RE-IMAGINING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION[1]
From "The Promise" to Aesthetic of Existence

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What is the meaning of C. W. Mills' "sociological imagination" after 50 years? This article grapples with this question by juxtaposing Mills' notion of "promise" with Foucault's poststructuralist notion of "exit" or "way out" in relation to modernity and sociological imagination. This paper explores the similarities and the radical differences between Mills' conception of sociological imagination and Foucault's "aesthetic of existence" as a postmodern version of the sociological imagination. Their main divergence in interpreting the sociological imagination stems from Mills' use of Marx's modernist legacy and Foucault's deployment of Nietzsche's more aestheticized rendering of modernity.

Keywords: sociological imagination, Mills, Foucault, Enlightenment, Modernity

INTRODUCTION

"The Promise," Chapter 1 of Charles Wright Mills' *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), has always been a required reading for students who take introductory sociology courses. The "sociological imagination," of which Mills so passionately wrote about, is very much a product of mid-twentieth century modernity. He was writing after the horrors of the two world wars and the ascendancy of "mass society." Today many of the problems that Mills diagnosed are very much still with us. However our "socioscape" has dramatically changed. Many social scientists claim we are now living in the threshold of late modernity (Giddens 1990; Jameson 1984; Harvey 1989). So, I wonder what the sociological imagination, advocated by Mills, might

mean in the late modern world, a world where "grand narratives" are already discredited, and globalization has shrunk the world into a "small global village" (Lyotard 1984; Robertson 1990).

In this paper I turn to Michel Foucault to find some clues to these queries. Why Foucault? Why not Habermas? Or even better, Richard Rorty? Because I believe that the Foucauldian critique could enhance and renew considerably C. W. Mills' modernist version of the "sociological imagination." Foucauldian critique problematizes Mill's version of the sociological imagination in the light of our post-modern condition. In this paper I want to delve into some of the fruitful lessons that social scientists might learn from the Foucauldian critique. I want to show that Foucault, in contrast to Mills, does not provide any "promise," but "a way out." And this "way out" is through the "aesthetic of existence." Through this problematization I want to reconsider the sociological imagination so as to provide social scientists a "new" sensibility appropriate to our present condition. I will briefly consider these new directions at the end of my paper.

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AS A TOTALIZING PERSPECTIVE: THE MILLSIAN VERSION

Connecting Biography and History in Society

At the heart of Mills' version of the sociological imagination are two poles: biography and history, and their intersections within social structures. And these poles "are the coordinate points of the proper study of man" (p. 143). By linking biography with history, social scientists should "try to understand man not as an isolated fragment, not as an intelligible field or system in and of itself" (p. 225). Mills insists that sociologists must "understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and external career of a variety of individuals" (p. 5). Society for Mills is the grand canvass upon which biography and history unfold their inner dynamic. Only the "sociological imagination" can comprehend the meaning of the intersection of these two poles within society. That is the task and promise of sociological imagination (p. 6).

Social transformation could only happen if social scientists could make sense of the disjunction between individual biography and historical currents within a totalizing analysis of society. In doing so, the "sociological imagination has its chance to make a difference in the quality of human life in our time" (p. 226). This "difference" is the power of social scientists to help people consciously dominate the welter they experience in daily life.

Mills insists, “The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without references to the institutions within which biography is enacted” (p. 161). Hence he argues that “the most radical discovery within recent psychology and social science is the discovery of how so many of the most intimate features of the person are socially patterned and even implanted” (p. 161). Any attempt to explain social issues on the basis of “human nature” is “a violation of the social and historical specificity that careful work in the human studies requires” (p. 164). Sociologists cannot start with the assumption of humanism that there is an immutable, intrinsic human nature (p. 172). Sociologists must inquire into the question of “what in man’s nature, what in the human condition today, what in each of the varieties of social structure” makes the type of individuals that live today in modern societies. To answer this, sociologist must be able to locate individual biography within unfolding dynamic of history in society. What is needed is to “understand men and women as historical and social actors, and the ways in which the variety of ways in which men and women are intricately selected and intricately formed by the variety of human societies” (p. 225). Such task would reveal, and should not be the starting point, the limits and extent of the malleability of human character.

From Biography to Social Structure

Sociological imagination allows sociologists to situate individual’s private troubles within the larger province of pubic issues. For Mills, “To be aware of the idea of social structure and to use it with sensibility is to be capable of tracing such linkages among a great variety of miliuex,” is the hallmark of the sociological imagination. Because, “Nowadays men often feel that their private lives are a series of traps” (p. 3), Mills observes that they cannot explain their anxieties beyond the frame of personal troubles.

> They sense that within their everyday worlds, they cannot overcome their troubles, and in this feeling, they are often quite correct: What ordinary men are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by the private orbits in which they live; their visions and their powers are limited to the close-up scene of job, family, neighborhood; in other miliuex, they move vicariously and remain spectators (p. 3).

He thinks, “ours is a time of uneasiness and indifference – not yet formulated in such ways as to permit the work of reason and the play of sensibility” (p. 11). Therefore Mills laments the failure of sociology to deliver its “promise” to bring enlightenment to modern individuals. He decries the

alienation in modern society that blinds people from perceiving the real causes of their private "troubles." Mills wants to empower modern individuals by enabling them to master the unruly social forces that overpower them. The "promise" of sociological imagination, Mills argues, is to deliver people away from the paralyzing effect of their myopic vision. As Mills puts it, "The moral and the intellectual promise of social science is that freedom and reason will remain cherished values, that they will be used seriously and consistently and imaginatively in the formulation of the problems" (p. 173). Mills hopes that by enabling people to transcend their "personal troubles" and link them with "public issues" people could be emancipated, and thereby be rescued from hopelessness.

The Principle of Historical Specificity

To analyze public issues is to locate them within the frame of history. Mills understands history in terms of Marx's "principle of historical specificity," that is, "any given society is to be understood in terms of the specific period in which it exists" (p. 149). Moreover Mills advocates a pragmatic use of history. Social scientists study trends and their totality within an epoch in order to answer the question "where are we going?" The emphasis is not on the past but on the "why has it [trend] persisted?" In this way history becomes an important ingredient in explaining the limits and possibilities for human emancipation (p. 158). Social transformation and the possibility for individual liberation could only be understood within specific historical trends and the limits they set.

However, this principle entails that there are no invariant social laws. There are only "principia media" or mechanisms that produce social change. But the principle of historical specificity does not prevent social scientists from doing comparative analyses because "longer-term trends are usually needed if only in order to overcome historical provincialism: the assumption that the present is a sort of autonomous creation" (p. 151). Comparative historical analyses are necessary in order to explain the changes that social structures are undergoing. In addition, historical analysis must go "behind events and make an orderly sense of them." It means, "in such studies we often try to focus on each trend just a little ahead of where it is now, and more importantly to see all the trends at once, as moving parts of the total structure of the period" (p. 153).

Two "Grievous Threats" to the Sociological Imagination

Mills sees the scientific attitude as inadequate in comprehending the alienation of modern individuals. It is incapable of delivering the "promise" (p. 16). It is part of the problem itself. But he could not also endorse the humanistic and fictional approach of arts and literature. They cannot provide the "big picture."

> What fiction, what journalism, what artistic endeavor can compete with the historical reality and political facts of our time? What dramatic vision of hell can compete with the events of twentieth-century war? What moral denunciations can measure up to the moral insensibility of men in the agonies of primary accumulation? It is the social and historical reality that men want to know, and often they do not find contemporary literature an adequate means of knowing it. They yearn for facts, they search for their meanings, they want a 'big picture' in which they can believe and within which they can come to understand themselves" (p. 17).

He also wants to expurgate social sciences of two "grievous threats" to the intellectual promise of the social science and to the political promise of the role of reason (p. 118). First is "grand theory." Grand theory, trapped in the theoretical morass, simply obfuscates social issue. It is far remote from the historical and social miliuex of individuals. Abstracted empiricism, on the other hand, with its piecemeal approach, could not comprehend the totality of social issues. It leads to fragmentation rather than totalization. Both of these "practicalities" prevent social scientists from criticizing the status quo based on the "big picture." As Mills laments,

> A merely formal emphasis upon 'the organic whole,' plus a failure to consider the adequate causes—which are usually structural—plus a compulsion to examine only one situation at a time – such ideas do make it difficult to understand the structure of the status quo (p. 86).

Thus Mills wants to continue the sociological imagination founded by the modernist project of classical sociology: to diagnose the ills of the present society in order to improve it. This sociological imagination will "determine the limits of freedom and the limits of the role of reason in history" (p. 184). So Mills believes, "It is not merely one quality of mind among the contemporary range of cultural sensibilities – it is the quality whose wider and more adroit use offers the promise that all such sensibilities—and in fact, human reason itself—will come to play a greater role in human affairs" (p. 15). In short, Mills like Habermas and the members of the Frankfurt School wants to rescue reason from the irrationalities of modern societies. Reason is indispensable in the realization of freedom.

> That is why freedom cannot exist without an enlarged role of human reason in human affairs. Within an individual's biography and within a society's history, the social task of reason is to formulate choices, to enlarge the scope of human decisions in the making of history. The future of human affairs is not merely some set of variables to be predicted. The future is what is to be decided – within the limits, to be sure, of historical possibility (p. 174).

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION AS AESTHETIC OF EXISTENCE: THE FOUCAULDIAN "EXIT"

The Ethos of Modernism as an "Exit"

Now let's turn to Foucault. In several interviews and writings, Foucault (1991, 1998) admits his affinities with the writings of the members of the Frankfurt School.[2] Foucault sees the important contribution of the Frankfurt School in explaining the atrophy of freedom despite the march of Reason (1991: 118). Like Mills, Foucault situates his overall project in relation to Enlightenment. He is also interested in the historical development of modern rationality. But unlike Mills and the members of the Frankfurt School, Foucault advances a different conception of Enlightenment. His discussion of Kant's *Aufklarung* departs considerably from Mills' modernist notion of "sociological imagination."

At the onset, Foucault (1985) rejects the blackmail of Enlightenment: either one is for or against it. In his lecture on Kant and the question of Aufklarung, delivered at the College de France in 1983, Foucault argues that "what we need to preserve," therefore, "is not what is left of the Aufklarung, in terms of fragments; it is the very question of that event and its meaning (the question of historicity of thinking about the universal) that must now be kept present in our minds as what must be thought." What is worth preserving in the Aufklarung debate is the "ethos," or "limit-attitude" itself (p. 34).

Foucault interprets the lasting significance of modernity not in terms of understanding the present as a search for universal structure of reason (that would enable us to distinguish the rational from the irrational). Foucault interprets the modern attitude as an "exit" or "a way out." Unlike Mills, Foucault's attitude to the atrophy of freedom is neither that of establishing an analytics of truth "(What can I know?") nor in setting the limits of power. He is interested in the "spirit" of Enlightenment and not in its "promise." It is in the concept of "ethos" that Foucault wants to be faithful to the Enlightenment and "not faithfulness to doctrinal elements."

Now, for Foucault, this ethos "could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era." This "limit-attitude," that serves as a critique of the present, "a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression," does not look for formal universal structures but "rather as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (p. 46).This "ethos" or "spirit" means relentless critiquing of what we are. It is an interrogation of the present that opens up "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think (p. 47).[3]

Furthermore such critique is "experimental," which means, "this work done at the limits of ourselves must...open up a realm of historical inquiry and put itself to the test of reality, of contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take" (p. 46). Foucault re-defines the critical attitude derived from the Enlightenment:

> In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental, and the goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in method. Archaeological—and not transcendental—in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so may historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, do, or, think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally became a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far as wide possible, to the undefined work of freedom.

From these remarks it is evident that Foucault shares with Mills the belief that the central task of Enlightenment is to enlarge human freedom. Mills' preference for setting out the limits of reason and freedom is also echoed in Foucault's attitude to Enlightenment. However Foucault views Enlightenment less as giving a "promise" and more of providing an "exit" or "way out." Mills' notion of "promise" seems to suggest "a kind of founding act whereby reason, in its essence, was discovered or established and from which it was subsequently diverted by such and such an event" (Foucault 1998: 28). The fulfillment of the promise would mean the restoration of the Golden Age of Reason. Foucault rejects any notion of bifurcation of "original" reason. He prefers "to analyze forms of rationality: different foundations, different creations, different modifications in which rationalities engender one another,

oppose and pursue one another" (p. 29). Foucault is not interested in assigning a point "at which reason would have lost sight of its fundamental project, or even a point at which the rational becomes irrational." By examining different forms of rationalities that appeared in history, Foucault wishes to examine how different subjectivities were constituted in specific historical moments. In doing so, he hopes he might offer modern individuals a "way out" or "exit" from the normalizing discourses of subjectivization.[4] The point is, "we must produce something that does not yet exist and about which we cannot know how and what it will be" (Foucault 1991: 121). Or, "it's a question rather of destruction of what we are, of the creation of something entirely different, of total innovation." Such project led Foucault to situate the normalization of individuals in various historical periods by deploying genealogy. It is inspired by Nietzschean perspectivism rather than by Marx's materialist interpretation of history. Genealogy, as an historical method, is both minimalist and nominalist (Foucault 1998a).

