

Environmental Correlates of Community Attachment*

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The resurgence of interest in community development also stimulated conceptual and methodological elaboration of related concepts among which is community attachment.

The study developed indexes of community attachment and identified its environmental correlates using key informant interviews and social survey in barangays Bayugo and Pagkalinawan of Jala-jala, Rizal. Community attachment was measured using local indicators of the three dimensions of the concept, namely, interpersonal relations, community participation and community satisfaction. An index was constructed for each dimension: interpersonal relations measured degree of closeness to people they went to for help on important matters and to those they often socialized with; community participation consisted of both membership in formal organizations and participation in informal organizational activities in the barangay; community satisfaction reflected extent of satisfaction with the barangay, plan to change barangay of residence and trust that barangay leaders would perform roles effectively. The community attachment index was the composite of scores on the three individual component indexes. Index scores show differential levels of community attachment among the residents of the two barangays.

Three environmental factors were found to have significant relationships with the composite measure of community attachment. These are the physical features of the barangay, length of residence in the barangay and ownership and type of residential unit of respondents. The construction of a community attachment index contributes both to the conceptual elaboration of community attachment and to the methodological imperative for indicators that capture the specificities and particularities of the barangays studied. The study lays the ground work for further studies linking the concept of community attachment to community action and development.

INTRODUCTION

Community development has regained currency in recent years due in part to the recognition of the importance of local initiatives and participatory approaches to development. Effecting development at the community level requires an appreciation of the concept

of community as well as that of community structure and dynamics.

Community is one concept that has taken different meanings in different contexts. The usage of the term is not entirely consistent even

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among sociologists. This situation is even compounded by the blurring traditional distinctions between rural and urban communities and the fast changes not only in the communities themselves but more so in the larger geopolitical contexts in which these are embedded.

Community like any sociological concept displays many different facets. It has been given different definitions most of which were for purposes of delineating manageable areas of research. Among the earliest definitions was the one given by Maclver (1917:107) where a community is "a social unity whose members recognize as common a sufficiency of interests to allow of the interactivities of common life."

Over the years the concept has undergone some subtle changes with emphasis on such aspects as co-occupancy of a given territory (Park 1929), sharing "a common culture, ... arranged in a social structure, and exhibit an awareness of their uniqueness and separate entity as a group" (Mercer 1956:27), effects of urbanization, industrialization, and bureaucratization leading to the "eclipse of community" (Stein 1960:107), non-utility of an areally bounded social entity in favor of a new form of "community without propinquity" (Webber 1963:23), interdependence of generalized activities in and through a set of institutions for its continuity as a social and economic entity (Schnore 1973), social relations characterized by personal intimacy, emotional depth, social coherence, and continuity in

time (Baltzell 1968, Nisbet 1969), a means of intervention and a process of participation in society (Steuart 1985).

Recent studies have focused on community attachment as a vital aspect of community development to deal with such issues as out-migration because of lack of jobs or other income opportunities and underutilization of available human capital. Some sociologists have argued that it is imperative for rural areas to build the "social infrastructure" in order to deal effectively with such issues. This can be done by stemming out-migration and mobilizing residents for community action (Flora and Flora 1990, Allen and Dillman 1994). As Wilkinson (1986:12) aptly puts it, "without community action, there is no community development." Assuming that community attachment fosters community action, then studies on the determinants of the attachment of residents to their local communities would lead to finding solutions to community problems and issues.

Thus, the elaboration of the concept community attachment has drawn the attention of researchers who have identified and empirically tested its dimensions and determinants. The earliest and most influential conceptualization was that by Kasarda and Janowitz (1974). Community attachment accordingly has three dimensions: (1) The interpersonal dimension refers to the degree to which ties to friends and relatives are concentrated in the local community and the extensiveness of

ties in the local community; (2) The participation dimension is the person's involvement in formal community organizations; (3) The sentiments dimension captures positive feelings toward the local community. The first two dimensions reflect local bonds while the third dimension reflects local sentiments.

