

INTRODUCTION

Computer Mediated Interactive Communication Technology (CMICT): The End of the Social or the Birth of the New World Order?

The present millennium marked both the end of an old regime and the birth of a new one. Capitalism triumphed over communism but only to be challenged by fundamentalisms of various provenances. Scientific and technological discoveries transform ever more rapidly all areas of our lives. The nationstate is increasingly replaced by regional coalitions as the demands of globalization require greater coordination over growing aspects of everyday life. Human rights and environmental concerns, including the energy crises, require constant monitoring and evaluation. Old values are replaced by new ones, with their corresponding anxieties. No wonder that our times have provoked radical comments such as the end of history (Fukuyama) or the end of nature (Castells).

While we may debate which technology is affecting our lives more substantively (e.g. genetics, robotics, cognitive science), there is little doubt that CMICT (computer mediated interactive communication technology) is among them. This has prompted some scholars to make excessive claims about its consequences.

We seem to be on the cusp of a new age! Astonishing claims are being made by social theorists. According to Barlow (1995: 36):

With the development of the Internet, and with the increasing pervasiveness of communications between networked computers, we are in the middle of the most transforming technological event since the capture of fire. I used to think that it was just the biggest thing since Gutenberg, but now I think you have to go back further.

The invention of movable print in Gutenberg in the fifteenth century was the impetus for modernity, with its reflective and abstract textuality (Pertierra 1997). The Internet makes it possible to return to a more intimate orality on a global scale, with its chat groups and informal networks. The limits of community are confounded when the local, diasporal and global intersect. These new intersections produce distinct hybridities embodied in transformed corporealities.

Barlow makes an even bigger claim, equating the Internet with the domestication of fire, the very beginning of human culture. Following him, one assumes that the electronic revolution will transform the human either into the posthuman or at least into the cyborg. The seamless merging of human and machine generate problems for an earlier understanding of culture as distinct from and opposed to nature. In the cyborg, the dialectic between culture and nature is fully established. Culture not only

informs but also constitutes nature, which in its turn disinforms culture. Brute facticity and human purposiveness merge into the human-machine. The classical distinction between science, as the disinterested pursuit of knowledge and technology, as its instrumental application, disappears. The posthuman subject combines the immediacy of a tool with the effectiveness of a machine. For these reasons, social theorists (e.g. Kirby 1997) are presaging the end of the corporeal and the birth of the post-corporeal or the replacement of the human by the posthuman.

Others make equally astonishing claims: "We are going to be Gods, we might as well get good at it" or "In another thousand years, we will be machines or gods" (Gray 2002). How can we assess the basis of these claims? They sound a bit premature for the Philippines, with its low rate of Internet penetration (15%) even if this usage is growing quickly. Nevertheless, new forms of technoscience have enormous potentials for social and cultural change. Cyber space and virtual reality are new ontologies, often subverting the former continuum of space/time. The global merges with the local into the glocal, disrupting identities based on territoriality such as the nation-state. Homogenous and territorialized cultures are rapidly hybridized, while diasporas are localized. A leading electronic journal advertises its orientation as follows:

The Leonardo Electronic Almanac (ISSN No: 1071-4391) is inviting papers that address the complex relationship between technology and difference. Technology is often conceived as an ability to "create," "innovate," "make;" all that which differentiates: 'man' from 'nature'; human from animal. It is seen as a path to 'God(s)' and 'community,' sociality, spirituality, and consciousness. Cultural differences are enacted in differentiations of 'technologically advanced' from 'technologically backward' cultural traditions, often evidenced in statistics on use and proliferation of such technologies. There are significant differences how cultures approach this question of 'technology' both in art and science, albeit they are rarely presented and poorly understood.

In the past few decades, however, a new optimism has been propagated of a technology that is said to operate as a de-differentiating force: it builds bridges, it unites, it globalizes (for better or for worse), it brings us closer. It goes beyond 'old' differences: ethnic, sexual, cultural, animal, towards 'new' differences between human and (intelligent) machine, human and post-human, human and transgenic or artificial species.

The multiple and often conflicting loyalties (ethnicity, gender, nationality) of the contemporary condition are often contrasted with the certainties and promises of modernity. The rationalization of social life under modernity produced a view of the self that stressed its rational orientation. The self had clearly stated goals, appropriate values and used its resources for their achievement. The citizen and consumer mirrored the well-managed nation-state and the free-market. Modernization and development theory predicted a bright future for everyone, including members of the Third World. This prediction has not only failed, but it is now perceived as part of a legitimizing strategy on the part of the affluent and privileged. Narratives of economic development, the benefits of science, promises of equality and the endless bounties of nature are

now increasingly questioned or discredited. Globalization has both narrowed and widened the differences between (and even within) nations, societies and cultures. The global has replaced the local with the virtual, extinguishing the difference between the real and its simulacrum.

These changes are not only producing significant transformations in the sphere of the social but have even more important consequences for culture. Hitherto closely attached to a form of life, postmodern culture becomes a sphere of autonomous signification. The virtualization of the local has detached culture from its sources in the routines of everyday life and instead culture becomes a product of globality. The structures of meaning provided by culture are no longer rooted in ordinary experience but are instead linked to complex and abstract systems. This rupture between culture and its generative structures creates problems for identity. The social as collective is replaced by the intercalation of diverse elements combined in the individual.

The rise of multifunctional spaces such as shopping malls and housing estates (e.g. Eastwood City) mark important aspects of the contemporary world. They usually mimic public space (which in Philippine cities is rapidly disappearing) but are often private spaces easily surveilled by their controllers. These new spaces are often characterized by their conscious separation from local and traditional structures such as markets, plazas and other public areas. Shopping malls and housing estates often invoke the notion of a more rational and ordered virtual world in contrast to the chaos and irrationality of the locally real. They simulate the ideal of a Western lifestyle and substitute it for the realities of Philippine society. A housing estate advertises its products as making its residents feel that they are living abroad – ‘a house so continental, you feel like you’re in another country.’ This results in a simulacrum and virtualization of everyday life. Filipinos experience a New York winter at Megamall or reproduce western chic at Eastwood City. By contrast ordinary life becomes banal and inferior, befitting the poor and the weak.

No other technical device has spread more quickly, including more people, than the mobile phone (two billion by 2008). The cellphone has become the new icon of Philippine life. Filipinos of all classes, generations and ethnicities have adopted this new technology to reproduce traditional relationships under new conditions. Moreover they also employ it to explore new identities and transcorporeal subjectivities. Freed from the constraints of spatial location, cellphones allow perpetual interaction with absent interlocutors. Cyber or virtual communities are easily generated by CMICT. This technology has encouraged or permitted an explicitly sexual subject as well as other subversive identities. CMICT are able to generate virtual communities involving self and other. In these circumstances, notions of the social and of culture have to be radically transformed. Copresence and direct interaction no longer constitute the primary basis for relationships. These new relationships often provide an expanded role for the stranger, hitherto undeveloped in the Philippines in both private and public

interaction. These conditions constitute new possibilities for the rise of a postmodern public sphere and new forms of politics. The Habermasian public sphere can now be extended into cyberspace, generating hitherto impossible relationships and identities.

While members of defined classes pursuing collective interests constituted an earlier (modern) public sphere, a postmodern public consists of a network of diasporal individuals with heterogeneous interests. The cellphone facilitates these networks and reinforces private interests in the public sphere. This new form of politics characterized EDSA 2, and to a lesser extent EDSA 1.

For the reasons above, CMICT is as much a challenge for sociology as it is a challenge to sociology and the other social sciences. This new technology requires the discipline to re-examine its understanding of networks, connections, hierarchies and other organizational modes, nodes, schemas and structures. Functionalist and empiricist approaches have to be reassessed, positivist and other methodologies reevaluated, and actual expectations matched with virtual realities. The possibilities of imaginability have far exceeded previous boundaries. Neither space nor time and even the actual, constrain or inhibit the virtual. Only technology and human interests do so. Sociology can assist this task but only if it gives up earlier notions of the real and the possible.

The articles in this issue confront some of the main questions in the sociology of the postmodern age. Pertierra points out how central Durkheim was for understanding the changes caused by the industrial revolution. New times required new relationships as well as new understandings of the sphere of the social, hitherto absorbed and conflated with nature and a pre-reflective culture. Industrialism separated areas of life earlier confined to locality or kinship (Pertierra 1997). Work and the sphere of the social expanded to include elements not covered by locality or kinship. Economics and politics were the earliest attempts to conceptualize the new conditions of early modernity. The market and the citizen represented hitherto unspecialized practices. New paradigms were required to understand them. Psychology soon followed as reflexivity marked the modern subject and finally sociology arose to explain the sphere of the social. Similar transformations are taking place due to the rapid accumulation of information and communication. New models of the social are required to explain these changes.

Some readers may be wondering about the appropriateness of articles dealing with issues outside the Philippines for this journal. A special PSR issue dealing with CMICT cannot ignore the global context within which these technologies operate. Understanding the influences and consequences of CMICT for Philippine society and culture can best be achieved by comparing their use in other societies in the region. Like all technologies, CMICT is shaped by the social and cultural contexts of their use. This social shaping of technology is best understood by comparing their uses in a

range of societies and cultures. Hence, mobile phone use in Tibet and Guangdong, Web 2.0 as used by Tamils, digital piracy in Malaysia and blogging in China Mainland provide valuable insights for their counterparts in the Philippines. Both the global and the local can now only be understood through their mediated glocal formations.

Raul Pertierra argues that CMICT has significantly transformed the previous constraints of space/time, virtually if not actually. Many interactions now involve interlocutors who are no longer physically copresent. This leads to the phenomenon of an absent presence that allows overseas relatives to micro-coordinate the daily expenses of dependents in their home villages. This coordination of everyday life from a distance generates notions of self and other not adequately comprehended by a sociology that assumes face-to-face interaction as the primary basis of social life.

The claims for CMICT are somewhat excessive but there is little doubt that in association with broader social trends, we are presently undergoing a transformation perhaps of greater significance than the industrial revolution. Modern technology challenges most of our assumptions regarding both the natural and cultural worlds. Nature, previously seen as brute facticity is now seen as having its internal telos. Culture, hitherto seen as the sum of human purposive action, is now perceived as indistinguishable from complex structures with systemic requirements. The human is rapidly becoming a technofaction where dacron, silicon implants and electronic chips merge seamlessly with human flesh. As Gray argues: in another thousand years: "We're going to be Gods, we might as well get good at it" or "In another thousand years, we'll be machines or gods" (Gray 2002: 9).

Social institutions from the family to the nation will have to better express these new realities if they are to remain relevant. A process of democratization is occurring at all these levels, and even extending to the rights of animals and nature. Never before have we had to face such momentous changes so quickly. The use of fire and the domestication of livestock took many millennia before producing significant transformations. By comparison, the industrial revolution changed society in a little over a century. The telegraph, telephone, railway, steamboat and air travel increased the pace of life significantly by practically canceling distance. The motor car privatized travel and the cinema transformed our perception of time. The social sciences were a response to these changes by seeing action as purposive, identificatory and social rather than traditional, pre-reflective or singular.

By comparison to these earlier transformations, the spread of CMICT in the Philippines and the rest of the world have been phenomenal. While the Neolithic revolution took place over millennia and the industrial revolution lasted a century, CMICT has become indispensable in most people's lives only in a little over a decade. As DiMaggio et al. (2001) have pointed out, the Internet and associated communication technologies are reshaping and being shaped by their users at an incredible pace.

These changes are taking place as we watch them close at hand and even participate in these activities ourselves. Mobiles have in five years achieved levels of penetration that took television 50 years to obtain. This example presents an ideal case for studying social transformations whose major elements are observable and whose effects are revelatory of less transparent structures. How quickly will the social sciences adapt to these changes? The rise of postmodern theory, cultural studies and transdisciplinary approaches are an indication of attempts to confront these new social and cultural realities. Sociology will have to confront these questions adequately or be replaced by other paradigms and disciplinary approaches.

Kristinne Joyce Lara-de Leon points out that given the importance of CMICT for many Filipinos, an ethnography of Internet cafes is a timely topic for research. Tuguegarao is a major town in Northern Luzon, characterized by a multitude of ethnic backgrounds and languages. Cultural difference is an ordinary element of most people's lives and the new communication technologies extend this difference globally.

She describes the activities and practices in two Internet cafés in Tuguegarao. One is more interactive, where both virtual and physical interaction takes place while the other favors more private and virtual relationships. Both reflect the real contexts within which they are located. The first mainly caters to students drawn from one school nearby; hence customers often know one another and readily participate in each others cyber activities. The cyber world is an extension of the physical world, even if its requirements often generate new practices. The second café represents a more distinct world, whose members are generally unknown to one another. This second café is perhaps more representative of the urban condition where people are strangers to one another. They may meet at the café but each one is absorbed into their own cyber world.

De Leon gives several examples of how informants' lives have been affected by CMICT. Genuine is a teenager who explores his sexuality by joining gay sites where he meets people with similar orientations. They offer advice and support which is often lacking in his physical world. Flora is deaf and finds it hard to establish relationships with non-deaf people. Instead she prefers logging into sites where she can use FSL (Filipino Sign Language) to communicate with her deaf acquaintances. Jay-r is a boy with advanced skills in computer games that allow him to compete with and often win against much older players. He has established friendships through gaming with people who would normally have considered him to be too young. This has given him confidence in relating to older people. These examples indicate how CMICT provide alternative channels for establishing relationships often lacking in face-to-face or co-present situations.

Given the diasporal nature of Filipino culture and the large numbers of Filipinos working abroad, one expects the new communication technology to play an important

role in many people's everyday life. However, as de Leon shows, the new technology is used both for traditional and innovative ways. Internet cafés serve as linkages between people in Tuguegarao and their relatives abroad. They reinforce already existing ties but as other studies show (Pertierra 2006), they also transform these ties. Parents become super vigilant, wives surveille erring husbands and children discuss hitherto taboo topics such as sex with overseas parents. Moreover, traditional activities such as searching for spouses become globalized. Thus, Imee used the Internet to meet her French-Australian husband after having emotional relationships with several foreigners. Janna explores her sexuality via cyber sex with her overseas husband.

Finally, de Leon points out that despite the increasing use of Internet cafés, this technology is still relatively inaccessible to the majority of people in Tuguegarao. Ironically, even when its importance is recognized in educational institutions, CMICT is as much an imagined as a practical skill. Thus, the local university offers computer courses without having an Internet connection on campus. Students have to travel to the urban cafés for connectivity. This example indicates the often paradoxical situation involving the new technology. While it is increasingly incorporated into everyday life, thereby fusing the virtual with the actual, its practice is as much rhetorical as practical.

De Leon provides valuable insights into the new but increasingly common communicative practices of Filipinos. Contemporary global life is mostly experienced as mediated and CMICT provides a main channel for this mediation. Internet cafés are common sites for these experiences. While much of traditional life was based on co-presence or face-to-face interaction, the global condition requires transgressing spatio-temporal boundaries. The stranger and cosmopolitanism increasingly enter more aspects of everyday life, including its most intimate areas. Locality and its relationship to the global have to be reconfigured. In the process, earlier identities and existing relationships are reconceptualized.

Tilman Baumgartel discusses the significance and consequences of digital piracy in Southeast Asia. Apart from their major influence on all aspects of quotidian life and popular culture, pirated films have also exposed locals to the more specialized worlds of art cinema. Among its consequences is a rising generation of local filmmakers influenced by both classical and contemporary trends. Using the new technologies, young directors are able to experiment and produce films hitherto impossible.

The global circulation of capital and technology has facilitated an underground cultural economy that, although illegal, epitomizes many of the desired features of contemporary life. Baumgartel refers to this as globalization from below. Normally inaccessible but highly desired products become available for ordinary people. The formal economy is not able to provide desired goods and hence people are forced to resort to alternative sources made available, ironically, by capitalist technology. From

Baumgartel's perspective, both the legal and pirate economies constitute two sides of the same coin.

A global economy generates a culture that is both highly homogenized and extremely varied. Consumers are able to create distinctive patterns of consumption based on individual choice of universally available goods. Political and other exclusionary mechanisms preventing access to desired goods are difficult to implement in often permeable borders generated by economic liberalism and the privatization of public structures. Images, ideas and lifestyles cross borders and hierarchies, creating new and hybrid cultural formations. But these new structures are also based on the pursuit of profits by exploiting new niche markets hitherto untapped by more conventional strategies.

Baumgartel is careful not to imply any direct causal connections between digital piracy and the new Asian cinema but their affinities are clearly visible. Their influence has been mentioned by several young local directors who in turn are now the models for a revival of Asian cinema. The digitalization of information has not only made possible new communication technologies but has allowed their dispersal to distant lands at minimal costs. The autonomy of isolation is no longer applicable; instead all cultures are in constant dialogue with their global counterparts. From film, fashion and food to politics, business and education, the world is densely intercalated. Neither disciplinary or cultural and ideological barriers prevent the increasing hybridization of life.

Gopalan Ravindran takes a major issue in contemporary social theory: how adequate are former notions of structure, distribution and consumption in understanding CMICT? He uses the example of Tamil cinema and its huge following among diasporal communities, particularly among Malaysian Tamils. Ravindran begins by analyzing notions of flow first suggested by Williams in his study of patterns of television viewing. While older models of distribution used mechanical models for understanding the consumption of modern media, Williams preferred the notion of flow as more adequate to the way the media is consumed and domesticated. Each viewer has her own preferences, choices and strategies while surfing the available channels. Castells (2000) prefers the notion of flexible networks and nodes, while Giddens (1991) introduced the distinction between structure and structuration. All these models reject earlier notions of rigid structures, fixed hierarchies and predetermined trajectories. Instead, the new models prefer hydraulic rather than mechanical metaphors, where shape, orientation and consequence is more flexible, less predictable and open to individual choice.

For Ravindran the most suitable model for CMICT is provided by Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.1987). Their notion of

rhizome encapsulates the chaotic nature of contemporary life. According to Ravindran: for Deleuze and Guattari, rhizomatic connections do not follow any order, unlike in the case of the connections that flow between fixed and pre-determined points in a tree. According to them, "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be." He uses examples from Web 2.0 to illustrate the notion of rhizomatic distribution and regeneration.

Ravindran begins by describing the significance of Tamil cinema for diasporic communities, particularly in Malaysia where Tamils occupy a problematic position. Tamil films are followed with passionate interest, partly to keep abreast of cultural trends in the motherland but also to emphasize their own local differences. This already complex phenomenon is greatly amplified with the arrival of the Internet and applications such as Web 2.0. Citing examples of highly popular video clips made available in YouTube, Ravindran shows how inadequate earlier notions of original sources, derived forms and individual use are in the case of Web 2.0.

The notion of original or real was first challenged by the computer and facsimile machines. What is the original copy of a document produced on the screen, printed and latter photocopied? They are all simulacra of an original simulacrum. Web 2.0 compounds these paradoxes and reveals the inadequacy of earlier notions of the real, the copy and the simulated. In such instances Deleuze and Guattari provide better models that capture the intricacies, inconsistencies, unpredictabilities and randomness of phenomena generated by CMICT. Rhizomatic structures closely approximate the often ordered chaos of late or postmodernity.

The case of little superstar, a midget, who dances to the music of Rajinikanth is a good example of rhizomatic structures, where the former distinctions between original, partial or variant no longer apply. New hybridities replace the original and the total, themselves replaced by new totalities. YouTube provides a medium for transforming original versions into mutant and hybrid forms that themselves constitute the bases for new transformations. Local examples of these hybridities are readily available, from sexual scandals to public performances and even surgical techniques. Each case mutates into unpredictable forms, taking on new lives no longer answerable to former genres. How will the old models of change and development deal with these new modalities?

Roudanji discusses how cellphones have affected local Tibetan society. A comparatively new technology, mobiles have been taken up with enthusiasm by Tibetans. Most of the users are presently students living in urban areas but even villagers and monks are starting to use cellphones. Most of its uses are practical such as connecting with friends and relatives or transacting business affairs. Distances in Tibet makes travel difficult and mobiles have significantly facilitated the sharing of information among dispersed networks.

The main issue addressed in this chapter is the development of modernity in Tibet. Modernity is a complex process involving the state, the economy and a host of other institutions dealing with public and private affairs. Modernity also affects identity and processes of individuation. A central aspect of modernity is the rationalization of everyday life required by the growing coordination of locality with the national and the global. At the individual level, this involves an increase in reflexivity as choices provided by the market and the state replaces tradition with purposive rationality. The cellphone is centrally involved in most of these processes, at the collective and private levels.

Roudanji points out the importance of education, particularly the ability to read and write Chinese, for utilizing fully the capacities of communications technology. The contemporary media uses Chinese as its main language and Tibetans unable to comprehend it are at a decided disadvantage. As expected, students and government officials are best equipped to make good use of these resources. Hence they are able to keep abreast of international trends in global fashion, music and popular culture.

As reported in other cases (Pertierra 2006), the cellphone also affects how people project themselves through its use. In Tibet, cellphone conversations have generated new forms of language etiquette among their users but in particular among government officials. The tones employed in their conversation characterize different social status (e.g. the highness or lowness of voice, using formal and polite words in conversing, among others). A famous Tibetan artist Malayjyap, used these new language conventions in a popular comedy 'Phone,' to convey the multiple identities Tibetans project using cellphones.

Finally, Roudanji discusses the role of mobiles among Buddhist monks. The question of adapting modern technology such as cellphones is controversial among Buddhists but some monasteries allow their limited use. Monks generally use their cellphones like most other Tibetans – to keep in touch with friends and relatives in the village. But they also use it to network with fellow monks and in organizing classes in Buddhist theology and liturgy. Interestingly, another consequence of its use is the concentration of ritual performances within the monastery instead of in the surrounding villages. Previously, monks roamed the villages performing life and other rituals. Presently, they wait in the monastery for people to contact them on cellphones to request the performance of desired rituals. As a consequence, the monastery itself has now become a center for ritual performance. This has led to an unexpected concentration and rationalization of ritual action.

Yinni Peng's paper deals with the effects of mobiles on the labor process. Technologies have often been seen as directly increasing the productive capacities of labor and the corresponding rise in capitalist profits. While the productive potential of cellphones is not in doubt, their capacity to empower workers is less explored. Yinni

Peng investigates how the mobile allows workers in the Pearl River Delta Region in Guangdong (China mainland) to obtain crucial information about wages and conditions in local factories.

The economic boom in China has provided employment for millions of Chinese workers from rural provinces who flock to the coastal areas where factories are generally located. While conditions are steadily improving, workers often complain about the harshness of life in the new economic zones. Recently, cellphones have provided workers with access to information that allows them to compare wages and conditions in local factories. As a consequence, given local labor shortages, workers can often improve their incomes by shifting quickly to factories offering better conditions. Official information is generally limited in China and only rarely can ordinary people use it to their advantage. The mobile has changed this situation significantly.

One of the first things rural workers buy when they arrive in the new economic zones is a cellphone. They use it mainly to remain in contact with family and friends in their home villages but increasingly workers also use their mobiles to obtain information about working conditions in their area. Every worker automatically belongs to an extensive social network based on locality of origin, ethnicity and kinship. To this is quickly added new contacts obtained in the work place as well as through other social occasions. Cellphones are therefore not only important devices to remain in contact with significant others but also practical tools for obtaining information about relevant matters at work as well as more generally.

Leaving rural villages for work in the metropolitan and business centers is an inevitable aspect of modernity. New values, skills and statuses have to be acquired as an index of this shift from rural to urban, and the cellphone is an index of this transformation. Factory work is tedious and requires constant monitoring. The mobile, however, allows workers to retain some autonomy and privacy during their work hours. They become adept at sending and receiving surreptitious messages via SMS.

Easily hidden, workers can send messages even when expressly forbidden by managers. Peng reports a female migrant worker as saying:

In our factory, it is okay for us to carry mobile phones. But, we are fined if we use mobile phones during working hours. Sometimes, when I receive an incoming call, I will tell my foreman that I want to use the restroom... I answer the call in the restroom.

Retaining some control over their bodies reduces the micro-disciplinary constraints associated with modern factory work. As a worker said:

I always carry my mobile phone. I seldom receive calls or send short messages when I am working. But, having a mobile phone handy, I feel safe. I know I will not miss any call from my family. I am married and have a six-year-old son. If there is some urgent things happened in my home, I can be reached easily.

Most workers live in dormitories with few opportunities for privacy. Maintaining contacts with relatives and friends using landlines was either impossible or extremely difficult. The mobile not only ensures relative privacy but also guarantees constant availability.

Virtual networks are now as important for most workers as their spatial networks based in their villages of origin or kinship links. Many mobiles have cameras and Internet connections, thereby allowing users multiple channels for extending information. Mediated relationships now occur as ordinary aspects of urban life. Despite the harsh disciplinary controls found in contemporary labor processes, cellphones represent a technology that at least allows workers with some capacity to resist. As Peng shows, Chinese workers are becoming highly skilled in devising strategies that allow them greater access to information affecting the labor process. The mobile, however limitedly, becomes a technology of liberation.

Patrick Pui-lam Law and Ke Yang assert that the importance of CMICT for the constitution of a more open public sphere is one of the most important questions raised in relation to the new media. While there is little doubt that access to information has dramatically increased, this access does not necessarily lead to a more informed or open public sphere (Lash 2002). Data does not always increase understanding and can as easily obfuscate it. Nevertheless, CMICT seems to provide conditions of possibility that can generate more democratic discursive practices. The sheer abundance of information makes censorship impractical if not impossible. The relative facility of access gives ordinary people opportunities for obtaining and disseminating information hitherto not possible.

Law and Yang discuss the role of blogs in developing a civil discourse possibly leading to a stronger civil society. They begin by arguing that civil society in the western sense is weakly developed in China Mainland both during the imperial and the communist periods. Individual autonomy and social institutions necessary to developing civil consciousness expressed, for example, in social movements have not been part of the Chinese experience. The State is mostly hegemonic and only lately has shown signs of relegating its massive coercive powers to other social organizations.

Others have argued that civil society in an indigenous form has existed in China through various societal groups and organizations even if they mostly remain within the state's supervision. Kinship, religion, ethnicity and locality have always played a strong role in Chinese society, at times mitigating and resisting imperial control. It is in this context that blogging has entered the communication field.

Law and Yang give examples of blogs that have elicited extraordinary support among both bloggers and the general public. The first involved a child in need of specialized medical care unaffordable by its parents. Their blog caught the attention

of bloggers and eventually the mainstream media, resulting in generous donations to their cause. The second involved a determined family who refused to move out of their home to give way to a large commercial development. The developers, with the support of local authorities, isolated the family residence, cut off utilities and tried to coerce them to leave their home. The case attracted some attention resulting in online discussions about its relative merits. Eventually a young blogger joined the discussion and took up the cause of the family with great perseverance, even traveling from his home province to Chongqing to report from the scene. Other bloggers joined in and the case quickly became an example of bureaucratic oppression against the common man.

Neither example actually challenged the hegemony of the state but indirectly allowed the public to raise sensitive issues not normally allowed. Bloggers and later the general public participated enthusiastically in discussing the merits of the case and its consequences. A new discursive field was opened resulting in the rational exchange of views, including notions of social justice and private rights. It also generated collective action either in organizing financial contributions or demonstrations in support of the besieged household. Although the consequences of blogging for the development of civil society and social movements is far from clear, these cases indicate that CMICT opens new conditions of possibility.

CONCLUSION

This special issue of the *Philippine Sociological Review* (PSR) has raised questions central to the continuing relevance of sociology in the new world order. There is little doubt that we are experiencing a pace of social transformation equivalent if not greater than the industrial revolution. The latter produced the social sciences in the forms presently known to us. Sociology was based on the new sphere of the social experienced in the growing urbanization of life, linking strangers to one another within a simultaneous present. CMICT has transformed this simultaneous present into a lived experience, where interlocutors spatially separated can interact in a quasi face-to-face mode.

Contemporary life is characterized by mediating institutions and systems that connect everyday experience to broader and global structures. Hitherto closely attached to a form of life, postmodern culture becomes a sphere of autonomous signification. The virtualization of the local has detached culture from its sources in the routines of everyday life, converting it into a product of globality. Meaning is no longer rooted in ordinary experience but is instead linked to complex and abstract systems. The social as collective is replaced by the intercalation of diverse elements combined in the individual, herself linked into complex networks.

One obvious consequence of the above is that journals such as the PSR will have to reflect the global condition. What happens to national traditions in a globalized world? Who will represent and express particular needs hitherto provided by the national or the local? Ravindran has addressed this issue by arguing that the globalized homeland now includes its diasporal members. Distinctions between the settled and the original homeland no longer apply as relevantly as they did before CMICT. A friend describes herself as a Filipino from California, converting what was hitherto a nationality into an ethnicity. A growing Filipino diaspora will similarly interrogate earlier definitions of homeland. The social sciences are presently ill equipped to deal with these conundrums adequately. This issue is meant to stimulate further questions in the practice of sociology for it to better confront and resolve future conundrums.

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DURKHEIM, MOBILES AND THE SPHERE OF THE SOCIAL

Raul Pertierra

The mobile and other new communication technologies such as the Internet are having unprecedented effects on society and culture worldwide. While some of the claims for these new communication technologies are wildly exaggerated, there is little doubt that they are changing our world significantly. This paper addresses some of the theoretical issues associated with the new communication technology and assesses their impact for the Philippines. Just as Durkheim and other early theorists responded to the changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution, one may expect a similar theoretical renewal to address contemporary transformations. The social sciences, in particular Sociology, will have to reconsider its basic paradigms to accommodate these transformations.

Keywords: paradigm shift, local cosmopolitanism, communication revolution, classical and postmodern theories, new socialities

DURKHEIM'S HERITAGE

The social sciences provided new paradigms to explain social transformations that were no longer explicable in traditional terms. Supernatural and other conventional models for human action needed to be redefined in the context of spreading literacy, colonial discoveries, economic expansion and political reforms. The social sciences provided more adequate models to explain the changes brought about by the industrial revolution. The shift from communal to contractual relationships generated new norms and modes of social organization. The movements from the countryside to the cities created new anxieties as traditional ties were replaced by new localities. According to Durkheim (1995) and later Levi-Strauss (1966), primitive societies

based on similitude created difference through appropriate social classifications such as crow and eagle hawk. The model of nature was imposed on culture to produce difference. Complex societies are already highly differentiated and the problem is to produce affinity. Each social formation has its own form of sociability adequate to meet systemic needs. Durkheim (1960) suggested that the shift from mechanical to organic solidarity require new forms of sociability. Labor unions and professional groups arose as replacements for earlier modes of association such as guilds and religious confraternities. But this major shift also created a normative vacuum resulting in feelings of listlessness and anomie. Sociology developed its models to accommodate these major shifts. Much has changed since then and, as expected,

social science must account for these changes in its explanatory paradigms.

Many are now claiming that ICT is bringing about fundamental changes to contemporary society. If nothing else, ICT certainly facilitates new forms of association, with its corresponding possible affinities. The former spatio-temporal constraints of association have been significantly altered by the new media and consequently, new forms of sociality may be expected to arise. Judging from the claims of some social theorists, we seem to be on the cusp of a new age, whose full implications are only slowly emerging. Just like previous epochal transitions, we can expect that this new epoch will generate its own singularities. For example, globality has made virtual and actual cosmopolitanism possible. A cosmopolitan sociality, at least one based on a sense of a simultaneous present, was not possible before the new media.