Towards a Minimalist History

Foucault shares with Mills the passion to locate subjects within history. Interestingly, both Mills and Foucault reject the traditional notions of history as universalizing and objective. Both of them are opposed to "grand theory." But Foucault has a more compelling argument against "grand history" (understood as the totalizing narrative of the past). Foucault offers a genealogical hermeneutics that seeks to show how the different "games of truth" constituted and categorized different subjects.[5] Foucault rejects any teleological account of history –"because this is, that will be" (Foucault 1998b: 37). Rather "history serves to show how that-which-is has not always been...What reason perceives as its necessity, or rather, what different forms of rationality offer as their necessary being, can perfectly well be shown to have a history; and the network of contingencies from which it emerges can be traced...and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made" (p. 37).

Foucault further differs from Mills by foregoing any hankering for a "total view" of the structure of a given historical period. Mills' historicism is rooted in Marxist conception of history; Foucault approaches history along the Nietzschean genealogy. Foucault's approach centers not on the issue of "persistence" but of descent and scattered moments of emergence. Foucault only sees proliferation of rationalities in history. Mills wants to diagnose the present through a unified view of rationality as it unfolds in history. Foucault's

method, which follows Canguilhem and Bachelard, focuses on discontinuities and rhizome-like descent. It is not intended "to recount the gradual discovery of a truth that has always been inscribed in things or in the intellect" (Foucault 1998a: 471). It is a "history of 'veridictions,' understood as the forms according to which discourses capable of being declared true or false are articulated concerning a domain of things" (Foucault 1998a: 460). But it is also a "history of subjectivity," which means "the way in which the subject experiences himself in a game of truth where he relates himself" (p. 461).

However the attempt to investigate how subjectivities are made through various "regimes of truth" does not make Foucault crave for Mills' totalizing vision of social issues. Instead, Foucault opts for a regional and strategic analysis. As Foucault (1985) states,

> This means that the historical ontology of our selves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical...I prefer the very specific transformations that have proved to be possible in the last twenty years in a certain number of areas that concern our ways of being and thinking, relations to authority, relations between sexes, the way in which we perceive insanity or illness; I prefer even these partial transformations that have been made in the correlation of historical analysis and the practical attitude, to the programs for a new man that the worst political systems have repeated throughout the twentieth century (p. 47).

Foucault is skeptical about all forms of "grand strategies" because "we know from experience that the claim to escape the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, of another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led only to the return of the most dangerous traditions." Thus Foucault exasperates his critics because he vexingly refuses to provide any "grand scheme" or plot to the stories he is telling.[6] This is because Foucault does not believe that "people who try to decipher the truth should also provide ethical principles or practical guide at the moment, in the same book and the same analysis." He is emphatic that "All this prescriptive network has to be elaborated and transformed by people themselves" (quoted in Morey 1998: 119).

Mills equates the "big picture" with the analysis of nation-states. Consequently his notion of "totality" is tied to the juridical notion of power that Foucault found inadequate. In contrast, Foucault's analysis addresses the microphysics of power and the problem of governmentality.[7] He is very much interested in the swarming of institutions and disciplinary practices that constitute different forms of subjectivities. And the state and economic

institutions are just a few among the many sites of power. Also, Foucault analyzes the individualizing forms of power through bio-power that targets population, anatomico-politics of the body, and pastoral power. And these various forms of "policing" are irreducible to state power. Foucault goes beyond Mills' almost exclusive reliance on the Marxist language of state politics as overdetermined by class and class interests without completely jettisoning it.[8] Foucault (1980a) is convinced that, "nothing in society will be changed if the mechanism of power that function outside, below, and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not changed" (p. 60).

Furthermore Foucault would be suspicious of positing social therapy as the goal of critique. Mills' sociological imagination strides closely the precipice of prophetism and social reform. It runs the risk of the normalizing effects of the power it criticizes. Foucauldian sensibility eliminates the enthusiasm for intellectual messianism. Instead Foucault opts for the role of a "specific intellectual."

The Prophet Versus the "Warrior"

Foucault agrees with Mills that science today has lost its capacity to free us from the fetters of modernity.[9] But Foucault follows the Nietzschean critique of scientific will to knowledge and not the Marxist critique advanced by Mills. Mills thinks that the critical function of science has been corrupted by instrumentalist rationality enshrined in positivism. Science has been co-opted by the military industrial complex. Unfortunately, modern individuals could not even find salvation in the arts and literary approaches. Because, "Art does not and cannot formulate these feelings as problems containing the troubles and issues men must now confront if they are to overcome their uneasiness and indifference and the intractable miseries to which these lead."

Mills would have been puzzled by Foucault's aestheticization of modernism. Foucault endorses Baudelaire's *dandysme,* not the man "who goes off to discover himself, his secrets and his hidden truth; he is the man who tries to invent himself. This modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being'; it compels him to face the task of producing himself" (p. 43). For Mills, the obscurities and the trivialities of the works of social scientists today—including the artists—stop them from suggesting any way out of the crisis (p. 20). And following Mills' standard, Foucault's "dandysme" fares no better.

Mills' longing for social transformation would have made him choose the role of the intellectual as a prophet rather than the dandy. For Mills, the

role of social scientists is "to remain independent to do one's own work, to select one's own problems, but to direct this work at kings as well as to "publics" (p. 181). He further adds, "In so far as the values of freedom and reason concern him, one of his themes for the study has to do with the objective chances available for given types of men within given types of social structure to become free and rational as individuals" (p. 184).

Paralleling Foucault's much-debated "knowledge/power scheme, Mills advocates an "educational task" for social scientists, who must intervene in "the politics of truth" through the use of sociological imagination (p. 185). But in discussing the possible interventions of social scientists to those with power and with awareness of it, to "those whose actions have such consequences, but who do not seem to be aware of them," and to "those who are regularly without such power and whose awareness is confined to their everyday miliuex" (p. 185), Mills oversteps the minimalist role of a "specific intellectual" preferred by Foucault.[10] Mills' sociological imagination invites social scientists to provide usable analyses to cure modern irrationalities. The "promise" of sociological imagination is therefore therapeutic. Foucault disagrees with Mills' conception of the role of intellectual:

> The Greek wise man, the Jewish prophet, the Roman legislator are still models that haunt those, who today, practice the profession of speaking and writing. I dream of the intellectual who destroys evidence and generalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present time, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, who is incessantly on the move, does not know where he is exactly heading nor what he will think tomorrow for he is too attentive to the present; who, wherever he moves, contributes to posing the question of knowing whether the revolution is worth the trouble, and what kind (I mean what revolution and what trouble), it being understood that the question can be answered only by those who are willing to risk their lives to bring it about (1988: 124).

Foucault opts for "specific intellectual" over the "universal intellectual." The latter, prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, is often called the "man of justice," the "man of law," whose arguments depended only on universal laws that bind humanity. The intellectual is the one who is supposed to bear all values; opposes the unjust sovereign (1980: 129).[11] The intellectual is conceived as the master of truth and justice. "He was heard," Foucault explains, "or purported to be heard, as the spokesman of the universal. To be an intellectual meant something like being the consciousness/conscience of us all."

On the other hand, the "specific intellectual" no longer works for the universal, "the exemplary" or "just-and-true for all," but within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work put them (housing, the hospitals, the asylum, the laboratory, the university, the family and sexual relations) in contact with grassroot struggles" (Foucault 1978: 207).

Of course Foucault would have endorsed Mills' plea for intellectuals to intervene among "those who are regularly without such power and whose awareness is confined to their everyday miliuex," but he would definitely qualify the scope of the intervention. For the "specific intellectual" is closer to the archetype of the "warrior." Paul Veyne (1997), a very close friend of Michel Foucault, describes Foucault's ethical and political stance as that of a "warrior." The "warrior," in contrast to the prophet, "is a man who can get along without truth, who only knows the sides taken, his and that of his adversary, and who has enough energy to fight without having to justify himself in order to reassure himself" (p. 227). The "warrior," unlike Mills' prophet-intellectual, does not impute responsibility to the power-holders. Rather, the warrior works to "describe certain aspects of the contemporary world and its governmentality" that "will not tell you what you should do or what you have to fight against, but it will give you a map; thus it will tell you: if you want to take such-and-such a direction, well, here there is a knot of resistance and there a possible passage" (quoted in Veyne, p. 230). Foucault's warrior-intellectual simply provides 'instruments and tools that people might find useful. By forming groups specifically to make these analyses, to wage these struggles, by using these instruments or others; this is how, in the end, possibilities open up (1998: 108).

Toward a Critique of Humanism

As discussed earlier, Mills deconstructs the notion of "human nature" by situating it in history. In this sense, Mills shares Foucault's antihumanist concerns. But Mills still harbors some humanist concerns. He considers the sociological imagination as enabling "its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their daily experiences often become falsely conscious of their social positions" (p. 5). Foucault rejects ascribing "false consciousness" to individuals trapped in the welter of their daily experiences. Rather than talking about "false consciousness" Foucault explores the

discursive practices that regulate the circulation of "truth" within society. It directs us away from examining subjective intentions and human values as well as in assessing the truth of discourses. Foucault disagrees with Mills, because Foucault does not ask about the values that are threatened. Foucauldian analysis starts with the analysis of discourses that shape the way we perceive these values. What is at issue is not threat and indifference but the disciplinary mechanism that produces subjectivities that feel threatened and indifferent. The question is: How are individuals and their values governed by the "regime of truth"?

Moreover, Mills, by assuming that modern individuals are "trapped" within the webs of social forces, seems to suggest that emancipation would only happen when power is finally eliminated. He declares that "man's chief danger today lies in its pervasive transformation of the very nature of man and the conditions and aims of his life" (p. 13). Mills wants to end the alienation in modern life. In contrast, Foucault posits the omnipresence of power in social life. Foucault (1980) dismisses as utopian any idea that we can get rid of power and free individuals from power-relations. Like Marcuse and Reich, Mills subscribes to the "repressive hypothesis." Mills seems to assume that unless we get rid of power we will never be able to free modern individuals from alienation. Foucault rejects any notion of "repression." Alienation connotes an "intrinsic nature" that is damaged. There is no deep human essence waiting to be liberated. Foucauldian sociological imagination looks at alternatives and greater space for the exercise of freedom rather than emancipation.

However by making power omnipresent the Foucauldian critique does not lead to political paralysis. Foucauldian sociological imagination does not turn a sociologist into a *flaneur* – the botanist of the asphalt or a city-stroller that remains esthetically aloof from what is happening around.[12] Neither are we left with a Weberian heroic individual who "faces the task of the day" but resigned to the fate of modern rationalization.[13] Foucault is optimistic like Mills:[14]

> My optimism would consist rather in saying that so many things can be changed, fragile as they are, bound up more with circumstances than necessities, more arbitrary than self-evident, more a matter of complex but temporary, historical circumstances than with inevitable anthropological constant.

Politicizing Ethics: Towards a Critique of Power

For Mills the sociological imagination enables social scientists to shift from one perspective to another in order "to build an adequate view of a total society and of its components" (p. 211). The goal of Foucauldian critique is more modest. Its goal is not to comprehend social reality in its totality—circumscribed within nation-states—but to constantly change who we are. The Foucauldian critique celebrates intellectual nomadism and fluidity. It means taking seriously the endless creation of one's self in relation to others and existing power configuration.[15] It is a strategic resistance against the normalizing grip of pastoral power that shapes our identities.

In this sense, Foucault's aesthetic optimism provides a corrective to Mills' excessively rationalistic conception of the sociological imagination. Interestingly, both Mills and Foucault find in ancient Greek philosophy a rich font for developing their respective forms of critique. For Mills, "it includes a sort of therapy in the ancient sense of clarifying one's knowledge of self" (p. 187). Mills interprets the Delphic oracle of "Know thyself" in a rationalist manner: "the end product of any liberating education is simply the self-educating, self-cultivating man and woman; in short, in the free and rational individual" (p. 187). Foucault connects the Delphic oracle to the ancient Greek precept of "*epimeleisthai sautou*" or "to take care of yourself," understood "not in the sense of a morality of renunciation but as an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault 1998a: 282, 226). It is a quest for self-mastery in order to live a beautiful existence and leave others beautiful memories of one's life.

