

the growing concern with culture patterns and their effects draw the ecologists and geographers closer. The ecologists have come to recognize the region as a significant spatial unit by itself as well as a network of "dominance." This has given writer such as Odum hope for more interdisciplinary collaboration.

Lastly it may be remarked that many of these various concepts and theories with which this paper has been concerned are still not perfectly formed. There are yet some staunch environmentalists among human geographers and equally steadfast "metropolitanists" among human ecologists. Human ecology being especially new has not as yet produced any definitive source book. These indications suggest that in time the hopes of Odum and others may be realized in that the now infant trends toward a closer harmony between the two disciplines will mature into a new synthesis for the study of the human community and its physical setting.

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## A REPORT ON A VISAYAN FISHING BARRIO

By Cecilia L. Cantero-Pastrano

This paper is an attempt to depict the life of a rural group—its setting (location, population, and topography), the chief factors which condition the life of the people, its institutions, its patterns of thought and behavior, its deeply rooted attitudes, and the beliefs which have embedded themselves in the warp and woof of their lives. These are treated in this report in so far as they affect the sociological make-up of the community.

Mabilo is a barrio of the town of Calivo, Capiz. It is seven kilometers away from the *poblacion* and is situated on the fringe of the richer fishing grounds of the Visayas. This seaside barrio is somewhat rectangular in shape, is a little over four square kilometers in size and has a population of approximately 500 grouped into less than ninety families.

The topography of the barrio is regular. Mabilo is situated on a plain which is dotted by several other barrios. Mabilo is bounded on the north by the Sibuyan Sea, on the east by Barrio Ka-ano, on the west by Barrio Tambac, and on the south by a winding marshy stream twelve meters wide at its largest portion and three meters at its narrowest. This stream swells and ebbs with the tide and is the borderline which separate Mabilo from the nipa swamps of Barrio Nalo-ok. Interestingly enough, this stream has never been named; it is simply called "sapa" which is the dialect for "stream."

The soil of Mabilo is of the sandy and clayish variety and is not adaptable for farming. Rice planting yields poor returns. Nature is not so generous in this respect as she is in other portions of the Aklan Valley. The people must work hard for a living. Most of the marshy lands bordering the sea have been converted into fish points for *bangus* (milkfish) production. The greater portion of the barrio is planted with coconut trees. Rice paddies are found in the more fertile portions to the east (towards Barrio Ka-ano). The lands near the "sapa" have been utilized as nipa swamps, which now supply the barrio with thatch for roofing.

The barrio is roughly subdivided into—

- a. Takas—the inland portion which is mostly rice paddies and which is sparsely populated.
- b. Ilawood—the seaside portion which is the homesite for 85% of the Mabilo population.

Most of the people own the small lots wherein their houses stand. Only a few own rice fields or coconut groves of considerable size.

The people have utilized their natural assets and resources to advantage. They supplement their income with vegetable gardens which they tend laboriously in spite of the poor soil, and through home industries such as the making of abaca slippers and the weaving of piña (*birang*) and abaca (*pinukpok*) cloth. The steady demand for these

products induces native initiative and art. It may be mentioned in this connection that the hand weaving loom is an integral part of the Mabilo home.

But all these cannot support the greater part of the Mabileños. Ultimately, they must turn to the sea for their daily needs. So here, again the natural environment shapes the economic and social life of the people. In this little barrio, the sea is a friend and fishing is the way of life as well as the way of making a living.

Thus, it is that about 80% of the adult males are fishermen, 5% are in business, 7% are farmers, 3% students, and the rest are engaged in some other minor occupation such as tuba-gathering, production of nipa thatches, fire-wood trade, etc. Most of the many barrio *tiendas* are tended by women. Very rarely are idlers and loafers found in this barrio. The keen struggle for existence demands work as a necessity for survival.

Fishing in Mabilo is done chiefly by fish corrals, and in lesser degree by seine and trawlers. Usually a fish corral is constructed about one and one quarter kilometers away from the shoreline where the water is from 10 to 14 meters deep. It is a slow and a very laborious process, and it takes about four weeks to finish with thirty-five men working on shifts.