NEW MODELS, NEW MUDDLES

Social theorists have been proposing new models for understanding the contemporary condition since the early 1980s. Lyotard (1984) called for a complete overhaul and rejection of earlier paradigms and since then postmodernists have continued and even radicalized his critique. Others, like Habermas (1984, 1989) have called for a strengthening of the rationalist program and a revival of the project of the enlightenment. More moderate sociologists like Giddens (1990) have pointed out the ontological insecurities of our age and the

consequences of space-time distanciation. Hitherto physical co-presence was an initial condition for most relationships. Presently, most relationships do not require contiguity. The capacity for indirect relationships has generated the structures of modernity. However, the enthusiastic embrace of postmodern theories has been counterbalanced by a resurgence of earlier models like systems theory (Luhmann 1998). But just when it looked as though an *entente cordiale* between the postmodernists and the heirs of the enlightenment was being established, cyber theorists with ideas about the postcorporeal and the posthuman (Kirby 1997) burst on to the scene. Any hopes of a theoretical consensus are quickly diminishing. Basic concepts like society and culture were deconstructed and any thing goes seems to be the name of the game (Game 1991).

Social science has become only one of many available narratives for explaining our present condition, each reflecting the positionalities of their proponents. Cultural Studies encroached and even supplanted the privileged hold on culture previously enjoyed by anthropologists. This concept, which had been used by anthropologists to indicate the uniqueness of a distinct mode of life enjoyed by small cohesive communities, was adapted to large, complex societies, whose members are not only strangers to one another, but who live according to distinct values and norms. What their members have in common, is no longer a common habitus but a wide range of meanings and practices generated by

mediating institutions each with particular goals. Hence the family, schooling, mass media, the economy, the polity and other structures create meanings and practices no longer consonant with each other. The result is, as Markus (1997) has pointed out, a surplus of meaning and a lack of sense. Signifying practices are no longer tied to practical significations. We are generating meanings at a rate too fast for their assimilation into practical life. As a consequence, culture refers only to itself rather than to structures that in the past helped generate it. The hitherto close links between culture and social structure have been severed or transformed. It is this transformation that the new media celebrate and enhance. Henceforth only the virtual is real (Shields 2003).

MILLENNIAL TECHNOLOGIES

The early claims for the emancipatory consequences of CMICT (computer mediated interactive communication technologies) may now seem excessive. According to Barlow (1995: 36):

With the development of the Internet, and with the increasing pervasiveness of communications between networked computers, we are in the middle of the most transforming technological event since the capture of fire. I used to think that it was just the biggest thing since Gutenberg, but now I think you have to go back further.

Barlow equates the Internet with the domestication of fire, the very beginning of human culture and the start of our domination of nature. The control of fire gave humans a truly transforming

technology, resulting in basic anatomical and sociocultural changes (Goubsblom 1992). Human evolution took on a distinctive path thereafter. The control of fire was followed by the domestication of plants and livestock. Thus began the human project of controlling and dominating nature. Some claim the end of nature since this domination is now complete. As Saunders argues:

In the modern world, where we work, sleep or take our leisure depends more in the created spaces we have manufactured—the factory, the semi-detached house, the seaside resort—than on the natural or inherent characteristics of different locations (1989:222).

Following Barlow, one assumes that the electronic revolution will transform the human either into the posthuman or at least into the cyborg. The routine incorporation of dacron, steel and electronic devices (cochlear implant, pacemaker, silicon breasts, aluminum joints, artificial hearts, synthetic lenses, prosthetic limbs) into the human body transforms it from an organic unity into a techno-formation. The seamless merging of human and machine generate problems for an earlier understanding of culture as the domain of signification and nature as brute facticity. In the cyborg, the dialectic between culture and nature is established and transcended. Culture not only informs but also constitutes nature, which in its turn disinforms culture. Human purposiveness and brute facticity merge in the human-machine. The posthuman subject combines the corporeal intimacy of a tool with the

effectiveness of a machine. For these reasons, social theorists (e.g. Kirby 1997) are presaging the end of the corporeal and the birth of the postcorporeal or the replacement of the human by the posthuman. H.G. Wells' (Cochrane 1996) fears may have been exceeded – we are becoming a nation not of mechanics but of machines. Society has been transformed into a technoformation where culture has been reduced to data. As expected, critiques of this view have also emerged but even they concede that 'a regime of meaning is transformed into a regime of operationality...Flows do not mean. They work. They are operational' (Lash 2002: 216).

Perhaps this is the source of our unease; the fear of being displaced and outmoded by machines. Others make equally astonishing claims: "We are going to be Gods, we might as well get good at it" or "In another thousand years, we'll be machines or gods" (Gray 2002:9). These claims may be a bit premature for the Philippines, with its low rate of Internet (12; Khan 2006, Lallana 2004) and mobile phone penetration (50%) even if this usage is growing quickly (Pertierra 2006). Nevertheless, even in societies like the Philippines, new forms of techno science have enormous potentials for social and cultural change.

HYDRAULIC SOCIETIES AND FLUID CULTURES

Recent analyzes of contemporary society have suggested more fluid models to better describe the flexible ties joining their members. Castells (2000, 2001)

prefers the idea of a network rather than a centralized structure to understand the multiple strands linking society's members. Informationally generated social structures operate very differently from earlier modes. They are necessarily more flexible, less hierarchical and more adaptive. For Castells (2000: 508), 'the network society represents a qualitative change in the human experience.' While earlier societies had to adapt their experience to nature, contemporary society only adjusts to culture (having earlier superseded nature). "We are just entering a new stage in which culture refers to culture, having superseded nature to the point that nature is artificially revived as a cultural form...This is why information is the key ingredient of our social organization and why flows of messages and images between networks constitute the basic thread of our social structure.'

Bauman (2005) describes liquid society as 'the kind of life commonly lived in our contemporary, liquid modern society. Liquid life cannot stay on course because liquid modern society cannot keep its shape for long. It is a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty. The most acute and stubborn worries that haunt this liquid life are the fears of being caught napping, of failing to catch up with fast moving events, of overlooking the use by dates and being saddled with worthless possessions, of missing the moment calling for a change of tack and being left behind.' Others, like Luhmann (1998) prefer to characterize our times as one of extreme contingency

or an age of the accidental (Virilio 1982). Nothing is necessary or universal.

Hannertz (1993: 105) describes how culture, hitherto collectively shared, is now individualized. 'As she changes jobs, moves between places, and makes her choices in cultural consumption, one human being may turn out to construct a cultural repertoire which in its entirety is like nobody else's.' While the uniqueness of individual experience is a feature of all societies and cultures, the contemporary emphasis on consumer choice and the wide variety of patterns of consumption available make this insight particularly relevant and appropriate for our times. As Bauman (2005) points out, while all societies consume, only contemporary capitalist societies are explicitly organized around consumerism. Furthermore as Miller (1997) has pointed out, consumption is now an integral aspect of our identity.

LOCAL COSMOPOLITANISMS

Even assuming that earlier millenarian assertions have proved unfounded, there are adequate grounds to believe that basic changes are occurring, if not entirely due to the new communications technology, certainly in conjunction with other elements such as globalization. Whether these changes are simply an extension of the industrial revolution and a global economy is debatable (Featherstone 1995). Giddens (1999) has argued that basic changes are taking place in social institutions such as the moves for democracy not only globally but also in aspects of everyday life such as the family.

New social relationships are emerging to challenge former identities. These changes are at least as basic as those brought about during the 19th century. Durkheim's notion of organic solidarity now applies globally rather than nationally and to more aspects of everyday life, from popular culture, to the economy and the polity. A common example is the prevalence of international call centers in the Philippines. Filipinos are being taught to cultivate foreign accents, work according to overseas schedules and support global political issues. Only their wages remain stubbornly local.

While the structures of globalization may have been established in the 19th century, an awareness of the world as a synchronic whole can only have been experienced in the 20th century following the rapid gains in communication technologies. The experience of a global simultaneous present is now almost banal. Live broadcasts of sporting competitions, entertainment, political crises, the weather and other events are a regular feature of daily life. Local events are sometimes first known by a global rather than by their national audience. This pace of globalization of the local and the localization of the global can only be expected to increase. This space-time contraction has led to the phenomenon of *glocalization* and a reduction in the importance of the national. A recent survey (*Philippine Daily Inquirer* 7 March 2003:1) indicated that Filipino Internet users are more aware of issues such as global warming (93%) than even their American (13%) counterparts.

According to Appadurai, "No idiom has yet emerged to capture the collective interests of many groups in translocal solidarities, crossborder mobilizations, and postnational identities" (Appadurai 1997:166). The language of nationalism and territoriality no longer expresses these complex, nonterritorial postnational identities. Globality cannot be expressed in the language of internationalism because the latter is still trapped in the logic of territorialized cultures (Tomlinson 1999). It seems that the global is a reality *sui generis*, a new form of sphere of the social, inexpressible in terms of earlier affinities. This new cosmopolitanism is no longer anchored anywhere, least of all in the former cultural or political centers. The true cosmopolite is at home anywhere and preferably elsewhere (on condition of having online access). The Internet allows locals to become virtual cosmopolitans by experiencing the world as a simultaneous present.

MOBILES AND THE WELTGEIST

As DiMaggio et al. (2001) have pointed out, rarely have social scientists had the opportunity to study a major technological event evolving before their own eyes. The Internet and associated communication technologies are reshaping and being shaped by their users at an incredible pace. These changes are taking place as we watch them close at hand and even participate in these activities ourselves. This presents an ideal case of studying social transformations whose major elements are observable and whose effects are revelatory of less transparent structures.

My choice of the Philippines is particularly apt for analyzing the transformations generated by CMICT (computer-mediated interactive communication technologies). These technologies are consonant with changes in the country and answer the demands of the times. They also encourage existing structures to flourish and display their full potentialities. The new communications technology has been rapidly accepted and its consequences can be easily observed. If DiMaggio's claim that the Internet and related technologies give us a unique opportunity to observe social change before our own eyes, then the Philippines is a good place to be. Similar claims are being made about the mobile in Africa and elsewhere. No wonder Katz & Aakhus (2002) describes mobiles as *apparatgeist*; they embody the contemporary *zeitgeist* or spirit of the age. The Internet and the mobile give us global connectivity. The drastic reorientation of the spatio-temporal order is resulting in the deterritorialization of culture, confounding the previous boundaries separating the local and national from the global. In this new context identities are no longer contained or reproduced by former structures and hierarchies.

Modern technologies were present in the Philippines soon after their invention abroad. Unfortunately, their effects were limited to Manila and mainly involved rich Filipinos. The majority of Filipinos may have been aware of the wonders of technology but seldom experienced these wonders themselves. But the mobile changed all this. In five years (1997-2002) mobiles exceeded the rates of penetration

achieved by TV in 50 years. Presently about 50 percent of the population has a mobile phone and real access is higher since most people readily share phones with friends and relatives. Hence, almost all households have access to a mobile. Landlines have become largely irrelevant for most Filipinos. The Internet is much less accessible because of the more expensive infrastructure necessary. Approximately 15 percent (Lallana 2004) has direct online access but Internet cafés are easily found and relatively inexpensive. Many Filipinos use these cafés to connect with a world outside their normal limits. These cafés also constitute new sites of sociability since even people with home access prefer to use the café for privacy and convenience. Increasingly, elements of this outside world are incorporated into their users' everyday life.

FROM THE WORD TO THE TEXT

From being a locally-based oral society, the Philippines has become the texting capital of the world, whose members send 10 times the SMS global average (Pertierra 2006). Nearly 25 percent of the Filipino workforce is abroad and their remittances (\$14 billion) are the most important source of foreign income, far exceeding both foreign aid (\$650 million) and foreign investment (\$1.2 billion). Maintaining and reproducing ties with local kin is a major use of the new communications technology. But it also generates new notions of identity and relationships. The mobile and the Internet have opened up

local society in hitherto unexpected ways. This has resulted in a local form of virtual cosmopolitanism.

MY PUBLIC SPHERE

The Philippines is a society with a strong private but weak public culture. The notion of a world inhabited by contemporaries sharing a common normative life-space but otherwise unknown to one another is not well developed in the Philippines. What one says publicly but does privately are not judged by the same values. The former is performance, the latter reveals normativity. At best, the public sphere is seen primarily as an extension of private networks. Most Filipinos see the public sphere as unclaimed territory open to predatory acquisition. Politicians are the most adept practitioners of this public predation but ordinary Filipinos are always trying to expand their private control of the public domain.

Consociation is the basis for generating common expectations and reciprocity is its primary value. An economy of gift rather than commodity exchange characterizes the social structure, including the public sphere and the economy. Notions of trust were severely limited and mostly only included kin and close friends. Dealing with strangers is seen as inherently risky even in the context of conventional roles (e.g. bank tellers, doctors, government officials, market vendors). Filipinos try to personalize these contacts either through intermediaries or ritualizing the exchange using cultural mechanisms such as *suki*

(a special relationship between vendor and customer) or *compadre* (godparent).

TRANSACTING THE OTHER

In ordinary conversations, Filipinos always locate themselves in kinship terms. Older and younger people are referred to by the appropriate kinship term. The kinship term used refers not to the actual kin connection but to its desired or assumed emotional closeness. Hence, distant cousins are addressed as brothers to convey the closeness of the relationship. These cultural mechanisms allow hitherto unrelated people to establish moral ties and hence expand structures of trust. Strangers are by definition not part of this structure of trust. While strangers may be seen as contemporaries, they are not consociates. It is consociation that eventually ensures trustworthiness. The process of converting contemporaries into consociates is a main concern of Filipino social life. This conversion is achieved through networking, an integral part of Filipino life in order to expand one's contacts. In the recent past, opportunities to transform strangers into consociates was limited both by practical as well as cultural constraints. People were less mobile and the rituals of sociability only covered certain cases. The mobile and the Internet are new ways of extending networks. Virtual consociation eventually leads to common expectations and a basis for reciprocity. Texting is a common way of expressing such consociation and reciprocity.

Until recently, consociation necessarily took a face-to-face model, where speech is the primary mode of interaction. Any situation can be interrupted by a claim to be heard. Talk is the most common way of relating among Filipinos and silence is the best evidence of a social rupture. Talk confirms social ties as much as it conveys information. In any case, the reliability of the latter depends on the strength of the former. Trust the messenger not the message. All of these points to the transactional model of Filipino society, with its complex strategies and alliances to ensure that networks of exchange and reciprocity are maintained and expanded. Economic interests, political power and social legitimacy all rest on these strong networks. In these transactions, Filipinos regularly overstate their claims, hoping thereby to ensure reciprocity. Rituals of hospitality transform strangers into friends and casual acquaintances become intimate buddies. These affirmations are understood by both partners simply as possibilities for future transactions rather than as firm commitments. They are part of a network that may be activated in the future.

VIRTUAL CONSOCIATES

The mobile allowed the expansion of networks previously impossible and the Internet made cosmopolitan exchanges quotidian. These changes summarize the major transitions from a pre-industrial to a post-industrial age. While this transition took nearly two centuries in the West, they took less than two decades in the

Philippines. While the new media make virtual consociation possible, these relationships still employ traditional notions of personhood. These changes were too quick to alter existing notions of subjectivity. Hence, westerners are surprised at how quickly their Filipino cyber acquaintances profess affection soon after their initial exchanges. The language of traditional hospitality has been translated into the net. These expressions of profuse affection are part of the ritual discourse of hospitality. Naturally, as in the West, not everything has changed but even persisting structures find themselves in different contexts. Moreover, this shift from talk to text transforms the oral into the textual, generating corresponding changes in the tone of social interaction. The model of social action hitherto based on face-to-face oral exchanges shifts to an exchange of texts whose meanings are more precise but also more constrained. The said replaces the saying (Ricoeur 1971). In face-to-face exchanges, the saying is as important as the said, while in textual exchanges only the said is conveyed. Many features of the awkwardness of face-to-face interactions are eliminated in textual exchanges. Declarations of affection, apologies and other self-revelatory expressions are easier to convey textually than in face-to-face exchanges. But since texts are usually more composed expressions of intent, they may also conceal more deliberately.

If Filipinos can not talk, they text. It is the texting that conveys the message. But in the text, the saying and the said coincide. This creates an ambiguity that

allows multiple meanings to operate at different levels. The locutionary and perlocutionary aspects may differ. An extreme example is provided by Rodel who missed his wife so much when she left to work in Taiwan that he flooded her with over a hundred texts daily protesting his love. Soon after, she refused to answer him and sent messages that she wanted a legal separation. Rodel was so shocked that he stopped texting her altogether. Their relationship improved and presently Rodel hears about his wife through the texts she sends their children.

WE ARE ALL STARS

Pinoy Idol based on American Idol is very popular in the Philippines, as are various reality shows. The conversion of ordinary talents into media stars is a popular aspiration. The invention of the videoke has transformed private performances into public events. Most shopping venues, malls and other public spaces often have videoke machines that allow passersby to display their singing skills. This technology allows people to become, at least for a few minutes, media stars. Private fantasies become public performances. In these performances, the audience is composed of fellow stars.

Most uses of the mobile and even the Internet involve close friends and relatives. Moreover, these exchanges are usually banal and only rarely creative or innovative. Nevertheless they play an important function in continuing and cementing these relationships. They also reinforce the importance of private networks by extending them into hitherto

non-accessible areas of everyday life. This extension of the private into the public is an important feature of Philippine life. The country's leading newspaper commentators frequently use their columns to inform friends and acquaintances of their interests and activities. The notion of an anonymous readership is rarely assumed by Filipino writers.

Others have also noted the provincialism (Rodis 2007) of Filipino journalists. They belong to a small circle of metropolitan commentators who view national events from a local perspective. Their columns are personalized accounts of events meant for like minded acquaintances. Private concerns are often projected as public interests. Journalists are like media stars whose private and public lives are interchangeable. This conflation of private and public is a major aspect of Filipino life. Members of large email groups regularly use them to convey private information appropriate only for selected readers.

TECHNO RELATIONS

In a recent paper, Miller (2007) distinguishes between the use of mobiles to extend already existing relationships such as contacting family members, from uses involving strangers or others not normally accessible without the technology. The former are certainly the main use for Filipinos. Most of the texts they send are to family members or close friends. These involve the exchange of mostly banal information, prompting Koskinen's (2007) comment about the

explosion of banality associated with mobiles. This usage seems to be mainly concerned with confirming already existing ties. However, this confirmation may not have been so easily possible in pre-mobile times so the technology can still be seen to have introduced new conditions of possibility. Already existing relationships are extended beyond earlier possibilities. An effect of the telephone, once it became a common domestic technology was its use in maintaining close family ties, particularly between mothers and daughters in an age when mobility was separating hitherto spatially close kin (Erwin 2000, de Sola 1977). Ironically, this physical distance may have facilitated an emotional closeness that was unnecessary in earlier days. The telephone maintained pre-existing relationships but also gave these relationships a novel twist, transforming spatial distance into emotional closeness. Ling (2008) has recently argued that mobile messages perform important ritual functions in societies where meaning has lost much of its collective significance. Banal but regular text messages provide the ritual context that give meaning to otherwise unconnected individuals.

We observed the same transformation in the Philippines. Filipinos rarely express emotional closeness in face-to-face communication. But they regularly send texts to relatives and friends expressing their affection, love and devotion. Informants admitted how much easier it was to express these feelings through texting. Others have noted how romance is now mainly conducted through texting (Solis 2006). The mobile also facilitates

reconciliation since it allows both parties to admit fault and ask for forgiveness, an awkward and difficult thing to conduct face-to-face. Others also report similar instances of young people terminating relationships via SMS, the most serious being young Filipinos who text before committing suicide (*The Philippine Star* 29 June 2006). Malaysian Muslims (Wednesday, 11 July 2001, 14:00 GMT 15:00 UK *Anger over mobile divorce ruling* B.B.C.) may now divorce their wives simply by sending the appropriate text message. These are all examples where the technology, while extending or terminating an existing relationship also transforms it through its conditions of possibility. While, as the Nokia ad asserts, mobiles connect, they also disconnect. Just like the earlier telephone, the facility of communication now makes it imperative to regularly connect simply to maintain existing ties. This compulsion to communicate has given rise to an explosion of the banal.

Miller (2007) also mentions using mobiles not so much to extend but also to initiate an otherwise improbable relationship. Miller distinguishes between existing relationships continued on the mobile from those either initiated or only made possible through mobiles. It is common in the Philippines to receive texts from complete strangers. Many respond and sometimes these exchanges generate new relationships. Actual meetings are referred to as eye-balling and they sometimes result in stable friendships. However, as often, both parties seem as interested in the texting itself as they are in the emerging

relationship. They are not necessarily interested in meeting (eye-balling) but continue to text one another regularly. In this case, they relate primarily through texting or what Miller argues is a relationship with the object itself, such as a mobile. These relationships with material objects are common enough (e.g. men with their cars, women with shoes). Whether the relationship is with the mobile or with the activity it allows a moot point. What is certain is that cars and shoes become important extensions of their owners. People take special care of their mobiles, treating them as extensions of the self or as ritualized objects. The important thing is that the mobile allows for virtual relationships hitherto not possible.

TRANSFORMING TECHNOLOGIES

The examples to be discussed below are not unique or new since similar cases have been discussed in the literature. Cybersex, virtual identities, online marriages and sensorial extensions enabled by CMICT have been a major topic of earlier discussions. What distinguishes these cases is that they occur in a particular cultural context not originally figured in the technology. They are incidental and unintended consequences of technology.

Vilma, a retired school teacher keeps her mobile on 'a small soft chair on my headboard. The acetate angel guards my phone that is made more visible by white backlights' (Pertierra et al. 2002:64). Vilma has named her mobile Linus, after her favorite comic character. While Linus has his blanket,

Vilma has her mobile – these objects provide comfort and security to their owners.

Mane was devastated when he lost his mobile. 'My cellphone was stolen last night. I had not realized how integral my cellphone is to my life until now...I could not sleep last night...I kept thinking and thinking about what has happened...My cellphone is, of course, a communication tool...But that is not its most important feature. It is so highly personalized...it is like I lost a chunk of myself' (Pertierra et al. 2002:68).

These cases indicate how integral the mobile has become in people's lives. Being retired, Vilma misses her colleagues but her cellphone reconnects her with old friends. She treats it like a trusted companion. Mane also depends heavily on his mobile. It projects his image, displaying how cool he is: 'I feel naked when I do not have it.' The mobile becomes an extension of and envelope for him.

Sarah worked in Hong Kong for several years but returned to her village when she discovered that her husband was frittering away her remittances on his own pleasures. She separated from her husband and is working in a nearby town while awaiting her permit to return to Hong Kong. To wile away her time and to dispel her frequent bouts of depression, Sarah texts. When she does not have her mobile, Sarah loses her interest in texting. But when the mobile is returned she resumes her frenzied texting. When asked what the cellphone does for her, does she feel any different without the cellphone, she replies: 'Yes, if there is no cellphone, I also do not think of my boyfriend. My daughter borrowed my

cellphone for a month; I did not look for him – never mind I said. But if I have the cellphone with me and no load, I feel that I must load' (Pertierra 2006:110).

MANAGING INFORMATION OVERLOAD

In an earlier publication (Pertierra 2006), I argued that the mobile represents a technology of transformation. It not only alters our relationship with the physical world but also shapes our notion of an innerself. While other technologies mainly affect our capacity to transform nature, the mobile is primarily concerned with transforming culture through communicative practices. While not denying its instrumental uses, like the telephone, its use in communicating banalities or the ordinary aspects of everyday life is an equally important function. In an age characterized by information overload, with its excess of meaning but lack of sense, banality, as Koskinen (2007) and Ling (2008) argue, performs a useful role. It gives us a sense of reassurance in an otherwise chaotic and incomprehensible world. In a world replete with meanings, only banalities make sense.

But like many other technologies, the mobile also possesses its own agency. More accurately, technologies allow human agency to be exercised and extended into new domains. Communication technologies in particular, retain a close association with human subjectivity, often resembling tools as much as machines. Other

technologies introduce new experiences which then become incorporated as part of the lifeworld. The rise of the railways required the standardization of schedules and consequently of time. While the first trains were seen as disrupting the natural rhythms of the countryside, they soon provided a framework for rural life. With their fast but smooth travel, they also provided new perspectives for admiring the landscape (Holmes 2005). Speed, as Virilio (1986) argued, is not only a relationship to material space but also to our sense of attachment. These are arguments for a form of technological determinism, whose consequences are often unpredictable. Technologies open new conditions of possibility which are unexpected and irresistible but which in time are absorbed as part of ordinary human experience.

LOVE ON THE NET

Arnold and Miguel continued their relationship while Arnold studied abroad. Their virtual relationship extended former elements but introduced new ones, thus transforming the resulting relationship.

My online relationship with Miguel has evolved from having a tightly organized routine to a more spontaneous one. During the first three months in Hong Kong, I stayed in the library everyday to wait for our chat session that started at 6 pm. In addition, we emailed each other in the morning to say "I love you" and to inform each other of the day's activities. During our chat, we frequently vowed our love for one another, talked about what we did during the day and our plans for the next.

The Miguel on my computer screen is different from the 'real' Miguel. In a sense, I find the former more appealing than the latter. His face is sweeter on cam, his skin more smooth, and I do not see the imperfections in his body that I notice when I am with him. He frames the camera so that his face looks smaller and more boyish. Filmmakers have long known how to make people look more attractive on screen than they really are. The image is often more beautiful than the real.

Surprisingly, my interaction with Miguel online has not become more intellectual or more intense. We basically chat about old topics – what music he likes, how he travels home, what he has for dinner, etc. The experiencing of Miguel in my computer screen is totally unlike experiencing Miguel corporeally. When I am with Miguel, he is the most important person in my life. In contrast, when he is online, Miguel consists of a small yahoo messenger window which occupies a fraction in my computer screen. At the same time as chatting with him, I also chat with other people – sister, strangers, friends or read the news, listen to music. Miguel is transformed into a world of words and pictures, as part of other words and images on my screen. My textual response to him is at the same level as my reply to an email or my need to read the news (Pertierra 2006:123).

The account above reveals several changes in the relationship between Arnold and Miguel. These changes may be attributed to the very process of communication. To begin with their exchanges are routinized and soon become predictable. The ease with which they can connect makes this event quickly

banal, in the absence of more creative strategies. These exchanges are mainly textual, with occasional images and emotions. In other words, the relationship comes under more critical awareness and control. Following Ricoeur (1971), the model of the text generates the communicative exchange and hence the social relationship.

Arnold and Miguel continue their sexual encounters online and certain aspects stimulate both partners equally. Miguel appears more physically attractive online than in the flesh, certain features such as penile size, skin smoothness and musculature are enhanced. They imagine and hence experience themselves as more exciting lovers.

But these communicational encounters are only part of Arnold's attention since he often maintains several conversations simultaneously. These include his sisters and other friends. Miguel is sometimes reduced to being a small window in the computer screen. This image competes for attention with others such as email or the news. Online, Miguel is no longer the center of Arnold's gaze. Today, face-to-face meetings are regularly interrupted by mobile calls and other intervening events. Following Fortunati (2005), face-to-face interactions are already embedded in mediated communication structures. We are surrounded by images, sounds and messages that impinge on and mediate face-to-face encounters.

Modern technology has allowed Arnold and Miguel to continue their relationship despite being separated by

hundreds of kilometers. They can enjoy an intimate visual co-presence. In a way, it is as though they are still in Manila communicating daily by telephone. Some aspects of their relationship have remained the same while others have changed. The problem of banality that threatens most routine relationships also presents itself online. Arnold seems to be better able to deal with it than when confronted by Miguel's physical presence. In some ways online relationships allow for greater emotional frankness but they also facilitate deception. Many online relationships base themselves on previously existing ones but they also add new and unforeseeable elements. According to Constable (2005) crosscultural communication is facilitated online, making possible amorous quests that earlier may have been awkward or impossible. Filipino and Chinese women are able to initiate relationships with Westerners, difficult in normal circumstances. Cyber relationships involve a certain detachment or corporeal absence that encourages tentative discursive commitments. Differences are initially effaced and only gradually introduced as the communication process proceeds. But physical presence, when interlocutors finally meet, may create other difficulties.

Arnold is better able to craft his responses to Miguel when not confronted with the latter's physicality. Face-to-face communication involves simultaneous symbolic exchanges on several levels, the linguistic, visual, phatic, semiotic and proxemic. These communicative

exchanges operate on distinct codes and are more difficult to consciously and deliberately coordinate. While this form of communication is perhaps the most satisfying, it is also the most unpredictable (Heim 1991). Online exchanges reduce this capacity for simultaneous messages and bring the communication act under more conscious control. It also facilitates deception because motives can be disguised or unacknowledged.

INTERNET CAFES

Internet Cafés have become a common feature of most Philippine cities. People in Tuguegarao, a small city north of Manila use these cafés to remain in contact with friends and family abroad, to supplement the meager resources of local libraries, play games, search for porn, access useful information and as a place to meet friends. Janna is a young married woman (de Leon 2007: 68):

I go to the Internet café to download software, music videos, games and also to play with other gamers who I now consider friends. Actually I feel more 'free' in Internet cafés since I could open and browse any site I wish to visit. Although my personal computer is protected with several anti-viruses, I am still very cautious, especially that all important files are stored in it. My husband and I love online or network gaming and we do it in the Internet shop. Battle Realms, DOTA and Need for Speed Underground are a few of our favorites. We like to compete with each other and since we have only one computer at home, we go to net cafés to play. I tried playing alone, but I get bored easy. With someone to compete

with (not the computer), I can really be motivated to do well and win. One time I beat my husband, he got all boos, and hurrahs for me, he suddenly turned red because of embarrassment. I pitied him but I was too overwhelmed by the other gamers' applauses.

From then on, everybody wanted to play with me but I never beat my husband again...it is a matter of choice. I am actually withdrawn around people but in my constant visit to Internet cafés I eventually gained friends especially those I played with. Most of them are males and in their late teens. Considering my personality I did not imagine I could be friends with them. Our interest in computer/online games creased out unfriendly encounters.

For Janna, the Internet Café is a new domain for exploring new relationships as well as for asserting new aspects of herself. She feels more confident in the Café and meets new friends. Her relationship with her husband takes on a more egalitarian aspect even as she continues to defer to him in important ways. But it is the capacity to form new friendships both online and on site that the Café exercises generative powers. Married Filipinas are very circumspect about relationships with young men unrelated to them. That Janna feels comfortable in befriending her Internet buddies indicates a new sense of individual confidence. The important thing is to contain these relationships within their appropriate sites, in this case the Internet Café. In this sense we can say that Janna's relationships are virtual in two senses—because they occur in cyberspace and because they are limited to the Internet Café.

CYBER-COSMOPOLITANISM

Filipina mail order brides were a common, if controversial, issue during the 1980s and 1990s. Much of the controversy eventually died down as these contracted marriages generally fared no worse than more conventional ones. However, this issue has been resurrected in association with female trafficking. The Internet greatly facilitates transnational marriages and includes the possibility of exploiting unwary users. Nevertheless, online marriages have become increasingly common and are now part of the wide repertoire of conventional courtship. Chen (2004) has studied Taiwanese online marriage sites. They combine traditional features such as marriage brokers with new technologies like the Internet. Clients are able to meet their possible brides online and arrange quick visits to Vietnam to meet their families. These sites are a response to shifts in marriage practices among Taiwanese women who are no longer willing to accept the traditional burdens of marriage. On the other hand, Vietnamese women are keen to improve their economic prospects and are willing to marry Taiwanese men. These marriages are arranged according to traditional rural custom except that the brides are recruited overseas. Chen argues that while these marriages conform to previous practices, their increasing commercialization poses new problems. In this case the Internet opens itself not only to new marital possibilities but also to new forms of economic exploitation.