Moreover whereas Mills talks about intellectual craftsmanship, Foucault talks about "aesthetic of existence." Mills conceives social scientific craft as a *techne*. His emphasis is on intellectual craftsmanship, that is, in perfecting one's craft or doing research. In contrast, Foucault advocates aestheticization of life. And he subordinates intellectual craftsmanship to his art of living.[16] As Foucault says, "What can be an ethic of an intellectual…if not that: to render oneself permanently capable of getting free of oneself" (quoted in Bernauer 1989: 179). In another interview, Foucault (1998) writes,

> You see, that's why I really work like a dog and I worked like a dog all my life. I am not interested in the academic status of what I am doing because my problem is my own transformation…This transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic of experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting (p. 14)?

Finally, in contrast to Millsian sociological imagination that operates on the tradition of "analytics of truth," the Foucauldian critique follows the ancient tradition of "art of truth-telling" or *parrhisia*. A *parrhiastes* "uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy" (Foucault 1983: 8). A *parrhisiastes* or truth-teller expresses what he believes to be "true," not backed by the Habermasian notion of communicative rationality, but through frankness.[17] The validity of his arguments is not based on the "truthfulness" of sociological analysis" but it simply is the voice of the governed against the normalizers. Foucault's truth-telling lets the critic speak of "truth" because he cares about himself; and therefore, he also cares for others and the polis. Ethics is politicized! Freedom becomes the center of self-creation. This Socratic *parrhisia* allows the "agonistic self" to leave behind through transgression the "prisons of a particular historical determination and for creating a new relation to event and, thus, a self" (Bernauer 1994: 71). And this Socratic imperative, "Be concerned with yourself, i.e., ground yourself in liberty, through the mastery of the self," serves as the foundation for critical thought (Foucault 1994: 20).

In summary, what distinguishes the Foucauldian sociological imagination from Mills' is not the capacity of the mind to shift from one perspective to another, and connect biography and history within the overall structure of society. It is an "ecstatic thinking" (Bernauer 1987) that calls into question how we become what we are. So what is needed is less of an "imagination" and more of "creativity" and transgression (Foucault 1998: 262). That is, the ability to stylize one's self through "permanent provocation" to "the knowledge, power and subjectivization which operate on us" (Bernauer 1997: 71). The goal is to enable the individual to create himself with maximum freedom. But Foucault's emphasis is neither on the institutions that will guarantee our freedom nor the imagination that will allow us to analyze and transform these institutions. His concern is establishing an ethical relationship with one's self, and thereby transforming one's relationship with others. His main concern is not revolution or the politics of emancipation, but in the "politics of the personal" (David 1999). It is a way of making people deserve the revolution (Bernauer 1988); it offers a sensibility for revolutionary governance that does not only attack and wait for the "four horsemen of the apocalypse" to trample on human freedom, but more importantly, it also prevents the "four worms of everyday life" from eating the souls of

revolutionaries, thereby turning them into fascists![18] Its strength lies not in its "promise" (Foucault does not give one), but in "the exit" or "way out." Or, in the words of Bernauer, in the "force of flight."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I do not want the readers to get the wrong impression that the Millsian version of the sociological imagination is completely outdated. To the contrary, I am convinced that many of the postulates Mills advanced in *The Sociological Imagination* are still very relevant today. Unfortunately, it also has some assumptions that need to be reconsidered. On the one hand, Mills' plea for social scientists to provide a "bigger picture" (minus its totalizing tendency), his emphasis on historical specificity, his advocacy for the "politics of truth," amongst others, still carry considerable weight today in our highly globalized world. On the other hand, his excessive rationalism, his language about "false consciousness," his monolithic view of history, his "grand" view of the role of intellectuals, his juridical notion of power and subscription to the "repressive hypothesis," and his delimitation of the sociological analysis to nation-states, need to be reconsidered today.

After having shown many striking similarities between Mills's sociological imagination and the Foucauldian critique, I had also pointed out that Mills' sociological imagination still spews some of the grandiose claims that inform modernist critique. By juxtaposing Mills' version of the sociological imagination with Foucault's version of critical theory, I hope I was able to invite the readers, especially the social scientists, to carry forward the critical vision of social science earlier essayed by C. W. Mills to make it relevant to the post-modern world.

As a concluding note, I can only adumbrate here some tentative directions. A reconsideration of the sociological imagination would embody the following orientations: (1) it will have to make its historical approach genealogical; (2) it will be local and regional in its analysis of power; (3) it will adopt an antihumanistic and a nominalist approach to subjectivities and subjectivization; (4) it will link the care of the self and intellectual craftsmanship with the impatience for freedom; and, (5) its goal will be to provide tools and maps for those concerned with the struggle against domination. It will wage war against domination on tactical level rather than on grand scale. These general characteristics, I believe, should inform the appropriate "sociological imagination" for our time. And this reconsideration,

that shows our faithfulness to the "ethos" of Aufklarung, would show "what difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday" (Foucault 1985: 38).

NOTES

1 Of course Mills was very much aware that "the sociological imagination" is not a privileged possession of sociologists. It is common to social scientists, politicians, writers, and even journalists. And so in this essay, I will follow the general and very broad definition of Mills.

2 Foucault (1991), with much irony writes, "Perhaps if I had read those works earlier on, I would have saved useful time, surely: I would not have needed to write some things and I would have avoided certain errors. At any rate, if I had encountered the Frankfurt School while young, I would have been seduced to the point of doing nothing else in life but the job of commenting on them" (p. 120).

3 For a discussion of Foucault's relationship with modernity and Habermas' critique, see Habermas (1986); also Ingram (1994).

4 Mills employs the more sociological term "socialized individuals" for the normalized individuals.

5 For Foucault's discussion of historical method, see his essays, "On the Ways of Writing History" (1998a), "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History" (1998a), "Return to History" (1998a), and his book *Archaeology of Human Knowledge* (1989).

6 For criticisms raised against Foucault supposedly political nihilism, see McNay (1994); Walzer (1989); Taylor (1989). For defense, see Hoy (1989); Smart (1989); Dean (1994); Prado (1995).

7 Yet Foucault does not turn "power" into a new totalizing concept. Power itself "is that which must be explained" (Foucault 1991:148; also Foucault 1998:451).

8 In an interview, Foucault (1980) qualifies his anti-statist stance: "I do not want to say that the state is not important; what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state" (p. 123). Foucault (1980) also admits, "Thus it is possible for class struggle not to be the 'ratio' for the exercise of power', yet still be the 'guarantee of intelligibility' for certain grand strategies" (p. 142).

9 Mills writes, “Surely this is the paradox of our immediate situation. The facts about the newer means of history-making are a signal that men are not necessarily in the grip of fate, that men can now make history. But this fact is made ironic by the further fact that just now those ideologies which offer men the hope of making history have declined and are collapsing in the Western societies. That collapse is also the collapse of the expectations of the Enlightenment, that reason and freedom would come to prevail as paramount forces in human history“ (p. 183).

10 See Foucault’s interview: “Minimalist Self” (1988). In this interview, he says: “I am sure I am not able to provide these people what they expect. I never behave like a prophet” (p. 15).

11 Foucault mentions Voltaire and Emile Zola as examples of universal intellectuals. Usually their weapon is writing and literature.

12 This is very much similar to Frisby’s (1994) Lukacsian critique of Simmel’s aestheticized sociology. For a defense of Simmel contra Frisby, see Weinstein and Weinstein (1998).

13 See Weber’s famous essay, “Science as a Vocation” (1967). For a discussion on the similarities between Weber’s diagnosis of modernity and Foucault’s analysis of discipline, see Turner (1992).

14 The same optimism is found in Mills: “Social science may be confused, but its confusion should be exploited rather than bemoaned. It may be sick, but recognition of this fact can and should be taken as a call for diagnosis and perhaps even as a sign of coming health” (p. 132).

15 Foucauldian approach documents the microphysics of power and not the grand design of domination (Rabinow 1985; Smart 1983). Foucault wants resistance and leaves the question of revolution to those who are directly involved in it. As Foucault (1987) puts it, “My objective is not to propose a global principle for analyzing society” (p. 85). But the “final Foucault” tends to favor “aesthetic of existence” as a form of resistance. See his interviews: “On Power” (1988); “Truth and Power” (1980); “Revolution until Now” (1978).

16 Mills comes closest to this aestheticized politics in his discussion of intellectual craftsmanship. Mills writes, “It is best to begin, I think, by reminding you, the beginning student, that the most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community you have chosen to join do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such dissociation, and they want to use each for the enrichment of the other...But you will have recognized that as a scholar you have the exceptional opportunity of designing a way of living which will encourage the habits of good workmanship. Scholarship is a choice of how to live

as well as a choice of career; whether he knows it or not, the intellectual workman forms his own self as he works toward the perfection of his craft; to realize his own potentialities, and any opportunities that come his way, he constructs a character which has as its core the qualities of the good workman" (p. 195-196).

17 For Foucault's analysis of *parrhisia*, see Foucault (2001) and his interview: "Aesthetic of Existence" (1988). A good commentary is in Flynn (1998).

18 These metaphors are based on the interview, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (1998), on the occasion of a film *Hitler: A View from Germany*.

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The Road to Oakwood is Paved with Good Intentions: The Oakwood Mutiny and the Politics of Recognition

Nicole Curato

This article examines the forms of injustices the junior officers experienced in the Armed Forces the Philippines the led them to launch a mutiny in July 2003. Findings from fourteen face-to-face interviews with the mutineers suggest that the Oakwood Mutiny is not just prompted by discontent about poor material provision in the AFP as depicted in popular discourse but is the culmination of the junior officers' attempts at challenging the 'norms of recognition' in the military. This article foregrounds the cultural patterns of disesteem in the armed forces that deter officers from realising their identities as honourable protectors of the state as well as the efforts made in overcoming such form of injustice. By framing the mutiny as an issue of recognition, this piece aims to introduce another hue in the literature analysing the causes of military dissent.

Keywords: politics of recognition, Oakwood Mutiny, Armed Forces of the Philippines

On 27 July 2003, 324 junior officers and enlisted men from the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) elite units forcibly took over the Oakwood Serviced Apartments in Makati City's central business district. They declared their withdrawal of support from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, their commander-in-chief, and expressed their grievances in the military service. The officers protested the widespread corruption in the AFP and the collusion of the military high command with armed rebel groups. They claimed to have exhausted all possible channels within the AFP to communicate their discontent and that the mutiny was their last resort in order to be heard. In

spite of the presence of high-powered firearms from both the government and mutineers' camps, the incident was terminated without a single shot fired. A series of informal dialogues and formal negotiations were conducted between the mutineers and government emissaries. Both parties reached an agreement regarding the terms of the mutineers' return to barracks and the actions to be taken by the government to address their grievances. This encounter is popularly called the Oakwood Mutiny.

The aftermath of the mutiny was marked by continuous hostility between the Arroyo government and some of the mutineers. Until the end of Arroyo's nine-year term, the government kept a firm stance about the illegality of the officers' actions. The officers were dismissed from the military service based on their violation of the Articles of War of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. They were also detained for charges of coup d'état, which for twenty-two of the accused who refused to plead guilty, lasted for more than six years. On 29 November 2007, twelve mutineers once again expressed discontent with the Arroyo government by walking out of their own trial, holing up in another hotel in Makati City and calling for military troops and the public to oust the 'illegitimate' regime. Unlike the Oakwood Mutiny, this incident was violently quashed with an armoured personnel carrier ramming the hotel entrance to force the officers' surrender.

The political dynamic took a different tack in June 2010 when Arroyo's successor, President Benigno Aquino III expressed a sympathetic position towards the officers. Even before he was formally inaugurated as President, Aquino already summoned the Department of Justice to review the mutineers' case, stating that the officers themselves may have been victims of injustice (Ramos and Ubac, *Philippine Daily Inquirer, 17* July 2010). In his first command conference, the commander-in-chief assured the military that a 'feedback mechanism that follows the chain of command' would be in place to address the grievances of 'disgruntled' and 'demoralised' military officers and enlisted personnel. He stated that such mechanisms are necessary so that officers do not feel the need to resort to extra-constitutional means of articulating their dissent (Ager, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 12 July 2010). Although such initiative was not unique to the Aquino administration, it is noteworthy that the commander-in-chief himself has shifted the official discourse by depicting the mutinous officers as an aggrieved party deserving of better treatment. Unlike the previous administration that was committed to prosecuting the junior officers, Aquino pushed for the officers' amnesty, stating that the mutiny was their way of protesting the wrongdoings and injustices in the AFP.

