

Preface

How are new contributions to an understanding of the social world made? How does a new social scientist contribute to an understanding of the world which, having predated him or her, will be inhabited by many others whose aim is to likewise enlarge this space of knowledge?

The five papers in this issue, which are based on recently completed master's theses, show how one can make significant contributions to the production of social science knowledge by presenting new accounts or interpretations of previously studied social phenomena. The authors in this issue do this by following rules once set by the founders of Sociology: by intertwining theory, concepts and empirical evidence. When empirical areas of inquiry such as street children, urban street life, second generation immigrants, health policy, local politics, civil society and political mobilization are combined with conceptual frameworks that examine the creation of meanings, the functions of structures and the relations of power, new insights of a social phenomenon are developed. Finding the appropriate mix of theories and concepts in order to make sense of an aspect of reality must however be linked to the ongoing project of knowledge creation. Thus, the authors in this issue also consciously locate their work in the context of broader questions and existing works. By doing so, they succeed in advancing the conceptual, methodological, and practical formulations of a given phenomenon.

In her study of the various processes and forms of knowledge construction (views) by different socioeconomic groups of children (i.e., street children and private school children) in Katipunan Avenue, **Yuko Okuma** broadens existing approaches on child socialization and poverty. As she points out, no existing study 'focuses comprehensively on the process in which children from different socioeconomic groups come to understand socioeconomic differences and behave accordingly'. Thus, the importance of the article lies in its ability to use the social constructivist approach developed by Schutz and Luckmann (1966) to show that street children and their wealthier counterparts develop their knowledge and behavior towards socioeconomic differences in society through various interactions with one another. The article also demonstrates how the grounded theory approach, as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1998), can be sensibly used in transforming a personal experience (e.g., observation of a stone-throwing incident between two groups of children) into a form of scientific inquiry (e.g., an

ethnography of Katipunan Avenue as focused on children's social construction of socioeconomic differences).

To construct an ethnography of street children and middle/upper middle-class school children of Kostka School along Katipunan Avenue, Okuma treats the avenue as a social interface. In a social interface, different actors and social situations interact with each other through negotiations, exchanges, and strategies. Street children and private school children encounter each other in Katipunan Avenue and, in these various interactions, shape their views of themselves and of the other. These various constructions of themselves and of the other are either confirmed and consequently taken-for-granted, or challenged and consequently modified, through further encounters of each other. Thus, children themselves actively maintain the social reality of socioeconomic differences. Since these encounters occur within a social setting, actors such as security guards, barangay officials, DSWD, and NGO workers and certain arrangements such as guarded establishments contribute to maintaining the social reality of children.

Since we share our everyday life-world with many others, we all contribute to the maintenance of social realities. Like Okuma, we must therefore be interested in how children develop their awareness and sense of accountability towards other members of society, as this 'question

leads us to consider the extent of the elite's awareness of social inequality in this country and the manner in which their understanding of these issues are taken over to the next generation to construct future socioeconomic relations'.

Many sectors in Philippine society viewed the introduction of the Local Government Code of 1991 and the accompanying decentralization of political and administrative functions as the solution to the country's inefficient systems of governance. **Enrique Niño P. Leviste** shows that one can make a contribution to the body of knowledge by applying existing concepts (e.g., decentralization, pluralism) on a specific area of inquiry (e.g., health policymaking and implementation in a locality). He examines the contexts and processes of decentralization as they are made legible in the formulation and implementation of health policies and programs in a Philippine locality. In doing so, his work connects back to earlier works: Miralao and Dacumos' (1969) formulation of pluralism in terms of 'influential individuals' from the professional, educational, socio-civic or cultural and religious sectors potentially counterbalancing the economic and political elite; and Weber's idea that society bestows different types of prestige or social honor to different groups of people. Making use of the consensus that political, economic, professional, educational, socio-civic or cultural, and religious fields are the major spheres of power and prestige in Philippine society, Leviste examines the

influentials, 'individuals who are perceived by key informants to be influential in their respective areas of interest or chosen fields', in a locality. He shows that although politics and economics occupy central roles in local governance, there are indeed other perceived venues of influence or power, which hint at a more diversified participation in health policymaking and implementation.

Leviste, however, confirms existing notions of the nature of group power relations. Although the 'rise of relatively new venues of power, such as the professional, educational, socio-civic or cultural, and religious sectors, has increased the number of private sector individuals presumed to be influential', it does not 'translate to active private sector involvement in health policymaking'. In health policymaking and implementation, not all activities are equal in importance. It is pluralist (open to influentials from relatively new venues of power) at one time, and elitist (exclusive to political influentials) in another. Matters such as the formulation of strategies in addressing health issues, which do not involve realignment of power and resources, are more open to private sector involvement. The participation of the private sector in budget deliberations, however, is almost always limited.

In view of these arrangements, Leviste argues that the promise of pluralism and decentralization is limited by the nature of everyday politics. Providing channels

for non-government involvement in local health delivery will not, contrary to expectations, result in efficient and responsive local governance. Insights from his study support a broadening not only of the types of participants but also of the forms of participation in health service delivery. Since influentials vary in their scope of influence, there is a need to empower those who lose out in important decision-making activities.