A systemic model of community attachment was developed where the systemic factors that explain the strength of community attachment are three characteristics of residents, namely, length of residence, social position, and stage in life cycle. In applying the model to rural communities, for example, community attachment was significantly related to, among others, length of residence and stage in life cycle (Goudy 1990), broad economic factors (Brown 1993) and contextual local community factors (Sampson 1988, Stinner et al. 1990). A recent test of a refinement of the model was done by Beggs and

associates (1996) where they introduced operational refinements to the interpersonal and participation dimensions of the model and then tested the refined model with data from southwest Louisiana. Their results suggest that the operational refinements generally improved understanding of community attachment in a rural setting but further suggest that additional refinements are needed.

In addition to fostering community action, personal attachment to one's community serves to provide a person with a "... sense of belonging and purpose which gives meaning to his/her life" (Proshansky and associates 1995:90). This sense of belonging varies with the degree to which the important activities in a person's life are centered in and around the home (Buttimer 1980). Such personal attachment has been referred to as place identity (Proshansky and associates 1995). An analysis of six

Table 1. Selected Characteristics and Sample Sizes of the Two Study Sites

Particulars	Pagkalinawan	Bayugo
Land Area*	177 ha	577 ha
Total number of farms*	86	68
Residential area*	5 ha	27 ha
Total number of households	267	739
Number of survey respondents		
Part I of survey (<i>MBN</i>)	267	739
Part II of survey (Community Attachment)	267	280

Source: * Municipal Planning and Development Office, Jala-jala, Rizal, 2000

women's narratives demonstrated the utility of place identity in explaining different levels of attachment to their hometown, Bacolor, Pampanga (Lamug et al. 1999). All of the women had their homes devastated by lahar flows following the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

The objective of this study is to measure community attachment in migrant communities and identify its environmental correlates. It uses locally specific indicators for each of the three dimensions of community attachment used by Kasarda and Janowitz (1974). For the interpersonal dimension, local social networks (friends and kin) are used. The participation dimension employs participation in formal and informal community organizations. The sentiments dimension is measured using a scale of affect toward the local community. The composite measure of community attachment is then correlated with environmental factors to explain the variation in strength of community attachment to a rural community in Jala-jala, Rizal. This study departs from the established systemic model of community attachment by focusing on physical and social environmental correlates. In addition, the study is on two predominantly migrant communities unlike in previous studies of communities with low proportions of migrant residents.

METHODS USED

The study was conducted in Jala-jala, one of the towns of the province of Rizal. The town is a peninsula along

the shores of Laguna de Bay. The study sites were two of the 11 barangays of Jala-jala, namely, Pagkalinawan and Bayugo. These two towns were forested areas in the 1950s with an abundance of wildlife. Despite the private ownership of the land, it attracted several waves of migrants from different towns of Batangas province. Initially, the migration was circulatory in nature with migrants engaged in farming as tenants and some fished in the lake. The eruption of Taal volcano in the 1960s brought big waves of migrants to Jala-jala this time many became permanent residents.

The selection of the two study barangays was based on variation in population size, mix of livelihood sources of residents and environmental conditions. Table 1 shows that Bayugo has a larger total land area, larger residential area and bigger number of households than Pagkalinawan. The latter, however has a larger number of farms than the former; more households are engaged in farming in Pagkalinawan than in Bayugo where a large proportion of residents engage in fishing.

Key informant interviews and the social survey were employed in the study. The key informants were former and current chairs of the barangay council, some purok leaders and selected community members. The key informants validated the bases for site selection and gave suggestions for indicators of community attachment.

A social survey was conducted in each barangay. The survey consisted

of two parts. The first part was the standard questionnaire used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for its Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) survey. This part was conducted immediately before the study for Bayugo. We volunteered to encode the questionnaires and provide the DSWD a diskette of the analyzed data for ease in data comparison in subsequent phases on their MBN study. No such survey was done for Pagkalinawan so the first part of the survey (MBN) was conducted together with the second part which consisted of items on community attachment and environmental variables.