This article examines the bases of these pronouncements by characterising the junior officers' experience of injustice that led them to launch a mutiny. Findings from 14 face-to-face interviews with the mutineers suggest that the Oakwood Mutiny is not just driven by the officers' discontent about the lack of material support to troops as depicted in popular discourse but also by the ritualised practices of disesteem in the military that deterred them from overcoming their perceived injustices. The mutiny is interpreted as the culmination of the officers' struggle over the norms of recognition in the AFP. It is an attempt at redefining the existing power relations in the armed forces by demanding for the recognition of the junior officers' status as agents with legitimate concerns worthy of engagement. By appreciating the mutiny in this manner, this piece aims to introduce another hue in the literature on military dissent. Apart from *The Report of the Feliciano Fact Finding Commission* (2003)—a comprehensive and authoritative document that identifies the incident's underlying causes and provides policy recommendations—most of the literature present the mutiny as an appendage of a broader theoretical or empirical point about the continuous politicisation of the military in the Philippines (i.e. Abinales 2008; Beeson and Bellamy 2008; Hernandez 2007; Selochan 2004). These established accounts often employ historical institutionalism and path dependency approach which analyse critical historical junctures that shape the trajectory or 'development paths' of institutions and succeeding events (Thelen 1999; Beeson 2008). The Oakwood Mutiny is considered a derivative of the Martial Law regime which eroded the legitimacy of civilian political institutions and made the military a primary contender for power. Another widely used framework is the political economy approach which considers the military's restiveness as a legacy of underdevelopment. Mutinies and military coups are described as acts of desperation by military officers who were frustrated by the insufficiency of material support to national defence (Huntington 1996: 9). While these frameworks have fine distinctions particularly with the heuristic tools used to make sense of 'military adventurism,' their findings are broadly similar in that they interpret the mutiny as a struggle for political power and material gains. Appreciating the mutiny from the 'politics of recognition' perspective contributes to a more holistic and textured understanding of the kinds of injustices that must be addressed in order to avert similar events in the future.

To systematically discuss this argument, this piece is structured in three parts. The first part provides an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the 'politics of recognition.' It locates the recognition discourse in the 'cultural

turn' of social theory which frames injustice as an issue of status subordination or identity struggles and not just material redistribution. Such perspective is used to weave together the junior offices' narratives presented in the second part of this piece. In this section, it is argued that the mutineers' experience of injustice cannot be reduced to clamour for better material provision or accumulation of political power. The officers' narratives suggest that a major part of their discontent relates to the culture of status subordination in the military that prevents them from overcoming their perceived injustices and realising their identities as honourable protectors of the state. The cultural patterns in the AFP tend to 'normalise' dissent by trivialising or dismissing the officers' concerns. This section explains how the mutiny came to be the junior officers' platform to rectify these injustices. The final part of this piece reflects back on the literature on the politics of recognition and military dissent, suggesting ways in which the empirical findings on case of the Oakwood Mutiny contributes to the existing literature.

THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

The entry of the 'recognition' discourse in social theory can be traced as far back as Friedrich Hegel's concept of 'struggle for recognition' but it was only in the 1990s when it became an area of intense theoretical activity (Garrett 2010: 1518). Neo-Hegelians Axel Honneth (2001) and Charles Taylor (1994) as well as feminist theorist Nancy Fraser (1999) revived the concept of recognition as a way of engaging social theory's 'cultural turn' or the shift in the terms of reference from issues of class and material redistribution to issues of recognition of culture and identity. As Honneth notes:

> Its [social theory's] normative aim no longer appears to be the elimination of inequality but the avoidance of degradation and disrespect; its core categories are no longer 'equal distribution' or 'economic equality', but 'dignity' and 'respect.' Nancy Fraser provided a succinct formula, when she referred to this transition as one from 'redistribution' to 'recognition.' While the former concept is tied to a vision of justice, which aims to achieve social equality through a redistribution of the material necessities for an existence as free subjects, in the latter concept, the conditions for a just society come to be defined as the recognition of the personal dignity of all individuals.
>
> - Honneth 2001:43

For Honneth and Taylor, recognition is not just a form of courtesy that individuals owe one another but an anthropological constant or a 'vital human

need' which constitutes the intersubjective nature of human beings (Taylor 1997: 99; Honneth 2001). Recognition by others is critical as it shapes the way an individual perceives oneself. As Fraser puts it, 'one becomes an individual only by virtue of recognising, and being recognised by, another subject' (Fraser 2000: 109). It gives individuals a sense of dignity and confirmation of selfhood that sets the tone for social relations. Recognition provides the foundation of an 'ideal reciprocal relation' where agents express appreciation of the other's equal civic and discursive status regardless of one's social characteristics. To do otherwise—to fail to recognise or 'misrecognise' others—is to inflict suffering by mirroring a distorted, demeaning and contemptible image of the other (Taylor 1994: 25). It reduces the other's mode of being, leading misrecognised identities to adopt or internalise a deprecatory and inferior self-image. This, for Taylor, is one of the 'most potent instruments of oppression,' as it condemns social agents to suffer the consequences of low self-esteem and deter the achievement of complete 'self-realisation.' (Taylor 1994; Honneth 2001). Without self-confirmation, individuals are unable to develop their identities and consequently, fail to operate as free self-realising agents. Practices of misrecognition are constitutive of the structures of subordination in society which goes deeper than issues of material redistribution or class struggle. This leads the abovementioned theorists to consider the idea of recognition as the 'heart of what justice means today' (Thompson 2006: 3).

Fraser extends Taylor and Honneth's conceptualisation of recognition as a matter of justice. She argues that recognition is not only important for self-realisation (Taylor 1994; Honneth 2001) but critical in acquiring the social status necessary to be treated as a full partner in social interaction (Fraser and Honneth 2003). She conceptualises injustice as a dynamic and relational concept. She neither presupposes a 'fixed identity' on the part of the oppressed nor considers oppressors to necessarily have a deliberate or malicious intent to devalue subordinated groups (Mullay 2002: 27). Instead, injustice is manifested in institutional arrangements that prevent individuals from interacting with each other as full partners in social life. These arrangements are brought about by gross disparities in wealth that deprive individuals of the means to engage with each other as peers (an issue of material redistribution) or patterns of social behaviour, signification and interpretation that deny groups social esteem (an issue of recognition). Fraser calls this interpretation a 'bivalent conception of justice' which considers both redistribution and recognition as dimensions of justice 'without reducing either

one of them to the other' (Fraser 2008: 30). Instead of reducing oppression to an issue of wage exploitation or considering identity as the new terrain of the political struggles, Fraser acknowledges the 'interwoven' or 'mutually imbricated' nature of both material and identity struggles (Fraser 2003: 51; Tully 2000). She cites the example of wage gap between men and women as a form of injustice which has to be addressed from the perspective of both redistribution and recognition. She argues that the issue of wage gap cannot be completely eliminated by merely providing women with legal protection or economic opportunities aimed at narrowing the discrepancy of their pay with men. As long as institutionalised patriarchal practices remain unchanged and condescending cultural codes associated to 'women's work' are not deconstructed, there remains a fundamental injustice whether redistribution was carried out or not (Fraser 1997: 281). Both cultural patterns of disrespect and disesteem as well as distributive inequalities impede parity of participation – the principle that permits 'all (adult) members of society to interact with each other as peers' (Fraser 1999: 37).

Viewed this way, struggles for recognition involve confronting cultural significations, seemingly mundane social practices as well as institutional arrangements that perpetuate status subordination. It requires, as Fraser puts it, 'changing institutionalised interpretations and norms that create classes of devalued persons who are impeded from participatory parity' (Fraser 2008: 26). Nikolas Kompridis further develops this argument, stating that in order to put such struggle in motion, the inarticulate suffering of the misrecognised group must be made articulate (Kompridis 2007: 281-282). This entails finding one's voice to name such injustice and to 'turn what is merely experienced as injustice into what rightly merits the title of injustice' (Kompridis 2007: 282). The success of the struggle for recognition is gauged based on the extent to which it exposes a form of injustice that was unrecognised prior to its articulation. Prevailing norms of recognition are challenged and the redistribution of what James Tully calls 'recognition capital' composed of status, respect and esteem is demanded (Tully 2000: 470). Because demands for recognition disrupt existing power relations among different groups and affect other identities, these may provoke responses that either refuse to acknowledge the demand or negotiate the terms of recognition (Tully 2000: 274). This sets off contention not only over recognition but over 'norms of recognition' or what recognising and being recognised entails (Tully 2000; Kompridis 2007: 287). This is an implicit struggle in that when a group demands for recognition, they do not only challenge the injustice or the

harms caused by misrecognition (i.e. lack of rights, poor access to material resources) but also attempt at redefining the way they are governed (Kompridis 2007: 288). Tully cites the example of citizens clamouring to have a democratic voice in transnational corporations. In this case, the citizens are not only making demands for redistribution (i.e. better wages and benefits) and recognition (i.e. better representation as stakeholders) but also over the norms of recognition – that workers should be governed as citizens who are bearers of democratic rights as this aspect of citizen identity has not been fully recognised in the corporate sphere (Tully 2000: 471). Contending over the norms of recognition interrogates the current structures that shape the way recognition is accorded to particular groups and not in others. These struggles take a variety of forms, ranging from 'subtleties' such as covert and minute acts of resistance or organised forms of collective action such as recourse to formal parliamentary procedures such as constitutional and legislative negotiations, civil disobedience or even forms of armed struggle such as civil wars and acts of self-determination (Tully 2004: 89). These struggles ultimately aim at redefining the intersubjective norms of recognition which allows previously subordinated groups to be appreciated as co-equal members of society deserving of esteem and respect. With this conceptualisation, the challenge for social research is to empirically map out the patterns of disrespect and disesteem that impede parity in participation and the subordinated group's efforts in overcoming these deeply entrenched practices (Fraser 1999: 114).

POLITICS OF RECOGNITION: THE CASE OF JUNIOR MILITARY OFFICERS

The revival of the literature on the politics of recognition prompted empirical research on issues related to feminist, LGBT, indigenous and race-based struggles. Fraser (1997), in particular, has identified the practical effects of heterosexist cultural significations in areas of law, medicine and social welfare. She examines the context of the United States where gays and lesbians are denied a full range of constitutional rights and protection, evident in the disproportionate burden they face in family-based social welfare benefits, entitlements in tax and inheritance laws and medical support. Injustice brought about by misrecognition is also manifest in non-economic/material issues such as the summary dismissal of gays in the military service and the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of hate crimes directed at members of LGBT communities (Fraser 1997: 282). Tully (2000), on the other hand, examines

the struggle for legal reforms in multicultural societies, where linguistic and cultural minorities clamour for better representation in legislature and access to the media, schools, employment and land rights. These struggles for recognition not only aim at addressing distributive injustices but deconstructing the sense of cultural entitlement that produce minority subjects as 'abjects' (Fraser 1997: 282).

While these empirical studies have been at the centre of the politics of recognition's research agenda, there are also some contexts that remain at the margins of sociological investigation. The struggle for recognition of military officers is one of these cases. Military officers are often depicted as agents enjoying social esteem by virtue of their prestigious educational background in the military academy, embodiment of hegemonic masculine characteristics, social privileges associated to their rank and relatively[1] privileged economic position (see Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). They are celebrated as ideal citizens who are able to transcend personal interests to selflessly serve the nation (Moskos 2001: 21). Military personnel's hardships in performing their constitutional mandate as protectors of the state are recognised through elaborate military rituals such as the awarding of military decorations, service medals and ribbons.[2] These forms of recognition usually have a 'redistributive' element in that material rewards such as pay increases and improved benefits are appended with military honours.[3]

In spite of the practices that reflect the high level of social and professional esteem accorded to military officers, the narratives of junior officers interviewed for this piece point at patterns of disesteem in the military that deter them from experiencing 'full' recognition. As mentioned, the respondents were junior officers who participated in the Oakwood Mutiny. They were contacted as part of a doctoral research aimed at understanding the process of articulating and resolving dissent in the armed forces with Oakwood Mutiny as case study. The interviews were semi-structured and engaged with themes related to the officers' experiences before going to Oakwood, their motivations for joining the mutiny and their most meaningful experience in Oakwood. These themes were not phrased to specific questions to allow for flexibility in raising these topics. Given the sensitivity of the subject, all respondents were assured of anonymity and none of the comments that were declared 'off the record' was cited in the final write-up. Apart from face-to-face interviews, testimonies of junior officers in the Feliciano Fact Finding Commission, congressional and senate enquiries investigating the mutiny conducted from July to August 2003 were also analysed. This was

done to address temporal issues of interviewing respondents from October 2008 to March 2009 – five years after the incident occurred. The first phase of data analysis employed a soft version of grounded theory by segmenting or coding chunks of data into provisional categories. These provisional categories were concerned with identifying the resonant themes in the interviews and testimonies to appreciate both the commonality and diversity of the respondents' narratives. These categories were then 'winnowed' into 'small, manageable set of themes' (Creswell 1998: 144) to generate a storyline that makes sense of the respondents' narratives.[4] One of the resonant themes that emerged in the officers' narratives relate to practices in the AFP that perpetuate disrespect and status subordination. The next two sections discuss this observation, arguing that in spite of the formal rituals that accord recognition to military officers, there are institutionalised practices that misrecognise or devalue officers as agents unworthy of esteem. This constitutes the 'injustice' the junior officers experienced that prompted them to explore extra-institutional avenues to articulate their dissent.