Imee is another frequent user of Internet Cafés. She had a bad marriage and uses the Internet to make new friends online. She claims that the Internet made her less lonely and opened possibilities for new relationships.

I met Roger, a black American affiliated with NBC, on a certain website. After a few emails and night chats, he came to the Philippines twice and we had a great time. But after a year, the flame just died down. And then I met Brian (from Victoria, Canada) from the same website, but we chat only as friends. Realizing I could be happy with someone else, I filed for annulment/presumptive death. (Her husband had disappeared years earlier)

It was December 2005 when I met my second (soon-to-be) husband, Marc (Australian-based French chef), at match.com.au. We started exchanging messages, pictures even sharing our experiences and life stories. We came to know each other mainly through the Internet. After three months of exchanging emails, talking on the net and chatting, Marc came to the Philippines and professed his love. That was then I knew this is not a dream. Then, I brought him with me to Cagayan where he met my family, friends and relatives. Next thing I knew, I was flying with him to Australia (de Leon 2007: 74).

De Leon (2007: 72) also provides an example of how the Internet has expanded the world of deaf Filipinos like Flora:

‘Though I do not chat with normal people, the fact that I could use the Internet the way they use it, I do not feel neglected or isolated at all. When I’m on the net I do not feel disabled or

left out. The Internet opened doors for me. Before, I had very few people whom I can call friends. With the Internet, I was able to meet other people like me. My circle of friends widened – from everywhere in the Philippines to people abroad. I often share my problems with them since they can connect with me given the fact that we are in the same condition.

I have a cellphone but I still prefer the Internet to talk with my friends. It is a lot easier that way. I just log on to my account in camfrog.com and with a webcam, my friends and I can talk (through sign language) for hours. I am a regular customer here [Internet café] and I start chatting usually from 10 in the morning to around 4 or 5 in the afternoon. So you see, I spend most of my time with friends, though in a mediated way, I still feel that we are actually 'conversing' face-to-face.

I did not go to a school for the hearing impaired, that explains my weakness in using the cellphone and the keyboard. I'm not textual. I am not familiar with the alphabet and I use Filipino Sign Language (FSL) since I'm not educated. In the Center, they teach the American Sign Language (ASL). So when I chat with friends, we do the FSL of course with a webcam. And when I have to ride a tricycle, I let my other friends who know the alphabet write down the address of wherever I'm going and just show it to the driver.

Web cameras provide Flora with a 'window on everyday life' not otherwise accessible. 'Through it, everyday life and mediation become integrated and metonymic since the filming of everyday life, as well as providing a window on the life of the protagonist, also includes the camera as an actor in the network of

relations' (de Leon 2007: 74). The camera both mediates and is an integral part of the relationship. As in the case of Miguel and Arnold, this mediation may increase the intensity of experience by highlighting perceived elements.

CONCLUSION

While the more extreme predictions about the new media have proved to be unfounded, it appears that social relationships are changing significantly. Previous spatio-temporal barriers preventing communications have been surmounted, often in unpredictable ways. These changes are taking place simultaneously at a global level but with distinct emphasis. Both the extent and the speed of these changes are unprecedented. Moreover, we are both privileged observers and participants in these changes. Durkheim predicted that new spheres of sociality would accompany changes in the signification of difference and in the corresponding generation of affinity. It seems that Durkheim was right. There has been an explosion of new socialities both actual and virtual. These socialities connect physical bodies with their cyber equivalents. They involve corporeal and postcorporeal identities, strange hybridities and new psychopathologies such as Internet addiction, cyber rape, endo-cannibalism and suicide texters. However, most of these new differences are easily incorporated within recontextualized structures. But, contrary to Durkheimian functionalist theory, societal forces are now as likely to induce

change as to restore stability. System autopoiesis is increasingly capable of absorbing change as part of its operationability. In Bauman's terms, societies are in a condition of dynamic fluidity.

As a consequence of these global forces, the Philippines can no longer be described as a local, orally-based society. Locality and orality still play important roles in contemporary life but they no longer exhaust its possibilities. Most Filipinos still mainly trust friends and relatives but others, including strangers are entering this circle of trust. The case of Imee, while not yet common, indicates how strangers now more routinely enter into peoples' lives. Janna and others regularly interact with their text or chatmates, leading to new relationships. In these encounters they often reveal aspects of themselves not generally shared even with friends or family members. Flora, who can only communicate using Filipino sign language, uses the webcam to maintain and expand her circle of deaf friends. The webcam is her window to a new virtual world.

Texting has become a common way both of continuing and expanding social relationships. It is part of a new form of courtship. With established friends, it allows for intimate exchanges normally shunned in direct conversation. With textmates, it opens a virtual world with

new possibilities. These cases indicate that the virtual must now be included as part of the actual. Spatial boundaries formerly limiting interaction have been effectively transcended, including previous barriers such as unfamiliarity and strangeness. The unfamiliar and the stranger are now routinely incorporated into many people's lives. But the local persists. Hence the new reality may best be called local cosmopolitanism.

The new media have made new forms of sociality possible. Unlike earlier forms, mostly confined to physical co-presence, the sphere of the social significantly extends co-presence, to include its virtual expressions. Virtual co-presence elicits new forms of the presentation of self, including expressions of intimacy. It also encourages explorations of new relationships and identities. Moreover, virtual co-presence occurs in the context of physical co-presence, where friends congregate in Internet Cafés, sharing virtual relationships with their cohorts. Bodies remain in place but with new meanings. In this new cyber and ethereal world, Marx's prediction—all that is solid melts into air—has taken on new significances. As in the past, new prophets will announce the beginning of redemption. Perhaps, the millenarian and chiliastic claims of cyber theorists are indications of these new age prophets.

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A STUDY OF INTERNET CAFÉS: IDENTITY, FREEDOM AND COMMUNICATIVE EXTENSION

Kristinne Joyce Lara-de Leon

This research is a descriptive-qualitative study of Internet usage and its sociocultural consequences in a small Philippine city. It describes the consequences on identity, freedom, communication. It answers the following specific questions; (1) Who uses Internet Cafés? (2) How do these individuals use the Internet? (3) What effects does it have on the users' attitudes and worldviews? (4) What are the social interactions within Internet Cafés?

Despite the low penetration rate of the Internet in the Philippines (eight percent) as compared to mobile phones (35 percent), this technology entered and blended into the routines of everyday life. First, the results of this study show that the distinction between the actual and the virtual has become blurred. Secondly, the blurring and blending of the virtual-actual has led into new ways of self-exploration. Lastly, the expansion of Internet cafés opens up Tuguegarao City to the possible emergence of new and global forms of relationships.

Keywords: Internet cafés, identity, freedom, sociality

Ethnographic studies of Internet cafés, such as the study by Miller and Slater (2000), investigate how technologies, such as the computer and the Internet, are assimilated into everyday life. A detailed study of what people find in the Internet, how they relate to it, and how they consume the technology (i.e., how they use its features and possibilities) furthers our understanding of technology and its assimilation in everyday life.

Studying a particular instance of this assimilation will provide the basis for wider generalizations and theoretical elaboration. As Miller and Slater (2000, 1) write, "one can use this particularism as a solid grounding for comparative ethnography."

In the case of Tuguegarao, the results of the study are generalizable since our subjects are mostly unexceptional. Tuguegarao is described as "rurban" rather than urban because of its persisting rural attitude and lifestyle. Modern life is only experienced in the center of the city, where the infrastructure supports its practice. In contrast, life in Tuguegarao's periphery is still mostly agricultural and traditional.

The results of this ethnographic study of Internet use in Tuguegarao indicate how people convert a technology—seen as cold, rigid, and lifeless—as a part of their everyday lives, playing an important role in binding and maintaining not only familial ties but also romantic and friendly relations, transforming personalities,

TABLE 1 EFFECTS OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATIONS (CMCs) ON THE INFORMANTS' LIVES

Key Informants*	Effects of the New Media
Gretchen, 20	Expands friendships or social network Maintains relationship with family and relatives abroad
Janna, 28	Fosters relationship with husband and daughter Develops and improves interpersonal relationship Satisfies desires and needs
Genuine, 15	Understands sexuality Expands friendships or social network Finds support online
Bryan, 22	Strengthens sexuality Develops personality Expands friendships or social network
Jay-r, 10	Expands friendships or social network Maintains relationship with relatives abroad Fosters relationship with neighbors (who do not belong in his age group)
Imee, 42	Finds love online and travels abroad Expands friendship/social network
Ross, 20, and his friends Sheila and Pat, 16	Expands friendships or social network Aids in communication Facilitates learning of the alphabet
Flora, 25	Expands friendships or social network Finds own community online
Jayson, 15	Strengthens sexuality Expands friendship/social network

* Except for Genuine and Jay-r, the names of the other key informants have been changed.

developing sexualities, reflecting on identity and achieving desires (see table 1). As Miller and Slater (2000) claim, users have a "natural affinity" for the Internet. Even the scale and speed of diffusion of the technology is remarkable as business people feel the demand for it. From 105 Internet shops as of September 2006, the number has reached approximately 150. This mirrors the natural fitting of the technology into the people's mundane, everyday activities and transforming older

forms of sociability, often deviating from earlier conventions.

INTERNET CAFÉS: ETHOS AND SOCIALITY

Internet café A

Internet café A typifies most Internet cafés in Tuguegarao. It has ten terminals, each unit equipped with PC accessories like cameras and headphones which are generally used for chatting and gaming.

It is located next to a Catholic university where other Internet shops are gradually mushrooming. The place is air-conditioned, making it more attractive to users. It offers services like Internet surfing, scanning, printing, CD (compact disc) burning, computer sales and repair, tutorials, encoding, and gaming. Games often played are Battle Realms, Freestyle, Pangya, Need 4 Speed, and Frozen Throne. Since its main customers are students, it charges a minimal fee of twenty pesos per hour. It opens at eight in the morning and closes at nine or ten in the evening everyday, even during typhoons and town fiestas (a holiday when most of the shops are closed). Student-users often request that it should be open all night especially when school requirements are due.

Internet café A employs two assistants (a female and a male) in their early twenties. The male assistant, a cousin of the owner, usually makes the financial decisions (e.g. who will be given discounts) especially when the owner is away. Both assistants befriend their customers—students, professionals, *tambay*, and everyone who visits the shop.

The impression in café A suggests a sociable atmosphere since most of their customers come from the same age group and university. Albeit small in size, users as well as onlookers enjoy virtual and physical sociality. While users are busy surfing, chatting, or gaming, onlookers are entertained and usually comment on the others' work.

Much sociability is observed in café A. With constant contact (seeing each other in the university and in the café), almost all users know each other and eventually become chatmates, game mates and "Friendsters," which may sometimes evolve into deeper relationships. Regular customers usually chat with the assistants or with other users, usually asking what is new (in the games, Youtube, and Friendster) or how big their credit is, before opening their own internet sites. Once surfing, chatting, or gaming has begun, users talk with the people around them and greet those who have just entered. Conversing with people inside the café continues even after a user has paid his bills. These and the cases of the key informants that will be discussed in this study show that although corporeal sociability is dominant, it supports and enhances virtual interaction, which in turn further encourages and builds up physical interaction. The link between the virtual and corporeal is mutually reinforced.

Internet café B

Café B, as opposed to café A, is much bigger in size. It has two floors – the first floor has sixteen terminals while the second has twenty-six. Both floors are air-conditioned. Each unit is equipped with PC (personal computer) accessories like web cameras and headsets; however, the web camera is rented out for ten pesos per hour. It offers services like Internet surfing, printing, CD burning, gaming, computer repair, and other extended services like designing all kinds of invitations, making certificates, and even

selling PC accessories. They also sell snacks and softdrinks to users. The owner, however, has decided to expand the food business by putting up a stall located in front of the café selling ice-cold juices and shakes, which is usually crowded with customers.

Gaming is among the top income earners of most Internet cafés in Tuguegarao; hence, almost all cafés offer gaming and usually updates games for the game enthusiasts.

Café B has four to five assistants because of its larger size. The owner stays at the café most of the time and usually sleeps there. Although most users of café B are students, there are many non-students—medical representatives, office workers, teachers, housewives, and tricycle drivers. The café opens at eight in the morning and closes at eleven in the evening to allow the medical representatives (who are major customers) to transmit their daily reports.

Compared to café A, student users of café B come from different schools. Even students from the barrios outside Tuguegarao prefer café B because of its strategic location. In café B, very few physical interactions among users were observed because of its spatial layout. Each terminal has curtains which serve as divisions—which is not typical in Tuguegarao. This setup allows for more privacy and less interaction among users as they are confined to these “private” spaces. Those who wish not to be disturbed prefer to stay upstairs. Possibly, the privacy in café B allows for the exploration of less conventional interests.

The difference between the two cafés lies in the kind of sociability it generates. Because of the difference in their spatial layout, café A encourages as much physical as virtual interaction. This also affects the manner the researcher was treated. In café A – the researcher played the role of the assistants. At first, users hesitantly sought the researcher’s help but after a week she was accepted. The users included her in their Friendster lists and electronic address books and even asked her to join in their games. Unfortunately, she was not as good as they were. The purpose of these interactions was not to win games but trust.

In café B, however, it was difficult to blend in, as users often do not interact with one another. Once they sit in their chosen terminals, they are lost in their own worlds. Even if they come in groups, they tend to block their social space from other people inside the café. Although the researcher pretended to be one of the assistants, she was regarded more as an observer. Activities of assistants in café B were more limited compared to those in café A. There exists an unspoken convention of not interacting with users unless asked to.

For the reasons above, the researcher encountered difficulties in gaining the trust of informants in café B. But with increasing familiarity, and with the help of common friends (my identity as a teacher/student/researcher had to be validated), key informants eventually agreed to share their experiences. Giving a background of the research and assuring confidentiality helped in convincing them to become informants.

DYNAMICS OF MEDIATION

Respondents in Tuguegarao present an optimistic perception of the technology. Although some users express their concern about the dangers of the Internet, they are not condemnatory of the new media. Informants are more concerned about how the Internet improves their personality and fulfills their desires. As users bring the Internet into their everyday life-world, the binary real-virtual disappears and the medium becomes a conduit for desires and a source of information for complex problems.

Internet users join in networks or online groups on the basis of shared interests and values, such as Genuine joining gay chatrooms and Flora joining sites for the deaf. They look for virtual friends who sometimes become actual friends. Online friends become a support community for those experiencing prejudice and isolation. For Flora and Genuine, their virtual friends give them the support often lacking in actual life. Genuine, a gay high school student recounts:

I began using the Internet two years ago when my friends introduced me to the web. Having seen its usefulness, I made it a part of my everyday life. I visit the Internet café twice a day from Mondays to Sundays. I do a lot of things on the Internet, but most of all, I love logging on to Fabolous.com, a chat facility for people who have doubts about their sexuality. Here, you can find different kinds of people—from “straight” to bisexuals and homosexuals. This is actually a very

good site for people who want to be in touch with their sexuality, that is, understanding the so called “third sex.” You can get pieces of advice, even unsolicited advice, from people in this website especially on how to deal with people who often misunderstand us; and I can say that it has made me a better person.

My chatmates are both gays and lesbians and they come from different places—Manila, Bicol, Singapore, Malaysia. With constant chatting, we have become good friends like my “real” friends in school. We share secrets, our dirtiest deeds, love life, interests, dislikes, and everything we have in mind. I am true to my virtual friends; I do not pose as somebody else on the web. I think, and I can also feel, that my virtual friends are likewise honest. The idea of creating a different person on the web is exciting but my attempts to do so always fail since I am very tactless, I end up leaving nothing for myself. They listen and respond to my problems, especially about school, family, and oftentimes the discriminating look of other people. Like my “real” friends, we also have misunderstandings at times but we patch things up easily.

Though we have not met yet, I think they are as good as my “real” friends. In fact, I spend more time with them, through the Internet, than with my “real” friends. They seem more truthful than my high school friends.

Yes, I feel a sense of community online. Actually, you can find more people with whom you share the same characteristics in chatrooms than in “real” life. For me, I felt more loved and more bonded with friends online than off-line. And my circle of friends grew.

In this study, the Internet proved to have provided “safe” spaces where those who are marginalized in society can communicate and connect without the burdens or restrictions imposed in their physical communities. Some researchers (e.g. Bakardjieva and Smith 2001) have found that the Internet enables people with disability to connect and build online communities with those who have similar conditions. This is true for Flora, a deaf person:

I chat with people of the same condition and the website, Camfrog.com, facilitates conversing with them. Meeting people who are like me makes me feel secure and part of a “society.” Having them comforts me. I have few friends who are not deaf and I can see that they are having difficulties communicating with me, especially since I do not use my cell phone that much, so I prefer people who are like me. For me, the Internet is my way to connect with other deaf persons as well as with the outside world.

Moreover, the “technology of the Internet has empowered ‘boxed in’ ordinary people to transcend certain limitations of their situations and to open up spaces for meaningful individual and collective action and creativity” (Bakardjieva and Smith 2001: 80). As Flora relates:

Though I do not chat with normal people, the fact that I can use the Internet the way they use it, I do not feel neglected or isolated at all. When I am logged on to the Internet, I do not feel disabled or left out. The Internet opened doors for me. Before, I had very

few people whom I can call friends. With the Internet, I was able to meet other people who are like me. My circle of friends widened—from people everywhere in the Philippines to those abroad. I often share with them my problems since they can relate with me because we are in the same condition.

I have a cell phone but I still prefer the Internet to talk with my friends. It is a lot easier that way. I just log on to my account in Camfrog.com and with a web camera, my friends and I can talk through sign language for hours. I am a regular customer here [Internet café] and I start chatting usually from ten in the morning to around four or five in the afternoon. So you see, I spend most of my time with friends, though in a mediated way. I still feel that we are actually “conversing” face-to-face.

I did not go to a school for the hearing impaired; that explains my weakness in using the cell phone and the keyboard. I am not textual. I am not familiar with the alphabet and I use Filipino Sign Language (FSL) since I am not educated. In the Center, they teach the American Sign Language (ASL). So when I chat with friends, we do the FSL, of course with a web camera. And when I have to ride a tricycle, I let my other friends who know the alphabet write down the address of wherever I am going and I just show it to the driver.

The mobile phone and the Internet also link and maintain transnational families and populations. Filipinos are part of an extensive diaspora, which is indicated in their cellphone directories and their use of email and Friendster. Most of these are relatives and close friends but sometimes also include ‘strangers.’

Apart from its uses for the Diaspora, the new communication technology also expands one's social network, including "strangers." This attitude of adding and entertaining "strangers" is very recent. As a consequence, social relationships become more cosmopolitan.

DYNAMICS OF FREEDOM AND OBJECTIFICATION

The freedom offered by the Internet opens up ways of blurring the actual-virtual. For instance, in games, Jay-r, Imee, and the other gamers see themselves as stronger in real life when assuming a specific role in their respective computer games. Jay-r relates:

DOTA [Defense of the Ancients], Battle Realms, Counterstrike, Ragnarok and NBA Live are just few of my favorite PC games. Some people say these [first three mentioned] are too violent for me, but I do not really mind. I love war games, they involve power and mental ability. I usually get some attention when I am winning and I like it very much. Inside the Internet café, people know you when you win. I also get to play with college students and other older guys in school and in the neighborhood. When it comes to gaming, age does not matter. The gamers focus on how you win, your game tactics. I can say that gaming builds one's self-confidence. Now I can interact with older people as if they are my age; we discuss different game strategies, upcoming games, LANsomnia, and other stuffs about gaming. I gained a lot of friends, mostly [a lot] older than me and I met them all in the Internet café. If not for online/computer gaming we may not be friends now.

When we play, we do "shop-to-shop." meaning we contact other gamers in other Internet cafés to play with us online. Contacting is through our cell phones. I do not have a cell phone so my friends contact them. Communication during a game is done through in-game chats and sometimes through texting as we have friends who have chosen to watch do the texting. We group ourselves together—gamers in the same shop belong to one group. And then we start killing each other. It is fun doing this; it is like bonding with your friends and friends of your friends. This way, my circle of friends expands.

Here, they are bringing VL into RL. Whereas in the case of Flora and Genuine, as they look for friends or support communities online, they bring RL into VL but still consider VL as RL. This mirrors interaction between the virtual and actual worlds as users may see themselves inside computer screens; however, they are still aware of the life-world in which they are anchored. Though fantasies are possible, informants' use of the Internet reflects Saloma's (2005) claim on the primacy of the everyday life-world.

On the other hand, cyber activism also manifests freedom in cyberspace as activists may post claims, arguments, and rhetoric in a manner they like. The technology is democratic, providing "safe" spaces for people who want to express themselves but are afraid to do so. Anonymity in the Internet makes possible freedom of expression often curtailed in so-called democracies like the Philippines.

This study also touched on the gendering of the technology. Women, because of online games displaying violence and “unwomanly” activities, tend to be passive observers rather than active users. However, some users like Janna, Imee, Gretchen, and Flora, have found interesting ways to access the technology. Friendster, blogs, chat facilities, “friendly” games, even sites that entertain women are some features of the Internet that have increased women’s use of the technology.

DYNAMICS OF POSITIONING

Like the Internet and the mobile phones, CMCs are extensions of the body, literally and figuratively. The mobile phone, in particular, becomes an extended part of the body often giving its user/owner a sense of being fashionable, like Sheila who wears her cell phone as part of her being *fashionista*. Changing cellphone fascia gives the user a “personality,” making them feel unique (Horst and Miller 2006).

Similarly, the web camera is important for Internet users. During online communications, informants tend to use the web camera to transform the “as if real” into “truly real.” Users, however, still consider the “as if real” as real, since the web camera captures real-time occurrences though people are in different spatiotemporal locations. These technologies (the Internet, mobile phone, and web camera), as manifested by the informants’ experiences, make the absent present.

The camera also adds excitement to relationships since it makes possible alternative and “creative” sex as exemplified by Imee’s experience. Here, sex is experimented using the technology, and for Imee the experience is worth repeating. Having sex with a partner using the technology also provides new ways of experiencing pleasure. But what is significant is that for the informants, web cameras add up to the “reality,” “presence,” and “intimacy” of the communication.

CMCs also facilitate learning especially for the deaf. As they are exposed to these technologies, their “communication skills” are improved—from simple speech (i.e., pidgin), the deaf are now experimenting with their “language,” constantly shifting from ASL to FSL and vice versa. More significantly, they learn the alphabet through texting and chatting with family members, relatives, friends, and “strangers.” Thus, their teachers in the Center for the Hearing Impaired are grateful to the technology since it facilitated the training of deaf students to communicate with deaf and nondeaf persons. As some deaf informants relate:

When we get interested in people, whether hearing or deaf, we approach them courageously to ask for their cell phone numbers and after a few hours, we become textmates. Sometimes, our textmates initiate communication but most of the time, we make the first move usually by texting “Can we be textmates?” We do not usually get rejected since people, especially the hearing, are interested in deaf people

like us. But yes, we reject other textmates when we do not find them attractive, friendly, or intelligent. [Intelligence is gauged based on everyday activities. For instance, people who do not know how to use the cell phone are considered not intelligent.]

We text purely in English though at times we combine it with Tagalog. We learned few Tagalog words with constant communication with the hearing. With our textmates, we talk about family and school but more often we talk about relationships, like if they have girlfriends or boyfriends. We text only during class breaks, when we get home at night, and on weekends. Our teachers and parents as well are strict about cell phone use so during times when we do not have textmates nor important things to text, we leave our cell phones at home and reply to whoever texted only when we get home. However at times, we intentionally bring it to school to teach our classmates who are *bobo* [dumb or stupid] in using the cell phone.

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION

Based on the foregoing findings, Internet cafés even in small provincial localities are becoming very popular. In a “rurban” area like Tuguegarao, cafés have become places of information, banter, and sociality. This study supports Pertierra’s (2006) as well as Miller and Slater’s (2000) claim about the significance of the Internet, as seen in the sociocultural consequences of the technology among provincial users. It also highlights the importance of the café in the users’ lives. This emphasis is sustained by the different experiences of key

informants. Genuine, Imee, and Flora, for instance, may not be typical members of the café; however, the Internet has significantly affected their lives. While technologies can be used in traditional ways; it can also be used to innovate such as looking for partners or exploring one’s sexuality. This capacity of real-time interaction offered by the technology enables one to do things one has never done before. In this sense, technology has the potential for radicalization.

The results of the study are significant for several issues, three of which (actual-virtual, self-exploration, and sociality) are addressed briefly. First, the results of this study show that the distinction between the actual and the virtual has become blurred. The experiences of the respondents (i.e., Genuine, Jay-r, Imee, and Janna) manifest this, as they tend to incorporate virtual activities and relationships into everyday life-world and vice versa. This means that the virtual becomes part of the actual or the real; hence, it is difficult to identify or separate these worlds. The Internet does not necessarily displace the life-world. As Saloma (2005) argues, in a culture of simulation, the boundaries between the real (actual) and the virtual are being eroded by experiences of technology and everyday life.

To a great extent, information technology applications, the Internet in particular, have become transformative for users in Tuguegarao. Although very few have access to the Internet, the sociocultural consequences are nevertheless remarkable. However,

having claimed how easily the technology has been incorporated by their users, this technology remains inaccessible to the majority of the town's inhabitants. The Internet, even cafés, are exotic technologies since access is limited only to the *centro* (center of the locality) where cafés are found.

Saloma (2005) examines a group of youth on the privileged side of the digital divide. She argues that cyberspace sociality is anchored in the everyday life-world. Her respondents' consumption of the technology is reflected in their construction of cyberspace sociality vis-à-vis everyday life-world. This particular youth group belongs to the privileged side of the digital divide and has access to the latest information and communications technology.

On the other hand, provincial users in Tuguegarao are experiencing both anchoring and de-anchoring of the technology. Internet cafés have provided safe spaces where one can engage in different socialities, thereby creating means of domesticating the technology. As reflected in the informants' experiences, the Internet, as well as the mobile phone, has been integrated into their daily lives. The widespread use of the Internet for communication and entertainment, Saloma (2005) claims, indicates that sociality with objects, particularly cyberspace sociality, has become part of everyday life as well as of the work sphere.

The personal computer and the Internet are becoming hallmarks of the workplace in modern societies. In

Tuguegarao, however, the Internet is detached from the spheres of work and education. The Internet may be accessed in cafés but seldom in offices and schools. A particular university in the province exemplifies this de-anchoring or detachment of Internet technologies in education and the workplace. The university offers an IT program without the necessary resources and equipment. Internet literacy, being part of the curriculum, is taught without Internet connection. Students depend on stand-alone programs usually created for teaching purposes. The inability to provide connectivity may mean that the institution does not recognize the importance of Internet technologies in education, work, and the everyday life-world. This may also mean that virtuality is seen as an adequate response to real needs; hence, the virtual-actual is also manifested in education. Internet cafés, in addition to bridging the digital divide, reflect the inadequacy of formal education in the Philippines. Job opportunities for IT graduates in the province are often limited. Most graduates work as call center agents, clerks, and sales ladies in Tuguegarao, or Manila.

Here, we can see the ironies of modernity and the imbalance in the ecology of communicative practices in Tuguegarao. Cafés are anchored on the everyday life-world; on the other hand, education is disconnected from the technology. Although Internet cafés continue to increase in number in order to cater to local demands, the concept of the information society is rarely articulated in broader areas of society.

This is due to the fact that the country lacks practical policies geared toward technological development.

Secondly, the blurring and blending of the virtual-actual has increased self-exploration since these experiences can be compared and shared in Internet cafés. As mentioned, cafés provide privacy otherwise not available in most private spaces (i.e., homes and offices). The privacy afforded by these cafés opened ways of exploring the self, as in the cases of Genuine, Jayson, Bryan, and Janna. Furthermore, as it allows self-exploration, cafés also make self-validation possible since virtual experiences may be shared with friends inside cafés.

Lastly, the expansion of Internet cafés opens up Tuguegarao to new and cosmopolitan forms of relationships. Tuguegarao, as a melting pot of local cultures in the north, has produced a multilingual community. Linguistically, the concept of the "stranger" is more common by Philippine standards since Tuguegarao is a frontier town where old Ybanag communities were overtaken by migrants. As Schultz (1944) asserts, "when the stranger comes in contact with a new culture, his pre-conceived notions of that culture is questioned and eventually adapts to his new surroundings, as such the stranger ceases to exist." Although the "stranger" is dominant in the province, he has learned to blend and adapt, and in the end he has ceased to be a stranger and has become part of the community. Society, as Pertierra (1997) argues, "is seen as a synchronic entity, all of whose members

being connected to a common and consciously conventional understanding of sequenciality and alterity." The differences among the people were negotiated through accepted public norms. Moreover, the "stranger," through the Internet, has been domesticated because people have learned to trust him, welcoming him into their virtual-actual lives. Although structures of anonymity dominate modern societies, trust in "strangers" and acceptance of differences coupled with consensus has created safe spaces for the "stranger" in a traditional society such as the Philippines. Previously the "stranger" occupied only marginal spaces in local society.

What is new in this sociality, however, is that local relationships may become global. The Internet café has expanded notions of sociality and allowed more possibilities. The former spatiotemporal constraints of social relationships have been significantly altered by the new media. The cases of Jay-r and Janna wherein bonds of relationships were only built and strengthened inside cafés, as well as the experiences of Bryan, Jayson, and Genuine whose sexual identities were either strengthened or weakened, manifest new socialities within the social order of Tuguegarao. These new forms of social relationships are both virtual and actual.

All these indicate that ICT significantly affect people's lives. It has brought fundamental changes to contemporary society. It has made possible new forms of association, thus

giving rise to new forms of sociality. Its limited access has negative repercussions for schooling, work, employment, and the community's development in general.

Lastly, future researches on this subject should further explore the ecology of communication in local communities and the opportunities it offers for its less privileged. Otherwise, digital inequality may simply reinforce earlier ones.

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THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CONSEQUENCES OF DIGITAL PIRACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE CASE OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS

Tilman Baumgärtel

This paper looks at the phenomenon of media piracy in Southeast Asia, and outlines some of its consequences for independent film production. In the first part of this essay I will look at the phenomenon of piracy as such and try and outline some observations about how piracy works. In the second part I will address the impact that piracy has on the makers and consumers of independent films, a group that I call the "Generation Piracy" as they have grown up with an unprecedented access to world cinema due to media piracy. At the same time, I will put special emphasis on the fact that both piracy and the recent wave of independent films in countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia etc are a result of the same technical conditions: the easy and cheap access to digital media from cameras to computers to the distribution network of the internet, peer-to-peer networks and video-sharing sites such as YouTube.

Keywords: piracy, Philippines, independent film

Jo is a Malaysian student who smuggles Malaysian DVDs into England where he is studying economics. Being a film buff and would-be director, he saves the money he makes selling cheap Malaysian DVDs, in the hope that some day he will have enough to attend a film school in New York. Taking advantage of the fact that pirated DVDs often hit the streets before a movie's cinematic release; Jo has the latest titles before they hit the cinemas in the UK. As he is about to graduate, Jo decides to go big with his last shipment. He wants to smuggle 175 movies into the UK for a buyer, who will pay 50 pounds per DVD. This will cover the tuition for film school, including living expenses in New York. Unfortunately, the Malaysian police kick off a major operation on the very day Jo is scheduled

to pick up his stock of DVDs, and his suppliers are among the victims of the raid. The British film pirates that depend on his wares are threatening to get even with one of his friends. Jo needs to get 175 DVDs with new films in the 24 hours before his plane leaves for the UK.

