they feel like celebrities who understand the language of a few. The youths that Austria et al. interviewed find pride in the fact that people copy their language and style of communication.

In addition, Austria, et al., in comparing urban (Manila) and rural (Mindoro) youth’s use of gay language, discovered that in the urban areas, both gays and straight use gay language. In contrast, among the rural youth, the use of the gay language has been mostly limited to the gay population.



Austria, et al. explained this discovery by citing the "minimal exposure" and hesitancy of the non-gay respondents in the rural areas to use gay language. The urban youth respondents are found to have had more exposure, and consequently, a more positive attitude towards gays and their language than the rural youth.

### **The Mainstreaming Process: Use and Context**

Gay language permeates the day-to-day conversation and interactions of the gays. It managed to spread into the daily fare of the non-gay population, more pronouncedly, during the 70's. In the 80's, the gay language even gained more acceptance and wide use in the daily lives of Filipino youth.

Through the years, gay language has invaded Philippine society's mass media (i.e., radio, TV, films, newspapers, tabloids, magazines, comics, etc.). These mass media forms have invariably employed gay characters, gay hosts or hostesses, gay performers or entertainers, gay columnists and gay writers. Being voracious consumers of media, particularly TV and films, the youth inevitably assimilated the use of the gay language. In fact, it has even influenced their styles of communication.

Can we, therefore, say that gay language has indeed invaded the youth's communication system? To answer this, it would be worthwhile to inquire into the ways in which gay language is adopted.

### **Adopting Gay Language**

According to the data, the manner of adopting gay language proceeds from constant companionship with gays, or in the case of a few straight male respondents who use gay language, through companionship with female friends who use gay language. These female friends would have consequently influenced them to make gay language a part of their vocabulary.

Hence, gay language spreads as one takes fancy in listening to and enjoying gay language. He or she eventually imitates the words and manner of speaking. Consciously or otherwise, gay language then becomes the style of communication of gays and their associates.

In connection with how one formulates words in gay language, this occurs by manipulating, contracting or distorting existing words, phrases or expressions. For instance, the phrase, "hindi ba?" is contracted as, "di ba?" and is transformed and styled as "duh vah?" in gay language. Or the expression "ma at pa!" which could be mistaken as "mother and father" actually means, "malay ko at paki ko!" in the gay language. Other examples of distorted words are "chipanga" for cheap, "itis" or "itish" for "ito," "sosi" for "sosyal" and "lukring" or "lukrish" or "lukish" for "loko" or "loka."



Observed one respondent, "a gay language word or phrase cannot seem to exist without a real, live language to feed on."

### **Reasons and Context for Using Gay Language**

Before making a definite statement that the gay language has actually invaded the communication system of the youth, it is important to find out the context in which the youth use gay language. According to most respondents, they use gay language because of the following reasons: a) their friends use it; b) it is fun using it, and c) they have been accustomed to using it. It thus becomes evident that close association with gays inevitably leads to the use of gay language. Gays apparently wield strong influence on their friends in the use of gay language.

When asked how often they used gay language, majority of the respondents said, "sometimes." This indicates that the users discriminate by using it only on certain occasions, such as trading jokes during informal exchanges and casual conversations, talking to friends, and sending text messages.

Meanwhile, occasions where the respondents avoid using gay language include writing letters, school papers or requirements, answering an examination, answering the telephone, writing formal compositions and discussions in class.

For those who have used the language, majority of them recall that they have been using it for "more than five years."

Most respondents identified the following gay terms as the most popular or most frequently used: *charing, chika, chuva, chaka, keri* and *papa*.

### **Media Influence**

As mentioned earlier, the mass media's influence cannot be ignored. They have a role to play in the spread of gay language.

Those who say that the media have influenced them in the use of gay language outnumber those who say otherwise. Television emerged as the most popular form of mass media where people constantly hear gay language from homosexual hosts, artists and performers. More and more, heterosexual TV personalities also use gay language.

The influential shows where there is a preponderance of gay language include: *Magandang Tanghali Bayan*, *The Buzz*, *Idol ko si Kap*, *Eat Bulaga*, *Bubble Gang* and other showbiz-oriented talk shows. Soap operas were also mentioned, but only when a gay character is part of the cast.

The radio also provides listeners with a daily dose of gay language, mostly through the homosexual hosts and in rare instances, even the heterosexual hosts.



The print medium, while containing some gay words, does not figure as a major source of influence on the respondents.

### **Gay Language Users**

Studies on the utilization of gay language show a dramatic increase in its use from 39 percent in 1995 (Samonte's study) to 77 percent in 1999 (Avecilla and Dungca's study) and 90 percent in 2001 (Austria's study). The increment could be attributed to the increasing popularity of gay language not only among gays but among heterosexuals as well.

In this study however, only 66 percent of the respondents uses the gay language. The figure actually represents a reduction of gay language users when compared to the studies of Avecilla and Dungca et al. (1999) and Austria et al. The explanation to this would be the exclusion of homosexuals in the list of respondents in the present study, which, as mentioned earlier, involves only straight individuals.

Foremost users of gay language are the gays, followed by females who constantly associate with the gays, and straight males who use gay language, although on a minimal basis. The males in the latter category are suspected to have gay tendencies, according to some respondents.

### **Effects of Gay Language Popularity**

The growing attractiveness of gay language has made scholars (from the literature review) believe that it has blurred the boundaries or broken the demarcation line between the gays and the straight. It is difficult to conclude whether users of gay language are decidedly gays. Neither does it truly follow that, if one is straight, he or she does not use gay language.

Most of the literature on gay language seems to conclude that gay language has removed the wall that demarcates homosexuals from heterosexuals and, therefore, has invaded the dominant language.

In this study, most respondents think that it has become a fad. They perceive that since almost everybody uses it, they have to use it in order not to be left out.

Inquiring on whether class or economic status is an influencing factor in the use of gay language, the study found that although a good number of the respondents perceive gay language users to be more *masa* than elitist, some interviewees claim that this perception is highly debatable. They noted that even the affluent in society also use gay language as in the case of society page columnists and famous movie actors and actresses themselves who also openly use gay language.



### **Non-Usage of Gay Language**

The main reason for non-usage of gay language revolves around the concept of "machismo." The non-gay population, specifically, the male respondents, equate the use of gay language to one's being homosexual. And since they are not gays, they avoid using the language.

As such, avoidance of and uneasiness with gays translate to avoidance and uneasiness of gay language too. However, as revealed in the focus interviews, those who cannot tolerate gays are "left with no choice but to be amused while listening to gay language." This indicates the growing tolerance for gay language even among the straight population.

### **Characteristics of the Gay Language**

From the foregoing, the following characteristics of gay language have surfaced:

#### **It is a peripheral language**

Based on the data, gay language appears to be a peripheral language, which utilizes simple and less than critical and thoughtful words. People who use peripheral language are less serious and tend to inject humor and entertainment when delivering their lines. Gay language, as described by the respondents, is a dialect of entertainers that makes the listeners laugh. Thus, it can be linked to a theatrical community that provides entertainment to an audience. As such, it is not used in intellectual discussions.

#### **It is a secret code**

Gay language has been conveniently used as a secret code to hide notions and practices that are considered taboo in Philippine society.

According to some respondents, having a language that only they could fully and easily understand has provided opportunities for gays to establish their identity and strengthen their bonds. The secret codes however irritate and intrigue those who do not understand the meaning of gay words.

#### **It is a tool for empowerment**

The apparent effort of the gays to camouflage meanings may stem from insecurities and strong pressure from heterosexuals. Discrimination and other marginalization issues lend credence and significance to the employment of gay language in conversations. The empowerment perspective, likewise, is associated with the ability or power to take control of a situation by embedding meanings in terms that are unfamiliar to the non-gay population.