Patterns of Disrespect and Disesteem

A popular interpretation of the junior officers' experience of injustice in the military is to frame it as an issue of redistribution. On the surface, this interpretation is resonant because some of the grievances articulated during the mutiny referred to poor pay and allowances, inadequate medical and housing benefits and lack of support to troops engaged in combat (Feliciano Fact Finding Commission 2003: 44) Framing the mutiny as a protest aimed at improving the material conditions of junior officers and soldiers allowed the AFP to respond by requesting for increased budget allocation and military aid and ensuring that material resources reach the troops on the ground (Dizon, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* 28 July 2008). Some used such framing to dismiss the junior officers' concerns as no different from complaints of the *putschists* in the 1980s coup (i.e. Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, Senate Investigation, 1 August 2003; Sen. Robert Barbers, Senate Investigation, 14 August 2003) while others described the mutiny as an event where junior officers merely complained 'about our torn combat boots and uniform' (Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino, in dela Cruz, *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* 7 January 2009). However, a closer look at the junior officers' narrative suggests that their experience of injustice goes beyond issues of material redistribution. Based on their interviews and testimonies, it is observed that the junior officers characterised their suffering in terms of (a) poor troop morale due to the systemic corruption in the AFP

and (b) the failure of institutionalised channels to provide a fair hearing of their grievances. These two issues are linked in that they are prompted by the culture of status subordination in the military which prevents officers from overcoming their experience of injustice. The limitations brought about by these practices deter junior officers from upholding their professional identities as honourable protectors of the people worthy of esteem.[5]

Troop morale refers to a military unit's level of cohesion. It is an intangible resource pertaining to the solidarity shared by soldiers that gives meaning to their actions and sustains their commitment to the mission's accomplishment (Shibutani 1978: 4). There are two factors contributing to troop morale: the quality of material support that gives soldiers the confidence in completing their mission (Gal 1986) and social support that provides soldiers the 'perception that society sincerely values their contribution and sacrifices for the nation' (Henderson 1985: 79). A considerable part of the junior officers' narratives was spent discussing injustices in the AFP that compromised troop morale. The topic of scarce material resources always came up, although it is important to underscore that this concern was discussed within the context of systemic corruption in the AFP. This excerpt is characteristic of the way junior officers framed this issue.

> …they relate our struggle to shallow things – salary, lack of housing. It's not that shallow… I have soldiers dying, shouting my name, sir, 'where is the air evacuation?' 'We can't provide air evacuation, we don't have UH1H.' 'Why?' "The generals used it.'… We have been reflecting [on] these things, these irregularities, inadequacy of equipment, people dying the field… all the privileges, instead of prioritising the battlefront, are directed at the GHQ (General Headquarters). [*…nirerelate ang ipinaglalaban namin doon sa kababawan ng mga bagay-bagay – suweldo daw, wala daw housing. Hindi ganito kababaw ito… I have soldiers dying, shouting my name, sir, 'Saan 'yung air evacuation natin?' 'Wala tayong maiprovide na air evacuation. Wala tayong UH1H.' 'Bakit?' 'Ginamit noong mga heneral'… We have been reflecting these things* [sic]*, these irregularities, inadequacy of equipment, people dying in the field… all the privileges, instead na unahin sa battlefront, andoon sa GHQ.*]
>
> - Capt. Milo Maestrecampo, Senate Investigation, 14 August 2003

This excerpt illustrates a junior officer's discontent framed not just in terms of the lack of material benefits but in terms of the disparity of material resources provided to high ranking military officials and battlefront soldiers.

As Stouffer et al. (1949) argued, it is not physical discomfort per se that diminishes troop morale. After all, material deprivation is part of the hardships brave and resilient soldiers are expected to endure during combat. It is the relation of a soldier's discomfort to those around him that determines material deprivation's effects on morale. Junior officers often complained about high ranking officials having the AFP's resources at their disposal while soldiers in the frontlines were deprived of basic decency when responding to their primary needs such as rescue and evacuation. This observation was often articulated through emotional stories. For example, an army officer shared that his most distressing experience in the service was when he lost good men in the field because the medical evacuation helicopter (UH1H)—which a general used 'for some other purpose [instead of combat]'—arrived late. The deceased soldiers were left in the field for days and their corpses ended up being eaten by stray dogs and birds. He recalled that he felt 'sick to the stomach' when he talked to the soldiers' families, mouthing the official line that these soldiers were heroes then explaining the adverse circumstances of their husbands or sons' deaths. Apart from citing the disparity in terms of material resources, it is also common for respondents to contrast the lavish lifestyle of 'those sitting around in the headquarters' and those 'who are doing the fighting in the field.' The respondents expressed concern that their hard work in the field has been discredited in the eyes of the public because of the corruption scandals involving high ranking officers. Instead of conveying a sense of pride serving in the frontlines as protectors of the state, the respondents expressed suspicion that they were being used as pawns to perpetuate a never-ending war at the benefit of corrupt officials. A number of respondents stated their concern about the wars against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA), Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) being used as 'milking cow' by the Arroyo administration to justify the AFP's increased financial aid from the United States. Two air force officers and three marine officers felt that soldiers are just being used as 'instruments' (*ginagamit lang*) to fulfil corrupt officials' aim of enriching themselves. A number of respondents substantiated this claim by citing their experience of seeing a stash of bullets with Department of Defense (DND) markings in enemy camps they overturned. They inferred that some officials made money from the war by colluding with the ASG and selling DND's arms and ammunitions. Four respondents described this scenario as painfully ironic in that 'our own bullets kill our own men' *(sarili naming bala yung pumapatay sa tropa)*.

Framing their experience of injustice in this manner demonstrates that the junior officers' experience of injustice, more than a straightforward issue of material distribution, is an issue of esteem. While hierarchies and hardships are integral to one's life as an officer, a deprecatory relationship occurs when high ranking officials are perceived to use their position to benefit at the expense of their subordinates. Systemic corruption reduces the officers and soldiers' mode of being. Its material consequences such as the lack of support to troops in the battlefield prevent servicemen to live and die with dignity. The officers' view that they were used as instruments to advance corrupt officials' interests puts into question the bases of their esteem as honourable protectors of the state. Deprecatory practices brought about by corruption also counteract the prestige and recognition accorded to officers in formal rituals that celebrate and reward the officers' valour in service. An army officer recalled that he used to be happy when he was a second lieutenant every time he gets an award but as years passed by, he realised that the awards he won were 'symbol[s] of disgrace.' To accept these awards, he explained, is to be complicit with the misconducts in the AFP.

The junior officers sought to find ways to express their perceived injustices. Although the military organisation emphasises norms of obedience and cohesion, it also has mechanisms aimed at addressing dissenting opinions to ensure troop morale and combat efficiency. In principle, military officers have a right to have their concerns considered by an impartial authority to help them ascertain the legitimacy of their standpoints (Levine 1990: 17). In the AFP's case, the Office of Inspector General is instituted to investigate concerns relating to technical competence while the Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability and the Military Ombudsman look into allegations of corruption and unethical conduct against active military personnel. Officers with concerns on internal matters are encouraged to communicate with their immediate superiors who in turn, are tasked to find solutions to the problem (Feliciano Fact Finding Commission 2003: 79-80). In practice, however, junior officers felt that reporting an anomaly or simply airing grievances to their immediate superiors is a futile exercise. The Feliciano Fact Finding Commission provides a succinct summary of this concern.

> In truth of course, very few officers and soldiers have the courage to present a complaint directly to the commanding officer. It is simply unreal to expect an officer or soldier to bring to his immediate superior, much less to the commanding officer directly, a complaint to the effect that the commanding officer is probably guilty of a corrupt illegal act... Most military personnel are apprehensive that, if they criticise a senior officer,

> they could become 'marked men' who could subsequently be given a 'hard time,' e.g., assignment to a nonperforming department, curtailing privileges, delay in consideration for promotion and so forth.
>
> - Feliciano Fact Finding Commission 2003: 80-81; emphasis added

Data gathered from the junior officers' testimonies and interviews corroborate the Commission's findings. Aside from threats of retaliation, the junior officers' statements provide some indications as to why 'it is simply unreal' to expect officers to articulate their grievances through these channels. Their narratives suggest that even though formal, institutionalised procedures for grievance articulation are in place, there are ritualised practices of disesteem that deter them from getting a fair hearing of their standpoints. These practices are manifest through everyday discourse that put down officers expressing dissent. Some remarks tended to make a dissenting officer appear deviant – an 'obstructionist,' a 'bad team player' and someone who is just 'looking for trouble' (*naghahanap lang ng gulo*). By stigmatising the articulation of dissent, disgruntled officers were discouraged from expressing their views with the fear of being ostracised by their peers and superiors. Other responses trivialised officers' complaints, usually by invoking the discourse of masculinity. When airing grievances about the lack of material support in the field, officers were told off for acting like 'glamour boys,' referring to the officers' experience as pampered cadets in the PMA. Complaining officers were dismissed as 'sissies' and whiners who have yet to adjust to the harsh realities of combat. They were told to 'suck it up like a man' and stop being liabilities of the AFP. By trivialising the officers' concerns as 'realities in the field' that 'real men' should get used to, they were challenged to accept the status quo. Expressions that invoke the discourse of 'professionalism' also have a way of discouraging an officer from engaging with broader issues of corruption and governance. Junior officers were socialised to imbibe the saying 'wait 'til you become,' suggesting that an officer only had to be preoccupied in accomplishing his immediate tasks and should wait until he occupies a high ranking post to enact change. Otherwise, an officer theorising and reflecting on broader issues beyond his immediate sphere of responsibility is distracted from effectively performing his duty, which is a manifestation of unprofessionalism.

While acknowledging the importance of upholding professionalism in the military, it is also important to emphasise a broader point about the consequences of discursive patterns that deter junior officers from articulating

their dissent. The officers' demand for recognising their experience of injustice was met with a refusal to acknowledge their status as agents with legitimate concerns worthy of engagement. On top of threats of retaliation, seemingly mundane remarks and everyday expressions 'normalise' the suppression of grievances, making it 'simply unreal' for junior officers to articulate their dissent in institutionally-sanctioned channels. Their self-image and mandate as officers aiming to address issues of troop morale was 'misrecognised' to a deprecatory status as obstructionists, sissies and unprofessional officers. These practices compromise the existing channels for grievance articulation as avenues for recognition, rendering disgruntled junior officers voiceless.

Struggle Over the Norms of Recognition

Because of the limitations of existing channels for grievance articulation, it is not uncommon for military personnel to find alternative avenues to communicate their experiences of injustice. A gripe session is a typical forum for officers to express their grievances outside the formal structures of the AFP. Respondents describe a gripe session as a spontaneous, informal gathering among *mistahs,*[6] usually over a bottle of beer. These casual drinking sessions serve as a venue for officers to take stock and counsel each other on how to cope with the difficulties in the service. In this sense, gripe sessions help arrest patterns of disesteem by providing a supportive and encouraging environment among similarly-situated colleagues. However, these sessions also had some limitations. Some respondents described it as inconsequential in that after a session, officers return to their respective service units, go about their usual duties and face the same injustices they just complained about. Consequently, the gripe session of officers who participated in the mutiny evolved into more structured and frequent meetings that closely analysed their grievances and identified possible action plans to overcome their experiences of injustice. The officers from PMA class of 1995 initiated these meetings, inviting underclassmen they personally knew from the PMA.[7]

The manner in which these meetings were conducted is comparable to Fraser's characterisation of a 'subaltern counter-public.' A counter-public is a 'discursive enclave' where members of a subordinated social group forge bonds of solidarity by inventing and circulating counter-discourses about their perceived injustices and working out strategies to challenge social arrangements that perpetuate disesteem (Fraser 1999: 67). It operates in an enclave or a 'protected space' where like-minded individuals can express their ideas while being insulated from criticism from the dominant public.

Subordinated groups need such 'special protection' in order to develop confidence in their ideas, marshal their forces and get support from sympathetic peers (Mansbridge 1996: 58). Once counter-vocabularies have been established, participants can put forward their positions to the broader public. Through engagement with the wider public, subordinated groups can contribute to expanding the discourse because the standpoints that were previously exempt from contestation would have to be publicly argued out (Fraser 1992: 124). The junior officers' series of meetings which eventually led to the mutiny reflected the logic of the counter-public in three ways.