The coconut trunks and bamboos used for its construction go 3 meters below the surface when embedded in the sand. Usually the shorter poles are reinforced to make them conform with specified standards. These poles and other fishing materials are bought from the neighboring barrios and from the mountain peoples of Libacao and Malinao and are transported thru the Aklan River, thence to the sea, and then to Mabilo, by rafts.

Fish corrals are rather expensive enterprises. They require an initial capital of from four to five thousand pesos and require an additional two thousand for maintenance and repair. Only one fish corral (which by the way is called *pa-ca-an* in the dialect) can be constructed in a *zona*. Mabilo has five fishing zones which are leased to the highest bidders at auctions conducted annually in the Calivo Municipal Building. Mabilo has three well-to-do families who control the fish corral business and they try to out-manuever each other for choice sites. One of them is this writer's maternal grandfather, a veritable old-timer in the business. The other two are also residents of the barrio and have made their fortunes in fishing and in commerce done outside the barrio. They are looked upon not only as economic leaders but also as social and political big-wigs as well. Their opinions and decisions bear much weight in the conduct of community affairs.

The fishermen are employed on a capital-and-labor basis. They are recruited at the beginning of each fishing season (February) and work is continuous up to November when the northwest monsoons come to roughen the sea. The fish corral is then dismantled and some of the sturdier material are reserved for the next fishing season.

After all overhead and maintenance expenses are subtracted, the net profit is divided equally between the owner on one hand, and the fishermen as a group on the other. The group leader is known as the *maestro* since he directs the construction of the corral. It will be noted

the men are classified according to the work they perform: a) the *Maestro*, b) the assistant *maestro*, c) the divers, d) the net drawers, and e) the general utility groups who do the minor tasks. This stratification is on the basis of task specialities.

It is the *maestro* who divides the group's profits according to share which is as follows:

- a. *Maestro*—2 shares
- b. *Assistant maestro*—1-3/4 shares
- c. Divers—1-1/2 shares
- d. Net drawers—1-1/4 shares depending on whether they serve also as alternates for the divers. In case they do not, they receive the same pay as the following group
- e. General utility group—1 share each.

The profits are divided every four weeks. In cases where the catch has been huge, the pay-off comes every two weeks.

The *maestro* wields both administrative and disciplinary powers over the men under him and acceptance of his authority is unanimous. The owner defines the *maestro's* role in the enterprise. The *maestro* represents the group whenever negotiations are transacted with the owner of the fish corral.

In this set-up exists a miniature economic system—the relation between capital and labor. Strikes are unheard of in Mabilo. This can be attributed to the fact that the men find their jobs profitable and also because of blood relationship between them and the owner himself. Whenever disagreements occur, either conciliation or compromise is employed.

The three fishing magnates of Mabilo have found the business lucrative. The fishermen, on the other hand, earn enough to provide for the daily necessities and whatever supplementary earnings come their way are reserved for little luxuries of which they have so few.

A recent trend has been noted in the fish corral business. One of the owners has introduced the use of motor boats and electric lights. Mechanization tends to facilitate work with greater ease but also poses the feasibility of reducing personnel. The fishermen are adverse to mechanization as it undermines job stability. So far, the other two owners employ the old methods.

Other methods of fishing are done by the use of seines and trawlers. These are manned by large groups, mostly women and children. They drag the nets close to the shore during definite periods of the year, especially during the months of April, May and June, when the chances for a good catch are great. This activity is usually accompanied by ribaldry and boisterous jesting and this gives one the impression that it is more of play than work. The *ibis* (small fishes) caught are apportioned among the helpers. Usually a share provides about four day supply of food.

The fishponds of Mabilao are another source of income. Supply is year-round and is mostly sold to merchants from the neighboring towns and barrios. Mabilo has established quite a respective name as a fishing center in the Aklan region.

This is the economic set-up of the community. It is both a production unit and a processor as well. It is a cog in the economic wheel which makes the Aklan Valley what it is today.

Community life in Mabilo is a conglomeration of social, religious, economic, and political factors which all foster primary group relationship. It seems everyone is related to everyone else and family lineage can be traced several generations back in both patrilineal and matrilineal descent. It is customary to hear the addresses of "manong" and "manang (cousin) and *tatay* and "nanay" "Uncle and auntie" flow frequently from one person to another. Blood relationship, as illustrated in their daily contacts, is a strong force in cementing community solidarity.