However, empowerment ceases to underpin the use of gay language when straight individuals gradually appropriate it. The increasing number of those who are able to crack the secret code will thus threaten the sustainability of this empowerment.

### **It is an informal language**

Linked to its being a peripheral language, gay language is more appropriately used in informal settings. The data confirm what many literature say about it being an informal language and being more appropriately used in informal setting. It is employed in casual and relaxed situations, e.g., when talking or conversing with acquaintances. It is rarely used in addressing unfamiliar persons or those who belong outside the circle of gays' friends. These may include teachers, superiors, religious persons or strangers.

Thus, it would take quite a while before heterosexuals learn to use gay language. Longer association and familiarity with the gays and gay language are necessary before one becomes a user of gay language.

However, this study and that of Avecilla and Dungca, et al., show that the home is not a venue for the use of the gay language. In particular, parents are not amenable to its use, except perhaps in a few cases, where parents also use gay language.

### **Gay Language: Facilitating or Hindering Communication?**

Majority (52%) of the respondents believe that gay language facilitates rather than hinders communication. Almost 45 percent find it a hindrance, while there is a small minority (3.5%) who believe that gay language both facilitates and hinders communication.

Those who believe that gay language facilitates communication claim that it tends to enhance the creativity and imagination of its users. And because it is funny, interesting and lively, people are encouraged, rather than intimidated, to communicate using gay language.

It lends informality to the communication process. Everyone becomes confident and less fearful to speak. It eases tension and removes boredom in an ordinary conversation. The use of humor induces more interaction and an open atmosphere among communicators.

According to some respondents, gay language shortens communication time. Key words or codes can make one comprehend a whole range of concepts, meanings and practices. They connect those who understand it. They benefit both gays and straight who need secrecy for their unorthodox beliefs and behavior.



Meanwhile, there is a significant number of respondents who view gay language as a hindrance to communication because not everyone understands gay terms. It has become exclusive to the gays and the heterosexuals who have had a long association with the gays.

Those who do not know the language are thus intimidated and left out. They are not able to relate to the conversation or topic of those who use it. Since it is accompanied by boisterous laughter, negative reactions result among those who hear it. A lot of miscommunication and alienation results, affecting those who do not have any idea about what is being discussed.

Some respondents revealed that they get annoyed and irritated when they hear weird and indistinguishable language. Their communication disposition changes as they listen to vague words or "out of this world terms." This causes delayed messages.

Worth considering is the small minority who finds gay language both facilitating and hindering communication. This stems from their perception that the sexual orientation of the person will determine whether gay language facilitates or hinders communication. The gays positively view the gay language as a tool for greater understanding among them. The straight, on the other hand, find it a hindrance to successful communication since they do not understand gay terms.

### **Conclusions**

The study reveals that gay language has indeed invaded the communication system of the youth, but only to the extent that the respondents are aware of it and a big majority has been using it for more than five years.

Mainstreaming of gay language has been limited to peripheral and entertaining interactions. Mainstreaming of gay language is far from having been achieved, even among the youth whose tolerance for the gays is high. Mainstreaming involves the use and saturation of the dominant language in all communicative endeavors, be it formal or informal. As proven in this study whose respondents mostly come from UP, the level of usage is limited to informal talks and light discussions.

But, gay language's functions, the respondents believe, cannot be discounted as it has become a tool for reducing tension and for forging solidarity, relationship, interaction and free expression among those who are able to use and understand it. And the numbers of these type of youth are steadily rising.

The data likewise revealed that the so-called "gay language" is more of a gay "lingo" or "jargon" rather than a standard or real language. It does not have rules, no system of conjugation, among others.



Finally, the continuous struggle of the gays for recognition and acceptance by the larger society rationalizes the persistence of the gay language. The clamor for equal treatment and demand for gay human rights supply the underlying principles for its sustainability. While it will likely continue to prosper, it will not replace or upstage the dominant straight language.

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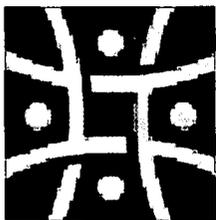
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## Ford Foundation International Fellows-elect gather for post-selection activities

**A**fter successfully making the grade as Fellows-elect of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), the 36 successful candidates gathered at the Philippine Social Science Council from 19 to 23 July 2004 for a comprehensive orientation on the IFP as well as for educational assessment and advising.

The objectives of the orientation were:

1. Introduce IFP to the Fellows-elect and begin the cohort-building process;
2. Conduct group and individual academic assessment and advising;
3. Review the "Terms and Conditions" for Fellows-elect;

The IFP PSSC Program Staff presented an overview of the entitlements and responsibilities of the Fellows-elect, the obligations of IFP-PSSC as an international partner, and the procedures for university placement. Presentations on the educational systems of the US, UK, Australia, and the Philippines were given by Dr. Esmeralda C. Cunanan



*Dr. Liza Lim of the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University, advising a group of Fellows-elect interested in the field of Environmental Science/ Management. Clockwise, they are: Jo-Rex Camba, Melinda Agapito, Jose Marie Gonzalez, Jr., Eric Palacpac, Maricel Jarencio, Dr. Liza Lim, Margarita Lavidés and Miller Villas.*



*IFP alumni and Fellows from the first cohort who served as resource speakers at the orientation for the 2004 Fellows-elect. Left to right: Alih Aiyub, Glenn Sevilla Mas, Celso Valmonte, Emanuel de Guzman, Carlota Francisco, Noel Cunanan, and Carlos Gadapan*

of the Philippine-American Educational Fund, Mr. William Ganchia of the British Council, Dr. Filomeno Aguilar, Jr. of Ateneo de Manila University (formerly of James Cook University of Australia) and Prof. Ronald Holmes of De La Salle-Santiago Zobel School, respectively.

Disciplinary experts from the social sciences, humanities, education, library and information sciences, development studies, and natural sciences also sat down with the Fellows-elect during the orientation to help them clarify their academic goals, determine appropriate academic program features based on their personal backgrounds and skills, and advise them on the academic institutions suitable for their chosen fields of study. Leading the group of experts were Dr. Reynaldo Vea, President of Mapua Institute of Technology; Ms. Cora Alma de Leon, former Secretary of Social Welfare and Development; and Dr. Leticia Peñano-Ho, Dean of the UP College of Education.

An assessment of the pre-academic training needs of the 36 Fellows-elect followed the briefings and academic advising. They were evaluated on their English language proficiency, computer literacy and knowledge of research. Undertaking these evaluations were the Ateneo Language Learning Center for written and oral proficiency in English, the National Computer Center for basic computer skills, and Dr. Cecilia Conaco and Prof. Stella Go for research skills.

IFP alumni and fellows from the first group of cohorts who are studying in-country or are in town for research served as resource persons during the orientation. On the last day of the orientation, they enthusiastically shared their experiences and gave practical tips, ranging from the proper filling up of dossiers to navigating graduate studies.

The orientation culminated in a welcome-dinner hosted by IFP-PSSC for the Fellows-elect and attended by PSSC's member-associations, IFP-PSSC's partner-institutions and IFP fellows from the first batch.

From 8 November to 17 December 2004, the Fellows-elect were once again convened to undergo rigorous pre-academic training to improve their English language proficiency and computer knowledge. The training forms part of IFP's support strategy to help the Fellows-elect gain admission and increase their prospects for academic success. With their diverse backgrounds and professions, many of the Fellows-elect have been out of the academic environment for years – some even for decades – and require assistance in their return to academic settings.