Firstly, the junior officers invited or 'recruited' to join the meetings were limited to those who were known to be dissatisfied with the military organisation's existing social arrangements. *Mistahs* close to or working as aides of Arroyo's favoured generals were not invited as well as those who were reputed to be 'devotees of strategic waiting' – the kind of officers who may have grievances but made a pragmatic calculation not to rock the boat and wait for their time to enter the circle of the military elite (Miranda 1995: 12). Because there were still a substantial number of officers, or using Fraser's term, 'dominant publics,' that supported the status quo, holding clandestine and exclusive meetings facilitated the consolidation of a counter-public within the AFP. Being insulated from dominant discourses that perpetuated disesteem enabled officers to develop a counter-vocabulary to identify pertinent issues that affected their identities as officers. The issues brought up in these meetings were those that were traditionally exempt from contestation in the AFP's formal channels due to principles of non-partisanship and professionalism such as corruption in the civilian bureaucracy, Arroyo's extra-constitutional ascent to presidency and failures of governance in Mindanao. The National Recovery Programme (NRP), a political platform Senator Gregorio Honasan put together for his planned but discontinued presidential bid for the 2004 elections, was also discussed.[8] Such discursive arrangements allowed officers to challenge the modes of recognition in the service by broadening the range of issues that officers involved themselves with. There was a shared sense that the injustices they experienced as officers were tied to broader problems linked to the civilian bureaucracy. Concomitant to the wider range of issues the officers addressed was the broadened range of possibilities considered for future action, such as publicly exposing the AFP and Arroyo regime's anomalies through extra-institutional means. One could reasonably speculate that such attempts at expanding the range of discourse would not have been possible had the mutineers been exposed to junior officers who were

'constitutionalists' or high ranking officials who could have berated and punished the officers for their breach of the principle of non-partisanship. These enclaves literally protected junior officers from retaliation or humiliation from those who considered their positions as capricious and unprofessional. Unlike the AFP's hostile and high-risk avenues for grievance articulation, these meetings allowed officers to relate to each other in a candid, open and supportive manner.

Secondly, these discursive enclaves enabled junior officers to reset the terms of mutual recognition among officers from different ranks. Even though the meetings were spearheaded by officers from the PMA class of 1995, there was no clear command structure in that no one was empowered to make decisions for the group. Higher ranking officers did not pull rank and directed younger officers to follow orders or disparaged dissenting colleagues as 'bad team players.' Although there was a distinction among the ranks, the underclassmen were clear in describing officers from higher batches as 'seniors' but not 'superiors.' It indicated an acknowledgment of the upperclassmen's higher rank but not necessarily their infallibility. One of the youngest mutineer shares:

> We really have high respect for them (class of 1995) because they did not disregard our [opinion]… even if you're so junior, you can question the senior [officers]. For me, personally, I like that… you can suggest. Your seniors are not always correct. So at least, the younger ones can enlighten [the seniors].[*Mataas talaga yung respeto namin sa kanila (class of 1995) dahil hindi nila binalewala yung [opinyon] namin… kahit napaka-junior mo, puwede mong kuwestiyunin 'yong senior. For me, personally, I like that that…you can suggest. Kasi hindi naman lahat ng nakakataas sa 'yo, tama. So at least, yung mas bata, puwede silang mag-enlighten*.]
>
> - Army force officer, interview

This statement identifies the basis of mutual respect within the group. Respect is manifested not through the immediate acceptance of a senior officer's view because of his rank but through the process of interrogating, listening and considering each other's positions. The capacity of younger officers to 'enlighten' senior officers indicates some level of equality in that all views, regardless of rank of the person articulating them, were accorded the same weight. No standpoint was restrained, discredited or trivialised, allowing officers to relate to one another as peers. Because no one's rank was *prima facie* privileged, there was a shared sense that all participants mattered in informing the group's decision. Another young mutineer recalls:

> If we need to decide on something…you won't sleep on it, in other words, continuous debates, open floor. You have to speak your mind. For example…everyone else agreed, and you still have a concern, it cannot be the case that they will say go with one still having a concern, that has to be heard until that concern in satisfied…it cannot be that [the case that] only one will decide because when…you joined the group, it was instilled that you're part of the group, you have no leader… you're free to speak. *[If we need to decide on something…hindi mo tutulugan yan, kumbaga continuous yung debates, open floor. You have to speak your mind. Halimbawa, lahat payag na tapos ikaw may concern ka, hindi pwedeng mag-go-go ng merong isa na may concern. Kailangang margining yung hanggang masatisfy na yung concern niya…Hindi pwedeng isa lang yung mag-decide kasi nung pumasok kami dun sa grupo…ang ininstill sa 'yo, you're part of the group, wala kang leader… you're free to speak.]*

He continues:

> If you don't want [to carry on], you just have to waive, but with a gentleman's agreement that you won't tell on your peers. *[If you don't want, you just have to waive, but with a gentleman's agreement na hindi ka magsusumbong.]*

- Air force officer, interview

These meetings' emphasis on the freedom to speak and leave allowed the mutineers to claim ownership and accept accountability over their actions. The practice of convincing each other through debates illustrates that the participants were regarded as agents capable of critical reflection and making judgments about their own political destinies instead of being treated as pawns that merely abides by a superior's command. Collegiality was practiced by allowing participants to engage in debates and openly communicate their agreement or dissent.

The third manifestation of the counter-public's logic in the mutineers' discursive enclave relates to their entry to the public sphere. As these meetings continued, rumours of destabilisation plots threatened the six-month old Arroyo regime. Unauthorised troop movements were monitored in Southern Philippines and at midnight of 25 July 2003, the AFP identified the suspected leaders of the plot as absent without leave. The military high command circulated photos of some officers from PMA class of 1995 to the media and ordered their arrest. The next time the junior officers were seen was on the morning of July 27, when they forcibly took over the Oakwood Serviced Apartments along with over two hundred (mostly) armed enlisted personnel. The circumstances that led the junior officers to Oakwood were contested

by the mutineers and government officials. The mutineers maintain that their show of force in Oakwood was triggered by the threatened arrest of officers who spearheaded the meetings because the government got wind of their plan to expose anomalies in the AFP. Going to Oakwood was, according to them, a spontaneous act of self-defence. They mobilised to ask their fellow soldiers and the public to support them in airing their grievances before the government silenced them. On the other hand, the Feliciano Commission's findings suggest that the Oakwood Mutiny was not as spontaneous as the mutineers portrayed it to be. Data gathered by the Commission 'point at the political goal of taking power' but the coup d'état was prematurely executed due to the early discovery of the plot (Feliciano Commission 2003: 33). The verdict as to whether the Oakwood incident is a spontaneous expression of grievances or a botched attempt at an elaborate plot is best left to the judgment of the court.[9] For the purposes of this piece, it suffices to acknowledge that the Oakwood Mutiny was a reaction to a series of contingencies that triggered the mutineers to go out of the barracks and break away from the chain of command. It can be interpreted as the counter-public's entry to the broader public sphere where their ideas were subject to the close and critical scrutiny of the dominant public. Even though the mutiny failed in so far as there were no people that massed in support of the troops in Oakwood, the entry of the counter-public in the broader public sphere was able to challenge the patterns of disesteem in the military in two ways.

Firstly, the mutineers were able to make their experience of suffering explicit. The occupation of a luxury apartment complex in the central business district drew dramatic and urgent attention to the officers' plight, allowing them to capture the political centre stage albeit for just a few hours. The mutiny generated media attention, which allowed the junior officers to directly communicate their grievances to the public. Even though issues on defence and security have been part of the national discourse, the mutiny was the time when the suffering of officers and soldiers in the frontlines was publicly articulated and placed in the foreground. Through their press conference, the mutineers were able to personify their concerns and put a face to their suffering without being edited out by the military hierarchy or having their experience of injustice narrated in the form of a cold, dispassionate report from the AFP's formal channels. The junior officers engaged in a process of self-characterisation where they revealed their social location and the 'physical, temporal, social and emotional obstacles' attached to it (Young 1996: 131). They shared the hardships of the troops in the frontlines through

emotional testimonies, similar to the ones mentioned in the previous section. Their subjective narratives lent insight to the disparaging realities in the field which fuelled their frustrations and willingness to risk their lives and careers just to articulate their experience of injustice. Their emotional testimonies allowed the public to have a glimpse of their humanity, rectifying the image of military officers as hardened members of the state's coercive apparatus. Viewed this way, the mutineers were able to successfully overcome their figurative speechlessness as they were able to articulate and make sense of their suffering using their *own* voice (Kompridis 2007: 282).

Second, the mutiny was an attempt at redefining the way military officers were governed. By protesting under arms, the junior officers disrupted the existing power relations in the AFP. Instead of subjecting themselves to the deprecatory practices attached with the formal channels for grievance articulation, they were able to make demands for the investigation of the injustices they identified in exchange for their return to barracks. As a former military officer notes:

> The airing of [the AFP's] dirty laundry was further emphasised…because the public was focused…So in that regard, the group one-upped [the AFP leadership] and they realised their objectives even though they lost towards the end. *[Mas lalong tumingkad yung paglalaladlad ng maruming labahin…dahil naka-focus ang publiko…So sa puntong 'yon, nakalamang ang grupo, at nakamit nila ang gusto nilang maging objective ng kanilang nagawa regardless na natalo sila sa bandang huli.]*
>
> - Former Lt. Diosdado Valeroso,
> UP LIKAS Symposium on the Oakwood Mutiny,
> University of the Philippines-Diliman,
> 11 December 2003

The mutiny forced the redistribution of 'recognition capital' in that their methods for articulating their experiences demanded that they be treated as political agents whose concerns deserved to be addressed, not ignored. In the negotiation process, the government emissaries patiently listened at the junior officers' gripes and assured that these grievances will be attended to by the relevant government agencies. The mutineers' demands for investigation were granted, with Arroyo ordering the creation of the Feliciano Fact Finding Commission to closely examine the grievances and the provocations that led the junior officers to launch a mutiny. The government even created a task force specifically tasked to oversee the implementation of Commission's recommendations. It also became a platform for non-

government organisations to reach out to junior officers, such as the convenors of the Initiatives for Peace Mindanao who asked the mutineers to entrust their testimonies and evidence to the grassroots-based Commission. In that regard, the junior officers were able to set a different tone in responding to grievances. Instead of trivialising or normalising discontent, their injustices were considered issues that warrant immediate attention. They were also able to reassert their identities as honourable protectors of the state by demanding for action over injustices that hold their mandate in contempt.

The emergence of a counter-public in the AFP pushed the boundaries for self-expression in the military organisation. It presented an alternative to the discredited channels for grievance articulation by providing a space to discuss issues previously exempt from contestation and create a new arrangement for recognising fellow officers as peers worthy of engagement. However, it is important to clarify that explaining the development of the counter-public in the AFP does not necessarily translate to a normative judgment of the righteousness of this discursive enclave. It is recognised that factions challenging the armed forces' democratically-mandated principles of professionalism and non-partisanship could injure institutional cohesion and devalue the sanctity of the chain of command. The characterisation of the mutineers' counter-public aims to emphasise that these enclaves are discursive innovations by disgruntled junior officers who felt that they had no other recourse for self-expression because of the deeply entrenched patterns of disesteem in the service. These improvisations are not necessarily the best approach to resolve the injustices in the AFP but are nevertheless compelling alternatives for the reasons mentioned above.

THE MILITARY AND THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

This article has characterised the junior officers' experience of injustice as an issue of recognition. Their grievances were contextualised in relation to deprecatory practices that reduced the officers' mode of being as 'instruments' that corrupt officials used for self-interested gains and subordinates whose complaints were unworthy of engagement. Even though the AFP has elaborate rituals that recognise and reward military personnel's societal contributions, routine practices of disesteem deny them the respect and dignity necessary to confirm their identities as honourable protectors of the state. The officers' attempts at challenging the AFP's norms of recognition were analysed, particularly the development of a counter-public that provided an alternative venue for officers to push the boundaries for self-expression in

the military. The Oakwood Mutiny was interpreted as the culmination of the struggle over the norms of recognition, particularly the ways in which the officers were able to publicly articulate their experiences of suffering and make demands for the investigation of their perceived injustices.

Framing the mutiny as an issue of recognition allows for the identification of the kinds of injustices that must be addressed in order to avert similar events in the future. More than resolving issues of material deprivation, practices that perpetuate disesteem in the service needs to be managed, if not severed, in order for military personnel to realise their identities as honourable protectors of the state. Aquino's initiative to ensure that a feedback mechanism is in place is a step towards the right direction, although, as emphasised throughout the piece, formal mechanisms are not necessarily immune from deeply entrenched cultural significations that perpetuate disesteem. Effort should be geared towards structuring these grievance mechanisms in such a way that military officers filing complaints are treated as agents with legitimate concerns worthy of engagement. Lessons can be learned from the mutineers' counter-public in that it was able to foster a supportive environment where junior officers felt secure and welcomed in putting forward and analysing their concerns. Moreover, penalising practices that reduce officers' mode of being such as corruption and the alleged collusion of high ranking officials with the enemies of state is also necessary to address issues of troop morale. These responses, although wide-ranging and complex, are necessary if only to acknowledge that the military personnel's experiences of injustice cannot be simply resolved through better material support.