Whenever a party is tendered, the whole barrio turns out for the occasion. Plenty of tuba and "sumsuman" (broiled fish) is passed around and usually "lechon" is the main treat. Both old and young dance and caper to the strains of guitars and banjos and lightheartedness pervades such gatherings. The atmosphere is that of one big family reunion. This explains why barrio *paka-ons* (parties) are rather expensive and only a few can afford to give them.

Nicknames are common and unusual ones stick permanently in Mabilo where there are many Juans and Pedros and Joses and Marias, appellatives are used freely to designate one from the other, as for example; the Juans. Juan *pak-i*; Juan *bangkil* (Juan with the large teeth); Juan *hilog* (Juan the drunkard); Juan *commerciante* (Juan the merchant), etc. It is usually a physical trait or a personal characteristic that is picked out as nickname. The practice has become so traditional that nicknames do stick, however derogatory. The recipients accept them good naturedly.

There are other factors which help foster closeness or intimacy among this barrio folks. The houses are clustered along the only road running through the barrio and on the area bordering the seashore. The nipa houses are located near each other. The typical Mabilo home is usually under two roofs: one housing the kitchen, dining room, bath and toilet; and the other, the living and sleeping room. Only the fishing magnates and the more prosperous merchants have big homes with modern conveniences.

Wells called *bubon* are sort of communal property where houses in a yard—usually 5 to 7—get water for household and watering purposes. The digging of surface wells is usually a neighborhood activity.

Group activities are very common in Mabilo. The limited number of people congregated in a small area is the major factor which make possible successful community undertakings on a cooperative basis. The building of a new house, the preparing for a feast, participation in seine and trawler fishing, the digging of a neighborhood well, the caring for the sick, the building of dams for fishponds, etc. are all occasions for the neighborhood to brace their shoulders in symbiotic relationship.

The young people have clubs and "chismis" circles to help them get acquainted with each other. They are rabid addicts of dances, parties, and programs. The barrio fiesta on March 17 in honor of St. Joseph, is the red letter day of the year. The barrio chapel and its grounds are cleared and the barrio literally brushes itself clean and decks

its finest for the fiesta. Athletic competitions, especially baseball and volleyball, are popular throughout the year. Cockfighting on Sundays is a favorite pastime.

In the afternoons, the tiendas dotting the roadside are huddled with men and women alike who congregate to talk of the important happenings of the day with an air of import not unlike that of our sophisticated diplomatic circles. The children play and scamper about like young colts while their elders speculate on such matters as to whether Lolo Liloy will invite them to the feast for his newly graduated doctor-son; who is going to help Manong Juan "Buktot" gather his palay before the rains come; who is courting Manang Nany, who just came from a year's vacation in Ilo-ilo; why hasn't the town mayor of Calivo erected the artesian well he promised before the election; how the catch in the *barnig* (trawlers) promises to be for the morrow; and a million other interesting episodes which keep their existence from being humdrum.

In all this seemingly incessant chit-chat lies a vital force which regulates the life activities of the barrio. In a word, gossip. The wagging tongues often lash mercilessly against a transgressor of the mores. When a scandal occurs, especially against morality, the news spreads like wildfire and before sundown the whole barrio can recite the details from beginning to end. Didactic songs are often composed by self-appointed "*manugcomposo*" to publicize the wrong doings perpetuated by some indiscreet "sinner." The songs usually trail off into a moralizing refrain.

Like most Filipino families, relationship among the household members is close and well-regulated. Most of the families are of the extended type. It is very common to see several generations under one roof or to see other relatives incorporated into the nuclear family circle. Families tend to stick together and when a Mabileño is at odds with another, his kin will take up the cudgels for him unless they happen to be related to the other party also. Disagreements are often ironed out peacefully and clan hatred fizzle out in time.

Parents, as a rule, are the supreme authority on all matters pertaining to household matters and the bringing up of the children. The children help in domestic chores with the mother as over-all supervisor. In Mabilo, the family still performs its economic functions as a producing and consuming unit. Its educational function has been relegated to a great extent to the barrio elementary school where the children get their formal schooling up to the sixth grade.