The English language and computer training programs crafted by the Ateneo Language Learning Center and the National Computer Center, respectively, were based on the needs assessment conducted in July 2004. The Ateneo Language Learning Center designed two modules to address the language deficiencies of the Fellows-elect. The first module, taken by 26 Fellows-elect, included lectures and exercises on correct English usage in classroom and professional settings, as well as reading and writing techniques. The second module, required for all Fellows-elect, focused on honing their expository and technical writing skills, particularly the preparation of concept papers, reports and position papers.

The National Computer Center's training course consisted of introductory lectures and hands-on training on the use of the Microsoft Windows operating system, word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation graphics. The use of the Web for research was included as well.

According to IFP-PSSC Program Director Luisa Fernan, the Fellows-elect showed remarkable improvement after going through the language training program. They are now better equipped to take the TOEFL and IELTS and are able to confidently express themselves in discussions. Ms. Fernan added that the computer training course has facilitated the Fellows-elect's search for universities and their preparation of application documents.

The training on research conceptualization and methodologies, the last component of the pre-academic training program, will be administered by PSSC in January 2005.

## Three Ford Foundation International Fellows complete their graduate degrees

**P**rospero Calagan, Pedro Bellen and Wilfredo Prilles, three of the 34 IFP fellows from the first batch, had successfully completed their graduate degrees in 2004. All three graduated from European universities and have now re-joined their former organizations.



*Pedro Bellen*

Having graduated with an MSc. in Environmental Management for Business: Economics and Policy from Cranfield University in the United Kingdom, Prospero Calagan has resumed his post as environment management specialist of the DENR-Environment Management Bureau in the Cordillera Administrative Region. Pedro Bellen, meanwhile, has returned to his hometown of Legaspi City, Albay to continue his development work in the area. He completed a Master's degree in Human Resources and Development from the Institute of Social Studies in The Netherlands. Wilfredo Prilles, who graduated from the University of Cambridge in the UK with an MPhil in Development Studies, has likewise gone back to Naga City, Camarines Sur to continue serving the local community. He works in the local government of Naga City and is part of the team of Mayor Jesse Robredo.

Three other IFP fellows from the first batch earlier finished their Master's in Development Management from the Asian Institute of Management. This year (2005), 14 IFP fellows enrolled in various graduate programs in the Philippines, the United States and the United Kingdom are expected to graduate.

## The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program Leadership for Social Justice Institute (LSJI)

**T**he Leadership for Social Justice Institute (LSJI) is an integral part of the leadership development and cohort-building component of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program. Moreover, the Institute (the term used to refer to the gathering of Fellows for the training) creates a venue where Fellows coming from many different countries and diverse disciplines can learn from each other.

From 4 to 9 July 2004, 73 Fellows from 15 countries in the regions of Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Russia converged in Chiang Mai, Thailand for the week-long program that included discussion sessions and skills-building workshops in inter-cultural communication, advocacy, social justice, leadership, conflict management, and strategic planning. Visits to selected local NGOs engaged in social justice and development work were organized as well.

The nine Fellows from the Philippines invited to participate were: Ebrahim L. Abo (MA Community Health, Davao Medical School Foundation), Carolina D. Amper (Ph.D. Plant Pathology, University of the Philippines in Los Baños), Salvacion B. Barnedo (MA Counseling



*IFP LSJI in Bangkok, Thailand. Left to Right: Rosario Dumelod (Philippines), Joyce Malombe (Program Director for Africa, IFF), Mila Espinosa (Philippines), Kulamo Celestine Bullo (Kenya), Salvacion Barnedo (Philippines)*

Psychology, De la Salle University), Rosario B. Dumelod (Ph.D. Applied Cosmic Anthropology, Asian Social Institute), Evelio B. Escleto (MA Sociology, Xavier University), Mila V. Espinosa (Ph.D. Community Development, University of the Philippines in Los Baños), Jaime A. Pantaleta (Ph.D. Development Studies, Ateneo de Davao University), Alimen W. Sencil (Ph.D. Development Studies, Ateneo de Davao University) and Assad L. Baunto (MPhil Economics, University of Oxford).

For the eight Fellows studying in-country, the experience of meeting, interacting, and sharing experiences with other fellows coming from different countries was an eye-opener. Their first encounter in learning in a multicultural setting took place in the first session on multicultural community building where the different groups had to agree on the norms which would create an effective learning community. After that session, the Filipino Fellows agreed that learning was much more enriching in a multi-cultural setting.

Of the various sessions conducted during the Institute, the Fellows were one in saying that the storytelling portion and the visit to the local NGOs helped achieved the objectives of LSJI.

The storytelling session evoked strong emotions from the participants as they shared their own experiences with social injustice. However, at the end of the session, these stories were transformed into creative scenarios that made a very strong impact on them. The Fellows realized that the local problems that they had encountered in their communities were shared in common with communities in Indonesia, China, Nigeria, Chile, Uganda and Russia as well.

The Fellows also gave high points to the visit to the local NGOs working on issues of rights of ethnic communities living along the border of Thailand and Laos, sustainable agriculture and livelihood, AIDS, and others. The visit helped make real the concepts of organizing strategies and methodologies as used by these NGOs. However, the Fellows felt that the time given to the field exposure was too short for them to really appreciate the extent of the work that the NGOs were doing in addressing issues of social injustice. The time given to the group to reflect and put together their thoughts and experiences after the field trip was also too short (debriefing and synthesis of site visits). One Fellow, Rosario Dumelod commented that all the NGOs visited were success stories. She added, however, that they can also learn from failures. In addition, the language barrier prevented other Fellows from asking follow-up questions to their host NGOs.

The IFP Fellows also attended sessions on accessing "LSJ Online," a valuable resource for connecting and getting ideas and support from other fellows working on the same issues, a kind of virtual community linking Fellows across space and time.

The Institute in Thailand was hosted by the Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF), an Asian-led non-profit organization that administers the ASIA Fellow Awards. ASF, together with the School of International Training (SIT) and the Advocacy Institute (AI) core team, collaborated in developing the content and agenda for the LSJI.



**Asian Scholarship Foundation**

## **ASIA Fellows Awards Sixth Cohort orientation**

**T**he new ASIA Fellows awardees, among them, Filipinos Dr. Jude William Genilo, Ms. Ma. Cristina Saulo and Ms. Crisline Torres, were briefed on administrative issues, research methods and multi-cultural sensitivity during the two-day Sixth Cohort orientation held on 31 July to 1 August at the Montien Riverside Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Allan Bernardo, Vice President for Academics and Research of the De La Salle University, conducted the workshop on research methods and multicultural sensitivity. The scholars were asked to probe further into the metaphor of research as conversation towards the end of the session *Inquiring about Inquiry: Understanding Research Approaches and Methods*. Dr. Bernardo told participants, "the importance of a contribution depends on the degree to which it advances the conversation."

In the next workshop, *Not All Asians are Alike: Basic Multicultural Sensitivity for Asian Research in Asian Countries*, Dr. Bernardo enjoined the new Fellows to be sensitive of the cultural dimensions of words and actions and urged them to recognize each one's unique cultural heritage. "Culture affects the way we do things. When there is a difference, suspend judgment and understand what happened with an open mind. There is a reason why things are done in a particular way," Dr. Bernardo said.

For the final activity, ASIA Fellows alumni, together with PSSC Executive Director Dr. Virginia Miralao, Dr. E. Sridharan of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India and Dr. Wang Hailiang of the Office of International Relations, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, discussed settling down in host countries.