Apart from adding another hue to the understanding of military mutinies, presenting the junior officers' plight as a struggle over the norms of recognition prompts some theoretical reflections on the discourse of recognition. As presented in the first part of this piece, empirical studies related to this theme focus on the struggles of subordinated social groups that have been traditionally considered as marginalised such as women, LGBT communities and cultural minorities. Findings from the case of junior officers suggest that possessing social characteristics associated to privilege do not necessarily translate to recognition. Able-bodied, well-educated and relatively economically privileged men could also be subject to patterns of disesteem that deter them from realising the fullness of their identities. While there is sufficient reason to continue investigating and exposing cultural significations that perpetuate status subordination among traditionally marginalised groups,

lessons from the junior officers' case suggest that indeed, it is an empirical question to what extent agents possessing particular social characteristics enjoy participatory parity. As an interpretive framework, the politics of recognition can claim further relevance through empirical research exposing forms of injustice from the bivalent and mutually imbricated perspectives of recognition and redistribution.

NOTES

1 In developing countries, soldiers enjoy higher pay and greater social security than other sectors of the working force. See Feit, Edward. 1973 Armed Bureaucrats. Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company. p.10.

2 The procedure for nominating and selecting awardees is uploaded at http://www.afp.mil.ph/otaghomesite/procedure_awards.html while the list of awards and decorations in the AFP is at http://www.afp.mil.ph/otaghomesite/awardsdecor.html.

3 The Philippine Medal of Valour is the highest military award given by the President to the AFP's military personnel who exhibited'supreme self-sacrifice and distinctive acts of heroism and gallantry' (Republic Act 9049). An awardee receives special privileges including a lifetime gratuity of PhP 20,000 on top of the salary or pension the awardee is currently receiving and an exemption of his or her beneficiaries from paying matriculation fees in all educational institutions.

4 The second phase of data analysis used a pragma-dialectical approach to discourse analysis. Franz van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst's framework of resolution-oriented reconstruction was employed to analyse the process of resolving a difference of opinion. See van Eemeren, Franz and Grootendorst, Rob., 2004, *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5 The AFP's mandate as protector of the people and the state is codified in Article 2 Section 3 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

6 Contemporaries or classmates in the PMA

7 Analysing the factors that prompted some members of the PMA class of 1995 to organise these meetings is not included in the scope of this article, although it is worth pointing out two conjectures on this matter. Some pieces of data point at the uniqueness of the class of 1995 in that this class sustained the highest casualties in the field. An underclassman described the class of 1995 to have borne the brunt of war as they rendered extended combat service particularly in Mindanao where they were

consistently exposed to the difficulties in the field, prompting them to organise some form of collective action. On the other hand, findings from the Feliciano Fact Finding Commission point at more organised efforts at recruiting disgruntled junior officers to launch a military coup against the Arroyo regime and restore deposed President Joseph Estrada back to presidency.

8 Lt.Sg. Antonio Trillanes IV was invited to draft the section in the NRP about reforms in the armed forces because of his postgraduate thesis on corruption in the Philippine Navy. Trillanes shared the contents of the NRP to his mistahs and agreed that they should 'propagate' the said piece in the AFP.

9 The court deferred the announcement of its verdict to give way to Aquino's decision to grant amnesty to the junior officers. Its 260-paged decision on the case has not been released.

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Magina's Two Blades: The Dual Nature of Discourse in the Game Chat of Philippine DOTA Players

Manuel Enverga III

This paper examines culture in the popular video game "Defense of the Ancients," or DOTA, through an analysis of the discourse that players use in the gamesetting. It explores the link between discourse, agency and structure, arguing that discourse mediates between the other two, which are portrayed in sociological literature as opposing one another. The paper uses in-game chat as a source of data and discusses the ways that the articulations of game players reflect both the structures that are built into the original programming of the game, as well as the agency that the players possess as creative actors in the game. The former is manifested in evaluations of character strength, game strategy and tactics and support talk. The latter is reflected in player discussons about changing and negotiating game rules, popular culture appropriations in their expressions and in-game politeness.

Keywords: discourse, culture and computer game studies

INTRODUCTION

Computer and video game consumption has become so popular over the past few years that the present generation of young people has been described as the "game generation" (Beck and Wade 2006). The medium's significance to a generation of young people, on the one hand, and ambivalence to older people, on the other hand, has arguably led to the coming of a generation gap, whereby a generation of young people grew up consuming video games in large quantities and immersing themselves in

video game worlds, while their parents are largely ignorant, sometimes hostile, towards the medium. The growth in video game popularity has made it a booming industry. According to a 2010 American Electronic Software Association (ESA) report, computer and video game sales in the United States has reached 10.5 billion dollars.

Similar trends in consumption may be seen throughout the rest of the world including the Philippines, with Filipinos consuming video games in a variety of platforms, including the Personal Computer (PC), the Sony Playstation 2 or 3, the Nintendo Wii, the Microsoft X-Box 360, as well as handheld devices such as the Sony PSP, the Nintendo DS and even mobile phones. In the area of PC gaming, one may observe internet cafes filled with people playing games via Local Area Networks or LAN or through the internet. Many PC games, require participation by two or more players, and as such, constitute arenas for human interaction within a virtual space. One of the most popular PC games played in the Philippines is called *Defense of the Ancients*, or DOTA, an unofficial user-made modification to the popular game *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos*, which was released in 2002 by the video game company Blizzard. DOTA was created by an anonymous developer named IceFrog. Originally intended for small-scale consumption, its popularity has grown such that the DOTA modification is still a competitive event in gaming tournaments throughout the world, while the original game, Warcraft III, no longer retains that status.

DOTA is structured such that each individual player only controls one character, with unique powers and skills. This is a different setup from Warcraft III, where each player controls an entire army. Individual players are assigned to one of two teams: the Scourge and the Sentinel. The main objective of each team is to destroy the other team's key building, defeating characters and obstacles in order to do so. In order to achieve the objective, individual players must manage resources, which they use to buy items that can make their characters more powerful, and experience points, which are used to widen the special skill set of a character, or to strengthen a special skill. DOTA may be likened to a game of capture the flag, 'though with infinitely more choices regarding how to achieve the objective.

The game of DOTA is the central focus of this paper. Informed by the research of Yates and Littleton (1999), who argue for the need to culturally contextualize games, playing a game of DOTA may be likened to entering a subculture with its own discourse. This paper examines the discourse of

Philippine DOTA players, arguing that the discursive practices of Philippine DOTA players reflect their creative agency as key actors in the game world. This agency is exercised in two ways: first, it is used in the context of achieving the objective and winning the game; second, creativity is seen in the way that players appropriate popular culture from the non-virtual world, the way they use word play while talking to one another in the game and the way that the discourse subverts the structures that are inherent in games.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

This research makes use of sociological concepts of agency and discourse in analyzing creative agency discourse among Philippine DOTA players. Creative agency discourse is a concept appropriated from the research of Wright et al. (2002), who make use of the term "creative game talk," which refers to the way that computer game players show innovation in the way that they talk to one another. This is seen through word play, naming, use of popular culture references and the images and logos that players use in the context of the game Counter-Strike. Though an important concept in itself, it may be enhanced further by making use of the sociological concepts of discourse and agency.

The term agency is often contrasted with the idea of social structure, with the latter referring to the larger societal forces that shape individual human relations. The great influence of social structure is emphasized in the work of sociology's intellectual forebears, such as Durkheim (1994) and Marx (1961). Both writers stressed the importance of larger social forces, such as religion and social class that influenced the behavior of individuals in society. Inherent in the argument of classical sociological thought was the idea that it would be very difficult to overcome such social structures unless, as in the case of Marx, there were to be a violent revolution.

More contemporary sociological thought has accommodated spaces by which social structure could be affected by smaller units in society. The work of Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) give relevance to the concept of agency, which refers to the ability of individuals or small groups to alter social structure or act outside its boundaries. Bourdieu (1977), for example, makes use of the concept of *habitus*, to refer to practices that develop in micro levels and can ultimately alter the macro level of structures. Giddens (1984), for his part, coined the term structuration whereby structure is seen as being both "medium and outcome of the practices they reclusively

organize." By consequence, structure is not an objective reality as argued by earlier thinkers. Rather, it exists as a result of the everyday practices of social actors, which reach the level of institutions and social systems.

The trajectory of this paper dovetails with that of Giddens and Bourdieu in that there are indeed interfaces between structure and agency. However, it focuses on the phenomenon of discourse. Discourse may be broadly defined as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world" (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002: 1). All the different approaches to discourse believe, to some degree, that discourses shape social reality. Foucault (1977), for example, argued that discourse makes its objects. In *Discipline and Punish*, he examines how discourses about suitable ways of disciplining people have changed. For example, he gives the example of how criminality is dealt with in the pre-modern period versus the modern period. To illustrate disciplinary mechanisms in pre-modern France, he describes the case of Damiens, the regicide, who was quartered in front of the Church of Paris. The example indicates how in the pre-modern, committing a crime warranted swift retribution from the King, either through execution, dismemberment or torture. However, just "eighty years later, Léon Faucher drew up his rules 'for the House of young prisoners in Paris'" (Foucault 1977: 6), which was the modern period's equivalent of public execution or torture. Categories of criminality and acceptable forms of punishment are all objects that were ordered by discourse. The change in penal practices between the pre-modern and modern periods is attributed to changes in discourse.

The work of Marston (1989) connects the concept of discourse with the ideas of agency and structure. Looking at the discourse of 19th century American urban immigrants, he argues that discourse mediates between agency and structure. Similarly, this paper argues that discourse, like light, which is both particle and wave, has a dual nature since it reinforces social structure, but is also a vehicle for the agency of social actors. On the one hand, what people say reflects the existence of larger social structures, which order the lives and actions of individuals. On the other hand, discourse exposes the perceptions that social agents have about their social positions in reference to social structures, as well as the strategies that they possess to negotiate the boundaries set by those same structures, either by changing them or by overcoming them.

The dual nature described above is ubiquitous in the discourse of Philippine DOTA players, since games, by their nature, possess structures. Salen and Zimmerman (2003) described the fundamental aspects of games

and mentioned that rules, which organize the system of the game, are essential in any game. Rules influence players by laying out the objectives of the game, as well as the constraints under which the game is played. They determine what players must do to win a game, and what they can and cannot do in order achieve their objective. Scholars, such as Abbot (1984), Axelrod (1984), Ordeshook (1986), that have applied game theory or a related theory, such as rational choice theory, to analyze social reality have discussed the importance of rules in influencing the social game. Rules in a game, whether real or metaphorical, behave like structures in that they are larger forces that affect players' actions in a game.

This paper, in its analysis of game discourse, looks past the overbearing influence of rule structures and looks at the agency of players as well. Wright et al. (2002), analyzing the first person shooter game Counter-Strike, looked at creative player actions within the game. Implicit in their research is the idea that players have agency despite the authority of game rules. Agency is seen in computer game players' ability to express themselves, through words, images and actions, in a game, as well as their ability to alter the rule structures of games. This agency is seen in the discourse of Philippine DOTA players as well.

METHODOLOGY

Analyzing the discourse of Philippine DOTA players is done through the analysis of text, which is typed by players during the course of a game. This text is commonly referred to as in-game chat, and may be directed towards teammates, or allies, or everyone in the game. To study the discursive patterns in the game, the log files, containing all of the in-game chat from over 40 hours of DOTA gameplay, with games ranging from between 30 minutes to over an hour, were examined and coded. The games selected to be analyzed were taken from the DOTA Philippines official website. The most frequently downloaded games from the site were used, since these were considered to best reflect the discourse of Philippine DOTA players by virtue of their popularity. Interpretation of in-game chat was possible due to the researcher's direct experience with playing the game, as well as discussions with key informants who clarified or validated some of the more technical terms used in the discourse.

Game chat was coded into two major categories: discourse reflecting game structure and discourse mirroring player agency. Each category has a

set of nodes. Discourse reflecting game structure has a set of nodes that are related to the rules and objectives set by the game. This includes: Game Strategy and Tactics, Evaluation of Character Strengths and Weaknesses and Support Talk. Discourse that indicates the agency of players contains the following nodes: Changing and Negotiating Game Rules, Popular Culture Appropriations, and Game Ethics and Politeness. This category of discourse, for its part, denotes the ability of game players to shape in-game practices and alter game structures.

DISCOURSE REFLECTING GAME STRUCTURE

DOTA, like any other game, has an objective and a set of rules that guide the actions of players. The objective of destroying the opposing team's main building is always at the back of the players' minds even as they are making individual split-second decisions as the game progresses. The discourse of DOTA players indicates the existence of the rules and objectives that are intrinsic to the computer game.