This is the story of *Ciplak* (2006), the exhilarating film debut of Khairil M. Bahar. Despite having been made with a very low budget, it is a feature length movie that both entertains and moves its viewers. *Ciplak* (Malay for "pariah") is a very self-conscious piece of independent cinema full of clever ideas and endless cinematic innuendos, references and puns. Its wry, sarcastic humor is reminiscent of films such as Richard Linklater's early works *Slacker* (1991)

and *Dazed and Confused* (1993). It makes good use of the very limited means in a way that resembles Kevin Smith's *Clerks* (1994), and at times manages to turn its material shortcomings into filmic virtuosity à la Robert Rodriguez's debut film *El Mariachi* (1993). A potential feel-good and popcorn movie at the same time as a cineaste's tour-de-force, *Ciplak* is a film that is smart, enjoyable and touching in a fashion that one has stopped expecting from Hollywood mainstream movies a long time ago.

This movie is a good starting point because it brings together the topics I want to discuss. Director Khairil M. Bahar writes on the website of the film: "In a country such as Malaysia, piracy is not just common: it's indispensable. Everything from clothes and shoes to CDs and video games are available in bootleg form. Piracy has allowed the underprivileged to afford overpriced sneakers, exposed the ignorant to the wonders of nonstop 40 music and increased the cinema vocabulary of an entire nation through pirated DVDs."¹

At the same time, the film is also a wonderful example of the new batch of Southeast Asian independent films that has recently emerged. *Ciplak* talks about the way digital media are currently influencing the way films and (pop) culture are produced and distributed in Southeast Asia.² While *Ciplak* was a critical success in Malaysia, it did not do exceptionally well in its home market. Yet, its subject matter and its quirky way of storytelling should appeal to young urban audiences throughout the region –

and probably in the rest of the world. That young hipsters in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore or the Philippines—all countries that border onto Malaysia—will most likely never get to see this film shows the deficiencies in the distribution of film (but presumably also of music, books, art etc.) in the region. The phenomenon of piracy speaks to these deficiencies.

This paper will look at media piracy in Southeast Asia, and it will outline some of its consequences for independent film production. It does not seem unreasonable to label the Southeast Asian filmmakers in the first decade of the 21st century as the "Generation Piracy." Due to the prevalent media piracy in the region, these young filmmakers had access to world cinema in an unprecedented way. While it is still too early to assess the long-term impact of piracy on the contemporary cinema of Southeast Asia, films such as *Ciplak* speak to the fact that there is a growing influence of independent and alternative cinema on local cinema. I will discuss some of the early signs of the changes that this might lead to, while at the same time contrasting it with the way earlier generations of film makers from the region encountered international cinema. Also, I will put special emphasis on the fact that both piracy and the recent wave of independent films in the region are a result of the same technical conditions: the easy and cheap access to digital media from cameras to computers to the distribution network of the internet, peer-to-peer networks and video-sharing sites such as iFilms, YouTube et al.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMICS OF PIRACY

To discuss the mechanisms of piracy is a tricky matter, since hard and fast data on the subject are difficult to obtain. Despite my research into the piracy culture of the Philippines that included interviews with some DVD dealers (Baumgärtel 2006), there are many open questions regarding the Philippines, not to mention the rest of Southeast Asia. How do these films get on the pirate markets? Who picks the titles that get distributed? Who compiles the DVD collections of all the Oscar winning films from 1929 to 1965? Why are films by the German Marxist film directors Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet—that have never been published on DVD in Germany—available in a shop full of pirated DVDs right smack in the middle of Beijing’s embassy area?

In many respects, one has to consider the pirate market as a kind of black box. Research into this field is very difficult, as it is an illegal and therefore very secretive trade. The traders themselves who sell the discs know very little about the way the films are obtained and produced and most people are not prepared to talk about it. There are numbers about the extent of piracy in Southeast Asia, either from local law enforcement agencies or international lobby groups, yet most of these numbers are self-serving and often the way they have been collected are either unclear or biased.³ The mostly American trade groups such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the

International Intellectual Property Association (IIPA) or the Business Software Association (BSA), who publish data on international piracy, are often financed by US media and software companies and therefore have a vested interest in making their alleged losses seem as dramatic as possible. Therefore they try to paint the situation in the darkest colors. Other numbers stem from organizations such as the Optical Media Board (OMB) of the Philippines, which have the task of fighting piracy. These organizations are often predominantly in the business of making their own work look efficient, or keeping their respective countries off international black lists because of consequences for their reputation as business locations. Therefore figures as the following have to be taken with great caution.

According to the Business Software Alliance (BSA), software piracy in the Asia-Pacific region cost manufacturers about \$8 billion in 2004 (<http://w3.bsa.org/germany//piraterie/piraterie.cfm>). Worldwide, losses due to software piracy were estimated at more than \$32 billion in that year. The BSA puts piracy rates in China at 90 percent and Russia at 87 percent. The IIPA puts the level of piracy in the Philippines at 85 percent, and the estimated trade losses at 33 million US dollar in 2004 (<http://www.iipa.com/statistics.html>). According to a report from the website of the MPAA, the percentage of potential market for MPAA member studios lost to piracy in Thailand (the only Southeast Asian country mentioned) is 79 percent⁴ (<http://www.mpa.org/piracy.asp>, see also Kate

2007). On another “fact sheet” on the same website, the MPAA office in Singapore gives this appraisal: “In 2005, the MPAA’s operations in the Asia-Pacific region investigated more than 34,000 cases of piracy and assisted law enforcement officials in conducting more than 10,500 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of more than 34 million illegal optical discs, 55 factory optical disc production lines and 3,362 optical disc burners, as well as the initiation of more than 8,000 legal actions.”

Since the methodology that was used to arrive at these numbers is not explained in great detail on the website of the MPAA, it is safe to assume that the numbers from these institutions are mere estimates. Yet, even if the frequency of piracy is substantially lower than the numbers quoted, it is still quite impressive and suggests that the problem deserves closer examination both as an economic and cultural phenomenon.⁵ I will however not address the ever-popular question of the moral and legal implications of piracy. While piracy is illegal in all Southeast Asian countries, it is also a fact of life in almost all of them.⁶ For the purposes of this paper, I will consider it as something that is very much part of quotidian life, without passing any ethical judgment on it.

And what a part of daily life it is: Counterfeit goods are easily available on many street markets as well as in shopping malls: fake Nike sneakers or DVDs with anything from Hollywood movies to European art house films, illicit

copies of Gucci bags or the latest albums of Western pop stars. I have found pirated copies of rare Japanese horror movies such as *Jigoku* next to digital gay art house films from the Philippines such as *Masahista*, William Burroughs’ shorts next to Amir Muhammad’s documentary (The last communist), that has been banned in Malaysia. The neighborhood of Quiapo in Manila, the center for pirated DVDs in the Philippines, is jokingly referred to as “the biggest film archive in Asia” due to the massive number of otherwise hard to get films available there.

In Europe and the USA, piracy is mostly seen as an online phenomenon that takes place via peer-to-peer networks. In contrast, piracy in Southeast Asia takes advantage of the fact that many people do not have access to the Internet or do not even own a computer. Therefore the predominant form of piracy in the region is the sale of counterfeit DVDs and VCDs. Most of them are recent Hollywood movies, often for sale on the streets before they even premiere in theaters. Then there is pornography—loads of it—that is illegal in many Asian countries.

Finally, there are art house films and experimental films. Less common, but still available are movie classics from *Chinese Silents from the Shanghai* of the 1930s to Godard’s *Weekend*, from *Gone with the Wind* to video art by Brian Eno. The majority of these films are not and never were available in regular shops, which predominantly carry mainstream movie fare. Just one example: Orson Welles’ classic *Citizen Kane* was never legally available in the Philippines (and

presumably in other Southeast Asian countries), and one had to go to great lengths to see this movie. Now it is easy to find it on pirate markets. For a very long time, being a film fan in Southeast Asia meant one had to limit oneself to the US-American and local offerings in cinemas or video. The alternatives were to pay a fortune for mail-ordering videos from abroad or to have a circle of friends that would swap and copy the latest movies.

These days are over. Examples of rare films on the pirate markets in Manila include a complete retrospective of the works of Rainer Werner Fassbinder on three DVDs and one of *The Cremaster Cycle* films by American video artist Matthew Barney. On the other hand, to find local films is quite a feat in many Southeast Asian countries. Yet, there have been instances, where local films that have been banned or censored but appear on the pirate markets. I will return to this point later.

So the pirates do not just deliver the latest blockbusters and blue movies. Some are ambitious enough to come up with their own boxed-sets. A staple of pirate markets all over Southeast Asia are the collections of all the *Star Wars* films, complete collections of popular Korea soap operas such as *Jewel in the Palace*, and well-presented selections of films by directors such as William Wyler and Kenji Mizoguchi. Many of these collections have a nerdy tendency towards completeness—all the films with Jackie Chan, all the films by Akira Kurosawa.

Sometimes they are even sold in lovingly hand-crafted boxes.

Yet, the cover design betrays the fact that the people who produce these DVDs are not professional designers and writers. Often local graphic artists—using pictures they obtained from the Internet—design these covers and provide the blurb. The practice of using pictures from the web can sometimes lead to amusing results: Recently a version of Akira Kurosawa's Dostoyevsky-adaptation *The Idiot* (1951) was sold in Manila with a cover from Lars Van Trier's independent digital movie *The Idiots* (1998). On the covers of some discs one can find pictures, which are not from the movie in the box, or which have been dramatically enhanced. They show guns on pictures of films that do not have guns, or suggest sexually explicit scenes that are not in the movie.

The English subtitles of pirated DVDs that come from China usually range from Chinese-English to being completely incomprehensible (Pang 2005). The account of DVD covers can read: "The global film is included completely, broadcast the new feeling superstrongly." On the box of another DVD sampler it says: "Unique Color Sensual Desire Cinema." The copyright notice (!) on the same box reads: "The copyright owner of the video disc in this DVD only permits Your Excellency to run the family to show, owner keeps the copyright all one's life relevantly in the right, not listing exhaustively..."

The production quality of these discs varies greatly. The "cam rips" of the late

1990s are on their way out.⁷ The majority of even the latest films available on the pirate market are usually from “screeners” or other digital sources. The manufacturing quality ranges from films that do not play at all to high quality copies. In Thailand, many of the more off-beat films seem to have been reproduced on an ordinary home computer with the covers reproduced with cheap color copiers or printed out on computer printers with the artwork coming from websites such as cdcovers.cc. The majority of the releases available in Southeast Asia however seems to come out of professional disc pressing plants, complete with titles printed on the discs and covers out of the printing press.

Some customers of piracy markets in Southeast Asia have become very aware of issues of quality. For example, there are a couple of forums on the Internet where buyers of pirated movies from the Philippines exchange tips on where to find rare films and how to distinguish quality DVDs from bad product. In one forum called The Q,⁸ buyers frequently bragged about their latest discovery. For example one member wrote: “*Found Day for Night* by Truffaut in Quiapo in the Muslim Barter Center at Stall No. 16. Ask for Benjie!”

REGIONAL PIRACY STYLES

There are notable differences between the “pirate cultures” of different Southeast Asian countries, both in terms of what is produced and what is available in the respective countries. I have discussed the culture of piracy in the

Philippines extensively elsewhere (Baumgärtel 2006), so I would just like to point out a recent development that I was not able to cover in this essay. The whole piracy landscape in the Philippines has been completely changed with the advent of the “8-in-1”-sets. DVDs with only one film on them are on their way out and are already not available at all anymore in certain markets. Since these collections usually focus on popular American mainstream fare, this also means that art house and classic films are much harder to find now than even a year ago.

A majority of “quality” and art house and the increasing number of classic American, European and Japanese movies come from China. A company from Shenzhen by the name of Bo Ying is particularly prolific in producing very sophisticated DVDs—often using as masters discs from the American Criterion Collection, which specializes in topnotch editions of classic films in flawless transfers and with original bonus material. Yet a visit to the website of Bo Ying leads to an “Anti-Piracy Statement!” Emails to both Bo Ying and to the Criterion Collection regarding the copyright situation of these DVDs were not answered. Yet it is safe to assume that Bo Ying did not obtain the rights to these films, since the Criterion Collection points out on their website, that they only distribute their films in the United States. Yet, these Bo Ying titles are easily available in regular stores in Singapore, which prides itself of having gotten rid of piracy in the last couple of years.

PIRACY AS “GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW”

It is unquestionable that media piracy has brought an unprecedented access to international cinema to Southeast Asia, a region that has only a very limited infrastructure for art house cinema. Apart from a number of festivals there is little opportunity to get legal access to non-Hollywood films. There are few art house cinemas,⁹ the regular stores carry predominantly American mainstream films, and mail ordering from abroad is prohibitively expensive. It is therefore safe to say, that piracy has added to the film literacy and even the quality of media education in the region. I only have to look at the rapid transformation that all the media studies departments that I know in Manila went through in the last two or three years. There is a quickly increasing number of brand-new DVDs on the shelves of many media studies departments, and many professors have started to use topnotch DVD versions of rare and off-beat films in class. This not only exposes students to a much wider variety of movies, but also enables teachers to use more uncommon, contemporary, independent and cult films. Needless to say, all of these films come from the pirate market. In the second part of the paper I will discuss how this new variety has impacted the surge of independent films from Southeast Asia.

I should point out, that these DVDs are not being produced to educate previously underprivileged film students in Southeast Asia. The cornucopia of blessings that has opened over the region

is a very peculiar result of the globalization of both markets and cultures that has started to take place in the last 20 years. The deregulation of many national markets in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union paved the way for the kind of globalized media piracy that we see today, where American movies are available on the streets of Manila, Delhi, Beijing and much more remote corners in Asia before they even premiered in the United States. In addition, the Post-1978 reforms of Deng Xiaoping, allowing private enterprise in China, and the economic opening of formerly socialist countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia played their role in furnishing pan-Asian piracy.

The free movement of capital and data is not only a hallmark of economic globalization, but also of global piracy. The process of economic “liberalization” around the world, the recent process of privatization and business deregulation all around the world has played its part in facilitating piracy. At the same time—and also in the name of a neo-liberal curbing of the power of the state—many countries have cut back on law enforcement and reduced border patrols, which obviously was another advantage to the international pirates.

This process worked in tandem with technological developments such as the proliferation of the Internet and comparatively cheap access to powerful computers, disc burners and scanners. While economic liberalization provided the means for distributing and paying for illicit goods, these new digital technology

supported their production. Moisés Naim writes: "With communication technologies that allow such tasks as warehouse management and shipment tracking to be done remotely, the trader and the goods need never be in the same place at the same time. This flexibility is a crucial advantage that illicit trade has over governments, and is a defining aspect of the problem." (Naim 2005: 19)

In many respects, piracy therefore is the illicit underbelly of globalization. It is a globalization from below, where the participants are not multinational corporations, but illegal outfits. Flexible, nonhierarchical, speedy, highly efficient and organized beyond national boundaries, these illegal traders are in many respects quite representative of globalized businesses. They happily take advantage of the newly deregulated foreign exchange transactions, the financial offshore havens in obscure venues such as Tuvalu or the Cook Islands, or the benefits of the Internet—from the anonymity and convenience of free web mail accounts to running online shops.

The pirate market is paradoxical in the sense that it is the most radically "free" market capitalism, yet at the same time also a corrective of certain traits of capitalism. On one level it is a no-holds-barred competition, without any rules or regulations, where the fastest and most ruthless is usually the most successful. At the same time, it has undone some of the inadequacies of the legitimate market. The pirates were flexible and perceptive enough to detect a potential market that

nobody had noticed before. They discovered that there was an audience for art house and avant-garde films in Southeast Asia, and were quick to exploit it.

While in most of Southeast Asia one of the benefits of piracy is that films come into the countries that otherwise would never be available, in more autocratic countries they have a much more important and libertarian function: They provide an alternative to the regular cinemas and shops as a distribution channel for films that the authorities do not want to be seen—in other words as a way around censorship. The most extensive example of this is obviously China, where only 20 international films get an official permission to be shown per year, yet every American blockbuster and much more is available at every street corner on pirated DVD.

Pirated DVDs can also provide an important distribution channel for banned films. In the Philippines, a television documentary on the former president Joseph Estrada was denied a rating by the Optical Media Board and therefore could not be aired. The film was available immediately on the black market. One of the bestsellers on the pirate market was the so-called "Hello Garci" tapes, an illegal recording of a conversation between President Arroyo and an election officer. To some extent the pirate market can therefore work as an oppositional and Habermasian public sphere.

FILMING ON A SHOESTRING

This finally leads us to the difficult question how this phenomenon of piracy

has influenced Southeast Asian independent film. Let us look again at *Ciplak* as a typical example of a no-budget-indie-film. Director Khairil M. Bahar writes on the website for the movie: "The film was made for less than 10,000 Malaysian ringgit (approximately 3,000 US dollars – T.B.), shot on a single Canon XM2 miniDV camera and edited on a home PC... The movie was shot on weekends between October and December 2005. Everybody working on the movie did so free of charge... Given the non-existence of a budget, we tried to beg, borrow and steal as much as we could to get the movie made. When I bought the camera it came with ten free miniDV tapes, which I used to shoot the film (although it was not enough) so we saved quite a bit on tapes. I had my old tripod from when I was 15 and Ariff had a monopod so that we could be more mobile. Our lighting rig was a borrowed Ikea lamp and a cheap Styrofoam board. Our boom mic was a borrowed stereo directional microphone (which broke down on us)... All the sets and locations were obtained without a single penny spent. Most of the locations were houses or apartments where the cast lived... The only thing I really spent money on for this production was food."

While the budget of 10,000 Malaysian ringgit is extremely low even for local standards, these production methods are not uncommon among many independent film makers in Southeast Asia. It is therefore the easy availability and the simplicity of use of digital media that facilitates not only the proliferation

of media piracy, but also the production of independent films.

In some ways, the pirate market in Asia today has a function similar to the French or the German film clubs of the 1950s and 1960s. Both movements screened classical films, that had often been blacklisted or simply forgotten during the Second World War and started their own magazines, that started the research and criticism of auteurs that are canonical today. In the process, they bred a new generation of filmmakers that were highly conscious of film history and aesthetics. Film movements such as the *Nouvelle Vague* in France or the *Neuer Deutscher Film* in Germany are a direct outcome of this grassroots cineastes movement. Today the pirate market seems to have taken on the task of confronting the audience in the region with classical and off-beat films. That is not to suggest that pirated films have taken on the role of the more institutionalized entities of "film appreciation," but they certainly are in the process of laying the ground for a more informed discourse on world cinema and provide material for cinephilia in the region.

The effects of this process need to be studied in greater detail, yet there are already the first signs of the impact of the proliferation of off-beat and art house films in the region. A number of film makers have openly acknowledged their indebtedness to pirated movies for them becoming filmmakers. Malaysia's Amir Muhammad reminisces in an interview about the influences of his generation of independent filmmaker: "I think we all

grew up watching Malaysian cinema to various degrees, but we are also of the generation that was very much exposed to cinema made in other countries. Malaysia always was exposed in that sense, but because we came of age with the pirated VHS in the 1980s and the VCD in the 1990s, I think our range of influences (is) wider. If it were not for these pirated things then we would have been stuck with what was brought here, which is extremely limiting. And probably you would have got the sense that to make a movie you had to make a movie like what you see in the cinema. Perhaps you can say that we (were) damaged in a sense as we were exposed to the hype of independent movies, which you can not deny started in America in the early 1990s. So we then got the romantic idea of doing it our own way." (McKay 2005)

Other filmmakers join him in pointing out the influence that pirated DVDs had an impact on their development. The young Philippine director Raya Martin writes about his first interview at the Festival du Cannes' Cinéfondation: "Here I was, in front of producers and distributors of films I was only familiar with from pirated DVDs, talking about my approach to filmmaking." (Martin 2005) And fellow Filipino John Torres points out in an interview, that "the video pirates have brought us a lot of good films into our country." (Tioseco 2006)

When reading the biographies of other Southeast Asian independent filmmakers, it was often the exposure to avant-garde and art house films from the West, that got them interested in making

their own films. Kidlak Tahimik, arguably the first independent director in the region, started to work on his first film *The Perfumed Nightmare* (1977) after he encountered Werner Herzog and his films in Germany. Raymond Red and other Philippine independent filmmakers, that followed *Tahimik* in the 1980s, were among the regulars at the workshops and film screenings that the Goethe Institute of Manila used to organize in late 1970s and early 1980s. There they encountered films by directors such as Herzog, Harun Farocki, Werner Schroeter and Rosa von Praunheim and other German directors of the *Neue Deutscher Film*.

More recently, internationally renowned Thai directors such as Pen-Ek Ratanaruang and Apichatpong Weerasethakul have described their filmic eureka moment during their first encounter with foreign art films. Pen-Ek relates in an interview: "Since I was in New York, I was always going to see films. And actually, I discovered cinema there, because before that I had no interest in cinema, in film. And even when I was in New York I was watching normal films, all these Hollywood films, and then one day I went to see *8 ½*, just because of the poster... (A)t the end of the film I was completely blown away. I did not understand shit, I did not understand at all "what is this?" you know, but... it was so sexy to me. It was so attractive. That was the first film in my life that actually sort of gave me the idea that—this guy can make films? This is film? Then I started to become interested in Fellini, so I'd see more films by him. And then that lead to Bergman and Godard.

And you know, the usual stuff, Truffaut, and Fassbinder. And, so I discovered this art cinema that I found really to my taste... (Tioseco 2005). In a similar vein, Apichatpong points to the experience of American experimental films by directors such as Stan Brakhage and Jonas Mekas during his studies in Chicago as one of the reasons why he became a filmmaker: "I went to Chicago and discovered experimental cinema. It was something that made me think, 'Oh, this is what I always wanted to do but I didn't know how to explain it.'" [Marlow 2005]

While these film makers still had to go physically abroad to get to know foreign avant-garde films, less than ten years after these formative experiences of Pen-Ek and Apichatpong it was entirely possible to find the very same films that had made such a lasting impression on them in the pirate markets of Bangkok, Manila, Kuala Lumpur or Jakarta. Filmmakers such as John Torres are among the first filmmakers who have been exposed to this assault of films that have become available out of the blue in their home countries, and his fast and daring work with hand-held digital camera and found footage seems to speak of this experience. The same goes for the trendy and self-conscious film making of

Khairil M. Bahar, that is saturated with film history and movie references.

None of this is, of course, meant to suggest that the filmmakers I mentioned are relying on the ideas and approaches of Western directors in their work. Tahimik, Red, Apichatpong, Pen-ek, Torres and Bahar have all carved out their respective filmic styles very much their own, which in fact differ quite substantially from the films that inspired them to become filmmakers in the first place. Yet, it appears as if the encounter with films outside the mainstream of Hollywood or the film industries of their respective home countries was the needed impetus to develop these personal styles or even to become filmmakers. Now, that international art house and avant-garde films have become relatively easy to obtain in the region, it should inspire even more young filmmakers. Arguably, we will see the full consequences of this assault of film history, that the pirates have brought about, only in the generation of filmmakers, which will come after the generation represented by Amir Muhammad or John Torres.'

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.ciplakmovie.com/>
- 2 At the same time *Ciplak* has not been canonized in the same way as the films of directors such as more art-house-oriented directors such as Lav Diaz, Apichatpong Weerasethakul or Amir Muhammad and due to its whimsical nature it most likely will never receive the same type of cineastes' blessings.
- 3 For example, the losses of the media and software industry that arise from piracy are obtained by multiplying the alleged number of pirated DVDs, CDs and CD-Roms with the American price. Needless to say most of the people who buy pirated films, music albums or software packages would not be able to buy them for the regular charge.
- 4 In the same report, the profile of a pirate is described like this: "The typical worldwide pirate is 16-24 years old, male and lives in an urban area!"
- 5 Literature that prescribes to the notion of piracy as being a precarious international crime include Naim 2005 and Phillips 2005. For some takes on piracy that are not informed by the perspective of the American copyright industry, see Lascia 2005 and Lessig 2004, for accounts that take Asian socioculture into consideration see Alford 1995; Pang 2006 and Sarai Media Lab 2006. The website for the conference *Asian Edition*, that I organized in November 2006 at the University of the Philippines, contains most of the papers delivered there, as well as ample links to other online resources.
- 6 Even in Singapore, that prides itself to have stamped out piracy, pirated DVDs are still available.
- 7 "Cam rips" are bootlegged versions of films that have been filmed in a theater with a digital video camera during the regular screening of a film. They are typically of poor audio quality, often one can hear the audience cough or laughing and you can even see the silhouettes of people who head for the restroom or concession stand.
- 8 Q stands for Quiapo, the neighborhood in Manila with the biggest black market.
- 9 While there are a number of art house cinemas in cities such as Singapore, Bangkok and others, there is nothing that even remotely resembles the situation in most countries in Europe and the larger cities in the US. Cultural institutions such as the German Goethe Institute, the Alliance Francaise, the British Council or the Spanish Instituto Cervantes, a number of universities and some film festivals such as Cinemanila in Manila or the World Film Festival in Bangkok screen art house films occasionally, but the cinemas of Southeast Asia are still dominated by Hollywood and local commercial movies.

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Business Software Association <http://w3.bsa.org/germany/>

Crappy Bootleg Covers <http://www.flickr.com/groups/crappybootlegs/pool/>

Pinoy DVD <http://www.pinoydvd.com>

Website of movie "Ciplak" <http://www.ciplakmovie.com/>

THE RHIZOMATIC FLOWS OF TRANSNATIONAL TAMIL CINEMA IN ASIA AND WEB 2.0

Gopalan Ravindran

This paper attempts to examine the rhizomatic flows of transnational Tamil cinema in Asia in the context of the growing influence of the agents of Web 2.0. The application of the concepts of flow and rhizome forms the theoretical backbone in this regard. The concept of television flow, as advanced by Raymond Williams, has had its transformations in the notion of the space of flows by Manuel Castells and the notion of rhizomatic line of flight of Deleuze and Guattari. Giddens' notion of structuration is the sociological attempt to capture the ephemerality of postmodern representations. In this paper, the rise of transnational Tamil cinema in Asia is juxtaposed with the rise of Web 2.0 in their intertwined contexts. This is to understand their implications for the members of the globalized homeland, who are increasingly connected in the rhizomatic networks of flows originated by the transnational Tamil cinema and Web 2.0

Keywords: transnational Tamil cinema, globalized homeland, rhizome, any-space-whatevers, Web 2.0 and Malaysian Tamils

RHIZOMATIC FLIGHTS, FLOWS, GLOBALIZED HOMELAND AND WEB 2.0

The iconic status of Raymond Williams in the history of cultural studies is well known. Also well known is his concept of flow. The concept of flow relates to the notion of television programming as an ongoing flow of experience for the television viewer. In his remarkable work in 1974, Raymond Williams said: "In all developed broadcasting systems, the characteristic organization, and therefore the characteristic experience, is one of sequence or flow. This phenomenon, of planned flow, is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a

cultural form"(80). The cultural form of television, according to Raymond Williams, rests on the planned flow of programming. Before embarking on the task of defining his kind of flow in this work, he sought to deal with the problem head on. The surest and best way to define a concept is to define its anti thesis. Here Raymond Williams comes out succinctly when he sought to define the distribution of programming as static and immobile and flow of programming as mobile. The concept of flow has been able to outlive the heydays of television studies largely due to the visionary essence it embodies towards the notion of distribution it wanted to dethrone. Moreover, the idea of flow appears to have overshadowed the idea of television flow as it gets applied to the post-

television contexts, in particular the contexts of Web 2.0.

The idea of flow also has its detractors. These argue against the concept of flow because of the role of technologies of distribution like DVDs and flash memory cards. When flow is equated with distribution, any new technology of distribution is a threat to the conventional mode of distribution. But they are not a threat to the larger flow that seeks to go beyond distribution. Particularly, when the larger flow is like a Deleuzian line of flight, with all the trappings of a rhizomatic progression of participatory content creation networks. These networks are ubiquitous in Web 2.0. They range from discussion forums and blogs to social networking sites like *Orkut* and *Facebook* to online video sharing communities like *YouTube*.

These networks exist in the space of flows, as Manuel Castells unwittingly adapted the notion of Raymond Williams's television flow in the age of network societies. Coming 15 years after Raymond Williams's concept, the notion of space of flows was a much needed upgrade of the concept of flow. Castells (1955-1997) wrote in his 1989 work that the space of places gets dethroned for enthroning the space of flows. The space of places is what conventional distribution finds cozy and the space of flows is where it gets dethroned absolutely. The theoretical progression of flow as a concept only receives a remarkable boost when we seek to link it to the notions of flow, as advanced by Castells and Raymond Williams, and then

to the notion of rhizome formulated by Deleuze and Guattari.

In the first chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (7-13) explain the six principles that govern the rhizome. These principles relate to "connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, rupture, cartography and decalomania." According to Deleuze and Guattari, rhizomatic connections do not follow any order, unlike in the case of the connections that flow between fixed and pre-determined points in a tree. According to them, "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be." Related to the characteristic of connection is the trait of heterogeneity rhizomes sport. A variety of points are connected in any rhizomatic situation. Deleuze and Guattari, while critiquing Chomsky's linguistic model, said: "A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive..." Rhizomes are not contained by any pivot, subject/object/unity positions or even points that act as nodes. These do not exist in a rhizome. Rhizome is more an assemblage that relies for its nature and expansion on its connections which are not only heterogeneous and free-flowing, but multiplicitous. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it

expands its connections. There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines. ... Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities. The plane of consistency (grid) is the outside of all multiplicities. The line of flight marks: the reality of a finite number of dimensions that the multiplicity effectively fills; the impossibility of a supplementary dimension, unless the multiplicity is transformed by the line of flight; the possibility and necessity of flattening all of the multiplicities on a single plane of consistency or exteriority, regardless of their number of dimensions."

The lines of flight in a rhizomatic structure are as significant as the 'lines of segmentarity,' which are governed by the old rules of territorialization and stratification. It is only when the rhizomatic structure encounters ruptures, one sees the transformation of the lines of segmentarity into the lines of flight. As Deleuze and Guattari say, "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines. You can never get rid of ants because they form an animal rhizome that can rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed. Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the

rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of a rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another..."

Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari label rhizome as a map. According to them, a map does not share the characteristics of a tracing. Tracings seek to reproduce the basic structure in all its constituting elements. Map lacks the quality to reproduce as it does not have a structure that seeks to grow into its constituents. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "The rhizome is altogether different, *a map and not a tracing*. Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real. ...Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways; in this sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the line of flight as passageway and storage or living strata (cf. the muskrat). A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same." The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged "competence."