## AFA Fourth Annual Conference

**T**he Fourth Annual Conference of the ASIA Fellows Awards (AFA) followed orientation activities for the new batch of Fellows at the Montien Riverside Hotel in Bangkok. Thirty (30) awardees from Cohort 4 (2002-2003) presented their studies. Prof. Krisda Arunvongse, former Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA) governor was Guest of Honor while Asian Scholarship Foundation (ASF) Board Director Dr. Johan Saravanamuttu delivered the Keynote Speech.

“Asia has a long way to go... Efforts such as the ones supported by the ASF can help in achieving scientific advancements needed to move the country forward,” Prof. Arunvongse said. He also addressed the fellows, saying they “must convince a wider audience of the great benefit of research, which is to improve the quality of life.”

Discussants for the parallel sessions were Dr. Lily Rose Tope (arts, literature and religion), Mr. Akbar Zaidi (health, environment, NGOs and other groups), and Dr. Patricio Abinales, Jr. (technology, economics and politics).

Parallel sessions were organized around the following sub-themes:

- What are the Contemporary Images of Asian Art?
- What are the Aspects of Language and Literary Studies in Asia?
- What are the Historical Contexts of Religions in Asia?
- How should Asia Address its present Health Concerns?
- How should Asians Engage the Environment?
- Globalization and Technologies for Whom?
- How do Asians Engage the Nation and the Global Order?

A cultural night capped the conference, where Prof. Danton Remoto of Ateneo de Manila University delivered a short speech on his experiences as an ASIA Fellow.

## The ASIA Fellows Follow-Up Awards

**A**SIA Fellows awardees who have successfully completed their fellowships are entitled to apply for the ASIA Fellows Follow-Up Awards which will allow them to engage in further research or study at a university or other appropriate institutions in Asia or in countries with highly developed Asian centers as Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The grant is applicable for a period of three months.

Fellows may also apply for a travel grant of up to four months to participate in international conferences to share their research findings to a broader audience and forge extensive links with Asian specialists throughout the world.

Applications for the Follow-Up Awards should be related to the research funded by the ASF under the Asia Fellows Awards. A fellow can apply for either a study/research award or travel award, but not for both. Those who are unable to secure a study/research award may apply for a travel award at a later time. Applications are received each year around July, and recipients are selected by members of the Executive Committee of the ASF Board of Directors.

## Filipino ASIA Fellows in focus

**T**he current crop of ASIA Fellows awardees (Cohort 6) includes three Filipino scholars who are all currently doing research in Thailand.

**Dr. Jude Genilo** seeks to investigate how rice farmers in a community in the Chao Phraya Delta utilize communication to improve their plight via taking greater control over themselves and their environment.

His study offers insights on meaning negotiation, information management, local knowledge and the role of communication in agricultural development in Asia.

The study takes off from Genilo's doctoral dissertation conducted in a local rice farming village, which, in his words, "laid the the foundation for a new communication for development model and proposed an alternative approach in the practice of development communication."

The model and approach, according to Genilo, engages development communication practitioners to view communication both as transmission and meaning negotiation; to rethink how information becomes knowledge and practices; to recognize local knowledge; to manage local communication resources (rather than "introducing modern communication channels"); and finally, to contextualize audiences within their communities (instead as isolated individuals).

One of the foremost goals of Genilo's study is to develop and validate a developmental communication model "that is truly Asian."

Genilo is president of Advocates for Community-Based Communication and Development, Inc. His host institution is the Kasetsart University Research and Development Institute in Bangkok.

**Ma. Cristina Saulo**, an art editor, researcher and lecturer, is doing research on the Mlabri tribe of Northern Thailand. She is hosted by the Association of Inter Mountain People Education and Culture in Thailand (IMPECT).

Saulo aims to record and present the contemporary everyday life of the Mlabri, an indigenous people found in the Nun and Phrae provinces of Northern Thailand, whose culture faces an uncertain future.

The Phi Tong Luang or Yellow Leaf People, as the Mlabri are called, traditionally lived as hunters and gatherers. However, their way of life is threatened with the influx of agricultural and logging activities in their natural environment. Thus, many now find themselves working in the fields of other hill tribes in exchange for food and other necessities.

Using a narrative framework, the project constitutes the stories and photographic images of the Mlabri's daily lives as narrated and experienced by them. The research will chronicle the tribe's livelihood (source and methods); household chores and routine activities (taking a closer look at the roles that men and women play in their everyday life); recreation and leisure activities; childrearing and caring (with special emphasis on reproductive and family health concerns); man and woman relationships; family and communal interrelation and interaction; religious beliefs as well as individual and collective aspirations.

Saulo explains that the project also makes use of unstructured interviews and casual conversations to capture the "spontaneity of the tribe members' everyday experiences."

**Crisline Torres**, an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of the Philippines, offers an assessment of "how the 1997 Thai Constitution affected the capacity of the political system to hold the Thai Parliament politically accountable." For the study, Torres defines political accountability as the "capacity of the citizens to make their public officials answerable for their actions." The study employs both the institutional design literature and self-assessments of Thai political actors.

The institutional design literature, according to Torres, "refers to a body of literature in political science that seeks to investigate the effects of the design of political institutions on the performance of the political system."

"The research allows a more detailed investigation of the features of the new Thai Constitution and their effects on the interplay among the political institutions created by the Constitution, and between these and the political and social forces contesting Thai politics on the other," she argued.

The study can reveal insights regarding current proposals in the Philippines for a shift to a parliamentary form of government, whose advocates insist that "parliamentary democracy has inherently superior political features over presidentialism, among them ensuring the political accountability of government."

This "clearly focused case study" says Torres, can be useful for deciding "on the extent to which this assumption holds in a parliamentary democracy in a Third World setting" and allows a detailed investigation of a "central quandary" of political science or "how...the form of government affects the functioning of a political system."

Affiliated with the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Torres is hopeful that her research may allow in the future a "wider comparative sweep of Asian countries as the pro-parliamentary scholars and critics have done of Latin American countries."

## Philippines host country to three AFA scholars

**T**hree AFA researchers, namely, Dr. Kishore M. Joshi, Dr. Sanghmitra Sheel Acharya and Dr. Le Thi Ai Lam, selected the Philippines as host country for their respective projects.

Dr. Joshi is a lecturer of Economics at the Bhavnagar University in Gujarat, India. His proposed research is on private sector financing of higher education in the Philippines, where he also expects to draw policy implications for India. His institutional affiliations are the University of the Philippines School of Economics and the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

Dr. Joshi observes that higher education in India shows a continuous rise in expenditures, "no way approaching adequacy of resources, along with inconsistent and erratic behavior of agencies responsible for financing higher education" whereas institutions of higher education in the Philippines "have been able to generate a considerable amount of resources from the private sector" and that these private HEIs already taking in approximately 79 percent of the student population, compared to State schools which account for only 21 percent of enrollees.

He also notes that universities and colleges in the Philippines offer courses of "applied" nature, taking into account changing needs, specifically, market demands. Joshi's study explores issues as the pattern of financing of higher education, areas of strong linkages between university and industry, visible changes in terms of household expenditure and government expenditure in higher education, and the objective of equity in the system.

**Dr. Le** is a researcher at the Institute of World Economy in Hanoi, Vietnam. Her study, "Human Resource Development and Urban Poverty in the Philippines" aims to understand the situation of urban poverty in the Philippines between 1985-2003, explore linkages between urban poor poverty and resource development through in-depth analysis of urban poor access to education, health and jobs, and propose policy implications for urban poverty issues in Asia.