After the children graduate from the course in the barrio school, the more well-to-do continue their studies in Calivo where there are a public elementary school and three private colleges (undoubtedly semi-actual diploma mills) which all have a high school departments and a collegiate department offering both technical and professional courses. These educational opportunities were opened to the Aklan people, as a whole, only during the last four years. So that at present, Mabilo has quite a number of college graduates and professionals. This factor in turn has effected a slow change in the rural ways of Mabilo, in terms of culture.

Recently, a large number of its young men and young women have left their homes to make their fortunes in other places, especially in Manila. However, there are more men than women who are permitted to migrate by their parents. The girls are more restricted due to the conservative belief of parents that the woman's place in society is the home.

There are other beliefs which need mentioning here. As a Catholic barrio, the people are noted for their piety and religious fervor. The Sunday mass said by the town parish priest at 10:00 a.m. is always well attended. Community rosaries and novenas are conducted according to a schedule posted on the church door. No matter how busy the womenfolk are, they manage to come to the chapel in the afternoons during angelus hour. Religion is an institution that is indispensable in fulfilling the spiritual needs of the people.

Nurtured by church teachings, the people have developed a resignation to whatever fate brings them. In the face of adversity like poor yield during harvest time, death of a member of a family, accidents of all sorts, the people attribute such occurrence to the will of God.

True, they do not take things which are obviously products of man, sitting down. They will fight for their rights but in cases where they have done their best and failed, they bow their heads in resignation. Hand in hand with this attitude is the belief that truth and virtue will always triumph in the end. This has given them comfort and carried them out of life's complexities.

Politically, the barrio folk have not yet gained true consciousness of democratic processes. The *teniente-del-barrio* holds the highest political position and maintains contact with the officials of the poblacion. Even with the changing educational patterns of the times, interest in governmental administration is almost nil except those that concern them directly. During elections, many can be bought; that is, they bow down to the dictates of the fish magnates under whom they are employed for fear of losing their jobs. This may be justifiable from their point of view. After all, man cannot live on ideals alone.

Because of the stratification of social status in Mabilo, the people do not care much about making impression on their co-members. There is nothing distinctive about their clothing. Children go to school in hand-me-downs sometimes with the hem not let up as "anyway they'll grow into them."

It is notable however that the children, like the adults are clothes sensitive to such a degree that where financial conditions do not merit a dress like the "others", social functions have to be foregone. A desire to be like the people in the *poblacion* has seized the barrio folks and when they go to town, they "get so dressed you could spot them a mile off."

As in most Philippine barrios, anyone who differs from the major body of residents are more often than not conceived of as outsiders. Resentment, unavowed, is directed towards those who in one way or another threaten the economic or social dominance of the group.

Although most of the people of Mabilo are poor, there is no need for a welfare agency in the area because—

- a. The people being conservative and economical can fare adequately with the "less" they have;
- b. They have as their outstanding traits pride and industry; and
- c. Family ties are so strong members need not go out of the family circle to get help.

Let us now examine the Mabileños attitude toward education. A firewood gatherer once said to me:

"I send my children to school because I want them to have a better life than I have."

Ask the fishermen what they think about education and for sure the majority would say something to this effect:

"The only unperishable wealth in this world is knowledge. I should not deny my children this—in fact, I shall be happy with the thought that they are equipped with a weapon to insure them a fair sailing in this life."

With regards to the move to educate the adults, they are non-committal and aside from the flimsy excuse that they are old and are ashamed, nothing can be got from them. This attitude has given the barrio school teachers hopes of a "sometime" when these people will see the benefits they will derive. When they are convinced that they have nothing to lose, they will welcome organized adult classes.

Age-old superstitions are slowly losing hold of the people's outlook in life. While it is true that some superstitions are still kept alive, it is because the people know that they have nothing to lose if they "place a bamboo star at the north and south ends of the fish corral to serve as beacon lights to the fishes so that they will enter the *punot* without fail." In other words, these superstitions have lost their way and power. They have ceased to be threats as "we have nothing to lose if we do them anyway." The evil connected with the non-following of these has lost its hold.

Even with the advent of popular education and science which have to a great degree changed the pace and pattern of the intellect of the people, there are still many who cling tenaciously to some beliefs. These beliefs interwoven into the psychological pattern of the people make culture change slow.