For Pagkalinawan, the two part survey was a complete enumeration of all 267 households in the barangay. For Bayugo, only a sample (280) of the total number of households (739) took part in the community attachment part of the survey. Table 1 shows the number of survey respondents in both barangays.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of households and survey respondents

Historically, both Pagkalinawan and Bayugo are migrant barangays. In the 1950s the first set of circulatory migrants from Batangas arrived setting up temporary houses and engaging in cultivation of rice and bananas. A decade after a big wave of migrants arrived following the eruption of Taal volcano. The land was privately owned and they were considered as tenants.

There were land related disputes between the land owner and the migrants. In the 1970s, the barangays were created, schools were constructed and development projects were initiated. In the 1980s, there were changes in land tenure as most farmers became agrarian reform beneficiaries or were awarded Certificates of Stewardship Contracts for their upland farms. Electricity and piped water were also introduced in the barangays. In the early 1990s, a road traversing the entire town of Jala-jala was constructed thereby increasing accessibility of the study barangays.

Most of the survey respondents were the head of the family or the spouse. In Pagkalinawan, about 94 percent of the heads of families were male while in Bayugo the male heads of household comprised 87 percent. Expectedly, most household heads were married (90 percent for Pagkalinawan and 85 percent for Bayugo). For both barangays, the modal educational attainment of the family heads was elementary education. The main sources of livelihood or occupation of the household heads were farming and charcoal-making in Pagkalinawan while in Bayugo these were fishing and farming. There were very few professionals among family heads in both barangays.

About three-fourths of household heads were members of formal organizations in Pagkalinawan. These were economic, sociocivic and political organizations. In Bayugo only 9 percent of household heads were members of formal organizations.

These organizations were sociocivic, economic and political in nature.

Most of the families in both barangays consisted of 4 to 6 members. Similarly, the modal age range of family members in both barangays was 26 to 40 followed by the range 18 to 25 years. A large proportion of family members were single and with some elementary education and many were still attending school. The occupations of the family members were reflections of the occupations of the household heads.

The modal monthly income of the study families was over P5,000 (22% for Pagkalinawan and 19% for Bayugo). The largest proportion of the family income was earned by the father although the mother and some children also contributed to the family income.

The modal materials for the building of houses in both barangays were wood and cement. Most houses in Pagkalinawan (83%) and in Bayugo (78%) were owned by the occupants. The modal type of toilet used is the one where water has to be poured (*de buhos*). Potable water was piped into the individual houses (Pagkalinawan, 79%; Bayugo, 86%).

Development of measures of community attachment

The three indicators of community attachment used were (1) interpersonal relations; (2) community participation; and (3) community satisfaction. An index was constructed

for each of the three indicators and an overall community attachment index was the composite of all three indicators. The construction of each component index and the composite index is described in turn.

The interpersonal relations index

This index consisted of two separate items on interpersonal relations. One measured the degree of closeness to people that the respondents often went to for help on important matters and the other item measured the degree of closeness to people that the respondents often socialized with.

On the first item each respondent was asked to give three to five names of people that they often go to for help on important matters in the last 6 months. For each name given four descriptors were provided. These were the nature of the relation to the respondents, location of residence, duration of relation and degree of closeness of relation. Each descriptor was measured on an ordinal scale showing variation in degree of relation to the respondent. A composite score from each of the names given in this item was the summation on the scale score of each of the descriptors. For example, a score on this item is high if the name given is a member of the family, residing in the barangay, and the relation characterized as longer than 6 years in duration and very strong compared to a low score if the name given is a mere acquaintance, residing in a different barangay or town, and the relation characterized

as less than a year in duration and not strong at all.

On the second item each respondent was asked to give three to five names of people they often socialized with in the last 6 months. Like in the first item, four descriptors were provided for each name given by the respondent. These were the nature of the relation to the respondent, location of residence, duration of relation and degree of closeness of the relation. The variations in the descriptors were reflected in the ordinal scale used to measure these. The scale scores for each of the names given were summed to form a composite score for the second item.