"Theoretically, human capital has significant linkages to urban poverty. But, practically, how does this theory work in the case of Philippine urban poverty? Why is poverty incidence higher in the Philippines while her population is better educated compared to Indonesia or Thailand?" she inquires. She will conduct her research under the auspices of the Philippine Institute of Development Studies.

**Dr. Acharya** is associate professor at the Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Sciences in Jawaharlal Nehru University. She will work on the emerging issues in adolescent health in the Philippines through service provision assessment, behavioral change communication and assessment of beneficiaries, providers and policymakers/administrators. The significance of the study, Dr. Acharya points out, "lies in its endeavor to identify issues related to awareness regarding health; examine (the) policy environment and understand the factors affecting their access to and utilization of health services."

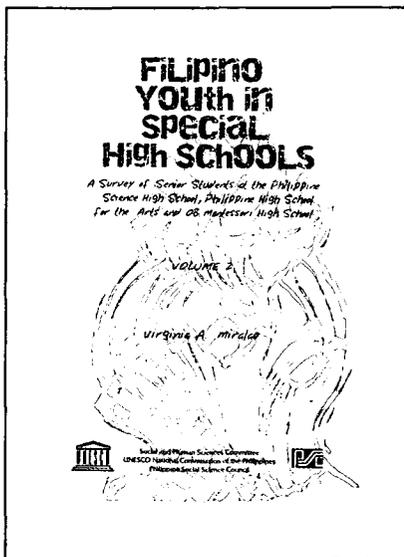
## Off the press: PSSC-UNACOM studies on Filipino youth transitions

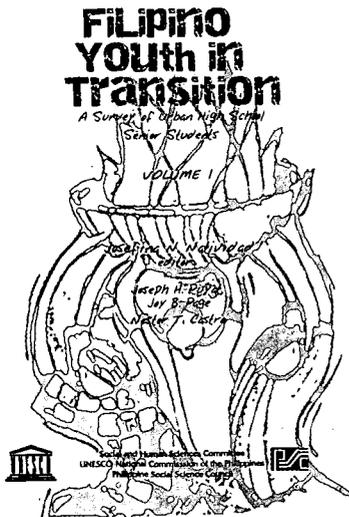
The PSSC recently published its surveys on Filipino youth transitions conducted under the auspices of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) Social and Human Sciences Committee. Dr. Josefina N. Natividad and co-authors Joseph H. Puyat, Joy Page-Manuel and Nestor T. Castro of the University of the Philippines, investigated students in regular high schools for *Filipino Youth in Transition: A Survey of Urban High School Senior Students*, which covered 402 respondents in Pasig Catholic High School, Ramon Magsaysay High School, Angeles City High School and Angeles University Foundation High School. The companion volume written by Dr. Virginia Miralao, *Filipino Youth in Special High Schools*, surveyed 84 students at the Philippine Science High School, Philippine High School for the Arts and OB Montessori High School.

The studies, Dr. Miralao writes, “sought to collect new information on and further our understanding of contemporary youth—their life and worldviews their notions of themselves, their goals and their visions of the future.”

The second volume covered areas as family life, school and religious influences on the youth; peer group experiences and media exposure and use; role models and community consciousness among the youth; the youth’s life goals and aspirations, and the youth’s sense of self.

The Institute of Philippine Culture-Ateneo de Manila University and the Philippine Sociological Society jointly sponsored a special lecture on November 26 to discuss the general findings of the research focusing on students in special high schools, with Ms. Flordeliza Serrano, Registrar and Officer-in-Charge of the Student Services Division of the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) as main discussant. IPC Director Dr. Filomeno Aguilar, Jr. welcomed guests and led the discussions which followed. Some of the key findings of the studies are hereby presented.





The research showed that 83 percent of students in special high schools have parents who are both alive and living together as spouses, and 10 percent have parents who are separated. Seventy-one percent (71%) report being raised by both parents, with 26.2 percent raised by their mothers primarily or other relatives. Figures for regular high school students who were raised by both parents stood at 73 percent.

In terms of family relationships, 71 percent of special high school students say that their parents get along well most or all the time (82% in regular high schools); 74 percent reveal that they get along well with their mother while 69 percent say they get along well with their father, which in

the regular high schools stand at 87 percent and 78 percent, respectively. More than half of students (58%) at the special high schools also say they feel closer to their mothers than fathers (53% in regular high schools).

English is the best liked subject among 33 percent of special high school students, compared to 18 percent at the regular high schools. Meanwhile, mathematics is identified by 25 percent of regular high school students as their best liked subject with only 12 percent of the special high school students favoring it. Math is also considered a least liked subject by 35 percent of students in regular high schools and 39 percent in special high schools.

Teachers are admired by 64 percent of students in PSHS, PHSA and OB Montessori, mentioning traits as intelligent, good in teaching and understanding. Having a *barkada* is almost universal for today's youth, indicated by 94 percent of those in special high schools and 98 percent in regular high schools. Of those with a *barkada*, however, only 34 percent in special high schools and an even lower 25 percent in regular high schools say that they will most likely share problems with their peer group.

The young people surveyed report being avid radio listeners (86% and 72% in special and regular high schools respectively). Sixty-nine percent (69%) of students at PSHS, PHSA and OB Montessori watch television everyday/several times a week compared to 86 percent for the regular schools. Special high school students also read newspapers more often than their counterparts in regular high schools, with 77 percent saying they read newspapers everyday/several times a week; Only 32 percent of regular high school students say they read newspapers with the same frequency.

After high school, 88 percent of special high school students hope to continue schooling, ten percent higher than that in regular high schoolst. Students in special high schools also report being keen on pursuing a masters degree in the future (51%).

Marriage plans in the future are expected by 70.2 percent of special high school students, with the preferred age of mid 20's to late 20's. Those who wish to have children constitute 85 percent, which implies that some would like to have children but not necessarily get married.

At age 25, students in special high schools would like to have permanent employment (64%), have their own business (46%), live independently from parents (72.6%), or be financially independent of parents (46%).

### **The Youth's Sense of Self**

The overall self-esteem mean score for special high school students is a high 30.23. Students at PSHS obtained a mean score lower than the overall mean, those at PHSA approximating the mean while OB Montessori students attained a score of 30.40, the highest average rating. Dr. Miralao's study revealed that students in special schools display scores higher than the 29.92 mean for students in regular high schools. For the locus of control measure, where scores below 15 are considered normal and demonstrate an internal locus of control, Puyat reports that the overall mean score for regular high school students is 12.15. In the locus of control scale, values range from 0 to 40, with lower values corresponding with a sense that things happen as a consequence of one's actions, and higher values indicate a feeling that occurrences are beyond one's control. In special high schools, the overall mean is 10.62.

"The percentile distribution of the locus of control scores moreover reveal only 10 percent of special high school students (vs. 20% in the regular high schools) undergoing emotional difficulties at present, or scoring over 15," Dr. Miralao explained.

Both sets of students show high levels of independent and interdependent self-construals. Students from PSHS, PHSA and OB Montessori were deemed somewhat less collectivist and more autonomous in their self-construals. Their independent self-construal scores averaged 78.3. The interdependent self-construal score obtained was 74.5. "The findings from the self-construal scores are also consistent with the known flexibility and adaptability of Filipinos to various conditions," the study concluded.

Overall, the students also share the same value priorities. The more important values to both groups of respondents are self-direction, benevolence, conformity, achievement and universalism.

"In brief, following basically the same paths as their parents and earlier generations, the youth see themselves as effectively making the transition to adulthood. Thus, even as we note many differences between adults and the youth, there is more that connects and coheres the generations than divides them," Dr. Miralao observed.