With the gradual influx of urbanization, let us analyze what is happening to those people. Under the impact of new ways, extended and more expanded social contacts and interests have resulted. Old institutional ties are losing their hold on the young. Conflicts often arise between parents and children who are trying to cast off the yoke of the old ways, but some form of adjustment eventually formulates itself through the initiative of the more tolerant and understanding parents. Thus, austere parental authority is now in the wane; youths are more assertive and independent.

The fishing industries and its related occupations are being influenced by mechanization and its management and operation have undergone slow but marked changes. So have the patterns of living. Rural isolation is now being broken down with the advent of better transportation facil-

ities, better educational opportunities, more social contacts, modern conveniences like the radio of which several homes have sets now, and the cine and other cultural influences that the poblacion of Calivo, seven kilometers away, extends to the people of Mabilo. There is also a tendency for Mabileños to aim at a higher standard of living.

Some desire to change is also evident in the community centered school project now being pushed through. Political consciousness is fast lifting the people from lethargy and indifference. Homes have become cleaner and the barrio, healthier. In short, change has set in. Culture change is slow, but it is surely a rejuvenator and reconditioner of human life.

In conclusion, I should like to enumerate the principal points that this report wishes to carry out:

1. It is evident that Mabilo, the fishing village, possesses a culture that is in some ways characteristic of the homogeneity of the people.
2. Folkways and mores are vital forces in regulating barrio life and their best ally is found in gossip.
3. Barrio people have more or less balanced personalities built up in an integral manner by the primary social, educational, economic, and religious elements in the rural culture of the group.
4. Familism, as in other Philippine barrios, is responsible for the stability and enduring quality of Mabileño marriages and for the strict supervision of courtship.
5. Mabilo is a primary group with relationship among its members on a strong basis of intimacy.
6. The geographic factors and the economic resources of an area greatly determined the mode of life of the people and their means of earning a living.
7. The beliefs and attitudes of a people, interwoven into their psychological makeup make culture change progress at a comparatively slow pace.
8. And lastly, urban influences are slowly seeping into the rural culture of Mabilo and are effecting culture changes some of which produce culture conflicts between the old ways and the new.

## A PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN MANILA

By George Henry Weightman

### Background.

Because of economic opportunities, traditional precedents, and former restrictive Spanish residential regulations, the larger part of the Philippine Chinese community has always tended to reside in the Manila area—and only in certain districts. The Spaniards, in the attempt to control the Chinese and to prevent too much wealth from coming into their hands, subjected the Chinese to many restrictions. The Chinese were not permitted to travel extensively in the Islands, (there were few in Iloilo before 1860 and there are still many towns in Batangas without any Chinese) nor to go two leagues from Manila without a written license, nor could they remain overnight in Manila proper (Intramuros) after the gates were closed on penalty of their lives.

Sociologically significant were the Spanish residential restrictions upon the Chinese. They were required to live in a limited special district (known in Manila and Cebu as the "Parían"). The "Parían" (market place) was originally called "alcarceria" (silk market) in Manila, and this name through the Spanish period was used interchangeably with "Parían". These special districts performed all the functions that ghettos throughout the world perform: the culture of the minority was preserved, the assimilation process was seriously reduced; cultural and social communication between the groups were handicapped; and resultant fears, hostilities, and suspicions were developed by all parties. Because of the trade connections with the Acapulco trade the most important Chinese settlement was in Manila as would be expected. The "alcarceria" was first established on the Pasig directly opposite Manila (Intramuros) in 1581 by Peñalosa. In 1583 it was moved across the river by Diego Ronquillo and was established beyond the walled area near the present ruins of Santo Domingo Church. (Throughout most of the Spanish period and until recently Catholic missionary activity among the Philippine Chinese was under the direction of the Spanish Dominicans). In both cases the guns of Fort Santiago were strategically able to command the Chinese settlement.

An old description (1662) of the district follows:

"On the Eastern side of the city, but outside of it and in front of its walls, at the distance of a musketshot, is a silk market which they called Parían. Usually 15,000 Chinese live there; they are Sangleys, natives of China, and all are merchants and artisans. They all possess, allotted among themselves by streets and square, shops containing all kinds of merchandise and all the trades that are necessary in a community. The place is very orderly and well arranged, and a great convenience to the citizens...<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B. de Letona, "Description of Filipinas Islands, Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, XXXVI, p. 189.