The individual scores on each of the two items were then assigned weights to reflect the relative importance of the first item (assigned weight of 2) compared to the second (assigned weight of 1). In other words, the interpersonal relations on assistance in important matters are deemed more important than those with whom one casually socializes. The interpersonal relations index was thus the summation of the two weighted items and then categorized into low, moderate and high. The interpersonal relations index in this study differed from that used in previous studies that conducted factor analyses of indicators of the local concentration of network ties and the strength of local ties.

The distribution of scores on the interpersonal relations index is shown in Table 2. For Pagkalinawan residents, their interpersonal relations scores are

almost evenly distributed among the low, moderate and high categories although those with high scores comprise the modal category (35%). Bayugo residents, in contrast, have moderate interpersonal relations scores as the modal category (38%). Thus, slightly more residents of Pagkalinawan than of Bayugo went to close relatives for help on important matters and often socialized with people from within their barangay on a sustained basis. In other words, Pagkalinawan residents had slightly stronger local ties and denser social networks than Bayugo residents. The difference between the two barangays in interpersonal relations could be attributed to the large land area and population size of Bayugo compared to Pagkalinawan. It could be that the smallness of the Pagkalinawan community made for more personal social relations and cohesive social networks which translated to higher interpersonal relations than in Bayugo.

The community participation index

This index was developed from two separate items. One was membership in formal organizations in the barangay and the other was participation in informal organizational activities in the barangay. Each question was answered by a 'yes' or 'no' response. The classification of answers to the two questions comprised the community participation index. This index differed from that used in previous studies in that the latter used participation only in formal organizations.

Table 2. Distribution of Index Scores on Interpersonal Relations, Community Participation, Community Satisfaction and Community Attachment

Index/Scores	Pagkalinawan		Bayugo		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Interpersonal Relations						
Low	83	31.09	87	31.07	170	31.08
Moderate	90	33.71	107	38.21	197	36.01
High	94	35.21	86	30.71	180	32.91
Community Participation						
Low	4	1.50	20	7.14	24	4.39
Moderate	48	17.98	96	34.29	144	26.33
High	215	80.52	164	58.57	379	69.29
Community Satisfaction						
Low	10	3.75	67	23.93	77	14.08
Moderate	37	13.86	98	35.00	135	24.68
High	220	82.40	115	41.07	335	61.24
Community Attachment						
Low	35	13.11	92	32.86	127	23.22
Moderate	76	28.46	95	33.93	171	31.26
High	156	58.43	93	33.21	249	45.52
Total	267	100.00	280	100.00	547	100.00

The scores on the community participation index were classified into low, moderate and high based on score distribution (Table 2). Evidently, majority of the respondents had high community participation scores with Pagkalinawan residents having a larger proportion of residents participating in both formal and informal community organization (81%) than Bayugo residents (59%). It should be noted that membership in organizations was significantly different in the two barangays (75% in Pagkalinawan compared to 9% in Bayugo). The high community participation levels of Pagkalinawan residents compared to those of Bayugo reflect stronger local bonds among residents of the former barangay.

Community satisfaction index

This index was constructed from three separate items. One was on extent of satisfaction with the barangay of residence. This was measured on an ordinal scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. A second item was on whether or not the respondent plans to change barangay of residence. The third item was frequency with which respondent trusted that present barangay leadership can perform its roles effectively. This item was measured on an ordinal scale ranging from almost never to just about always.

The community satisfaction index was a composite of the scores on the three items. Thus, scores on all three

items were summed such that the higher the score, the greater the community satisfaction. The scores were categorized into low, moderate and high. This index followed closely the measures utilized by Beggs and associates (1996) in their operational refinement of the sentiments dimension of community attachment.