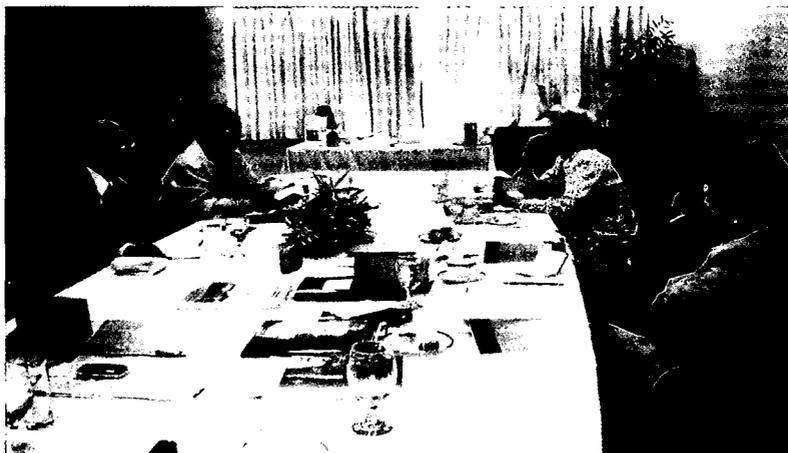
## AASSREC Executive Council meets in Manila

In preparation for the 16th Biennial General Conference of the Association of Asian Social Science Research Councils, the AASSREC Executive Council met in Manila on 8 October 2004.

Hosted by the Philippine Social Science Council, the meeting was attended by AASSREC President, Prof. V.R. Panchamukhi of the Indian Social Science Research Council; Dr. Hiroyuki Kotani, representing 1st Vice President Dr. Michiatsu Kaino of the Science Council of Japan; 2nd Vice President, Prof. Fay Gale of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia; and Secretary General, Dr. Virginia Miralao of PSSC. Also joining the meeting was Dr. Arun Bali, Director of International Collaboration of ICSSR.

The Executive Council brainstormed on the possible themes and discussed the logistics for the next Biennial General Conference. Following tradition, the conference will be organized in the country of the biennium President, a post currently held by India. In addition to planning for the conference, the Executive Council also had fruitful discussions on a number of AASSREC concerns including status of membership, international linkages and its forthcoming publication.

The meeting was capped by a reception dinner organized by PSSC for the AASSREC Executive Council. Dr. Emma Porio, PSSC Chairperson, led the PSSC team in welcoming the Asian guests to the Philippines. Also gracing the welcome dinner were UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines Secretary-General Preciosa Soliven and Commissioner Felice Sta. Maria.



*AASSREC Executive Council Meeting*

## PSSC Regular Members

### LSP ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Linguistic Society of the Philippines (LSP) chose "Assessment in Language Education" as the year's theme for their Annual Convention held at the Audio-Visual Theater of the Philippine Normal University on 26-27 November.

Special lectures sponsored by the LSP for 2004 included "Language Policy and Planning" by Prof. Joyce Milambiling of the State University of Medan (2 June); "Multi-Level View of Language and Philippine Linguistics: Rules vs. Relations" by Dr. David Zorc of McNeil Technologies Language Research Center (24 July); "Euphemism in Selected Tagalog Tabooed Expressions" by Dr. Venancio Mendoza of Philippine Normal University (28 August); "The Content and Form of Reader-Generated Questions: Implications for Independent Reading/Learning and for Teaching" by Dr. Remedios Miciano of the De La Salle University College of Education. The De La Salle University-Manila hosted three of the Society's special lectures and another two were held at the Philippine Normal University.

### PASWI 55<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONVENTION IN BAGUIO

The Philippine Association of Social Workers (PASWI) assembled for its 55th National Convention on November 15 to 17, 2004 at CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, Baguio City. Over 700 professional social workers in various fields attended the event.

The year's theme, "The Social Worker in Focus," according to PASWI, "is an acknowledgement of the classic teaching in social work practice of the social workers' inherent worth and a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities in nation-building."

The situation of children in the labor force, children in conflict with the law and children in armed conflict were among the topics discussed in the plenary sessions, along with empowering communities, good governance and child-friendly barangays. A concurrent workshop also helped identify the knowledge, attitude, skills and competency gaps of social workers in working with various groups.



*PASWI honors Ten Outstanding Social Workers of 2004 (From left): Ms. Evelyn Balais Seranno, Ms. Anacion Celedonia, Atty. Mary Fokno, Ms. Jocelyn Montalbo, Ms. Marilyn Manuel, Usec. Lourdes Balanon, PASWI president Finardo Cabilao, Ms. Leonor Loor, Ms. Lourdes Lositaño, Ms. Lourdes Bautista, Ms. Corazon Paraiso and Mr. Edwin Lariza*

The Ten Outstanding Social Work Professionals were also honored during the opening ceremonies. The 2004 awardees were:

*Evelyn Balais Serrano*, for her successful advocacy campaigns on human rights issues both locally and internationally.

*Anacion Celedonia*, for her pioneering efforts that uplifted the conditions of the disadvantaged and abused women and children in Quezon Province.

*Marilyn Manuel*, for her remarkable contributions in program planning, development, and management and policy formulation for child welfare.

*Leonor Loor*, for demonstrating professional social work practice in pastoral care in her parish-level work in Pasay City.

*Edwin Lariza*, for voluntarily giving his personal and professional services to prevent the closure of Iloilo House of Refuge by effectively mobilizing social work faculty and students to serve as social workers and houseparents.

*Lourdes Lositaño*, for effectively mobilizing the participation of the local government of the City of Ligao that led to the successful implementation of the devolved social welfare programs and services.

*Lourdes Bautista*, for developing a fundraising and resource mobilization strategy which became instrumental in extending the needed medical treatments to the indigent patients of the Philippine Heart Center.

*Jocelyn Montalbo*, for developing the *Resource Center on Wheels Project*, an innovative intervention that provided needed services to the children and youth of Batangas province.

*Atty. Mary Inglay Fokno*, for successfully integrating the social work perspective in her law practice with children victims of abuse, resulting in holistic and more responsive interventions.

*Corazon Paraiso*, for her valuable contributions in the name of networking specifically with NGOs and POs to institutionalize the support system and advocacy activities for the social development process.

### PCS RELEASES E-JOURNAL

In lieu of a conference for 2004, the Philippines Communication Society (PCS) availed their grant to publish the *PCS Journal* in electronic format. The editorial team is composed of Mary Ebitha Dy (Editor); Romualdo Cumagun (Managing Editor/Layout Artist); Maria Margarita Acosta (Associate Editor); Section Editors Marcia Regina Galura, Linda Garcia and Doreen Marco; Editorial Assistants Mary Love Alcantara, Jill Cabradilla, Jarmaine Gutierrez, Genelyn Jamolin and Julie Ann Victoria; Editorial Consultants Mary Grace Agoncillo, Belen Dayauon, Gerardo Josue and Ramon Tuason.

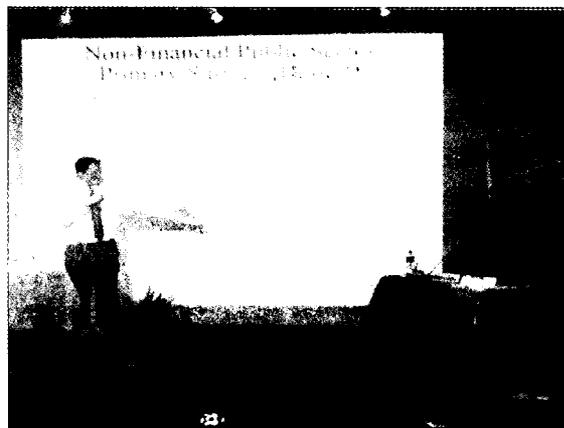
## PES SYMPOSIUM ON THE FISCAL CRISIS AT UST

The Philippine Economic Society (PES) mounted the "Symposium on Measures to Address the Fiscal Crisis" on September 30, 2004, from 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at the St. Thomas Aquinas Research Complex Auditorium, University of Santo Tomas (UST).