Johanna O. Zulueta makes her contribution to social scientific knowledge by focusing on not-so-common patterns of a social phenomenon. Although Japanese-Filipino intermarriages have been the subject of many studies, Zulueta points out that 'cases wherein the wife is Japanese or Okinawan and the husband is Filipino are less common'. Thus, her article analyzes how second generation Metro Manila-based Okinawan-Filipinos or Nisei, who are offspring of intermarriages between an Okinawan mother and a Filipino father, construct their ethnic identities. Zulueta writes that the identity of these second generation Okinawan-Filipinos is constituted in the word, 'Nisei' and explains why Okinawan-Filipinos do not refer to themselves as Nikkei or Nikkei-jin, a generic term for Japanese descendants born outside Japan. As a word occupying a central meaning in Japanese outmigration, Nisei refers to the first generation born in the host country. This term, however, has a specific meaning in the Philippines as it identifies the offspring of an Okinawan

and a Filipino. Using historical experiences such as the Japanization of Okinawa and the experience of Okinawan wives who accompanied their Filipino husbands back to their hometowns shortly after the Second World War, Zulueta suggests that the use of Nisei for identification may be a response to the Okinawan value given to 'pure blood' or 'pure genes', and to the view that Okinawans are not Japanese. Thus, Nisei both distinguishes Okinawan-Filipinos from mainland Japanese, and blurs the very nature of mixed parentage, which at times can be a disadvantage.

Zulueta's inquiry into hybrid cultural identities is centered on the content of Nisei identity and the conditions that gave rise to it. One salient condition is the high level of assimilation of the Niseis' Okinawan mothers to Philippine society as brought about by the pragmatics of adopting a Filipino ethnic identity to deal with post-War anti-Japanese emotions in the Philippines at that time. Another is that the 'here' and the 'now' determine how Niseis see themselves: being in the Philippines, they see themselves to be more Filipino than Okinawan. Nevertheless, the Niseis' exposure to Okinawan culture such as food, language, customs, traditions, and values and trips to Okinawa developed an awareness of their Okinawan heritage. Thus, the Niseis' identity is situational, as their Okinawan, Japanese and Filipino backgrounds provide them with a choice over a wider range of identities. The range

of choices corresponds to pragmatic concerns, just as their mothers' did half a century ago, namely, nationality (Filipino), parentage (Okinawan parent), residency (Philippines), and economic motives (participation in the Japanese labor market and acquisition of a Japanese citizenship).

The last two articles reexamine the role of civil society in political mobilization and regime change. While many writings (e.g., Karaos 1995, Racelis 2000, Wui and Lopez 1997, Young 1999) have hailed civil society organizations (CSOs) as the new force that will make a difference in development politics, the studies of Arugay and Velasco take on a more reflective track by unmasking their contradictory nature and position in political mobilizations because of their diverse political and ideological orientations, resulting in fragile and momentary alliances. This particularly complex character and political tendencies of CSOs become extremely significant when actors dominant in extra-parliamentary politics assume roles in formal institutions of power and governance.

Aries A. Arugay's research focuses on the political mobilization of CSOs demanding for accountability of the Estrada presidency from November 2000 to January 2001 and culminating in People Power II. While this issue has been analyzed by so many studies, Arugay

takes a new analytical track derived from social mobilization and democratization theories. By integrating the concept of contentious politics with the insights of the strategic mobilization framework, Arugay provides a more dynamic and insightful interpretation as to why the social and political mobilization activities of CSOs were successful in the ouster of President Estrada in January 2001. His examination of the strategies employed by two major civil society formations, Kongreso ng Mamamayan II (KOMPIL II) and the Erap Resign Movement (ERM) in generating societal accountability allowed him to identify the following factors, namely, the presence of internal conditions among the coalitions such as mobilizing structures, framing processes, and repertoires of contention supported by significant external exogenous political opportunities. These factors were responsible for the success of these momentary coalitions in compelling an otherwise unorganized citizenry in joining the political mobilization. The value of theoretical frames like contentious politics and societal accountability is that it allows the student of social mobilization to systematically order the events and processes in concrete political moments like that of the period leading to EDSA II.

Djorina R. Velasco examines the role of CSOs by making an in-depth case study of the Kongreso ng Mamamayan (Congress of Citizens) II or KOMPIL II, a civil society formation active in the resign, impeach and oust (RIO) movement of President Estrada

in January 2001. Through interviews of the participants in this movement and examining secondary materials, she identified the contradictions confronting social development-oriented CSOs, which for both pragmatic and strategic reasons forge momentary alliances with other formations having different political and ideological orientations. As Velasco argued, though KOMPIL members were united in their mobilization against Estrada, the post-resignation phase where they have to confront the real task of governance and bureaucratic politics unraveled many of these alliances.

Velasco also highlights the importance of political contexts (i.e., weak political parties, patronage politics and elite interests which dominate formal politics) in short-circuiting the gains of 'vibrant and transformative' politics initiated by civil society. This study also alerts civil society actors that formal structures of governance demand different strategies from those utilized in extra-parliamentary spaces.

The last two articles can also provide us with interesting analytical comparisons with the current contentious period under the Arroyo administration and why civil society formations cannot mobilize the same strategies of societal accountability.

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