The distribution of scores on the community satisfaction index is shown in Table 2. Like in community participation, Pagkalinawan residents have more than four-fifths of residents who are satisfied with their barangay, have no plan of changing residence and more often trust that their barangay leaders would perform their roles effectively. In comparison, almost a quarter of Bayugo residents are low in community satisfaction and only 41 percent have high community satisfaction scores. Thus, while the modal score category for both barangays is high, Pagkalinawan residents have a much larger proportion of high scorers (82%) compared to Bayugo residents (41%). This means that Pagkalinawan residents have more positive sentiments about their barangay than residents of Bayugo.

Community attachment index

The measure of community attachment is a composite of the scores of the three individual component indicators. Thus, the index scores for interpersonal relations, community participation and community satisfaction were summed to comprise the community

attachment index. The sums ranged from 3 to 9. These scores were then categorized into low, moderate and high in community attachment.

Table 2 shows that there are no significant variations in community attachment of Bayugo residents. About one-third of residents are each distributed evenly in the low, moderate and high categories of community attachment. In contrast, only 13 percent are low scorers while 58 percent are high scorers on community attachment in Pagkalinawan. In other words, majority of residents of the latter barangay have high interpersonal relations, actively participate in community organizations and are highly satisfied with their barangay. The description by the key informants of community dynamics in the two barangays is consistent with the levels of community attachment as measured by the index. Thus, the local indicators of interpersonal relations, community participation, and community satisfaction lend themselves to a useful locally specific measure of community attachment in Jala-jala. This is consistent with the findings and suggestions of Sampson (1987), Stinner and associates (1990) and Beggs and associates (1996).

Environmental factors associated with community attachment

Community attachment as measured by the community attachment index was tested for association with specific environmental factors. Of the several factors screened for empirical testing of association only three emerged to

have significant relationships. These are the physical environment of the barangay, the length of residence in the barangay, and ownership and make of residential unit.

The physical environment of the barangay. The two study barangays were purposely chosen because these have different features of the physical environment. As described in the selection of study sites above, barangay Bayugo has a larger total land area, a larger residential area, and a bigger number of households than barangay Pagkalinawan. The latter however, has a larger number of farms. In other words, more households in Pagkalinawan engage in farming as a main source of livelihood compared to Bayugo where residents are engaged in a variety of enterprises including fishing and farming.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the physical environment of the barangay and community attachment. As shown earlier, Pagkalinawan residents have a higher level of community attachment than the Bayugo residents. This could be attributed to the

distinctive features of each barangay. It seems that the relatively small size of the Pagkalinawan community and the larger proportion of farmers make for higher levels of community attachment. Small community size in rural areas is often associated with greater cohesiveness and hence the relatively greater tendency to help one another. This is clearly demonstrated in farming activities where most of the residents continue to practice labor sharing arrangements locally referred to as bayanihan. It could be that farming provides better opportunity for community participation like in informal organizations compared to other livelihood endeavors. Moreover, having a dominant source of livelihood like farming allows community leadership to focus community interventions on farming which would otherwise be diffused when there are multiple endeavors. These differences, notwithstanding, the two barangays have experienced major events and significant changes such as the increase in population size through migration, land tenure disputes, road construction and changes in land use.

Table 3. Environmental Factors Associated with Community Attachment

Environmental Factors	Statistical coefficient in relation with community attachment		
	Gamma	df	prob.
Physical environment of barangay	-0.452	2	p < = 0.001
Length of residence in barangay	0.195	4	p < = 0.001
Ownership and type of residential unit	0.183	2	p < = 0.05

Length of residence in barangay.

When asked how long they have resided in the barangay, the respondents gave a wide range of responses from a low of 14 to a high of 41 years. It is evident from Table 3 that length of residence is directly associated with community attachment, a finding that is consistent with those of previous studies (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974, Sampson 1988, Goudy 1990, Beggs et al. 1996). It may be that residents who have resided for a long period of time in the barangay have relatively more extensive social networks, have institutionalized participation in community activities and stand to lose more if they decide to migrate to another place compared to those who have not quite grown their roots in the barangay. This is notable because residents of the two study barangays are mainly migrants.