*Dr. Heinz Bongartz of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung welcomes participants to the PES activity*

Rep. Jose Clemente Salceda (Chair, House Committee on Economic Affairs) extensively discussed the dimensions of the fiscal crisis with the paper, "Dimensions of the Philippine Fiscal Crisis: A Road Map to Fiscal Rehabilitation." Dr. Felipe Medalla of the University of the Philippines School of Economics and Hon. Emilia Boncodin of the Department of Budget and Management participated as reactors. The symposium was co-sponsored by UST Social Research Center, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Corporate



*Rep. Jose Salceda delivering his Fiscal Roadmap presentation*

Planning Society of the Philippines and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). UST Rector Rev. Tamerlane Lana, and FES Resident Representative Dr. Heinz Bongartz both delivered welcome remarks.

Last May, the PES had its annual meeting at the Yuchengco Hall of the De La Salle University. Dr. Gerardo Sicat presented the paper "Direction or Drift: The Philippine Economy After 2004." The breakout sessions featured speakers Dr. Rosario Manansan, Dr. Gilberto Llanto and Dr. Felipe Medalla.

### **PGS 54<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**T**he 54th Annual General Assembly of the Philippine Geographical Society (PGS) was held on 6 March 2004 at the Palma Hall of the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Prof. Ernesto Samonte of the UP School of Urban Planning and Development gave a lecture on urbanization and urban planning in the Philippines.

The year also marked the release of the bi-annual *PGS Newsletter* edited by Prof. Lourdes Benipayo and available in print and electronic formats. Other PGS activities included the creation of a Local Chapter in Tarlac Province in May where board members held their monthly meeting.

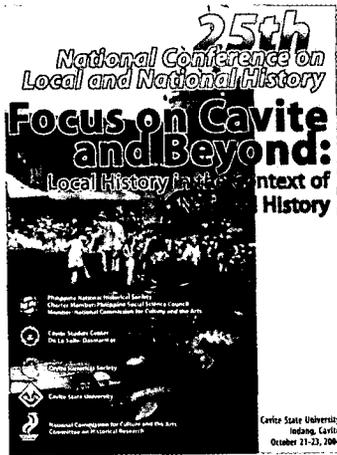
### **IN SEARCH OF GOOD GOVERNANCE: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT PHA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**T**he Philippine Historical Association (PHA) convened its Annual Conference on the theme "In Search of Good Governance: Retrospect and Prospect" on 17-18 October 2004.

The Association is also busy planning activities for its upcoming 50th Anniversary and the Silver Jubilee of its sister organization and funding arm, the Philippine History Foundation. Mrs. Amelita Almosara, the Foundation's Executive Secretary, was tasked to organize the joint celebration as Chairperson of the Anniversary Committee.

The Association also held workshops during the year. One workshop tackled the Makabayan curriculum, which took place at the National Historical Institute Audio-Visual Room, while another was devoted to evaluating the 50-year PHA Constitution.

## PNHS 25<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL HISTORY



The Philippine National Historical Society (PNHS) had its 25th National Conference on Local and National History on 21-23 October 2004 at the Cavite State University in Indang, Cavite Province. The conference theme was "Focus on Cavite and Beyond: Local History in the context of National History" featuring papers on local history not only in Cavite but throughout the Philippines. Papers were also presented in the related disciplines and fields of literature, art studies, culture and traditions, archeology (prehistory), anthropology, demography, politics and governance.

The conference was co-sponsored by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts-Committee on Historical Research, the Cavite Studies Center, De La Salle-Dasmariñas, Cavite Historical Society and the Cavite State University.

## PPA FORUM ON THE "TWO-CHILD NORM"

The Philippine Population Association (PPA), in cooperation with the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI), the Population Commission (POPCOM) and the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) organized a forum called "The Two-Child Norm: Challenges and Prospects" which was held on 17 September 2004 at the Alip Auditorium of the Philippine Social Science Center.

The forum centered on the debate generated by the Reproductive Health Act of 2004 or House Bill 16 filed by Representative Edcel Lagman (First District, Albay).

The explanatory note of HB 16 states, "Two of the overriding problems that bedevil the Philippines are an inordinately enormous debt service and an extremely huge population. This bill addresses the second problem on an uncontained population escalation that aggravates the debt menace, hampers delivery of reproductive health care services and derails sustainable human development."

The forum principally sought to answer "burning questions" as:

- (1) How far/near are we from/to the two-child norm?
- (2) How socially and culturally acceptable is the two-child norm?
- (3) What are the costs and benefits of the two-child norm?



*Panel presentations  
on the "Two Child Norm"*

- (4) How prepared is the public infrastructure for the two-child norm?
- (5) How would the two-child norm benefit women?
- (6) What legislative features would help the two-child norm?
- (7) How realistic is the two-child norm to Filipino couples?

Together with speakers Rep. Edcel Lagman and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, the panel was composed of Dr. Zelda Zablan (University of the Philippines Population Institute), Dr. Jesusa Marco (De La Salle University), Dr. Ernesto Gonzales (University of Santo Tomas), Dr. Honorata Catibog (Department of Health), Atty. Elizabeth Pangalangan (UP Reprocen) and Mr. Danilo Vega (Trade Union Congress of the Philippines). David Dereck Golla of the Population Commission served as moderator.

The PPA General Assembly, meanwhile, was held on 6 March 2004 at the University of the Philippines College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Audio Visual Room and attended by 47 members.

#### **PPSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE: IS THE LIBERAL MOMENT OVER?**

The Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) held its annual conference on October 22 to 23 at the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (CSB) Hotel in Manila. With theme, "Is the Liberal Moment Over?" the conference examined the effectiveness of liberal democratic institutions. Benedict Kerkvliet of the Australian National University presented the keynote lecture, "Political Expectations and Democracy in the Philippines and Vietnam."

Noted scholars discussed Imaging the Philippine Presidency; The Local Dimensions of Governance and Civil Society; Political Economy and Development; Elections and Democratic Consolidation; Islam and Democracy; National and Regional Security; Violence, Compromises and the Liberal State; Class Politics and the Liberal Moment; The Party-List System and the Liberal Moment; Politics and the Philippine Peace Process.

More than 150 participants attended the event, a third of which came from Mindanao and the Visayas.

The Conference likewise focused on Politics in Northeast and Southeast Asia, with the sub-themes "From Confucian Harmony to Confusion and Disharmony," and "Bullets, Ballots and the Boob Tube" respectively. The event also featured "Decentralization and Local Governance," with a concurrent session on Palawan and Mindanao.

A pedagogical workshop session on the teaching of political science was also scheduled on the last day of the conference where representatives of political science programs of universities in Japan, Malaysia, Australia and the Philippines shared disciplinal concerns. The Conference papers are available online at the PPSA website, [www.philpolsci.org](http://www.philpolsci.org).

### **PSPA CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**T**he Philippine Society of Public Administration (PSPA), with funding support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC), spearheaded the Conference on Public Administration and the Millennium Development Goals. The event was organized in cooperation with the University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) and the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines (ASPAP). The Conference followed the First Diliman Governance Forum (DGF) held on 15 September 2004 on the theme "Reorganizing the Bureaucracy: Is there Hope?"