Rhizome is an atypical network in so far as it defies the logic of a conventional tree (server) and branches (clients) network of hierarchies. There are no controlling servers or controlled nodes in a rhizomatic network. Anything connects to anything in any manner in the ongoing

processes of territorialization/deterritorialization and the collapse of segmentary lines/the emergence of lines of flight. There are as many exit points as there are entry points in a rhizome. There are also as many points of connections as there are points of disconnection. As rhizomatic networks are depended on connections that are in a flux because of either the lack of fixed points or moving points or even moving connections, they could be seen as similar in structure to the networks of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 personifies a site where flows are able to flow in directions not pre-determined. Here, as in any rhizomatic network, flows and their constituting connections make the rhizomatic network as dynamic as possible.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is generally seen as the successor of Web 1.0 But what does this mean to the uninitiated? Web 1.0 refers to Internet scenarios of content, users and delivery models that were in common use until the onset of the infamous *dot com* bubble of early 2000s. Web 2.0 refers to the entrance of new scenarios of content, users and delivery models during the last five years. The agents of Web 2.0 are seen as allowing the users to wield more control over what they are doing with the Internet. The emergence of blogs, social networking sites, *P2P* sites and the likes of YouTube have heightened the participatory and social networking activities of Internet users greatly. In short, Web 2.0 represents the second great leap forward by the Internet since its entry into the civilian domain during early 1990s.

The Web 2.0 also exists as a social web. The notion of social web implies a host of innumerable platforms which facilitate individuals and their social peers to congregate and enact diverse social roles. Web 2.0 provides an expanding social space where Giddens's logic of structuration is very suitable. In his theory of structuration, Giddens^a (1979: 69) said that "the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems." Web 2.0 is not only the medium that causes the interactions of millions of users in different social networking sites, but is also shaped by the actions and interactions of individuals who tag, flag, blog, *twitter*, *jaiku*, comment, upload, download, post scraps and do a range of other activities in the planes of the social web. These practices are both structural and structuring.

Besides the aspect of structuration, Web 2.0 has other sociological dimensions. One such important dimension of Web 2.0 is its ability to cause and accommodate the self-reflexive projects of individuals in late modernity. According to Giddens, the age of late modernity is an age of crises and risks. Individuals in this period resolve questions of their self-identity on their own, unlike their counterparts in the age of tradition. This practice of self reflexivity is continuous and is like an 'ongoing biography.' Giddens (54) says that "a person's identity is not to be found in behavior, nor—important though this is—in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she

is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self." The social web is a place where the reflexive projects of individuals acquire unique dimensions in the narratives of the bloggers, the video clips of YouTube users, the scraps and posts of social network sites, the raves and rants of discussion forums and the micro blogs of Twitter and Jaiku.

WEB 2.0 AND TRANSNATIONAL TAMIL CINEMA: THE YOUTUBING OF 'LITTLE SUPERSTAR'

In its use of the concepts of flow and rhizome, this paper examines the rhizomatic flows of transnational Tamil cinema in the context of three widely used domains of Web 2.0. They are: 1) YouTube 2) blogs and 3) forums. These domains have been selected in this study as they provide ample scope for examining them in relation to the six principles of rhizomatic structures Deleuze and Guattari outlined. This paper examines two seemingly independent developments concerning transnational Tamil cinema and its audience (Tamil diaspora), in the contexts defined by the domains of Web 2.0. They are: 1) the growing phenomenon of the 'little super star' video on YouTube and 2) the interesting encounters of the Malaysian Tamils on Web 2.0.

The phenomenon of 'little super star' refers to the rhizomatic flows of a short

video clip featuring Tamil cinema's reigning superstar, Rajinikanth and a midget. In this video, the midget dances to the music played from a tape player by Rajinikanth in the company of his young friends. The genre of dance the midget performs is a native version of break dancing. This clip is from a Rajinikanth starrer, *Athisaya Piravi*, a long forgotten film even by hardcore fans. The clip was uploaded nearly a year ago on YouTube and quickly became a rage among Tamil as well as non-Tamil users of YouTube. Recently, the video became the first ever Indian originated film content on YouTube to become part of the top 100 YouTube videos. Having clocked more than seven million views at last count, the 'little super star' has spawned his own multiplicities and rhizomatic connections as well as ruptures, as Deleuze and Guattari outlined. There are numerous versions of the 'little super star' and one of the popular remixes even goes by the mocking title, 'nobody is watching the little superstar.'

Rhizomatic structures expand because of the multiplicities they engender and the lines of flight they take. The line of flight, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is born of the exploding nature of the lines of segmentarity. When the lines of segmentarity are no longer in place, connections flow on the axis of the line of flight, which could also be likened as the crucial element that differentiates non-hierarchical networks from hierarchical networks. In the case of the 'little super star' phenomenon, what is at work is what is not possible in the hierarchical networking structures of

transnational Tamil cinema. The conventional logic of film distribution holds a clear view about the nature of the content to be distributed, the mode of distribution and the geographical location of the audience. In the case of all the three parameters, what reigns supreme is the physicality of the tasks at hand. A film exists on a physical plane for a physical network to carry it forward to the physically distributed individuals in pre-determined geographical locations. A film can not be distributed in terms of the divisions of its physical whole. A song or scene can not be distributed independent of the whole they represent. They simply do not exist on their own—just as the leaves can not exist independent of the physical tree. In the case of the 'little super star' on YouTube, it exists not only independent of the whole, the film *Athisaya Piravi*, but it also exists as the new whole, as an entirely new entity. Very few of the admirers of the 'little super star' video relate it as a part of the long forgotten film, *Athisaya Piravi*. A clear majority of viewers of the video only see 'little super star' as the original whole, and not as a part of the original film of yesteryear.

With every attempt by the admirers and detractors of the new original whole to clone the 'little super star' in their own ways, the logic of its existence as a part of a physical whole in a physically existing network of transnational film distribution for a geographically segregated transnational audience is only erased. The clones are about the multiplicities, heterogeneity and segmentarity as well as the lines of flight

the new rhizomatic whole nurtures even as they become increasingly alienated from the film from which the new original whole itself sprang. The phenomenon of the 'little super star' is a good example of a rhizomatic structure spawned by Web 2.0, another rhizomatic structure.

In more ways than one, the phenomenon of the 'little super star' is also a good example of Raymond Williams's notion of flow in its rhizomatic *avatar*. Rhizomes are about connections that follow no pre-determined paths of flows. The concept of flow pertains to the emergence of a new whole, an entirely different entity from the whole that is made up by the sum of its parts, the individual programmes. Flows in the conception of Raymond Williams is not a sequential ordering of one television programme after another but a whole new experience with television. In the conventional logic of television content distribution, programmes ought to follow one another in a pre-determined order. And when programmes follow their logical order of progression, what does not emerge is a sense of mobility. The sense of mobility is made possible only with our identification of the sense of television flow, a unique experience that has little to do with the physicality of the progression of programmes. It is more rhizomatic. Because of the unique experiences of individual television viewers, what becomes of television flow in its entirety is a changing/expanding structures of several flows in several cognitive/emotional directions. It is not only one kind of a television flow in a pre-determined order. Flows are

subjective experiences and are remarkably different from the objective segmentary lines in which programmes are made to run in a pre-determined path. In this context, it would be useful to slightly fuse the theoretical construct of flow, as advanced by Raymond Williams, with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome. What emerges out of such a fusion is the concept of a rhizomatic flow. Rhizomatic flows harbor the traits of an experience that gives us a sense of the whole that is not physical and does not evolve from the constitution of its parts. It is a whole that emerges from the connections that flow in a non-hierarchical networking space. The phenomenon of the 'little super star' video is fairly illustrative of the concept of rhizomatic flows. The experience of the whole in this case hinges not on the progression of an innocuous clip from an innocuous film of a film industry that is not well known outside the diasporic world of Tamils and the geographical marker of Tamil Nadu/India. The experience of the whole hinges on the rhizomatic nature of the flow of an innocuous clip in a terrain where it becomes more than its origins as a part of an unrecognizable whole (Athisaya Piravi). It becomes a recognizable whole, more recognizable than what constituted it as a part. The recognizable whole of 'little super star' only expanded wildly over the last one year in the network of the connections it spawned in the form of more clones, imitations and spoofs.

Besides Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome, the sociological concepts of structuration and self-

reflexivity, as advanced by Giddens, can also be gainfully employed to relate to phenomenon such as the 'little super star.' For instance, it is possible to read the continuous recursive journeys of the 'little super star' as the reflexive projects of YouTube users who seek to express their ongoing biographies through the mutations of the "little super star."

TRANSNATIONAL TAMIL CINEMA AND GLOBALIZED HOMELAND: THE RHIZOMATIC ENCOUNTERS OF MALAYSIAN TAMILS

Malaysia is home to the largest Tamil population outside India and has remained the *numero uno* market for the transnational Tamil cinema for decades. The transnational character of Tamil cinema was largely shaped by the enthusiastic support of fans in Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka (the traditional diasporic locations) decades before Tamil cinema made its entry into other countries.

No other Tamil diasporic setting evokes a deeply polarized audience relationship with transnational Tamil cinema as Malaysia. And no other diasporic setting resembles the original homeland (Tamil Nadu) as Malaysia in terms of the stars-fans relationship. Not surprisingly, this is the setting where Tamil film audience can cause riots because of delays in the release of a film like *Sivaji: The Boss* (2007). Not surprisingly, this is also the setting where transnational Tamil cinema bears the brunt of strident criticisms from the leaders of the Tamil community, political

parties and government functionaries for contributing to the moral depravity of Malaysian Tamils in general and Tamil youth in particular.

Malaysian media stories on the growing rate of crimes and suicides among Malaysian Tamils routinely cast the blame on the Tamil films imported from India. Eventhough, it is very difficult to prove a connection between Tamil films and the social ills faced by Malaysian Tamils, as pointed out by Ravindran (252-253) and Natarajah (2000), the antipathy held by the Tamil opinion leaders and government functionaries towards transnational Tamil cinema is as strong as ever. In fact, it seems to grow with the rising curve of widespread support transnational Tamil cinema evokes in Malaysian Tamil cinema audience following every new release.

The rhizomatic flows of transnational Tamil cinema bear the imprints of these divergent tendencies in the encounters found on Web 2.0 by Malaysian Tamils. One of the important Web 2.0 sites for negotiations of Tamil diasporal identities is a forum called *The Hub*. This portal seems massive in its structure in so far as the number of threads, archives, views and comments is concerned. Here is a thread on *The Hub* indicating a view against Tamil cinema. The thread starts with a report by BBC on the concerns evoked by Tamil cinema in Malaysia. "A Malaysian minister has called for suicide scenes to be cut from imported Indian films, amidst concerns that they are leading to copycat incidents. His remarks

came days after a young Tamil mother threw herself and two of her children under a train. Sadly, suicides among Malaysia's Tamil minority are reported all too regularly in the local media. The Tamil community is the poorest of the three main ethnic groups here, and many Tamils face severe hardship. But G Palanivel, deputy leader of the Tamil-dominated political party, the Malaysian Indian Congress, thinks movies are partly to blame. Suicides are said to be a common dramatic feature in Indian films, especially those made for Tamil audiences." The thread had responses from different diasporic locations such as UK, Canada, USA, Malaysia and India. The responses clearly disagreed with the perception of the Minister that Tamil films drive people to commit suicide. The responses clearly see the elements of blame played by politicians to escape responsibility for social ills. The moderator of the thread, who is located in Malaysia, quickly saw the strategy and instead blamed the politician. "It is just the typical sweeping-under-the-carpet syndrome of politicians. Since he was newly elected at the recent dubious elections, the politician probably wanted to be recognized." Another respondent said: "Actually, on the train from London today the conductor told me that four people had killed themselves on that line in the past six months. I do not think it is likely that English people are being influenced by Tamil cinema, so as we all seem to agree, it is probably the minister kicking up a fuss just for the sake of doing it. HOWEVER... I wandered into the Tamil Films section of the Hub today and

read some of the threads. I now think that even if Tamil Films do not increase the chance of suicide, it is highly probable that they (or discussions about them) increase the chance of MURDER.”

The above is an example of a repeated topic in Malaysia on the negative implications of transnational Tamil cinema. Ravindran (252-253) indicates the reasons for the divergent tendencies transnational Tamil cinema elicits from Malaysian Tamils. Ravindran (252) says, “Malaysian Tamils seek to negotiate their identities primarily in the contexts defined by Giddens’s ‘time-space distanciation.’ They are equally divided in their longing for inputs from the cultural homeland and in their dismissal of what comes to them through homeland films. There is a clear division in time and space in their negotiations of identities borne of the two important locations, the settled homeland and the cultural homeland.”

It is but inevitable to locate the flows of diasporic people not only alongside the flows of the transnational media and Internet, but as contingent upon them. In this paper, these multiple flows are seen responsible for the constitution of the globalized homeland. The globalized homeland exists as much in the countries of origin of Tamils in Asia as in the countries of their diasporic dispersals in Asia and elsewhere. The notion of globalized homeland negates the binary logic of homeland and settled homeland in many ways. The globalized homeland seeks to supplant the binary relationship between homeland and settled homeland

by locating itself in the Deleuzian any-space-whatever plane which is marked by disconnected and emptied spaces. This paper seeks to conceptualize globalized homeland as a space no different from the any-space-whatever defined by Deleuze (123). It is national, transnational and any-where as its members are latching on to the rhizomatic flows and connectivities made possible by the agents of Web 2.0 such as YouTube. In such a notion, the flows of the transnational are seen as contingent upon the diasporic flows of people in a globalized homeland. According to Deleuze, any-space-whatever are spaces that are constituted by indeterminate and deterritorializing parts. The ways in which these parts may connect are not determined in advance. The number of connections is also not known before. We have to remember here the similarity between these connections and the connections attributed to rhizomatic structures. In both cases, connections are not predetermined in advance and they flow in multiple directions in a non-hierarchical manner. Referring to the cinema of Antonioni, Deleuze (123) wrote, “...it seems that any-space-whatever takes on a new nature here. It is no longer, as before, a space which is defined by parts whose linking up and orientation are not determined in advance, and can be done in an infinite number of ways. It is now an amorphous set which has eliminated that which happened and acted in it. It is an extinction or a disappearing, but one which is not opposed to the genetic element. It is clear that the two aspects

are complementary, and reciprocally presupposing each other: the amorphous set in fact is a collection of locations or positions which coexist independently of the temporal order which moves from one part to the other, independently of the connections and orientations which the vanished characters and situations gave to them. There are therefore two states of the any-space-whatever, or two kinds of 'qualisigns', qualisigns of disconnection and of emptiness. These two states are always implied in each other, and we can only say that the one is 'before' and the other 'after.' According to Rodowick (63-64), 'any-space-whatever' is a "space that does not yet appear as a real setting or is abstracted from the spatial and temporal determinations of a real setting. ...the idea of 'any-space-whatever' expresses the quality of deterritorialization and indeterminacy..."

Nothing serves the task of illustrating the rhizomatic nature of the globalized homeland of Malaysian Tamils better than the phenomenon of Tamil Hiphop music and its echoes in the psyche of the Malaysian Tamils and in the original homeland (Tamil Nadu). The phenomenon of Tamil Hiphop represents one of the several rhizomatic encounters of Malaysian Tamils with transnational Tamil cinema. Among the several Tamil Hiphop groups in Malaysia, *Yogi B and Natchatra* enjoy a large following even beyond Malaysia. As a popular culture musical genre, Hiphop has its roots in the 1970s popular culture of USA. While nurturing the original elements of Hiphop, leading Malaysian Tamil Hiphop practitioners like Yogi B also seek to

render it with diasporic cultural layers. The recent addition to these layers is the one given by Malaysian Hiphop's first encounter with the transnational Tamil cinema. Eventhough, there were several attempts in the past to introduce Hiphop into the production schemes of Tamil cinema, they were not well received. The attempt by Yogi B succeeded largely because of the rhizomatic character of the present encounter of Malaysian Tamil Hiphop with Tamil cinema. And this has been made possible by the push given by the YouTube to Malaysian Tamil Hiphop. In particular, Yogi B's memorable number, 'Madai Thiranthu' has been creating waves in Tamil diasporic circles on the Web 2.0 through the ever expanding multiplicitous connections the fans of the song foster by embedding the YouTube links in their blogs and forums. Yogi B must be credited with the introduction of the Hiphop subtext to the transnational Tamil cinema with his remix number 'Engayum Eppothum' for the film *Pollathavan* (2007). He pioneered the hiphop musical tradition in Malaysia and shot to fame with his album *Vallavan*. This album has an interesting diasporic text in the song 'Madai Thiranthu,' a remix of the song from a Tamil film, *Nizhalgal* (1980). Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the original song has so far attracted only 117,092 views on the single YouTube version, whereas the remix song has garnered nearly 8,000,000 views for the three versions uploaded on YouTube. Attesting to the role of YouTube in the popularity registered by his Hiphop music, Yogi B remarked, "When I first

visited Chennai, I was going around a temple when a young fan patted me on the back and asked, "Are you Yogi B Natchatra?" I was pleasantly surprised as we have not yet released the album in India. I asked him, "How did you know about my album? He said he saw it on YouTube. YouTube has been greatly responsible for the promotion of my albums."

Yogi B attracts as many calls from his fans in the original homeland as from Malaysia and other diasporic locations. These fans convey the dominant impression that the notion of homeland that is situational and real exists alongside the abstracted space of the globalized homeland, that is still in the making and exists on the deterritorialized any-space-whatever of the Web 2.0 and transnational Tamil cinema. Many Malaysian Tamils, particularly youngsters, see themselves as proud Malaysians in the globalized homeland that is being created by their encounters through Web 2.0 and the transnational Tamil cinema. The following comments from some of the fans of Yogi B indicate this.

prusothman:

ain't no big fan of hiphop..but tis is serious good stuff. proud to be a msian indian. full respect to their determination to succeed and pursue their interest, despite the stereotyping within our own society. keep it up ! n lets keep supporting good stuff!

MANNAN76:

hey brother, we are malaysian born INDIANS, we still inherit the language & culture even it has been decades of

migration frm the motherland! respect MALAYSIAN INDIANS still surviving in foreign land with pride!

advimz27:

a pure fact 100% super duper V-Clip...Yogi B should get more and more chances in Indian Cinema songs and also in International fields..Yogi B - may god bless u with all the good lucks...

The remix has also been attracting brickbats in the views attracted by the original film song on YouTube. These views consider the original as the best. Yogi B is derided in these views for spoiling the original song of the Tamil film music director, Ilayaraja. Here is a sample of such views.

yogen82 (6 months ago)
nice song ilayaraja the best

Cphari (6 months ago)
awesome song thanx for posting.
such a nice song destroyed in that rapboy's video.

Going by the words of Deleuze and Rodowick in our examination of the encounters between the Malaysian Tamils and the transnational Tamil cinema, it is apparent from the above that the globalized homeland of Malaysian Tamils is no doubt a any-space-whatever. But it is not yet part of the reality as it is only abstracted from reality. It is constituted by the elements of indeterminacy and deterritorialization even as the transnational Tamil cinema seeks to promote these elements for its own benefits. The globalized homeland is also a disconnected and emptied space, in so far as the specific diasporic location and negotiations of Malaysian Tamils are

concerned. But it is also a space connected by the rhizomatic connections flowing from within and afar through the mediation of the agents of Web 2.0 and transnational Tamil cinema.

From another perspective, it is also possible to see the globalized homeland itself as a line of flight. This line of flight emerges from the encounters between Malaysian Tamils and the agents of Web 2.0 and transnational Tamil cinema. The line of flight is a breakaway point in the rhizomatic network of connections and this emerges when the lines of segmentarity explode and disappear. The traditional hierarchical connections that bounded Tamil cinema with its Malaysian audience are the lines of segmentarity which are exploding and disappearing, thanks to the mediation of the agents of Web 2.0. This globalized homeland of Malaysia exists not only in terms of the Deleuzian principles of rhizome, but also in terms of Deleuze's any-space-whatever logic. Seen as a globalized homeland, the diasporic world as mediated by the transnational Tamil cinema and the agents of Web 2.0 has within itself interesting trajectories which are rhizomatic in nature. This can also be seen as an invisible ideological strategy by the Malaysian Tamils to express their denial of difference with the original homeland, even as they both accept and reject differences between the settled and original homeland.

CONCLUSION

The rhizomatic flows of transnational Tamil cinema are testimony to the growing possibilities of the globalized homeland and the expanding influence of Web 2.0. The rhizomatic flows of the 'little super star' and the Malaysian Hiphop point to the opportunities and challenges before the transnational Tamil cinema in the age of Web 2.0. This paper has demonstrated the relevance and applications of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of rhizome, and Deleuze's concept of any-space-whatever. It also applied Giddens concept of structuration and Raymond Williams' notion of flow in understanding the complex interface between Web 2.0 applications, transnational Tamil cinema and members of Tamil diaspora.

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CELLPHONE USE AND TIBETAN MODERNITY: A CASE STUDY ON CELLPHONE USE IN AMDO TIBETAN COMMUNITY

Roudanjia

ICT's particularly cellphones, have been keenly adopted among Tibetans. This paper describes the use of cellphones in Tibetan society and explains their effects on Tibetan experiences. Generally, the study investigates the social consequences of cellphones on political, economic, and cultural aspects. It investigates the impact of mobiles on Tibetan social capital (i.e., family ties, friendship), access to new information (e.g. daily news report), and uses during emergencies (e.g. seeking a doctor under serious conditions). The scope of this study includes four different social groups (e.g. students, monks, villagers and government officers). The study aims to examine how cellphone use affects peoples' interpersonal relationships and their consequences for the public and private spheres in Tibetan life. The cellphone is more than simply a technical innovation. Like all technologies, cellphones affect both inner and outer aspects of personal identity. Tibetan modernity is increasingly being defined by technologies that allow mediated social relationships. ICT plays a significant role in these mediations and its study is crucial for understanding contemporary Tibetan society.

Keywords: ICT (Information and Communication Technology), Tibetan modernity, public and private sphere, social capital, individualism

INTRODUCTION

Western modernity depends on the clear separation of the private from the public sphere. The public sphere emphasizes legal and political norms rather than private interests and beliefs. Since Tibetan society has its own particularities, cellphone use in Tibet differs significantly from its use in the West. Although cellphones enhance and expand their users' private worlds, notions of private and public are not clearly distinguished in Tibetan society. Thus, its use may conflate domestic concerns with public interests. It is obvious in the Tibetan case that

cellphones are not only used for connectivity but also as a symbol of socio-economic status. People see someone who owns a cellphone as a member of a higher social status. Cellphone use is also one of the indicators for gender difference since more males than females have cellphones.

Tibetans use cellphones mainly to call their relatives, friends and fellow villagers. Unlike the Philippines, people rarely text each other in Tibetan society. They never text strangers as Filipinos do (Pertierra et al. 2002), unless the number is accidentally dialed. Tibetans generally build and extend networks and

relationships with existing members rather than including strangers. The use of cellphones makes possible the widening inclusion of interlocutors to a much broader social sphere. Cellphone use thus enables the breaching of boundaries within particular localities to include neighboring groups.

The mass media is gradually influencing aspects of everyday Tibetan life. The rapid growth of communicative technologies such as the Internet, television, newspapers, and cellphones is dramatically affecting and changing people's life ways. People no longer need to travel physically from one community to another to communicate. Modern technologies easily and conveniently enable mediated communication.

Pertierra et al. (2002:101) shows that these communicative technologies such as cellphones have the potential to transform private opinions into public interests and to reshape the public sphere in terms of decision-making and political issues. The implications of these new technologies for organizing work and other activities are significant. Physical and temporal barriers no longer prevent people from communicating and exchanging information. This example is a global phenomenon which we refer to presently as global modernity. In global modernity, localities are no longer as deeply structured as they were in the past but are significantly affected and are shaped by mass media and the global economy. This paper does not seek to explain how this new technology developed in Tibetan society. Instead, it

aims to describe how the people act and respond to this new phenomenon.

Communication technology has developed rapidly and has been adopted in everyday practices. Although this technology is pervasive, we are still unsure of the social consequences of cellphone communication (Ling 2004). This research examines the different uses of cellphones and to investigate its impact on everyday life in Tibetan society. Until now, Tibetan research about cellphones is minimal and mostly concerns commercially proposed topics such as the cellphones sales and the response of customers to advertisements. However, the general impact of cellphones on society, its everyday use, and its implications for broader society have received little emphasis.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Nowadays, more people are using cellphones as a device that augments and complements their everyday activities. By looking at the use of cellphones of four different social groups (i.e., students, villagers, monks, and government officials), this paper explores the cultural meanings that have emerged and been shaped through its use. The impact of cellphone use on each of these different social groups is analyzed in the paper.

The general objective of the study is to explore the kind of modernity that has taken place in local society. What are the characteristics of Tibetan modernity? How do these characteristics emerge and shape the cultural attitudes and self-

identities of Tibetans? What are the basic explanations for the increasing use of the cellphone among Amdo Tibetans? This study provides some answers to these questions.

The cellphone is more than a communicative device that makes life more convenient for Tibetans. It is also a device in which people construct new identities and beliefs under the project of modernity (Pertierra et al. 2002). For instance, in the Philippines, cellphone use has facilitated political events such as organizing popular protests and demonstrations against the political regime. Similarly, this study investigates the consequences of cellphone use on political, economic, and cultural aspects. It assesses the impact of ICT, particularly cellphone use, for the accumulation of social capital (i.e., family ties, friendship), access to information (e.g. daily news report), and emergency uses (e.g. seeking medical assistance).

FINDINGS: SURVEY RESULTS

In this study, the researcher employed instruments such as survey questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and observation studies. Overall, 106 respondents from both sexes were selectively chosen to comprise the "study population." Out of the 106 respondents, 63 were students, and 43 were from three different social groups such as government officials, monks, and ordinary villagers. One instrument was primarily focused on the demographic profile of respondents (i.e., age, sex, level of education, occupation, income and

etc), in relation to owning and using cellphones. The second survey looked at the use of cellphones in the community, i.e., how useful it is for work, and other ways people routinely use it. There were two versions of the questionnaire: English and Tibetan (part-English, part-Tibetan). Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to organize and analyze the results of the survey questionnaires. In addition, 20 people of both sexes were also separately interviewed in order to examine the different uses of the cellphone among social groups. These surveys were not meant to be truly representative of Ambo Tibetans but rather to provide guides for closer exploration during our interviews.

Demographic profile of the respondents

In our sample, cellphone owners are mostly males (74 percent compared to 26 percent female owners). This is because more men in the community do business outside of their homes while women are more likely to stay home or conduct family related businesses. However, the division of cellphone users between male and female does not always indicate gender difference. Factors such as age, schooling and social status also determine cellphone use. In the case of the college students we interviewed, both male and females shared equal access to cellphones.

According to age, the highest frequency among the samples belonged to the age group of 15-25 years old (55 percent). Moreover, among the 106

people surveyed 46 percent of cellphone owners were students; 22 percent were monks; 18 percent were villagers; and 14 percent were government officers. Our data indicate that cellphone ownership is more likely to be among those who are obtaining a certain educational level. The data showed that 43 percent of those who own cellphones were college students, followed by the high school students at 36 percent.

Our data shows that 76 percent of cellphone owners were single, whereas only 21 percent were married. In terms of geographical location, 72 percent of respondents were in rural areas and about 27 percent of the remaining populations were living in urban areas. In terms of class/status, 52 percent of cellphone owners are in the middle class, 27 percent of lower class and only 20 percent belong to the high social class in terms of their

yearly income and family assets. The majority of the respondents earn an annual income of 501-1,000 yuan, with government officials generally earning more compared to the other social groups.

Specific information about cellphone usage

The emergence of cellphone and its use in the Tibetan community is a relatively new phenomenon, and it has become popular mostly among the young people. Figure 1 shows this clearly. Cellphones have been adapted and popularized in Tibetan community just recently compared to other societies like the Philippines, where the cellphone has been used for a longer time. Figure 1 summarizes the trend of cellphone ownership in the Tibetan community. The figure shows that majority of respondents

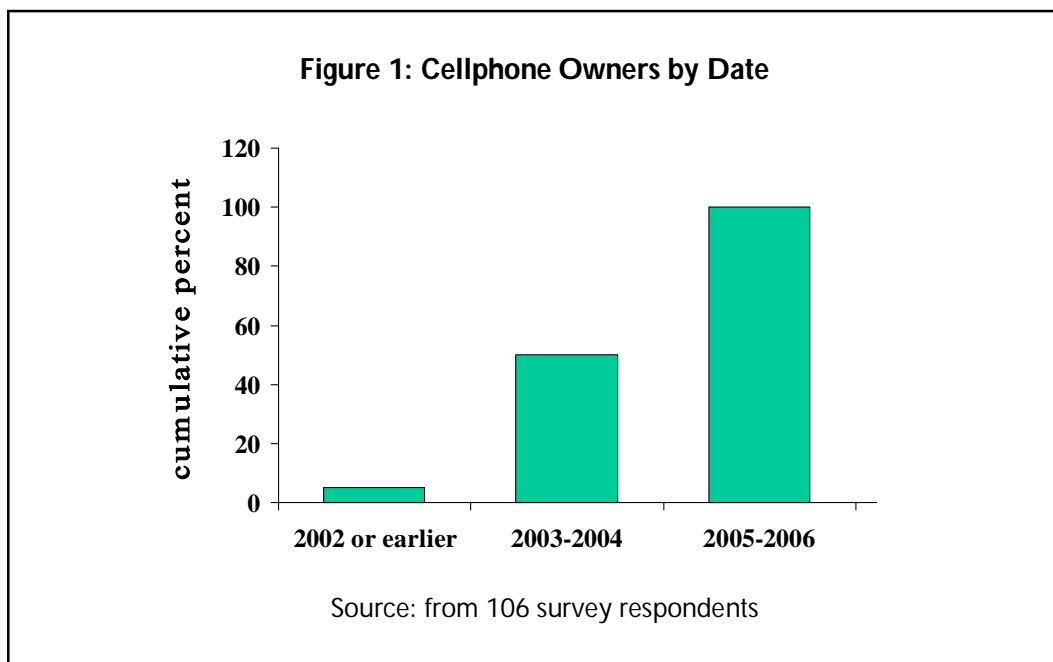
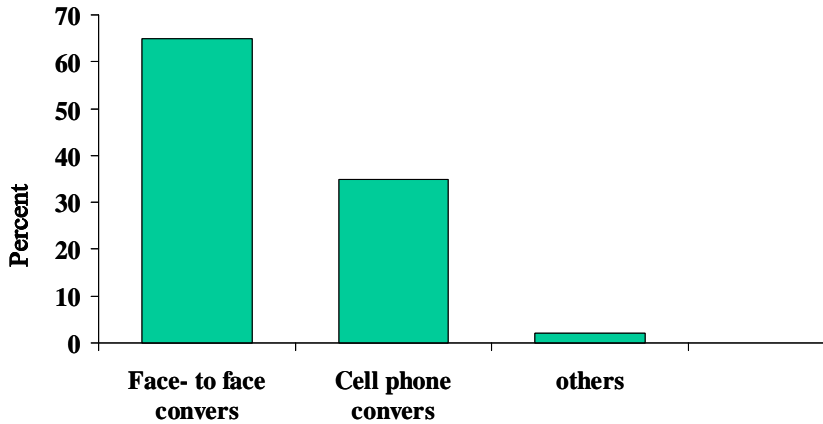


Figure 2. Preferred Way of Communication Mode



Source: from 106 survey respondents

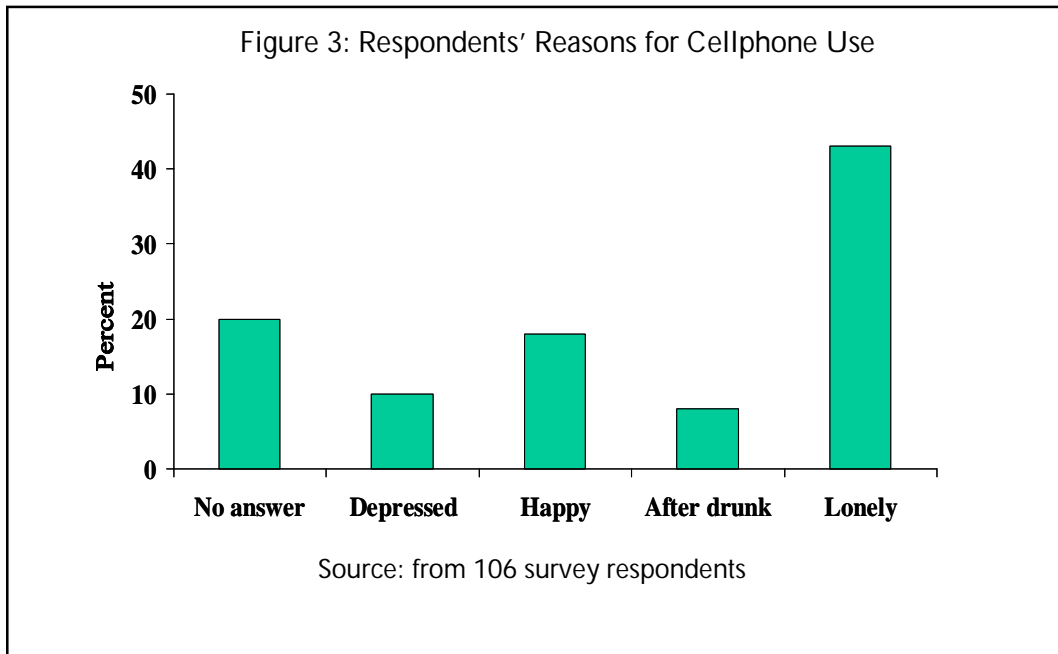
said that they started owning cellphones between 2005 and 2006.