However, the Lamug and associates study (1999) of Bacolor women showed that community attachment was a complex process that was not solely dependent on length of residence but also on other factors such as positive or negative past experiences in the community.

Ownership and type of residential unit. Two variables were fused into one; these were ownership of housing unit and type of house (i.e., the materials it is made of). The composite variable is found to be directly associated with community attachment (Table 3). Respondents whose residential units are owned and made of more permanent materials like concrete have significantly higher

levels of community attachment than those whose units are not owned and are made of less permanent materials. Recall that there are relatively more residents in Pagkalinawan (83%) than in Bayugo (78%) who owned their residential units.

It seems that residents with extensive social networks, greater community participation and are generally satisfied with their barangay have decided to stay permanently in the barangay and consequently invested in homes which they owned and built to be more stable. It goes without saying that socio-economic status is a confounding factor in linking ownership and make of residential unit with community attachment as empirically established in the Lamug and associates study (1999).

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The study identified environmental correlates of community attachment. It tested specific indicators of the three dimensions of the concept, namely, interpersonal relations, community participation and community satisfaction. The research methods used were key informant interviews and social survey in two barangays of Jala-jala, namely, Bayugo and Pagkalinawan.

In constructing measures for community attachment three locally specific indexes were used. One was an interpersonal relations index that measured degree of closeness both to people they went to for help on important matters and to those they

often socialized with. A second index was on community participation which consisted of both membership in formal organizations and participation in informal organizational activities in the barangay. The third was a community satisfaction index reflecting extent of satisfaction with the barangay, plan to change barangay of residence and trust that barangay leaders would perform roles effectively. A community attachment index was the composite of scores on the three individual component indexes. Thus, the index scores on interpersonal relations, community participation and community satisfaction were summed to comprise the community attachment index.

Three environmental factors showed significant relationships with the composite measure of community attachment. One is the physical environment of the barangay. Pagkalinawan residents have a higher level of community attachment than Bayugo residents. The relatively small size of the Pagkalinawan community and the larger proportion of farmers there made for greater cohesiveness and tendency to help one another compared to Bayugo with a larger total land area and residential area, and larger proportion of households engaged in non-farming endeavors.

Length of residence in the barangay was also positively associated with community attachment. Residents who have resided for a long time in the barangay have relatively more extensive social networks, have institutionalized participation in community activities

and stand to lose more if they migrate to another place.

The third environmental factor associated with community attachment is ownership and make of residential unit. Respondents whose residential units were owned and made of permanent materials have significantly higher levels of community attachment than those whose units were not owned and were made of less permanent materials. It could be that residents with extensive social networks, greater community participation and were generally satisfied with their barangay have decided to stay permanently in the barangay and consequently invested in homes which they owned and built to be more stable.

It can be concluded that the concepts of community and community attachment have utility even among residents of migrant communities. It can be inferred that to the study respondents, the co-occupants of their barangay, together with their interactivities in various aspects of life comprise a community. Moreover, the traditional notion of growing one's roots in one's birthplace is challenged when migrants to a new place develop their own sense of attachment in the context of different physical, social and interpersonal changes happening in their respective communities. The utility of the concept for migrants is demonstrated by their differential levels of attachment as indicated by three dimensions of the concept used in the study. In addition, the identification of environmental correlates of

community attachment adds a different dimension to the established systemic model of community attachment. The environmental factors can contribute to a better understanding of the migrant residents' sense of community attachment.

Moreover, the study demonstrated the importance of using local indicators of the dimensions of community attachment that reflect the social dynamics obtaining in the study areas. Its methodological implications for conceptual elaboration and local validation cannot be overemphasized.

Having shown the utility of the concept of community attachment to migrants as well as its measurement using composite indexes, it is suggested that future studies test its external validity on other barangays and identify other environmental correlates of community attachment. In addition, the assumption that community attachment fosters community action and community development should be tested in future studies by showing the correlation of community attachment as measured in this study with local indicators of community action and development.

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