### **PSS 25<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY: SOCIOLOGY IN A BORDERLESS WORLD**

**O**n 20 August 2004 the Philippine Sociological Society (PSS) had its General Assembly at the Mercedes Concepcion Seminar Room of the Philippine Social Science Center on the theme "Sociology in a Borderless World." Invited speakers were Dr. Ricardo Abad of the Ateneo de Manila University Department of Sociology and Anthropology who discussed Sociology and the Media, and the World Bank's Tito Nicolas who spoke on Sociology in International Development.

A business meeting followed the forum where a new set of officers were elected, namely: Ma. Elena Chiong-Javier (President), Ma. Loudes Quisumbing-Baybay (Vice President), Stella Go (Secretary), Jesusa Marco (Treasurer), and Filomeno Aguilar, Jr., Josephine Avila and Czarina Saloma (Board Members).

The Society co-sponsored a special lecture by PSSC Executive Director Dr. Virginia Miralao on "Filipino Youth in Special High Schools" together with the Institute of Philippine Culture on 26 November at the Ateneo de Manila University.

## PSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON TAXATION

Close to a hundred participants gathered for the Philippine Statistical Association (PSA) Annual Conference on the topic, "Current Issues in Taxation." The Reconciliation of Listing (RELIEF) Project was discussed by Ms. Jhanette Cruz of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) while National Tax Research Center Deputy Director Dante Sy gave a presentation on "Revenue Measures to Address the Worsening Fiscal Situation."

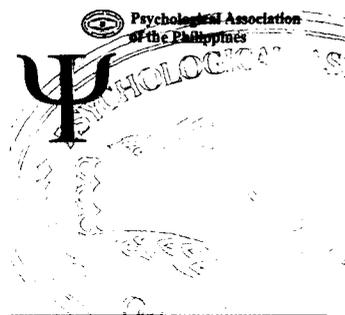
The PSA also conducted two training sessions in observance of the National Statistics Month. Dr. Zita Albacea of the University of the Philippines Institute of Statistics was resource person for the "Tutorial on Small Area Estimation" on 3 October at the Shangri-La EDSA Plaza Hotel. Under the theme "Concepts and Utilization of Selected Statistics," the annual training for institutional members was held on 12-13 October and featured agricultural statistics, banking and finance, labor and employment, and poverty.

## PAP 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

On 26-28 August 2004, the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) focused on current trends, issues, needs and new directions in the practice of Psychology for its 41st Annual Convention, a theme borrowed from the 1978 Annual Convention. Hon. Edilberto de Jesus, Education Secretary, gave the keynote speech.

Themed "Building Resiliency: Thriving in Times of Crisis," the PAP also held in May its 13th Regional Convention in Baguio City.

The PAP Junior Affiliates (PAPJA) convention for Psychology students was likewise organized on 10-11 December 2004 at the San Sebastian College-Recoletos.

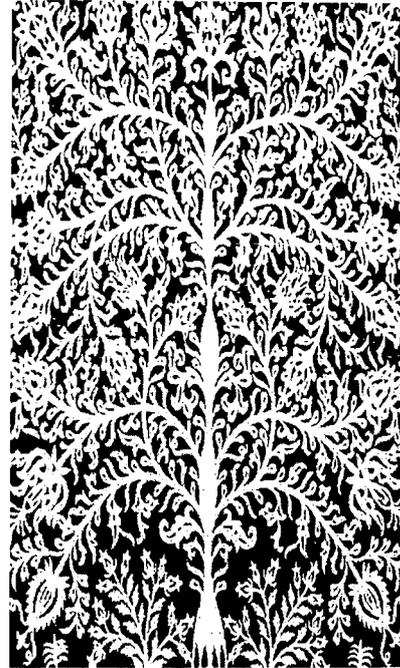


"The Practice of Psychology  
Current Trends and New Directions"  
41<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention  
August 26-28, 2004  
Holiday Inn Manila Galleria  
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

## FOCUS ON EDUCATION IN UGAT 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao (UGAT), the anthropological association of the Philippines, convened its 26th Annual Conference at Capitol University, Cagayan de Oro City on October 21 to 23, 2004 on the theme, "The Ends of Educating." The conference addressed the multiple appropriations of the concept of educating by particular sectors and institutions, including their respective teaching and learning processes and technologies.

Topics discussed under the Goals of Educating included Liberation; Peace and Development; Gender and Sexual Rights; Citizenship and Nation-building; Global Competitiveness; Heritage Preservation; and Alternative Healing Systems. Modes of Educating focused on Standard Setting, Classroom Dynamics, Educational Administration, Textbook Writing, Anthropology in Liberal Education, Mass Mediated Education, and Teaching Anthropology.



The PSSC promoted and distributed the 2004 release of its regular members' journals. These journals include:

*Philippine Journal of Psychology* Vol. 37 No. 1, June 2004

*Philippine Political Science Journal* Vol. 25 No. 48, 2004

*Philippine Population Review* Vol. 3 No. 1, January to December 2004

*The Philippine Statistician* Vol. 53 Nos. 1-4, 2004

*Philippine Journal of Linguistics* Vol. 34 No. 2 and Vol. 25 No. 1, December 2003 and June 2004

*Philippine Review of Economics* Vol. 40 No. 1, June 2003

*Philippines Communication Society Journal* Vol. 2, 2003 (electronic)

*Philippine Journal of Public Administration* Vol. 45 Nos. 1-2, January and April 2001

*Philippine Geographical Journal* Vol. 45, 2001 (electronic)

*Aghamtao* Vol. 10, 2001 and Vol. 11, 2002 (electronic)

The *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, *Philippine Review of Economics* and *Philippine Sociological Review* rank among the top-selling journals of the PSSC Book Center/Central Subscription Service.

# Back Issues of PSSC SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION

Available from the PSSC Central Subscription Service

Year	Volume	Year	Volume	Year	Volume	Year	Volume
1973	1 (1)		7 (3)		13 (4)	1993-	21 (2-3)
	1 (2)		7 (4)	1986	14 (1)	1994	21 (4)-
1974	2 (1)	1980	8 (2)		14 (2)		22 (1)
	2 (2)		8 (3)		14 (3)	1994	22 (2-4)
	2 (4)		8 (4)		14 (4)	1995	23 (1-2)
1975	3 (2)	1981	9 (1)	1987	15 (3-4)		23 (3-4)
	3 (3)		9 (2)	1988	16 (1-2)	1996	24 (1-2)
	3 (4)		9 (3)		16 (3-4)		24 (3-4)
1976	4 (1)		9 (4)	1989	17 (1)	1997	25 (1)
	4 (2)	1982	10 (1)		17 (2)		25 (2)
	4 (3)		10 (2)		17 (3-4)	1998	26 (1)
	4 (4)		10 (3)	1990	18 (1)		26 (2)
1977	5 (1)		10 (4)		18 (2)	1999	27 (1)
	5 (2)	1983	11 (2)		18 (3)		27 (2)
	5 (3)		11 (3)		18 (4)	2000	28 (1)
	5 (4)		11 (4)	1991	19 (1-2)		28 (2)
1978	6 (1)	1984	12 (1)		19 (3)	2001	29 (1)
	6 (2)		12 (2-3)		19 (4)		29 (2)
	6 (4)		12 (4)	1992	20 (1)	2002	30 (1)
			12 (5)		20 (2)		30 (2)
1979	7 (1)	1985	13 (2)		20 (3)	2003	31 (1)
	7 (2)		13 (3)	1992-	20 (4)-		31 (2)
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