In Tibetan society, people use cellphones primarily for making a voice call rather than sending text messages. More than half (56%) of the respondents in our survey declared that they prefer a voice call, whereas only 34 percent prefer to send text messages. However, sending text messages is strongly appreciated by students because it is more convenient and much cheaper than voice calls. The results also indicate that those who prefer sending text messages are those who read and type Chinese letters such as students and government officers. Since the texting (sms) function of the cellphone is limited to English and Chinese, it excludes those who cannot read and write in these languages such as ordinary villagers and monks. When asked in what ways the

cellphone is useful, 30 percent answered that the cellphone is useful in emergency cases.

Figure 2 indicates that most informants still prefer face-to-face communication. Apart from the preferred communication mode, when asked when and why they use their cellphones, most of them said that they use their cellphones when they are lonely. Figure 3 illustrates this.

The graph showed that about 40 percent of those surveyed answered that they used the cellphone when they were lonely, whereas about 10 percent and 20 percent declared that they were using their cellphones when depressed or happy. For instance, government officials feel stressed and lonely when they encounter problems at work and they



need to get advice from their family or friends. Monks often live far away from their families and they rely on the cellphone to stay in touch. Tibetans are accustomed to having close relationships with relatives and the community, so the cellphone helps in keeping these connections intact. One can interpret these results as indicating that the need for connections is the main imperative for cellphone use. But the widespread use of cellphones among Tibetans, particularly ordinary villagers, does more than maintain traditional relationships or extends networks; it also gains them social status (12%). Thus, the cellphone becomes a medium for helping to construct new identities.

Summary

Studying the use of cellphones among four different occupation categories expresses important features of Tibetan modernity. It has facilitated maintaining networks and allowed for mobility among villagers and monks. It has introduced new indices of status and aesthetics as well as novel forms of entertainment and leisure principally among students and government officials.

Generally, our investigations show that owning a cellphone is a new phenomenon in all of the different occupational categories (students, monks, villagers, and government officials). However, government officials and students owned cellphones much earlier than villagers and monks. This is because

government officials were able to afford cellphones when they were initially expensive in 2001. Since then prices for cellphones have gone down by half, from 2,000 to 1,000 yuan. Another major impediment for ordinary villagers is the fact that cellphones only indicate Chinese or English characters. Thus only students and government officials can use them for text messaging whereas villagers mainly make voice calls. Presently cellphones have become a basic communication tool for both monks and villagers in dealing with ordinary tasks.

Most of the respondents agree that they feel more comfortable and intimate when having face-to-face conversations with their friends and/or family members rather than on their cellphones. Our respondents have different reasons for owning a cellphone. Students and government officials are more likely to assert their status through their cellphones by making their mobile phones fashionable and purchasing the newer models. Meanwhile, villagers and monks own cellphones because they find it important in performing their daily work while keeping in touch with significant others. Villagers also feel that a cellphone elevates their social status as well as bringing them a sense of belonging in a modern community.

EXPERIENCE OF CELLPHONE USE: SELECTED CASES

The individual interviews discussed below examine the ways in which people use cellphones and the effects the technology has on its users. The interviews

asked people how they use cellphones (1) at work and in maintaining existing relationships, as well as (2) for popularity and the construction of new identities/statuses. The researcher interviewed five key informants from each of four different social groups (villagers, college students, government officials, monks).

These interviews reveal how technology increasingly but also differently shapes people's practices in traditional or modern ways. Although each group has different concerns and interests, everyone uses cellphones instrumentally and to extend their network. For this reason we must examine how users adapt this technology for their own needs.

The use of cellphone among villagers

Doubenjia is a 33 year-old villager. He got his cellphone three years ago and is the only one who has a cellphone in his family. His family is hoping to purchase one more cellphone soon. When asked why he needs a cellphone, Doubenjia replies:

I think it provides many conveniences for my work. For instance, when I have an emergency, I can quickly arrange for the proper assistance. Secondly, it is also useful for my business. I am a herdsman and need to obtain a good price for my sheep. I can contact my dealer and we can negotiate directly. It also helps me to finish my tasks in a shorter time. In the past, whenever I took my sheep to the market, the merchants fix their prices at a very low rate because they know I cannot take them back to my distant pasture. Thirdly, my cellphone is also good for

contacting my friends. If I need to meet one of my friends, we can arrange for a certain time and place to meet. In the past, if I want to meet someone, we needed to wait for long periods (translated from Tibetan).

According to Doubenjia, the cellphone helps him at work as well as expands his social and business networks. Indeed, the advent of cellphones has contributed to the reorganization of work and leisure. It has created instant meeting places, with more accuracy and mobility. Doubenjia also says that the cellphone brings a sense of belongingness in the community. He continues:

Nowadays, people imitate each other. If I have cellphone my neighbor and friends also want to have cellphones in order to communicate more effectively.

Apart from using cellphones as above, they also use it for discussing village matters and issues related to farming and herding. Additionally, as mentioned, owing a cellphone raises their social status among villagers.

The concept of popular culture among students

Lu defines Chinese popular culture as follows: it refers to the beliefs and practices, and objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population. This includes folk beliefs, practices and objects rooted in local traditions, and mass beliefs, practices and objects generated in political and commercial centers (Lu 2001).

In China, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, popular culture expanded significantly and brought a way of life that differed from either the official discourse of the party or the practices of the educated elite. More and more people started to wear jeans, listen to popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, read romances by Qiong Yao, and watched foreign movies. These new forms of practice and information came from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and the West, and have been significantly adapted and practiced among Chinese people (Sheldon 2001). More importantly, it opened up choices for people to select their own favorite music, dress styles and forms of leisure. The expansion of popular culture has given Tibetans more lifestyle choices than hitherto available.

Needless to say, popular culture has always existed in Tibet like in any society. However, earlier popular culture usually took official and bureaucratic forms of development and adaptation among the masses. For instance, popular songs and movies from Western countries, which have been popularized among Chinese, have been slowly practiced among Tibetans. This is also true for commodities such as new fashionable clothes, songs, and movies that are imported from Western countries. In a sense, there are two types of concepts which construct the understanding of popular culture. One is the external forces of cultural adaptation such as media, materials and commodities from outside of one's own community and gradually adapted and popularized among the population. The

other concept for popular culture is the internal forces of cultural practice which have been radically changed and popularized within a certain community, like songs and clothes that have been popular among Tibetans.

In the Tibetan community, the externally introduced popular culture seems more appreciated among young people. The following case shows that among students, cellphones are used not just as a communication tool, but for fashion. Zhaxijiancuo (18 years old) is a high school student, and when asked why he needs a cellphone, he says:

Most all of my classmates have cellphones, and I also feel I need one. Besides talking and sending messages through the cellphone, I can download music and take pictures because of its multiple functions. So I do not need to buy CD-player and camera. And I think having a cellphone becomes one basic need in school life. You can play games, take pictures, and even make a video (translated from Tibetan).

As the consequence of globalization, many new products now flood the local market. People's idea of consumption encourages the accumulation of foreign goods and trends. Young Tibetans tend to adapt these new trends in fashion, songs and films. For example, the popularization of the cellphone is more observable among students, rather than among ordinary villagers and monks. The concept of popular culture is also much stronger among students. Students use cellphones not only for communicating with teachers and classmates but also as a fashion statement. They use it for taking

short videos, pictures, and listening to popular songs. They also decorate their cellphones, download Tibetan songs for their ring tones, and choose lucky numbers for their permanent phone numbers. These are good examples in which this device has become the embodiment and symbol of social interaction, rather than simply a medium through which information is communicated.

The construction of cellphone language by government officials

According to Pertierra (2006), in modern societies literacy replaced orality as the main source of information. Oral exchanges or face-to-face conversations are no longer considered the main mode for the transmission of information and knowledge. Thus, orality and its forms of interaction tend to become restricted to private and domestic concerns. However, orality still plays a key role in the exchange ideas and information in Tibetan community. This was emphasized by many key informants who stressed the importance of face-to-face communication. This is one major reason why people use cellphones for voice calls rather than send text messages. This is particularly true among ordinary villagers and monks who can not read and write Chinese characters. Nonetheless, the practice of orality using a cellphone is a new phenomenon where people communicate differently compared to face-to-face interaction.

According to Giddens (1990), *talk* refers to concrete social activity in which

people participate in daily life, whereas *writing* lacks the complexity of interactions and occurs without certain conditions involving co-presence. This lack of co-presence limits the communicative potential of writing when compared to talk (Mark 1990). Furthermore, the absence of a partner (and its replacement by a reader) in writing shifts identity from performance to authorship. In computer-mediated communication, language use is radically separated from biographical identity. Language is thereby strongly anchored in the sphere of the social and its complexity is related less with its internal structure than with its complex social interactions. Cellphone conversation indicates this complex interaction where the talk is conducted in the physical absence of the interlocutor.

The use of cellphones among government officers varies according to their employment. Among the respondents who are government officers, two are school instructors, one official assistant, one hospital nurse, and one censor in County Bureau of Inquisition. Caiyanglacao is a nurse in the county hospital, and she is 26 years old. She said she needs a cellphone in order to get connected with her parents back in the village. And most importantly she uses her cellphone to arrange consultation times between the doctor and the patient. As she describes:

Well, I think the cellphone makes my work easier in terms of time and communication. Now I can easily contact my patients in case I need to talk to them. I can quickly contact the

doctors when there is an emergency. So it is useful and sufficient in my work as a nurse (translated from Tibetan).

These officials tend to use cellphones for organizing their regular tasks in the office such as arranging meetings and organizing appointments. Furthermore, the conversation or talk conducted through cellphones has introduced new forms of language etiquette among government officials. The voice of their conversation is usually characterized by the different social status (e.g. the highness or lowness of voice, using formal and polite words in conversing, among others). The Tibetan comedy *Phone*, which was played by famous Tibetan artist Malayjyap dealt with cellphone language and its related construction of multiple identities among Tibetans. A cellphone language is the way of speaking which people use for cellphone talk. It may play the function of writing in terms of the absent presence of co-presence in a particular setting. Nonetheless, it is different compared to written or spoken language (face-to-face conversation). In the case of the cellphone language, the way of communicating is much more reflexive and complex, especially when talking to someone who is socially identified in high positions like government leaders, and professors.

Usually when people are seen as lower class like the ordinary villagers, their way of talking to officials using the cellphone takes a distinct form—employing words, tones and euphemisms not usually used in face-to-face communication. Therefore, the emergence of the cellphone language

does not refer only about people talking in different ways but also about people constructing multiple identities towards others who hold different social positions in society.

Cellphone use in Tibetan monasteries

It is debatable whether monks should use cellphones in the monastery since some monasteries in other regions prohibit their use. According to Laneba Yeshisangbao, 38 years old and a teacher in the monastery:

Generally it was not strict in the monastery, but it is not allowed for monks to use their cellphones in public places like chanting halls or public debate places. These days more and more monks have their own cellphones, so there is no strict rule that monks can not use cellphones in both their public and private life (translated from Tibetan).

Nonetheless, the key informants in this study claimed that it is fair that monks use cellphones in their monastic life. Moreover, they said that through using the cellphone they can regularly contact their relatives and friends in their home village. They also use cellphones to contact motorcycle drivers to arrange a ride to the town. Monks use cellphones to communicate with their fellow monks, organize teachings, arrange meetings, and ask help from each other. Laneba Yeshisangbao describes the use of cellphone in his daily work:

In the past, occasionally monks need to go to other villages for religious rituals and funeral attendance. However, with a cellphone I think

monks will not go as far away as they used to in the past. So now, instead of going somewhere, the monks receive calls (either good or bad) from families, who often live far away, request them to pray or practice some rituals to ensure their good fortune. I am not saying the monks now are not visiting other villages but recently their visits have declined (translated from Tibetan).

Most importantly, using the cellphone enhances the communication between villagers and monks. Nowadays, villagers directly talk to monks about their concerns and spiritual needs. Furthermore, instead of going to the village or community, monks practice some religious rituals in the monastery (e.g. chanting, good harvest ritual, etc). Cellphones allow monks to hear from villagers without leaving the monastery. They can perform the necessary rituals in the monastery rather than having to go to the villages for their performance. The use of cellphone in organizing religious teachings and practices by monks results in a wider communication network involving village and monastery. Monastic life can take on a different tempo following the use of cellphones. Its activities are more concentrated within rather than outside the monastery.

Cellphone use in different social groups

Cellphone uses of the different social groups obtained from interviews are summarized in table 1:

Table 1: Cellphone Use in Different Occupational Categories

Occupational Categories	The Different Way of Using Cellphones
Students	Cellphone use among students is more likely for entertainment or popular events (e.g. taking pictures, downloading songs, choosing lucky numbers, decorating their cellphones, etc.). The device becomes the physical appearance of showing fashion and social interactions.
Villagers	They use cellphones for maintaining relations with kin and friends. They also use it for discussing village matters, and issues related to farming and herding. Moreover, owing a cellphone promotes their social status among villagers, and it brings a sense of belongingness to a particular social network within which they interact.
Monks	The use of cellphones in organizing religious teachings and practices by monks results in a wider connectivity between village and monastery. Rituals normally performed in the village are increasingly performed in the monastery per cellphone requests.
Government Officials	Cellphone use introduces different bureaucratic discourses among government officials. The voice of their conversation is usually characterized by the different social status (e.g. if someone talking to his/her boss, s/he talks with lower voice, using formal and polite words to talk to their boss, and vice versa). Cellphones generates novel forms of bureaucratese.

The use of cellphone in public spaces

The boundary between spatial location and talk has diminished because of cellphones. People are no longer constrained by the spatial distance in communicating and exchanging ideas. The use of cellphone in public spaces creates distinct localities in which people are simultaneously interacting while communicating with different people. Cellphone use in public spaces can be said to privatize public space since it turns this space into private talk.

In this study, the researcher employed observational study of cellphone use in a number of public settings: classrooms, monasteries, shopping areas, public halls, working places, restaurants, and bus

stations. The primary interest of this part of the study is in the social and physical constraints which shape cellphone use and behavior. Cellphone use in certain public spaces could be understood as the reconstruction of the public and the private sphere, wherein a normally private activity could be brought into public domain such as talking about personal issues in classrooms or monasteries, or likewise to bring about public concerns for private interest such as receiving public announcement or praying for private beliefs.

In Tibet, it is clear that the use of the cellphone brings private communications to public spaces whenever cellphone conversations are conducted in restaurants, classrooms, and even

monasteries. The distinction between the private and the public sphere are intertwined in public settings. The notion of the public realm, especially in terms of involving public affairs, and public practices has received little attention in Tibetan society. Usually within the family, there is little emphasis on privacy and individuation. People are generally more interested in domestic matters than they are in public concerns. The separation of the private sphere, with its distinct values and norms, from the public sphere is less developed in Tibetan society than in the West.

The construction of time and space

Through ICT, information can now be instantly transferred from one side of the world to the other (Poster 1990). In this complex communication system, cellphones assist the intensification of communication within existing social networks. However, the notions of time and space appear vague and unclear in a Tibetan context. The construction of time and space were usually conceived or understood by their physical or natural characteristics. Working space and working time often interpenetrated and were difficult to separate in a Tibetan community. Using cellphones constructs new notions of time and space where people interact independently of place and activity. People use cellphones to arrange a specific time and place for meetings and other activities, thus giving these notions a more interpretive and constructed nature. They become abstract concepts within which place and time can be reconstructed according to specific

needs and interests. This saves both money and resources for other activities such as rituals. As mentioned earlier, cellphones have altered the tempo of spatio-temporal interaction in Tibetan monasteries. They have intensified ritual life and allowed for more specialized practices hitherto requiring extensive travel for their performance.

Summary

Through the investigation of cellphone use in the daily practices of Tibetans, the most frequent and obvious observations are (a) keeping traditional relations and extending social networks within and outside the community, (b) the construction of new identities, (c) the emergence of popular culture, (d) the distinction between the domestic and public spheres. The data also indicate that the use of the cellphone assists economic mobility and productivity even if these gains are still too fragile to propel social development.

CONCLUSION

The rapid economic growth of China shifted people from rural areas into more centralized and integrated urban settings. The combination of different communities into the specialized urban city is the main characteristic of development in China. Nevertheless, the level of urban development varies in terms of its location, economic development, and political conditions.

In China, there are 55 ethnic groups but one major group, the Han Chinese are dominant. Most ethnic groups are

located in the Western part of China, such as Tibet, Mongolia, and Uger. The development of Western China is very different from that taking place in eastern coastal areas of China. In the early 1970s until the late 1980s, the government had focused on the development of the coastal regions. The disparity between Western and the coastal regions has increased. As a consequence, the government announced a policy to develop the neglected western regions such as Tibet. Presently, the development in the coastal areas in China is still much more advanced than in the western regions. This imbalance is particularly significant in the ICT sector. However, there are attempts to redress this imbalance and telecommunication companies are now being established in the towns and cities of Tibet.

The public and private sphere

Due to the growing importance of the modern mass media, there are closer links between urban areas and rural villages. Generally, public affairs involve the politics of the elite, while the private sphere is still dominated by the family. The Tibetan family plays a major role as the basic source of income and information. Within the family, the interest of the individual is mainly absorbed into the interests of the kin group. The presence of cellphones has given the private sphere broader social networks and also facilitated the development of individual interests and values. This has led to the greater separation of the public from the private sphere as well as a greater emphasis on

the former over the latter, at least among educated urban dwellers. This growing interest in public affairs is encouraged by the spread of popular culture. As noted earlier, popular culture is also shifting its emphasis from elite interests to mass appeal.

The mass media and telecommunications usually stress the relevance of the public sphere, even as they comment on domestic matters. Moreover, the public sphere emphasizes the imperatives of social and political development over domestic interests. In Tibet, as in most parts of the world, people believe that science and technology can bring about an improvement of everyday life. Modern communicative technologies reinforce people's beliefs in the ameliorative capacities of science and technology. But many of these technologies are usually imposed from above through government instrumentalities rather than through people's everyday interests. Cellphones are a strong exception since their popularity often stems from the practical needs of ordinary people. This technology can be seen as an expression of interests from below rather than an imposition from above.

Tibetan individualism

The notion of culture takes a specific meaning for modernity. Culture denotes a human activity through which people develop their skills, knowledge, and techniques in order to control nature. It is deliberately self-conscious as opposed to traditional behavior which does not

question previous structures. The rise of individualism and self-understanding are the most salient elements of modernity. According to Maria R. Markus (2002), traditional culture is rooted directly in the form of life into which one is born. Modernity assesses these life forms for its suitability in contemporary conditions. Moreover, culture also refers to a more abstract level such as beliefs, norms, and organized practices.

In Tibetan society, many traditional practices and rituals are heavily embedded in everyday life. It is very important to have a strong sense of collective life in order to appreciate the values of responsibility and social justice. Traditional Tibetan culture does not emphasize the concepts of the individual and of privacy. In rural areas, all the family members live together in one room, and hence there is little scope for the concepts of individuality or privacy. In this context, the cellphone is not only primarily a communication tool but also an agent for generating notions of individuality and privacy. The cellphone has created a private space hitherto lacking in Tibetan life. For this reason we may expect the notion of individualism to gain increasing acceptability within local society.

Modernity and Tibetan society

In the era of modernity, we seem to have arrived at a new age where everything has multiple reflexive meanings. What does it mean to be modern? The term in itself reflects the consciousness of time and space in a different manner than pursued in the past.

What we have understood and taken for granted for centuries now has to be justified in instrumental or practical grounds. The rationalization of everyday life proceeds as globalization exerts its influence over greater aspects of Tibetan life. People no longer respect many traditional narratives and norms as sufficient for living in modern society. The break with earlier providential views of history, the present reflexive and dynamic social institutions, the dissolution of foundationalism and the emergence of future-oriented thought are the distinguishable features of modernity. The transformation of the traditional social order into the multidimensional modern social institutions is a major aspect of modernity. People begin to trust each other through modern social institutions rather than kinship or family ties. Although these radical changes are not yet fully achieved in Tibetan society, the increasing numbers of cellphone and Internet users are a major indication that these changes are well on their way. These new forms of technology, including changes in popular culture have an enormous impact on people's culture and social change.

These social phenomena associated with modernity have largely been introduced from above via the appropriate governmental institutions. They have encountered some opposition from the grassroots where village life and traditional culture has a stronger hold. In many Tibetan communities, people still live in mountain areas where they have no access to modern services such as media, education, and hygiene. People's

sense of trust and the routines of everyday life are still based on kinship and locality. For them, the family and the local community are the major social bases of daily life.

Cellphones have extended the social network of traditional relationships among Tibetans. The reasons for possessing a cellphone and the ways in which individuals use them differ according to their age, social class, and gender. Among young students, cellphones serve as an index of popularity and a symbol of fashion, whereas villagers and government officers tend to see it more instrumentally. Using cellphones for sending text messages are more appreciated by those who can read and write Chinese. While men own the majority of cellphones among villagers, among students and government officers, gender is less important as women also acquire them. The use of cellphones among Buddhist monks and nuns is still controversial even as more monasteries accept its limited use. In monasteries which accept its use, there appears to be a shift of rituals from outside to inside the monastery. The cellphone has become a major topic of theological dispute among Buddhist monks. These disputes have raised fundamental questions about the relationship between Buddhism and modernity.

The extent to which cellphone use is influenced by commercial forces or state intervention is unclear in this research. The market and the state are major players in this game but Tibetans also act as important agents in its resolution and development. A major question remains: How do information and communication technologies construct social identities among Tibetans? Does cellphone use in the private sphere gradually affect and change the public sphere? Does the cellphone contribute to the overall development of Tibetan communities? This study of Tibetan mobile phone use offers some lessons. It enriches our understanding of the diversity of its global users. It adds detail to this diversity of use in local communities. But to effectively understand the role of mobile phones in society, it is important to study these technologies in their entire social, cultural, political and economic contexts.

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MOBILE COMMUNICATION AND RESISTANCE OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AREA

Yinni Peng

This article explores how the use of mobile phones among migrant workers in the Pearl River Delta Area (PRDA) of Mainland China affects the balance of power with their employers. It demonstrates that information and communication technologies (ICTs), rather than facilitating capital's domination, can be adopted to resist managerial control and reconstruct power relations from below. By providing job information to migrant workers, mobile phones bind the labor process to the local labor market. Managerial control in the labor process is heavily influenced by the local labor market context. Furthermore, mobile phone usage not only weakens the spatial constraint on migrant workers but also creates a virtual community within which they may form their own identity.

Keywords: control and resistance, migrant worker, mobile phone use, power relation

This article explores how mobile phone usage affects power relations between employers and migrant workers in the Pearl River Delta Area (PRDA) of Mainland China. Previous researchers who discuss labor process and technology (Braverman 1974; Friedman 1977; Burawoy 1985; Edwards 1979; Lee 1998; Pun 2005) mainly focus on the impact of technology on managerial control. Few of them systematically investigate how the implication of technology sometimes empowers the laborer. This article aims to remedy this situation by examining mobile phone usage among migrant workers in the PRDA. It demonstrates that, rather than facilitating capital's domination over migrant labor, information and communication technologies (CMICT), provide the potential for labor to resist

capital's control and thereby reconstruct the power relation from below. Based on data collected by a qualitative research between 2002 and 2005, this article discusses the effect of mobile phone usage on the control-resistance relationship between employers and migrant workers in the PRDA from the following three aspects: 1) mobile phone usage has created a new information channel, which provides migrant workers more job information and enhances their bargaining power with employers; 2) mobile phone usage has extended the mobility of laborers, hence lessening the spatial control of capital over the latter's activities; 3) mobile phone usage has generated a (virtual) boundary between migrant workers and employers, thereby strengthening the resistance identity among migrant workers.

MIGRANT WORKERS AND MOBILE PHONE USAGE

The Pearl River Delta Area (PRDA) has successfully maintained its position as the biggest manufacturing base in Mainland China since 1987. It hosts 33,000 corporations, which dominate the world's supply chain for light industrial products such as consumer goods, garments and accessories. In 2004, the Foreign Capitals Actually Utilized (FCAU) in the PRDA exceeded 11 billion USD and the Total Amounts of Exports (TAE) was about 181 billion USD.¹ As a result, the PRDA attracts a large number of young peasants from inner provinces such as Sichuan, Hunan, Guangxi, and Jiangxi, to seek employment. In 2000, there were more than 25.3 million migrant workers in Guangdong province, of which the PRDA accounted for 55 percent.² By January 2005, it was estimated that migrant workers in Guangdong province had reached 42 million.³ Obviously, the PRDA is the biggest migrant labor market in Mainland China.

Under China's current household registration system (*Huji Zhidu*), migrant workers are only permitted to work in cities but cannot be accepted as permanent city residents (Li and Tan 2000; Wang 2001). No matter how long they have worked in cities, they are always treated as a "floating population" and are discriminated by local residents (Wang 2001; Li and Tan 2000; Chu and Yang 2006). Moreover, the lack of permanent resident status in cities precludes migrant workers from a series of welfare services, such as health

insurance, labor protection and education. In the PDRA, most migrant workers took up skilled or semi-skilled jobs in labor-intensive factories. Compared with local residents and formal workers, they were among the lowest income groups in the PRDA. In 2004, the average monthly salary of migrant workers in the PRDA was about 964.8 RMB (including overtime pay), which equaled 57.9% of an average urban worker's salary in Guangdong province.⁴ However, in recent years, the number of mobile phone subscribers among migrant workers has sharply increased. Furthermore, the cost of mobile phone usage has become a major consumption item in their lives.

Since 1999, the mobile phone market has grown rapidly in Mainland China. There were only 43.3 million mobile phone subscribers in Mainland China in 1999 (Ministry of Information Industry). By 2006, the number of mobile phone subscribers in Mainland China had reached 461.08 million and the penetration rate was 35.3%.⁵ Guangdong province, as the biggest mobile phone market in Mainland China, had 71.2 million mobile phone subscribers in 2006. In 2002, there were only a small number of high-income migrant workers owning a mobile phone. According to a survey conducted by Peking University in the PRDA, in 2006, over 64 percent of migrant workers had purchased mobile phones.⁶ The average cost of their mobile communication was 97.56 RMB per month, which was equal to one-fifth of their monthly consumption.⁷ The main reason for their mobile phone is to

maintain contact with family members and their friends working in the PRDA. The penetration of mobile phone among migrant workers has brought fundamental changes in their social lives as well as influenced the power relation between migrant workers and their employers.

A THEORETIC FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

Most researchers who study the labor process (Braverman 1974; Friedman 1977; Edwards 1979; Burawoy 1985; Lee 1998) concentrate on how technological development generally favors the domination of capital. They argue that with the help of modern technologies and scientific management, capitalists successfully separate the conception of work from its execution, isolate labor in the work process, and diminish the autonomy and subjectivity of labor in various dimensions: economic, political, ideological, cultural, and even sexual (Braverman 1974; Friedman 1977; Edwards 1979; Burawoy 1985; Lee 1998; Ong 1987, 1991; Pun 2005). Following this logic, technology as the collaborator of capital is antagonistic to labor. The effect of technology on the labor process is often exploitive.

On the other hand, few studies have systematically discussed the significant role of labor's resistance (Thompson 1989). Vulnerable labor resistance, which is constricted by capitalistic structure, is only regarded as the by-product of capital control. Although some researchers (Edwards 1979; Thompson 1989) realized the contested nature of the labor process,

they did not explicitly elaborate the mechanism of labor resistance and its effect on the labor process. Underestimating the active struggle of labor and their strategic reaction will lessen understanding of the contradictory interaction of labor and capital in the contemporary factory regime. Labor, whether individual or collective, is the cofounder of the capitalistic labor process. As an active agent, labor is capable of adopting technologies and creating strategies to protect its own interests. In this sense, this article aims to emphasize how active labor shapes the power relation in the labor process with the help of new CMICTs.

Fundamentally, capital control and labor resistance constitute two sides of the same coin: the power relation, which is a key relation in the labor process. According to Foucault's micro power theory, modern power is a series of productive rather than repressive networks, which is not only localized in the State apparatus, but also reflected at the everyday level (Foucault 1980). Modern power engenders multiple disciplinary techniques to construct human body/conduct and penetrates its influence into every corner of daily life —e.g. sexuality, family, kinship, knowledge, and so forth (Foucault 1978, 1979, 1980). However, power as dominator always encounters resistance. While power produces its effect on the social body, it also finds a "counter-attack in the same body" (Foucault 1980:56). Power's mechanism is based on the contradictory action between offensive power and its counter-offensive force. As

Foucault mentioned, power is a “multiform production of relations of domination,” not “a binary structure with ‘dominator’ on one side and ‘dominated’ on the other” (Foucault 1980: 142). The main point in Foucault’s theory is the multiple and interactive characteristics of modern power. If control/domination is executed in multiple, diversified forms, then resistance, which exists at the same place with control/domination, is also multiple and variable. However, a power relation is also dialectical, defined by the interaction between control and resistance. Control creates the contested terrain where the dominator and the dominated meet and interact, while resistance affects the way and the direction of further control. Control is the ability/action of capitalists to “obtain desired work behavior” and work arrangement to realize their interests (Edwards 1979: 17). The aim of capital’s control in the labor process is to gain more profit (Thompson 1989). Resistance is the ability/action of labor to oppose and even to nullify capital’s control/domination. The aim of labor’s resistance is to maintain their autonomy in the labor process or to modify the factory regime to benefit their interests. Therefore, resistance is not only the result of control, but a countervailing force, which conditions the execution of control and affects the validity of control. Furthermore, resistance has the potential sometimes to invalidate or weaken control; capitalists have to make some modifications on their control to accommodate workers’ resistance (Thompson 1989). To some extent,

resistance tempers the intensity of control and directs it into new forms, thereby encountering new resistances.

Considering the power relation between employers and migrant workers in the PRDA, the usage of mobile phones among migrant workers breaks the former power balance between capital and labor. The flexibility and the ubiquitous connection provided by mobile phones bring new factors into the labor process. By providing job information to migrant workers, the mobile phone connects the laborer to the local labor market. The capacity of obtaining labor market information affects positions of advantage in the power relation. Managerial control in the labor process is strongly influenced by the local labor market. Mobile phone usage not only weakens the spatial constraint on migrant workers in the labor process, but creates a virtual community for them to form their own identity. Compared to earlier technologies promoting managerial control, mobile phone usage brings new benefits to the labor side. Therefore, with the invasion of new ICTs, technology is no longer the exclusive tool of capitalists. It also becomes an effective strategy of labor to resist capital control. To some extent, CMICTs force capital to adjust its control and reconstructs the power relation in the labor process from below.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

The data were collected between July 2003 and October 2005 in Dongguan city. Dongguan City is one of the eight economically developed cities

composing the PRDA. It includes 28 towns and four resident-districts. Dongguan city is located in the northeast PRDA and between two important cities in Guangdong province: Guangzhou City and Shenzhen City. The economy of Dongguan City is based on export-oriented industries, which are closely connected with the global capital market and the world product market. In 2005, there were more than 800 foreign companies in Dongguan City. Among them, 13 companies belong to the top 100 company in the world, such as Nokia, Samsung, Sony, and Philips.⁸ Foreign-invested and local-invested companies in Dongguan City absorbed a large number of migrant labor from hinterland provinces. Hence, Dongguan City is also considered to be a city of migrants. In 2005, compared with 1.66 million permanent residents, there were over 5.84 million migrants in Dongguan City.⁹ These migrants mainly came from Guangxi (18.32%), Sichuan (14.66%), Hunan (12.67%), Hubei (11.76%), and Henan (11.15%).¹⁰ Most of them were engaged in labor-intensive manufactures, such as plastics, toys, garments, electronic devices, and sports equipments.

Two towns in Dongguan City were selected to conduct the qualitative study¹¹ about migrant workers and their mobile phone usage: Humen town and Tangxia town. From July 2003 to October 2005, 61 informants were interviewed, including 50 migrant workers (30 male, 20 female), nine factory proprietors and managers (5 male, 4 female), and two local residents (1 male, 1 female). Among these informants, at least 21 informants

were interviewed over three times. Migrant workers in this study were mainly from four subcontract factories: one garment factory in Humen town, two golf-equipment factories in Tangxia town, and one electronic device factory in Humen town. Except for the electronic device factory owned by a Hong Kong entrepreneur, the other three factories used local capital. The initial contacts with migrant workers were established through their employers or the local sponsor. Then the researchers drew on further personal contacts with these workers and asked them to introduce their friends or relatives. Basically, interviews were conducted in factory offices, restaurants, and hotels. The language of interview was subject to the choice of each informant, either in the local Chinese dialect or in Mandarin. All interviews were semi-structured, which were guided by a set of key questions about migrant life (family background, migration history, current work and life state) and mobile phone usage (purchase motive, consumption, social relation through mobile phone usage). Based on this basic information, migrant workers were asked to give detailed descriptions about the relationship between mobile phone usage and their migrant lives in Dongguan City. The researchers also interviewed factory managers and local residents to enrich the narrative perspective and compare their mobile phone usage with migrant workers. In addition, field observation also provided some supplemental information. As some informants had to answer incoming calls or send SMS messages during interviews,

it was a good opportunity for researchers to observe how migrant workers used their mobile phones. When researchers conducted interviews in factories, they not only observed the labor process, but also compared different mobile phone usages of migrant workers in different places.

All interviews were tape-recorded, fully-transcribed and analyzed using the coding procedures developed by grounded theorists (Glazer and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Cobin 1998; Charmaz 2001). Interview transcripts and field notes were coded line-by-line. From the standpoint of grounded theory, line-by-line coding helps researchers to see “the familiar data in a new light and gain sufficient distance from taken-for-granted assumptions about the materials” (Charmaz 2001:342). More importantly, the researcher could use initial codes to break data into categories and to abstract ideas from them (Charmaz 2001).

MOBILE PHONE: A NEW INFORMATION CHANNEL

The first and foremost reason of mobile phone purchase among migrant workers is making connections with family members in their home town or friends in the PRDA. Before the broad penetration of mobile phone among migrant workers, it was very difficult to maintain contact with friends or relatives, even if they were working in factories nearby. The earlier communication difficulty was caused by the high mobility of migrant workers and the tight managerial control in factories. As a

floating population, migrant workers not only move regularly between their original villages and the destination city, but also among different factories and different towns. Without a mobile phone, they are not easily contactable. The tight control of management is another obstacle for migrant workers to maintain their social network. During their working hours, migrant workers are tightly controlled by their foremen. After working hours, workers also cannot easily contact their friends. Most migrant workers live in dormitories attached to factories because they are excluded from city housing provisions. The dormitory is an extended part of management control and constrains their social activities during leisure time (Pun and Smith 2007). Not every factory had installed fixed phones in the dormitory. Among the four factories in this study, only the electronic device factory invested by Hong Kong entrepreneurs provided fixed phones in workers’ dormitories. Even then, fixed phones are shared by more than ten workers and are constantly in use. As one worker put it:

The phone is always busy, particularly on weekends and holidays. Sometimes you have to wait for more than two hours and sometimes it is very unfortunate that when it is your turn, the party you call is engaged on the phone. (A young male worker, the electronic device factory)

Obviously, a mobile phone can reduce these difficulties and enable workers to connect with their social networks freely and easily. Social networks have an extremely important

meaning for migrant workers in the PRDA. Relatives and locals (lao-xiang) in the PRDA not only provide emotional support to migrant workers, but offer abundant information about job opportunity and conditions. The majority of migrant workers (over 78.1%) obtain their first jobs in the PRDA with the help of local networks.¹² After they enter the gate of the factory, local and kin-ethnic networks become a determinant factor in allocating tasks as the management manipulates local and kin-ethnic relations as a strategy to control workers (Lee 1998; Pun 2005). Before the arrival of mobile phones, workers' social networks were almost restricted within the factory and depended on face-to-face interactions. It was hard, if not impossible, for them to maintain their social network. A male worker recounted:

In the past it was not easy to find my friends. They are scattered in this town. Sometimes, they went back to their hometowns without telling me. I lost connections with many friends after they went back to their hometowns.

Once acquiring a mobile phone, this situation is fundamentally changed. Migrant workers are able to transgress the boundary of factory and diminish its spatial control over their activities (Kopamma 2000; Geser 2004). Even if it is impossible for them to meet their friends or relatives frequently, migrant workers can make a call or send a short message to express their greetings and good wishes. Thereafter, maintaining a stable social network in the PRDA has been much easier.

Having a mobile phone is mainly for the sake of convenience, especially making connection with friends. I did not meet some friends for a long time. Maybe, they have returned to their hometowns. But, (with a mobile phone), I can make contact with them. After we all have a mobile phone, we have more gatherings than before. (A young male worker, golf-equipment factory A)

More importantly, efficient connectivity and a stable network provide useful job information for migrant workers. In the past, in order to get job information, migrant workers had to look for job-vacancy posters on the front doors of factories (Law 2003). Nowadays, they just need to send a short message to their friends. As a worker said:

Usually, my friends send me a short message and ask whether there are job vacancies in my factory. If I tell them yes, they will give me a call and ask the details. If there is no job vacancy in my factory, I will send short messages to my other relatives or friends and require them to provide some information. (A male worker, the garment factory)

The low cost and easy accessibility of job information have improved the disadvantaged position of migrant workers. For the management, the most effective threat or punishment to workers' disobedience is dismissal. However, the availability of alternative employment poses a challenge to the power of employers/management. If workers are no longer afraid of being fired because they can easily get alternative jobs, then the effectiveness of management control

will decrease. All employers and managers interviewed in this research admitted that it was more difficult to discipline their workers now than before. The manager of a golf-equipment factory provided an example. Once there was a fight between two workers in his factory. A boy slapped a girl because she verbally abused him. After the investigation, the manager decided to support the girl and asked the boy to pay her 200 RMB as medical cost. The boy refused to pay the money and left the factory immediately. After several days, the manager was told that the boy soon found a new job in another factory. In this instance, the manager felt his power had been greatly challenged. The availability of alternative employment opportunities led the young man to quit his job (Law and Peng 2008). Similarly, the employer of the garment factory found that her workers became fastidious as they had so many complaints about the work timetable, job assignments and dormitory living conditions. If she could not adjust the work arrangement or improve the living conditions according to workers' requirement, they threatened to quit. Apparently, workers are now able to threaten management by quitting their jobs as a strategy to resist control and discipline.

From 2003 to 2005, four factories in this study all faced a labor shortage problem and the turnover rate was higher than before. According to Guangdong Statistic Bureau,¹³ Guangdong province was short of one million workers in 2005. More than two-third of the corporations in the PRDA had difficulty in recruiting

new migrant workers. Moreover, in non-state owned enterprises of the PRDA, the turnover rate of migrant workers was about 20 percent, which further exacerbated the labor shortage problem.¹⁴ Although labor shortage in the PRDA is a result of multiple reasons, evidence from this study shows that information of the job market brought by mobile phone usage among migrant workers is one of the factors contributing to the high turnover rate in the PRDA. As an employer complains:

If they have less information about the job market, they will be less likely to move around. The only way to reduce their contacts with others is to move our factory to a place where mobile phones cannot receive any signals. (An employer, the garment factory)

However, the wide coverage and reliable telecommunication network frustrates this employer's hope. Under this situation, migrant workers have more bargaining power and can fight for their rights more effectively than in the past (Law and Peng 2008). Besides more salary, migrant workers now demand more holidays, better living conditions, and more respectful treatment from the management. In order to keep their working force stable, employers and the management have to make some concessions. The employer of the garment factory has improved the living conditions of workers' dormitories. She also bought a hi-fi stereo component system to play music in the factory as workers wanted to listen to popular songs to cope with the work pressure. The manager of one golf-equipment factory

had to accept some “returning” workers. These workers left his factory to look for a better job elsewhere. When they failed, they wanted to go back to his factory. Considering the problem of labor shortage, the manager had to give them another chance. Although employers adopt some soft strategies to mitigate their relations with workers, they seldom raise a worker’s salary. As subcontractors, cheap labor is their main competitive edge. Among these four factories, only the garment factory has raised their workers’ salary. In their leisure time, workers often make a call to their friends or relatives in other factories to inquire about job opportunities. Once they discover that “any of these conditions of another factory are better than that of their own factory, they will quit after the lunch break” (Law and Peng 2008).

By mobile phone usage, migrant workers obtain an information advantage in the local labor market. Relying on the information provided by mobile communication, migrant workers can actively adopt job-changing as a strategy to resist the domination of their employers and strive for more rights and benefits. In this sense, the power of managements is counterbalanced by migrant workers. Therefore, the labor process is no longer an independent and isolated activity but is closely connected with the local labor market through the new information technologies. If job-changing is an overt struggle of migrant workers, then the following discussion will reveal some hidden tactics engendered by their mobile phone usage.

MOBILE PHONE USAGE: AN EXTENSION OF LABOR’S BODY

Besides the provision of information, mobile phone usage among migrant workers also affects actual shop-floor behaviors and relationships. It partly weakens the control of the body developed by “scientific management” and Fordism’s assembly line. Before the intervention of the mobile phone in the labor process, capital successfully utilizes the control of space to dominate labor (Ong 1987, 1991; Lee 1998; Pun 2005). By placing a worker’s body on a specific position on the assembly line and constraining its activities, capital isolates laborers from one another. By specifying exact bodily posture and requiring tedious repetition, capital produces docile bodies without minds (Ong 1991; Pun 2005). The aim of these controls of the labor process is to: improve productivity, maximize surplus value and minimize the possibilities of labor resistance (Ong 1991).

However, mobile phone usage among migrant workers challenges capital’s corporeal control and discipline. To some extent, it extends the worker’s body and emancipates labor from the constraint of space. Although their bodies are still located on the assemble line, migrant workers are not isolated any more. With a mobile phone, migrant workers can easily make connections with their networks despite the constant surveillance of management. Social contacts enabled by the mobile phone satisfy many psychological needs of migrant workers. Mobile communication

creates a virtual presence of friends and relatives, who are physically absent. (Kopomma 2000; Höflich 2002; Gergen 2003). This virtual companionship reduces workers' feelings of loneliness and unprotectedness at work.

In this study, all four factories forbid workers' mobile phones usage during working hours. Some employers even do not allow workers to bring their mobile phones with them to work. Employers and management believe that using mobile phones during working time distracts workers' attention and may cause accidents in the manufacturing process. However, migrant workers develop some strategies to resist the regulation. They hide their mobile phones in their pockets when they work. They switch their phones to vibration-mode to avoid being detected when they receive incoming calls or short messages. If they want to make contact with their friends or relatives during working hours, they prefer sending short messages instead of making voice calls. Using the restroom also becomes a good excuse for making phone calls. As a female migrant worker said:

In our factory, it is okay for us to carry mobile phones. But, we are fined if we use mobile phones during working hours. Sometimes, when I receive an incoming call, I will tell my foreman that I want to use the restroom... I answer the call in the restroom. (A young female worker, the electronic factory)

By using these tactics, migrant workers retain some autonomy in their private communications at work. These

intimate, private communications satisfy different needs for migrant workers. As a worker explains:

I always carry my mobile phone. I seldom receive calls or send short messages when I am working. But, having a mobile phone handy, I feel safe. I know I will not miss any call from my family. I am married and have a six-year-old son. If there is some urgent things happened in my home, I can be reached easily. (A thirty-year-old male worker, golf-equipment factory A)

Some male workers send short messages during working time to arrange their leisure activities. Social gatherings after work help them to maintain their friendships:

(Before got off work) I often send my friends (in other factories) short messages to make appointments. We talk about 'after-work' social gatherings, such as having a drink... We have more gatherings after we all bought mobile phones. (A male worker, golf-equipment factory A)

Some young workers enjoy chatting with their friends using SMS during working hours. As 'scientific management' fragments labor skills into simple procedures, the assembly work becomes the tedious repetition of bodily movements (Ong 1991; Pun 2005). Working time becomes unbearably boring. Under these conditions, workers create strategies to energize and distract themselves such as passing food on the line, listening to the radio, or day dreaming (Lee 1998; Pun 2005). Passing SMS messages has become the workers' favorite strategy to alleviate the boredom of work:

I send short messages during working times. When I receive messages from my friends, I will immediately reply. We just want to know what happened, how about their work. (A female worker, golf-equipment A)

Topics of their chat are focused on their work and migrant lives. Sometimes, they also send jokes or poems to cheer one another up. This mode of communication reassures migrant workers and maintains their personal networks (Johnsen 2003). The virtual presence of absent friends and relatives is an important emotional support to these lonely workers.

In addition, some young workers even purchase the on-line chat service to meet new friends in cyberspace and search for romantic experiences during working time (Law and Peng 2006). There are so many chat rooms and on-line networks set up by mobile network providers in Mainland China. By sending a message to the service center, workers can easily log into a chat room or access the list of subscribers on-line. In a chat room, workers can freely choose their chat partners. Usually, they prefer to search for opposite-sex friends who have similar background and experience. Initially, they exchange personal information and later they exchange mobile phone numbers and use short messages. Distinct from chatting with friends, the on-line chat is full of mystery, novelty, and romance. A female worker who enjoys on-line chat said:

On-line chat is fun. Even though he is a stranger, you can talk with him. You can hear lots of sweet words because

they want to please you. I know most words are not reliable. But, these sweet words are seldom heard in your real life, right? It is just for fun. (A female shop-floor worker, golf-equipment factory A)

This female worker once sent one hundred and sixty short messages during working hours. Nimble fingers produced by the assembly line work enable her to finish a short message within a minute and simultaneously chat with seven to eight friends on-line. She realizes that the virtual relation is not serious and seldom makes face-to-face interaction with her friends on-line. But, like daydreaming, the virtual romance enlivens her tedious working hours and satisfies her emotional needs. It also provides a great comfort to their otherwise often banal lives (Law and Peng 2006; Lin 2005).

Although employers and management are annoyed by workers' mobile phone usage during working hours, they have not developed strategies to prevent them. It is impossible for management to check every worker every day. Sending or receiving short messages is easy to conceal. Most employers and managers choose to turn a blind eye to workers' mobile phone usage, provided that it does not seriously affect their performance and efficiency (Lin 2005).

Mobile communication has become a hidden strategy of migrant workers to resist the alienation of work and body-control in the labor process. As the modern communication technology has dissolved the limitations of space and time, capital's body-control is partly

alleviated. Ubiquitous connections penetrate into every activity of the factory, thereby opening the labor process to the concerns of personal lives. This demonstrates that the labor process is also shaped by the worker's agency.

MOBILE PHONE: VIRTUAL COMMUNITY AND RESISTANCE IDENTIFICATION

According to Wellman (2001), the community in the information society is constituted by networks, not groups. He redefines "community" as "networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging, and social identity" (Wellman 2001:228). In this sense, it is arguable that mobiles have created a virtual community for migrant workers. Firstly, stable social networks established by mobile phone usage have provided job information, emotional support and social activities. Secondly, due to their high mobility, their community is not located in physical places, but centers around individuals' networks. Basically, this virtual community is constructed by their daily communication activities. Only in their virtual community are mobile communication activities of migrant workers imbued "with meaning, belonging and identity" (Wellman 2001:229).

Owning a mobile phone is a prerequisite for migrant workers to gain access to this virtual community. Purchasing a mobile phone becomes a migrant workers' first and foremost

concern at arriving in a new city. As an employer mentioned:

They are eager for a mobile phone. Workers in my factory try their best to buy a mobile phone as soon as possible. They borrow money from their colleagues. They cut expense on meals and clothes to buy mobile phone. (The employer of golf-equipment factory A)

The boundary of their virtual community is defined by contact lists in their mobile phones. Exchanging mobile phone numbers means accepting each other as trustworthy "insiders." According to the interviews conducted in the four factories, most migrant workers usually accept relatives, colleagues, locals, and friends as their community members. The contact list also reveals the scale of one's social network. The longer the contact lists are, the more social relations their owners have. Therefore, exchanging mobile phone numbers becomes an important means to socialize:

(The information of) our mobile phone numbers is transmitted very fast. I changed my phone number yesterday. But, all my colleagues and friends know my new number today. When I changed my mobile phone number, I would tell my friend this news. She would ask: what is your new number? Then I told her my new number. After a while, she passed this news to others. Soon, all my friends and colleagues will know my new number. (A young female worker, golf-equipment factory A)

Maintaining the virtual community also relies on mobile communication. All migrant workers interviewed in this study

said that they called their family members at least once a week. Over 80 percent of the informants admitted that they contacted their networks everyday. Short message is the most popular way to make connections. As a young female worker said:

Almost everyday, we spend some time to work on short messages. If I did not receive messages, I would send to others. We must send (short messages) for a while everyday. Otherwise, life will be very boring. (A female worker, golf-equipment factory B)

Sending a joke to amuse friends is also a popular way to express one's concern and to nurture a friendship:

I often receive some jokes from my friends. These jokes are very funny. I forward some interesting ones to my other friends and store some in my mobile phone. These messages are very good. I can feel the support from my friends in these messages. (A young male worker, golf-equipment factory B)

The frequency of receiving calls or short messages demonstrates the intensity of one's network in the virtual community. Through frequent contacts with friends, they have obtained a sense of belonging to the virtual community. They feel isolated when they lose contact with their networks:

If I have not received any message for a few days, I will feel a bit unhappy and isolated. (A male worker, golf-equipment factory B)

I expect to receive messages from my friends. If I have not received messages for two to three days, I will think why

my friends do not send me messages. (A male worker, golf-equipment factory A)

Interestingly, employers and the management are excluded from migrant workers' virtual community. Even if migrant workers disseminate their mobile phone numbers very broadly, seldom do they provide them to their employers or the management. Even if they have the foreman's number, they seldom send their foreman messages, let alone jokes and greeting messages. A young female migrant worker offered a good example:

The worker: once, a girl in our factory sent greeting messages to every one of us when we start to work everyday.'

Interviewer: Did she also send this kind of greeting messages to the management?

The worker: No. I think she did not.

Interviewer: Did you send short messages to your foreman or your employer?

The worker: No. Never.

Interviewer: Why?

The worker: Because we are different. They are the bosses.

These words show that migrant workers have consciously drawn a virtual boundary between themselves and the employers/management by managing their mobile phone usage. This virtual boundary is an excluding strategy developed by migrant workers so as to resist management. In a modern factory regime, capital employs stratagems to establish and maintain the hierarchy in the factory and segregate managerial staff

from workers. All four factories in this study provide better living conditions for the management. Except the garment factory, the other three factories differentiate managements from workers by wearing different working clothes. The electronic device factory owned by Hong Kong entrepreneurs has regulations that forbid workers from access to the office building and the managers' canteen. By consciously excluding workers from their working and living area, the management successfully marks a workers' status as inferior.

However, as Foucault argued, power also faces the counter-attack in the same body that it dominates (Foucault 1980). Migrant workers, although controlled and excluded by management, are not passively accepting this treatment. They actively create a counter-excluding strategy. Excluding management from their mobile communication not only avoids workers' virtual community being invaded by capital's power, but also constructs their resistance to management's discrimination and exclusion in the labor process. It is often hard for management to understand why workers are so fascinated with the mobile phone. In this study, most employers and management treat mobile phone purchasing as irrational actions on the part of migrant workers. The misunderstanding prevents workers and management from reaching consensus on mobile phone use during working hours.

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates how the new information technology reshapes the power relation between migrant workers and their employers in Southern China. The above analyses show that technology is not always monopolized by capital. It also sometimes empowers labor to resist the domination of capital. Compared with traditional technology, CMICTs are more flexible and penetrative, entering into every level of the labor process. By using mobile phones, labor has engendered multiple resistances to challenge the power of capital. Ubiquitous information directly connects the local labor market to the labor process. Information advantages remedy the degradation of labor brought by deskilling. Consequently, labor retains some power in the labor process.

This can partly explain the high turnover rate and the labor shortage problem in the PRDA. On the shop floor, labor control executed by Taylor's scientific management and Ford's assembly line also faces new problems. Body control no longer guarantees the isolation of labor. Perpetual connectivity brought by mobile communication liberates labor from the harsh surveillance and enables workers to indulge in their virtual community at any time. The boundary between work and private life is blurred. And the labor process becomes a mixed process which is permeated by labor's leisure activities and emotional lives. In addition, the virtual community based on mobile communication provides a space for labor to look for

social identity. Excluding management from their virtual community reflects labor's conscious resistance. The mutual-exclusion relation will have negative influence on the future interaction between labor and capital. The adoption of CMICTs enriches labor's capacity to resist. Mobile phone usage among migrant labor goes "beyond conventional dichotomies of individual and collective" resistance in the labor process research (Pun 2005:194). It combines the overt resistance with the covert confronting behavior and associates the collective struggle with individual strategies. Through mobile phone usage, migrant labor develops multiple resistance strategies to strive for their economic interest, emotional needs, and social identity.

Besides discussing the effect of CMICTs on labor's resistance, this article also sheds light on the contested and interactive nature of power. As mentioned above, mobile phone usage shifts the

power balance in the labor process. In order to keep the control over labor, capital has to make some adjustments to their dominating tactics. Soft strategies include improving living conditions, raising workers' salary, and making concession on recruitment policy. A hard discipline is expressed in the rule of forbidding worker's mobile phone usage in the factory. But workers also adapt new strategies. They shift between different jobs or factories to maximize their benefit. Obviously, the power relation between labor and capital is not static but an interactive and dialectic process. Labor is not a passive party in the power relation, but an important co-constructor who determines the power relation from below. In this case, it is labor that creates a new contested terrain and modifies the direction of capital's control. Therefore, exploring the power relation between capital and labor should take both parties into proper consideration in order to better understand the complex and dialectical ties that bind them.

NOTES

- 1 See Guangdong Statistic Bureau: 2005, *Guangdong Statistic Year Book*, Guangdong Statistic Information Web, http://www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjnj/table/19/19_c.htm.
- 2 See National Bureau of Statistics of China: 2003, *The Fifth Population Census Essays*, China Statistics Press, P. 280.
- 3 Data Source: <http://media.163.com>.
- 4 See Guangdong Statistic Bureau: 2005, *The Report of Corporation Recruitment in the Pearl River Delta Area*, Guangdong Statistic Information Web, http://www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjnj/table/gaishu_c.htm.

- 5 See the Ministry of Information Industry website: <http://www.mii.gov.cn>.
- 6 Data source: 2006, *The Report of Migrant Workers and their Mobility Status in PRDA*, Sociology Department, Peking University.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Data source: Dongguan government website, www.dg.gov.cn.
- 9 Data source: Dongguan government website, www.dg.gov.cn.
- 10 Data source: 2006, *The Report of Migrant Workers and their Mobility Status in PRDA*, Sociology Department, Peking University.
- 11 The study has been funded by grants from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University since 2003. Besides the author, the research collaborators include Pui-lam Law and Chu Wai-chi from Department of Applied Social Sciences of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Yang shan hua and Cheng Weimin from Department of Sociology of Peking University, Liu Xiaojing from the Research Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences of PRC, and postgraduate students from Sociology Department of Peking University.
- 12 Data source: 2006, *The Report of Migrant Workers and their Mobility Status in PRDA*, Sociology Department, Peking University.
- 13 See Guangdong Statistic Bureau: 2005, *The Report of Corporation Recruitment in Pearl River Delta Area*, Guangdong Statistic Information Web, http://www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjnj/table/gaishu_c.htm.
- 14 See Guangdong Statistic Bureau: 2005, *The Report of Corporation Recruitment in Pearl River Delta Area*, Guangdong Statistic Information Web, http://www.gdstats.gov.cn/tjnj/table/gaishu_c.htm.

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THE BLOG AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHINA

Patrick Pui-lam Law and Ke Yang

The paper examines briefly the dynamics of the blog and the development of civil society in China. First, the paper introduces the basic features of the blog followed by a brief account of its penetration in China. Second, it discusses an indigenous concept of civil society and its relation with the Internet in general and the blog in particular. Third, it uses two blog examples to illustrate the possible development of civil society in China.

Keywords: blogs, blogging, civil society, China, Internet, uncoerced communication

The increasing popularity of the Internet in China has already had a significant impact on the mainstream media (MSM) which is controlled by the central government. As a consequence, people have access to more varied sources of information than before. Personal blogs and other news sources are easily available both on local and international websites. The emergence of weblog (blog) on a variety of topics and approaches best exemplifies this media impact. Briefly, blog is a new form of webpage. They are largely personal accounts with posts, links and commentary archived in reverse chronological order (O Baoill 2004). Its easy-to-use technology allows the bloggers to post whatever they like on their blogs with little effort and has led to a new form of online personal expression and communication. As the information is less filtered in blogs, the bloggers can enjoy relatively more freedom in circulating their ideas online (Jiang 2006). The traditional stranglehold of information in China has been seriously challenged by the blog. This paper will examine

briefly the dynamics of the blog and the development of civil society in China.

Buchstein (1997) and Froomkin (2003) suggest that the Internet has generated ideal conditions for the public sphere as argued by Habermas (1989). This cyber sphere provides a possible platform for equal, transparent, inclusive, and rational conditions of discourse. Buchstein argues that, "[The Internet] offers universal access, uncoerced communication, freedom of expression, and unrestricted agenda, participation outside of traditional political institutions and generates public opinion through processes of discussion, the Internet looks like the most ideal speech situation." (1997:250) Following this line of thought, it is claimed that the emergence of the Internet will significantly facilitate the development of civil society in China. However, others point out that the Internet is unlikely to bring revolutionary change in China because the central government has implemented the most powerful, sophisticated, and broad-

reaching filtering system to curtail the circulation of politically sensitive information (Chase and Mulvenon 2002). But if this issue is put in a broader context of economic and social modernity, China has to compromise its authoritarian control of the Internet in order not to obstruct the economic reform and liberal policy to which China is unrelentingly committed (Harwit and Clark 2001). Liu, the well known dissident, claims that the Internet has given people in China more room for disseminating critical information and opinions (Liu 2006). The emergence of blogging in Mainland China has been one of the most influential means for disseminating critical information and views.

Although the blog is a new form of webpage, its importance was widely noted when it started in 1997. Many researchers have explored the social consequences of the blog with particular reference to journalism and media communication (Kim 2005; Walker 2003). In spite of the diversity of blogs, Krishnamurthy (2002) categorizes them into four types along two dimensions: individual vs. community and personal vs. topical. While blogs are largely written by individuals, some have a community of authors (Gill 2004). Personal blogs mainly record the bloggers' personal information, thoughts, and feelings. The topical blogs, in addition to their personal information, always focus on some interesting topics such as photography or relevant public issues found in the mainstream media (MSM).

In the case of topical blogs, the bloggers are mostly amateurs who express their views with passion rather than professional journalists writing news or commentary (Gill 2004). When their blogs deal with public issues, they are always capable of providing "new perspectives and new facts every minute" (Hewitt 2005). Blogging has made the grassroots or the netroots more participatory in public or political affairs (Kerbel and Bloom 2005), changing them from readers/observers to writers/commentators. Some studies show that the sources of information they input are often more credible than the MSM or other online information (Johnson and Kaye 2004; Hewitt 2005). In addition, the easily-to-use technology of the blog, a democratized media (Kim 2005), often triggers discussions between the bloggers and the readers. The blogrolling and trackback tools also allow the bloggers with the shared interests on specific issues to easily group themselves, forming an online community – blogosphere (Wei 2004). Some also attempt to attract and interact with the more general public, with the aim of fostering more open public debate (O Baoill 2004). Unlike other online communities which are usually lacking in structure or organization, topical bloggers can easily convert themselves from a virtual into real community, thereby facilitating the formation of social or political groups. The 'Blog for America' is an example showing how the virtual and the real have been connected and the community formed has survived after the presidential election (Kerl and Bloom 2005).

In short, the blog technology has brought considerable changes in the informational landscape. Topical blogs (Krishnamurthy 2002) are online platforms for grassroots or netroots discussion of public or political issues. They form democratically constituted blogospheres. When the partisanship of the members of these blogospheres is sufficiently high, a basis for transforming virtual to real communities is established. The participants are initially observers; after blogging they might become commentators or sometimes actors. It is in this context that this paper explores the relationship between blogging and the development of civil society in China Mainland.

The blog has indeed penetrated China significantly. The first instance of a blog in China was in 2002. Fang Xingdong, a developer of blogchina, wanted to develop a personal webpage to post his personal opinions on the Internet. He was extremely annoyed when his articles on the internet media in China were removed by the authorities. He found out about blogging, a technology becoming popular abroad, particularly in the U.S. Fang developed blogchina in August 2002, the first blog in China. By 2005 there were 16 million blog sites and by 2007 about 72.8 million. Most blogs are mainly personal, others are topical while yet others deal with public issues such as MSM or social networks. I argue that this phenomenon of blogging enables an expanded scope for public discussion and hence the development of civil society in China.

The concept of civil society is problematic when applied to Chinese society (White, Howell, and Shang 1996; Ding 2000). There are three kinds of popular definitions of civil society: It is an intermediate associational activity situated between the state and different sections of society (individuals, families and firms); it consists of social organizations separate from the state, enjoying a level of autonomy from the state; it is organized voluntarily by people to defend, protect, or advance their goals, interests, and values. Unlike the western one, the Chinese conception of civil society is not a confrontational state-civil society relations but a passive one, as the state exercises enormous control on social organization in China (Schwartz 2004).

Yang Guobin (2003a) suggests only an incipient nature of Chinese civil society since social organizations in China have emerged only for a couple of decades and their developments are weak compared to the West. Yang conducted a study of the relationship between the Internet and civil society in China (Yang 2003a, 2003b, 2003c). Yang integrates Habermas' and Calhoun's suggestions and explored Internet use in three key areas of Chinese civil society namely: public sphere, social organizations, and popular protest. His project tentatively concludes that the social uses of the Internet in China have fostered discussion in the public sphere and has changed social organizations through their incorporation of the online communities. These online communities have also introduced new elements in igniting

social protest (2003a). Yang also points out that the development of the Internet and civil society should be co-evolutionary, since the urge for public discussion, the dynamics of social organizations and active social movements are likely to lead to considerable diffusion of the Internet in China (2003b).

Yang's research has set an important landmark for understanding the Internet and civil society in China. His studies have been mostly issue-based since the research mainly relies on the content analysis of BBS forums, chatrooms, or the materials on the websites. With the emergence of the blog, it is easier to follow the development of the individual Internet users (bloggers) and their blog communities participating in the discussion of public forums. Thus examining the blog would certainly provide a broader picture than the previous studies have done on understanding the development of civil society in China.

When studying the blog in relation to the public sphere, the focus can be put on: whether the bloggers argue according to the norms of a free discussion rather than "bullying" the participants; whether the better argument prevails over social hierarchy such as gender or social position; whether new areas of questioning and criticism are introduced; and whether anyone is allowed to participate in the discussion. It is important to assess whether bloggers change their attitudes on the basis of argumentation concerning the issues they

are interested after going through debates or discussions on the net. Thus one of the aspects is the understanding of identity transformation.

We do not assume that identity on the Internet is fixed or unitary but instead consider that it may be fragmented or fluid. At one level, blogs easily reveal the online identity of authors. Thus, identity change is relatively easy to recognize. This change can be recognized by the ways of discussing issues in the Internet public sphere or whether bloggers' switch from passive participation online to involvement in the physical world.

In addition to the study of the identity transformation, the concepts of social organization and social movement are also central to understanding civil society. However, we have to specify and refine these concepts as they apply in China.

Societal organization (rather than NGO) is considered one of the key components of Chinese civil society. Organizations which enjoy relative autonomy from the state is central to the discussion of civil society and non-governmental organization (NGO) is a key component in the western world. In China (Yang 2003a; Schwartz 2004) incipient and nonconfrontational models of civil society, are more appropriate than the western NGO model. The latter barely exist in China. Instead, societal organizations in China may include: organizations under the control of the government and the communist party (some are very influential for government policy); quasi-governmental and quasi-

people or governmental as well as people (this category does not depend solely on government funding and have relatively more freedom); local organizations (they are entirely independent and have emerged in recent years), and finally web-based organizations.

Unlike social movements in the West, China does not presently tolerate confrontational and organized protest against the state. Therefore the concept of social movements in China should be expanded to include online debates on public issues, online protests, as well participation in physical events. In this context, we discuss two blog examples to illustrate the possible development of indigenous civil society in China.

The first blog is about a child who contracted leukemia and while a matched bone marrow was available, the family could not afford the needed operation. The child's father (with assistance from a friend) set up a blog to request donations and to spread the news regarding their plight. Using other bloggers, BBS, QQ (ICQ), SMS and email were used to spread their appeal. The blog posted pictures of the child as well as his diagnosis and prognosis. News spread fast on the net. Many bloggers posted the link on their blogs and some very popular bloggers helped the donation campaign. A blogger philanthropic group was formed with branches in many cities. The blogging group planed the 4th of February of 2007 as the donation date throughout the country.

As a consequence of all this activity, the campaign attracted the mainstream



media's attention. Beijing TV carried out live broadcasts of the day's donation event. The Beijing branch received 4,206 yuan as donation. By the 4th of March 2007, 358,400 yuan had been collected, of which bloggers and other internet users donated 241,100 yuan. The bone marrow transplant took place on March 26. A second operation was done in April because the first transplant was not successful. A wealthy donor gave 100,000 yuan on April 19 for the child's second operation. The blog continued posting the condition of the child, how the donated money had been used, including the receipts issued by the hospital.

This example did not involve complex or heated debates online. Instead it resulted in the voluntary formation of a virtual group

that subsequently led to societal organizations throughout China. A social movement in raising the money involved was also generated.

The power of the blog is also reflected in the example concerning the demolition of old houses and building of new high-rise apartments in Chongqing. One of the original residents refused to move out unless the developer agreed to resettle their family on the original place with the same house size. The developers initially refused and all the houses (except the protestor's) were demolished, while electricity and water were cut off. But the household was determined and insisted on staying. Many people posted their opinion on the chatrooms or forum but their posts were quickly removed. The case then spread to the blogs where many

posted their opinions. This led to a vigorous discussion of the case in the cyber world. Soon after, the case also attracted the mainstream media and spread globally. Because of the publicity, the developer feared forcing the household out of their premises. When the local government's deadline requiring the household to move out arrived, many local people surrounded the construction site and supported the family, including news reporters. Consequently, the local government and the developer relented and gave generous conditions for the family concerned. The later agreed to move out and received a large compensation.

In this example, we can also see the power of the blog in handling this social incident. The case attracted a young



blogger who traveled from his hometown Hunan Province to Chongqing city to be able to report on the case and pass on valuable information for other bloggers. They in turn circulated the information globally. The mainstream media also interviewed the young blogger who was referred to afterwards as the first "citizen" reporter of the cyber world. This case illustrates the influence of the virtual on the real world and their ineffable commingling. This case did not generate well organized social groups or movements but it nevertheless succeeded in its purpose. It has since become an important precedent in defense of the weak and powerless in Chinese society.

Concerning the discussion on the bet, at the initial stage, many posts on the website and on the blogs discussed this issue and the opinions were about how the rich people and those with power oppressed the poor. A month later, the discussion had become more mature and focused on the issue of property rights. This is a new concept for most Chinese because during the imperial period all property belonged to the emperor. After the communist revolution, it belonged to the state. Only after the open door policy

in 1979, was the concept of private property discussed and even encouraged by the Communist Party. However, the Internet and particularly the blog, has initiated fuller discussions about property rights in China. It is too early to conclude that these discussions of private property mark definite stages in the development of civil consciousness and civil rights. But at least there is now a space (for now mainly cyber) for initiating such discussions.

While the two examples discussed may not be typical in illustrating the link between blogging and the development of civil society in Mainland China, they at least provide material for further theoretical and empirical investigation. There is little doubt that blogs have introduced a new element of civil discourse hitherto restricted in China. Further research and corresponding political and social changes will determine how significant CMICT is for the development of civil consciousness and democratic processes. The evidence seems to indicate there is ground for hope that the new media will open more spaces for an ideal public sphere where ordinary people can participate freely.

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BOOK REVIEW

Loader, Brian D. (ed). 2007. Young Citizens in the Digital Age: Political Engagement, Young People and New Media. London and New York: Routledge. 213 pp.

Manuel Enverga III

One of the trends that have been noted in the realm of electoral politics, particularly in developed countries has been the decrease in the electoral participation of young people. This lack of participation has been attributed to their supposed loss of interest in electoral politics. This supposed political apathy of youth is sometimes attributed to increased immersion in technology, such as the Internet. What is revealed in Loader's book, however, is that these are misconceptions about the youth towards politics. On the contrary, the book argues that young people actually have very strong attitudes regarding political issues. Furthermore, the book discusses how technology is actually a medium, rather than a hindrance, to young people's participation in the political sphere.

Young people's supposed apathy towards politics is often due to thinking of politics solely in terms of activities with regard to elections or political parties. The decreasing participation of young people in political party activities and elections is what has led to the conclusion that young people are not involved in political issues. This is not just due to the actions

of young people, however, as the authors in this collection show that politicians and political parties do not try to reach out to issues that young people are interested in, thereby making them appear irrelevant to young people. This creates a gap between politicians and the youth. In order to bridge this gap, the book calls for a restructuring of the liberal democratic institutions, upon which political systems in developing countries rely.

Moving away from political activity as defined by elections and political party participation, however, it is clear in Loader's book that young people in developed countries are clearly involved in political issues. However, the difference is that young people's political interests fall outside the realm of traditional party and electoral politics. This is a consequence of the trend in present-day societies towards the weakening of institutions that once provided collective political meaning, symbols and authority for young people, such as families, voluntary organizations, churches and employment organizations. Instead, young people's political identities

are more closely associated with the development of individual preferences related to lifestyle and consumerism.

Consequently, the political topics that the youth presently find significant are issues such as environmental degradation, poverty in developing countries and unscrupulous behavior associated with large multinational corporations. The political field that young people in the developed countries examined in the book is more global than the interests of traditional politicians. Addressing these issues therefore require that young people move beyond the relatively confined political spaces of electoral and party politics, which is why the book discusses how young people use new information and communications technologies to engage in political issues they are interested in.

Given the fact that technology is presently used in the political realm, the question that then comes to mind is: in what ways and for what purposes are young people using technology for political action? Loader's book describes a number of ways that politics and technology intersect with one another in varying geographic locations. The conclusions that may be drawn from the book are mixed, although there are a number of general ideas that may be drawn. First of all, on the question of whether or not young people use the Internet to engage in political issues, it was found that young people who engaged in online political activity only did so as an extension of their offline political interests. The Internet by itself,

therefore, cannot make young people engage in politics unless they were already inclined to do so offline.

Another conclusion that may be drawn from the book is the fact that politicians and political parties need to harness new information and communication technologies in order to reach young people. In a number of studies discussed, it was found that the reason why politicians and political party representatives in developing countries appear irrelevant is due to the fact that the media that candidates and parties use, particularly websites, do not try to address young people enough.

Other discussions in the book revolve around the potential of ICTs in the political socialization of young people in response to the observed trend regarding the youth's lack of participation in national politics. This discussion particularly revolved around the implications of using ICTs in citizenship courses in various national school curricula, particularly those of Great Britain and Ireland. The conclusion of the studies with regard to ICTs as a tool for political socialization, indicate that ICTs do have potential as platforms for young people to engage in the political arena. It was noticed that they have enabled young people to discuss issues with politicians, as well as to engage positively with co-citizens in areas with deep cultural tensions and divisions, such as Ireland. The authors who discuss this, however, concede that although there are small-scale successes of ICTs, more still needs to be done in order for the field of ICTs

and the Internet to become effective as a tool of political socialization. This is a point that could be applied in the Philippines, with its deep ethnic, religious and class divisions. So far only the computerization of elections has drawn significant interest instead of the much broader issues of communication technology and political consciousness.

In general, therefore, Loader's book stands as a highly informative resource regarding the intersection between ICTs and young people's political participation. Its insights would be useful in a

variety of fields. What Loader's work could benefit from, however, is a look at the trends observed in developing countries and comparing them with other contexts. Despite the choice of locations studied being mainly developed countries; however, it is still important in a global context that is increasingly relying on ICTs for various cultural practices. Furthermore, it is one way to understand, and perhaps reframe, the so-called lack of political participation that is increasingly observed among young people, even in the Philippines.

Ling, Rich. 2008. New Tech, New Ties – How Mobile Communication is Reshaping Social Cohesion. London: MIT Press. xiii – 224, Hard Cover.

Raul Pertierra

I enjoyed Rich Ling's book very much. It is the first time that a book connects classical sociological theorists such as Durkheim, his later interpreters like Goffman and Collins, to the very contemporary phenomena of mobiles. A major deficiency of the literature dealing with mobiles is its generally non-theoretical nature - most studies are mainly descriptive and lack any attempt to theorize beyond simple narratives. This is partly because the mobile has been taken up so quickly and has penetrated so many aspects of everyday life that theorists can barely catch up with its effects, let alone reflect on its significance. As others have noted, the mobile has

resulted in an explosion of banality, as people send greetings and other ordinary messages to relatives and friends. This banality has blinded us to the more profound changes accompany these messages. Rich Ling has correctly identified these banalities of everyday life provided by mobiles as an attempt (not always successful) to recuperate earlier intimacies, traditionally provided by ritual expressions and actions.

Interestingly, Ling draws on Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, a text better known to anthropologists than sociologists because it deals with supposedly archaic and

primitive cultures. Durkheim deliberately chose Australian Aborigines as his examples because their culture and practices best showed the essential elements of ritual and sociality. Least encrusted with secondary features, their society directly expressed collective representations in social relationships. Ritual was an essential aspect of these collective representations. Modernity seems a long way away from these conditions and the mobile appears hardly comparable to ritual chants or message sticks. But Durkheim knew what he was doing in using this example; to understand the significance of religion and ritual in social life, including its contemporary case. Ling is performing a similar task. How can an ordinary device such as a mobile, mostly used for simple and often banal messages, express essential conditions of contemporary life?

This book reminds us that the changes charted by Durkheim, Simmel, Weber and other early theorists are proceeding even more vigorously today and that, like them, we have to theorize their significance. The mobile has without doubt been the most popular and significant communication tool invented since the telegraph and may even exceed the latter's importance. While the Internet may attract more attention and certainly has produced more theoretically oriented scholarship, it is the mobile that has made it possible for billions of poor people to participate in global communication.

While mobile messages are mostly banal and apparently uninteresting, they reveal a need previously provided by

ritual, to enrich everyday life by connecting its practices to notions of the sacred or the numinous. Under the regimes of modernity, ritual has been debased and the sacred consigned to the sphere of spirituality. But the practices of everyday life still have to provide meaning and purpose for most people and the mobile is its unpretentious purveyor. Durkheim recognized this when he stated that science is unable to replace religion until science itself becomes a religion. A rational attitude has to be complemented by corresponding norms usually provided by ritual. In the meantime we only have the banalities of everyday life to provide us with the certainties earlier provided by conventional religion and its rituals. Rich Ling brings us back to the classical theorists by reminding us of the importance of finding significance in the ordinary.

The book is full of examples illustrating the points above. It describes how mobiles are used in public, requiring corresponding protocols to coordinate its requirements within given contexts. Should we dissimulate a mobile conversation in public places? Texting is easily conducted without disturbing other people but what if we are with friends? Does the cellphone impose private behaviour in public spaces? Because of the rapid spread of cellphones in the Philippines, their use in public spaces is still uncontrolled. We can all provide Philippine examples where cellphone use in public spaces such as cinemas, churches and buses constitute a nuisance.

A major point in the book deals with a phenomenon Durkheim could not have possibly foreseen: mediated communication and the case of an absent presence. Much of our communication is now mediated through intervening technologies such as print, radio, television and the mobile. The banal exchanges mentioned earlier indicate that co-presence is no longer necessary for sharing petty, ordinary or significant information. Filipinos overseas can keep in close touch with their village families. The exchange of texts allows kin to maintain and even strengthen existing relationships. Filipinos are even more forthcoming in these mediated exchanges than they are face-to-face. Not only are existing relationships reproduced, new identities are forged in the process of these exchanges. This insight is the principal point of the book. The mobile generates new ties and novel socialities. This became obvious early in our research on cellphones in the Philippines. But Ling does all of us a great service by connecting this discovery to its Durkheimian sources.

The book ends with an interesting discussion of the individuating consequences of the mobile. Does being able to remain perpetually in touch with significant and even non-significant others, strengthen small group solidarity at the cost of broader loyalties? Is the steady march towards individualism the final effect of cellphones? While close ties are certainly reinforced by the mobile, it seems that other factors also allow for wider networks of communication. In the Philippines, close networks of kin and friends are certainly effects of the cellphone but the entry of the stranger is also another feature of this technology. The role of mobiles for political and other social mobilizations has also been noted among Filipinos but the data is still too raw for definite conclusions to be drawn. Once more Ling has done us a favor by linking these important sociological debates to everyday practices associated with mobiles. I recommend this book highly not only for enthusiasts of the mobile revolution but also for those looking for contemporary links with the classical sources of our discipline.

Horst, Heather A. and Daniel Miller. 2006. The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication. New York: Berg. 212 pp

Lidia Pola

The book is based on extensive ethnographic research in Jamaica, as part of a project sponsored by the UK Department for International Development aimed at exploring

the relationship between new communication technologies and poverty alleviation in four different countries—Ghana, India, Jamaica and South Africa.

Horst and Miller conducted their fieldwork over the course of a year (January to December 2004), focusing on two distinct locations—Portmore, in the outskirts of Kingston, and Marshfield, in Orange valley—considered representative for urban and rural settlements of low-income Jamaicans.

Compelled by the dramatic impact of the newly introduced cellphone on the lives and livelihood of Jamaicans, the authors decided to tackle this particular phenomenon as it was occurring within the wider communication ecologies of the communities. An ethnography of the cellphone in Jamaica, aimed at assessing its impact on the poor, was the result.

The book, grounded in ethnography, goes much beyond it. It is in fact a multifaceted, highly original and innovative piece of work, contributing to different disciplinary domains (actually blurring their boundaries), to anthropological theory, as well as to contemporary debates on new communication technologies and development. It is exceedingly lively and fun to read. The book is cast in a rigorous structure and – above all – informed by a contagious enthusiasm for anthropology and the cellphone.

The project is situated at the convergence of two main bodies of literature: the global impact of the cellphone and the specific nature of communication in Jamaica (see Chapter 1 – Introduction). The starting point is the widest possible consideration of communication, including “locations such as the market or church, media and

transport, as well as the specific nature of oral discourse.” Within these contexts, cellphone uses are tacked ethnographically with a primary concern for understanding and conveying the unique perspective of the research participants.

This is reflected in the whole book, where the authors’ findings are consistently substantiated by core ethnographic descriptions configured as “stories” about individuals and small groups, expressing their experiences in their own specific idioms. However, the focus on the “particular” is in dialectic contrast with the need for generalizations pertaining to other disciplines—including policy—considered in the book. A balance between the two perspectives is constantly re-negotiated through the various chapters.

Chapter 2 - Infrastructure – discusses the role of market players, government and other actors in bringing about the conditions for the cellphone to become a dazzling success in Jamaica, reaching one of the highest penetration rates in the world. Chapter 3 - Location – introduces Jamaica generally and low income Jamaicans in particular, as well as the research sites and the living conditions.

Within this context, provided in more general and analytic terms, are the subsequent core chapters—Possession, Link up, Coping, Pressure—committed to understanding the ways in which Jamaicans both see and experience communication, as expressed through their own idioms, concepts and categories. These are nicely contrasted with “ours” in Chapter 8 - Welfare –

where fields derived from international development (e.g. education, health, crime) are reintroduced, for an assessment of cellphone uses and their consequences, as well as an assessment of the process of evaluation itself.

The final section - Evaluation – is most intriguing in trying to address the gap between qualitative/anthropological research. Its assumptions, methods and findings, and policy makers' need for analyses and recommendation fitting their own agendas and visions. Is qualitative research any use for policy? The answer is positive, if "the primary contribution of ethnography can be to turn the phrase 'it all depends' from a negative critique of policy into a positive foundation for policy." A policy dialectically in tune with the contradictions of reality.

"Link up"—as a specific communication modality of low income Jamaicans, related but not subsidiary to their strategies of "coping"—is probably the most valuable contribution the study offers to the anthropology of communication. Evidence leading to such a conceptualization first emerged from the author's analysis of cellphone use.

While the average duration of a phone call in Jamaica in 2004 was 19 seconds, the lists of contact numbers memorized in the phones reflected peculiar networks of relationships, of a very heterogeneous composition and amazing size. These included relatives in Jamaica and abroad, friends, lovers, neighbors, church and schoolmates, down to more or less casual acquaintances, which could be useful

someday. Contacts were kept regularly activated by very short calls, in which the most important element was not the conversation, but the fact itself – in Jamaican terms – of 'linking up.' The authors found that this kind of calls dominated in the phone usage of low income Jamaicans. This led to the identification of a practice of networking related indeed to exchange of favors and money, but not exclusively "functional," even in a rural population where, on average, more than 50 percent of household income derived from social networking rather than work.

On the basis of other evidence derived from their research, as well as from relevant anthropological literature, the authors point out that Jamaican communication no longer appears as a means to some other end, but networking—or linking up—seems to be brought about by a desire to forge links that is felt as valuable in its own right. And the cellphone lends itself superbly to support this mutual desire—or even compulsion—to create relationships.

This is one of the many reasons—expounded in the book—why Jamaicans consistently consider the cellphone as a "blessing." It helps them in "begging and giving" (a micro economy of exchanges), in eliminating "pressure" (re-establishing their well being by means of social contacts), as well as in "linking up," as seen above. However, the picture is more mitigated if fields delineated by the convention of international development and other governing bodies are considered for assessment. Every

beneficial effect seems to be counter-weighted by drawbacks brought about by the new opportunities offered by the tool. If the balance is generally positive in the field of "health," the picture is contradictory in the case of "crime" and cellphones seem to be more detrimental than beneficial in "schooling." This makes it difficult, but not impossible, to formulate suggestions for public action, with the caveat that ethnographic finding must be constantly updated and monitored, since any policy action can lead to unforeseen effects. The authors have in fact compiled policy recommendations for their sponsoring agency, which would be very interesting to peruse (unfortunately, the provided web link is not active at the moment this review is written).

Horst and Miller have produced an excellent piece of anthropological work, while at the same time fulfilling their obligations toward their sponsoring

agency, in the form of an assessment of cellphone consequences for low income Jamaicans.

The double task they were faced with permeated the book with a constant dialectical shift among disciplines, methods, languages and perspectives. The richness of ethnographic evidence presented by the authors allowed them to go beyond ethnography and contribute to the anthropology of communication, the anthropology of media as well as the centrality of networking relationships. They participated in the contemporary debate on new technologies and society, while remaining coherently faithful to their academic assumptions and ethics. They actually built bridges between academia and the multiple actors outside it, which are part of our contradictory, ever changing world. Finally, Horst and Miller provide a model for other scholars interested in this field, thereby stimulating a collective effort for comparative research.

Pertierra, Raul. 2007. The Social Construction and Usage of Communication Technologies – Asian and European Experiences. The University of the Philippines Press. xi - 228 pp.

Tomasito T. Talledo

There are eleven essays collected in this book that includes the Introduction by the editor. They were remarkable papers read at a conference of international scholars on communication

technologies that was ably supported by Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), Asia Foundation and the Embassy of Finland in the Philippines. As gathering like this rarely happens in the country, the editor

underscores its significance by stressing that this is “the first attempt to discuss the new global media, with Asia as its focus despite predominance of the West” (p.x).

The contribution of Filipina sociologist, Czarina Saloma-Akpedonu, “Doing IT in Developing Societies: Varying Contexts, Similar Epistemic Practices,” (pp. 1-19) deals with the differences in the contexts of knowledge work in Malaysia and the Philippines and inquires if they can be globally competitive producers of knowledge based societies. Insiders note that Malaysia’s Multimedia Superior Corridor (MSC) and its effort to move from low value-added manufacturing to high-skill activities is an exemplar of state-propelled policy compared to the Philippines’ inchoate, unsystematic and “laissez faire” IT development model. Saloma-Akpedonu’s contribution establishes the parameters for the succeeding essays.

The sublime and the banal in ICT

An engaging philosophical reflection on Information Communication Technologies (ICT) is in Leopoldina Fortunati’s “Understanding Mobile Phone Design” (pp. 20-47). Her assertions are no idealistic extrapolations grounded as they were on experiential investigation and observations. Whereas typical consumer activists may decry the invincible power of producers, the author views ICT products “as artifacts in a society that they help to change and that, in turn, changes them” (p.21). Her close analysis of Telecom Italia Service Lab (Telcos), as case study on consumers’

reactivity, reveals that “the power of the user have been able not only, as it is generally stressed, to completely transfigure the design of the artifact over time, but also to reconfigure the architecture and/or the meaning of many organizational bodies inside the firm [Telcos]” (p. 35). Consumers or users of ICT, as Fortunati suggests, are not passive subjects but are in the position to influence producers and inventors.

As counterpoise to Fortunati’s reflections on technological processes and products, Ilpo Koskinen’s “Managing Banality in Mobile Multimedia” (pp. 60-81) shows how tawdriness and banality are traded between sender and receiver of messages via multimedia messaging services (MMS). And how is this mundane kind of connectivity managed? This is accomplished when the interests of the receiver is purposely aroused, when the message is presented as something “extraordinary,” when fun is generated and when the message is a sign of a more significant pattern. It is the credence of subject matter being essayed in this contribution as well as the author’s peculiar interest in employing the tools of micro-sociology on a topic such as MMS.

Examples from Northern Europe and Asia

Finland’s examples in Timo Kopomaa’s paper “Affected by the Mobiles: Mobile Phone Culture, Text Messaging, and Digital Welfare Services” (pp.48-59), and Sakari Taipali’s piece “The Cellphone: Is it an Urban

Phenomenon?" (pp. 82-99) exhibit the adaptability of this communication apparatus. Still, Timo Kopomaa validates the varied use of mobile phones that young Fins are into and finds that those of the older generation are not that hooked as "they are less driven by the need to be at the center of things" (p54). For his part, Sakari Tipali notes that in Finland's countryside the cellphone is a tool for creating and maintaining social contacts or to set up what Simmel termed "sociations" to satisfy their users' interests. Thus far, in urban areas, cellphones are used for privacy. Beyond geographical location, "technologic identities" (p.90) and/or one's sense of belonging with telephonic connection is now interestingly shifting from physical place to network. Supposedly, in a society like Finland, layered over the category of age, gender and geographical residence is another identity and that is "technologic identity."

Additional country studies set in Asia are Bui Hoai Son's "Vietnam and the Internet: A Brief History" (pp. 165-188), Patrick Law and Yinni Peng's "Cellphones and the Social Lives of Migrant Workers in Southern China" (pp. 126-142) and Reevany Bustami and Elisha Nasruddin's "Three Technological Paradoxes: Power Manifestations of Mobile Phone Usage among Malaysians on the Run" (pp143-164). The study in Vietnam shows that "young users do not regard Internet as a reason to reduce face-to-face communication; Internet users, in fact, have more opportunities to make friends through chatting and e-mailing" (p.182). The mushrooming service cafés in

Vietnam have played an important role in popularizing the use of internet, according to Bui Hoai Son. In southern China, the two investigators observe that with aid of cellphones, migrant workers' traditional kinship relation may gave way to civic fellowship or instrumental relationship or may also increase face-to-face connection. They surmise that among Chinese workers, "this modern form of communication has generated feelings of dependency as much as connectivity or generated a need for synchrony" (p.135). The Malaysian case easily grabs readers' attention as it seeks to identify the paradoxes of power dimension embedded in the use of mobile phones. These paradoxes are of control, of boundaries and of informality. As reviewer, I will refrain from disclosing too many details for the readers' curiosity concerning this contribution. It suffices to say that the mobile phone's feature is also a contradiction of empowerment and disempowerment. Probably, the apt metaphor for new telecommunication technologies in Asia is the dragon, a mythical creature that is both benign and perilous.

Focus on the Philippines

In this collection, there are two essays that spotlight on the Philippines, they are Itaru Nagasaka's "Cellphones in the Rural Philippines" (pp. 100-125) and the editor Raul Pertierra's own "The Transformative Capacities of Technology: Computer-Mediated Interactive Communications in the Philippines – Promises and the Present Future" (pp. 189-225). In the rural setting of Salpad, Ilocos, the Japanese

researcher confirms previous observations that cellphones reproduce existing social ties as those make possible new relationship with strangers. He observes cellphone texts become "exchange gifts" or "gift exchanges" where balanced reciprocity prevails, with reference to 2002 study by Pertierra. And that among women of middle-age in Salpad, having a cellphone makes for flexible sexual identities, even if only virtually.

Raul Pertierra's piece is placed last in the collection. In this contribution, the author is rather guarded with his assertions about the projected transformation of subjectivity when prevailing social constructs still remain as parameters of new communication technologies such as cellphones. But he is enthusiastic about what future the computer-mediated-interactive-communication technology (CMICT), the linking of cellphones with computer, can offer. Pertierra betrays his exhilaration here when in an example he waxes, "one

can say that corporeal limitations have been transcended through CMICT" (p. 223). With new communication technologies, while the past is history, the future appears as a seductive mystery.

Concluding words

This book does not only supply the readers' need for fundamental information concerning new communication technologies but may fire their imagination as to its societal implications in the future. Since even as the convenience of its products is being enjoyed now, given the fast process of its evolution, the generation of newer models and versions requires that both producers and consumers keep up their knowledge, skills and valuation. Yet contributors like Leopoldina Fortunati cautions by quoting Sombart: "technological interpretation of history, which sees the history of humankind in the light of technology, is another celebration of **technological determinism**" (p. 28, underscoring supplied). Thus, in weighing the worth of this book, I could not add more.

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Prospective contributors are requested to observe the following guidelines:

1. Standard length of papers is 6000 words (approximately 20 pages typed double spaced with generous margins at the top, bottom, and sides of the page), but shorter contributions are also welcomed.
2. Include a brief abstract of 100-200 words summarizing the findings and at most five key words on a separate sheet of paper (without author information).
3. Title, author's name, affiliation(s), full address (including telephone and email address) and a brief biographical note should be typed on a separate sheet.
4. *Notes* should contain more than a mere reference, although it is recommended to use notes only for substantive observation and to limit the length. They must be numbered serially and presented at the end of the article in a separate endnotes section that appears before the References.
5. All illustrations, diagrams, and tables to be referred to as "Figures" and "Tables" and numbered according to the sequence in the text. Figures should be referred to by number (Figure 1) rather than by placement (See Figure below). Each table and figure must include a descriptive title.
6. Please use The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed.
 - a) The following examples illustrate the format for referencing in the text:

(Banzon-Bautista 1998: 21)
(Lynch & Makil 1968)
Zialcita (2005)

For Filipinos, the "outside" world is "a place of power, wealth, cleanliness, beauty, glamour and enjoyment" (Cannell 1995: 223).
Source: Saloma 2001

"After all," he said, "*pinoy* can be seen along national lines."
Source: Saloma 2001

- b) List two or more works by different authors who are cited within the same parentheses in alphabetical order by the first author's surname. Separate the citations with semicolons.
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- c). All references cited in the text must be listed in the *References* section. The details should be listed in full, alphabetically by author. The following examples illustrate the format for references.

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Marcuse, P. 1989. "Dual City: A Muddy Metaphor for a Quartered City." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 13, 697-720.

Newspaper Article

Estopace, D. 2005. "The business of poverty." *Today*. 25 January, p. B3

Article from the Internet

Mershon, D. H. 1998. "Star Trek on the Brain: Alien Minds, Human Minds." *American Scientist* 86, 585. Retrieved 29 July 1999, from Expanded Academic ASAP database.

Cabrera, R. E. 2003. "Renewable Energy Program for Mindanao." Retrieved 26 July, from <http://www.amore.org.ph>.

Book

Berner, E. 1997. *Defending a Place in the City*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Book Article or Chapter

Racelis, M. 1988. "Becoming an Urbanite: The Neighborhood as a Learning Environment." In J. Gugler (ed.), *The Urbanization of the Third World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 219-224.

Conference paper

Sassen, S. 1994. "Identity in the Global City: Economic and Cultural Encasements." Paper presented at the conference on The Geography of Identity. University of Michigan, 4-5 February.



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