Evaluation of Character Strength

The first few minutes at the start of each game are usually dedicated to making the basic preparations for the game, such as character selection. In the game DOTA, each player selects a character to control, with its own special skills. Some characters are powerful close-range fighters that can cause a lot of damage in one hit, while other characters are fast and agile, being able to fight from a distance, and make quick attacks and move quickly. Other characters have are physically weak, but have the ability to cast magic that can damage multiple opponents at once. Character selection is a complex process, since a player's choice affects how they would play the game. Character selection is not simple, since there are seventy characters for each player to choose from. The portraits of the characters are shown in Figure 1.

The character that each player selects is revealed to all other players in the game, both teammates and opponents. This means that teammates can select their characters accordingly to complement each other's selections, while opponents choose characters that can counteract those of the other team. Much of the discourse at the start of each round is about evaluating characters, since character selection is crucial for the overall goal of winning the game.

Figure 1 DOTA Portraits of Characters

In a game between the teams AREA E and GIERGESS, some of the players discussed the character choice of one player who happened to make a selection that was thought to be disadvantageous. The parts in parentheses are English translations of what was said:

"-3:33 [Allies] MightyMalunggay (Harbinger): gudlak sa zus (Good luck to whoever picked Zeus)
-3:32 [Allies] MightyMalunggay (Harbinger): haha
-3:29 [Allies] GS-Lay-Awn (Zeus): uu nga e (I know right?)
-3:28 [Allies] Sirulo => (Rylai): haha
-3:28 [Allies] ~DmOnyONG BALiW (Spectre): haha."

In the exchange above, the player MightyMalunggay wished luck to GS-Lay-Awn, who picked the character Zeus, because he thought that Zeus was a disadvantageous choice. GS-Lay-Awn, for his part, seemed to agree with the observation. Their exchange was followed by responses of "haha" from their other teammates.

Another instance of discourse where character strength is evaluated may be found in the game between the teams Name Dsr and SnSt. The following were noted by players who had observer status in the game:

"2:18 [Observers] ~|cffff0000DsR: gus2 ko pick ng team ko (I like the characters my team picked)…
2:32 [Observers] kRvNsm: maganda rin sa kalaban (The opposing team picked strong characters too)."

In the instance above, two observers, meaning nonplayers who are simultaneously observing the game, were talking to each other and evaluating the character selections of the two teams. Despite being observers, however, it is clear that they are not unbiased in their feelings about the game since team allegiance may be found in the statement made by the first observer, who referred to his preferred team as his team, instead of referring to it by the team name, for example, "I like the character choices of Name Dsr." The use of the term "my team" denotes partiality.

A third example was found in a game between the teams Pd and Flow. In the following exchange, a member from one team is evaluating the character choice of the other team:

"0:01 [Allies] tonymazzini (Puck): necro (He chose necro)
0:01 [Allies] tonymazzini (Puck): expected na (That was already expected)…
0:01 [Allies] tonymazzini (Puck): sobrang blib ni arby sa hero na yan (He really believes in that character)."

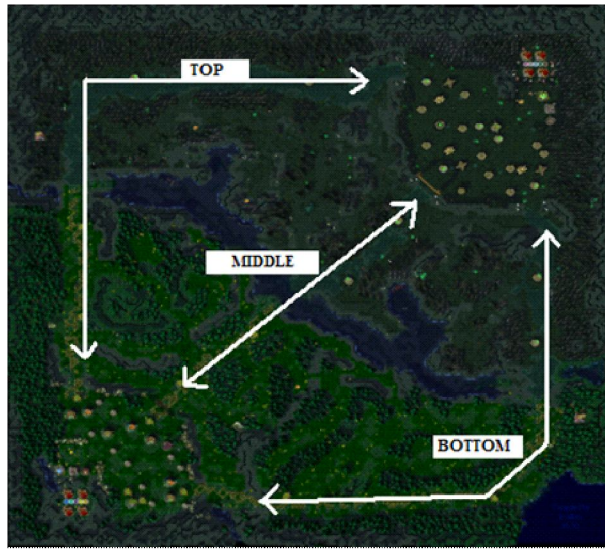
The player tonymazzini is telling his teammates about another player who chose the Necromancer character, which is shortened among Philippine DOTA players as "necro." His statement suggests familiarity with the player because he also comments that the player who chose the Necromancer really likes that character. The three examples of in-game chat above indicate the importance of evaluating character strength, in the discourse that reflects the structure of the game.

Game Strategy and Tactics

By their nature, discourse on game strategy and tactics reflect the structural aspects of a game, specifically the objective that all game players are working to achieve. Not surprisingly, the majority of the references coded in the study were on game strategy and tactics due to the fact that in-game communication mainly involves communication among teammates about how best to achieve the objective at different points throughout the game. Character selection, which was discussed above, is related to game strategy and tactics since proper selection is necessary to win the game.

There are other aspects of game strategy and tactics, however, such as the positioning of players' characters. The virtual terrain on which DOTA is played has three main paths through which characters can pass. They are referred to based on their position when seen in an overhead view of the terrain: top, middle and bottom. These paths are illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2 Paths through which Characters can Pass



The majority of in-game chat related to strategy and tactics is about which of the paths players in each team should take. In the game between the teams Area E and La Sale Dasma, the following exchanges were made among the players in one team:

"43:52 [Allies] D/\sŧ.cHuKoK (Lion): baba (Bottom)
44:06 [Allies] D/\sŧ./\nG (Slardar): tra na (Let's go now)
44:14 [Allies] MYI^noobitah (Ish'kafel): tra (Let's go)
44:25 [Allies] MYI^noobitah (Ish'kafel): mid na (Let's just go through the middle)
44:26 [Allies] MYI^ 'damulag (Admiral): tra (Let's go)."

The discussion among team members indicates the way that DOTA players tactically discuss map positions with one another.

Another topic for tactical discussion is the position of the other team's characters, especially when they are perceived to be strong. The exchange below exemplifies this part of the discourse:

"32:26 [Allies] pd.jave (Nessaj): sandking
32:27 [Allies] pd.jave (Nessaj): nsa baba (He's at the bottom path)
32:34 [Allies] stevefox (Mirana): gagank yan (He will probably gank)
32:49 [Allies] stevefox (Mirana): aw
32:59 [Allies] pd.jave (Nessaj): baba pupush (Should we push at the bottom path?)
33:16 [Allies] stevefox (Mirana): abang ulet (Let's just wait for another enemy)."

The discussion that the players were having was about whether or not they should go to the location of Sand King, a particularly strong character, one that could potentially "gank," which is a video game term synonymous with kill, them. At the end, they resolve to watch out for another character, perhaps one that is not as powerful.

A third application of game strategy and tactics discourse has to do with team tactics. Beyond the positioning of players on a map, and whether or not to engage opposing characters, team members also discuss whether or not they should go on the offensive, or engage their opponents in more favourable virtual ground. The game between Area E and La Sale Dasma has an example of such banter:

"41:04 [Allies] MYI^Mz (Dwarven): hayaan natin sila magpush ? (Should we wait for them to attack?)
41:09 [Allies] MYI^Mz (Dwarven): hinihintay lang tayo nyan eh... (They're waiting for us as well)
41:12 [Allies] MYI^ 'damulag (Admiral): -clear (Agreed)
41:18 [Allies] D/\s†.cHuKoK (Lion): tar mid... (Let's attack through the middle)."

In the discussion above, teammates discuss with one another whether or not they should attack the other team, or wait for the other team to come to them. The player named MYI^Mz argues that the other team is waiting for them to go on the offensive as well, so D/\s†.cHuKoK suggests going through the offensive and attacking through the middle path.

Support Talk

Another feature of discourse that reflects structure is referred to as Support Talk. Support talk refers to messages that players send one another as a form of moral support. Since DOTA is essentially a team-based war game, moral support is one way that teammates tell one another that they support one another. Two examples clearly exemplify the types of support talk that occur

in a game. The first example is from a game between teams BAS and CPG. Players in one team communicated the following to one another:

"-2:24 [Allies] CPG.YanYan (Ulfsaar): nanginginig ako.. :)) (I'm shaking)...
-2:08 [Allies] CPG.Dikoy (Vengeful): tissue?... (Do you need a tissue?)
-1:46 [Allies] CPG.Khai?? (Tidehunter): think pasitivek (Think positive)."

One of the players from team CPG, Yan Yan, expressed nervousness about the game. His teammates, then responded with support talk, with one of them offering him a tissue, while the other told him to be positive.

Another instance of support talk may be found in the match between the teams Mastah and Wafu, which is mentioned below:

"36:54 mastah.panGz (Admiral) (1-9) was killed by ` (Rattletrap) shaboy (8-1).
36:54 '(Rattletrap) shaboy has a mega kill!
36:55 [Allies] mastah.miGZZ (Anub'arak): gg."

The short conversation shows another form of support talk. The first two lines are not player-generated in-game chat, rather, it is text generated by the game broadcasting, when one player has killed another player. In the case above, shaboy's character killed the character of mastah.panGz, leading to a "mega kill." A "mega kill" occurs when a player is able to kill off more than two characters in a matter of seconds, which is quite difficult to execute during the game itself. To congratulate shaboy on getting a "mega kill," his teammate sent him the message "gg," which literally means "good game," but the phrase is used in this context to express felicitations. Saying "gg" to one's teammates for playing well is a common form of support talk.

The discourse of Evaluation of Character Strength, Game Strategy and Tactics and Support Talk above all exemplify the importance of the objective when playing a game such as DOTA. Underlying all of those discourses is the existence of a governing structure in the game, which includes the constraints of player actions, as well as the objective that needs to be achieved in order to be victorious in the game.

DISCOURSE REFLECTING PLAYER AGENCY

The preceding section discussed how Philippine DOTA discourse reflects many of the structural aspects of the game, such as its terrain, objective and constraints. However, discourse is not just a manifestation of structure, it also mirrors the agency of players themselves. Playing a computer game like DOTA goes beyond playing within the rules set for the game. It also entails playing with the rules, modifying them to some extent, and creating rules

that are not built into the game system. Rules of propriety and expressions used by players during the course of a game, for example, are not built into the rules. Instead, they occur through the agency of DOTA game players. It is on these features that this section of the paper will focus.

Changing and Negotiating Game Rules

An examination of in-game text reveals that there are actually instances whereby game players can change some of the structural features of the game. The overall objective remains the same, but DOTA players do have the ability to play with the rules that bind them.

One such change is about the technical rules of the game. At the start of a game, the player that started the game, also known as the host, can make certain changes to the structural aspects of the game by inputting game commands. This is exemplified in the text below:

"0:02 [Game Command] JeZtAh (Terrorblade): -ap...
0:05 [Game Command] JeZtAh (Terrorblade): -di."

The game host, JeZtAh, typed in two game commands, "-ap" and "-di," which change some of the structural aspects of the game. The "-ap" command allows players to choose from among all seventy characters, since without the command, they can only choose half of the available characters. The "-di" command renders invisible player statistics, which are usually available for all players in the game to view. Such statistics are useful to players who want to keep track of how many kills teammates and opponents make. Both commands alter the technical rules of the game, and ultimately affect the in-game behaviour of characters, since they directly affect tactics as well as character selection.

Another alteration that game players can make to change the structure of the game has to do with the characters available. It was mentioned earlier that there are seventy characters available for players to choose from. At the beginning of the many games examined, however, a process of negotiation occurs among the DOTA players regarding which characters should be banned, or rendered unusable by any player, and which characters should be retained. In a game between teams SK and Kr, the following exchange took place regarding the banning of characters:

"-6:32 [Allies] FnK.|eureka (Netherdrake): ban na (start banning)
-6:32 [Allies] bLeenK (Earthshaker): UNDYING BAN
-6:29 [Allies] kos.cho (Mirana): wag na ES (ban ES, or Earthshaker)...
-6:20 [Allies] FnK.|eureka (Netherdrake): tauren

-6:18 [Allies] kos.cho (Mirana): tauren
-6:17 [Allies] kos.cho (Mirana): tauren
-6:15 TarsivY (Batrider) has banned Taur[en]...
-6:12 [Allies] Jai-Ho.MaL-rr (Nevermore): ok
-6:11 [Allies] bLeenK (Earthshaker): aw...
-6:08 bLeenK (Earthshaker) has banned Admiral...
-6:02 [Allies] Jai-Ho.MaL-rr (Nevermore): ano last ban (Who do we ban last?)
-6:01 [Allies] Jai-Ho.MaL-rr (Nevermore): ?
-6:00 [Allies] kos.cho (Mirana): undying nlng (Undying)."

The passage above is a combination of both player-generated and game-generated chat. The latter appears as statements of what characters have been banned. More significant to this paper, however, is the fact that character banning is a process that reflects the agency of game players since they have the ability to change structural givens, such as what characters are available to play as, through the process of negotiation. This has further implications on the way that players will proceed in the game, and is consequently a reflection of the way that players play with the rules of the game through discourse.

Players also have the ability to influence aesthetic aspects of the game, which are normally unchangeable givens in games. There are two such modifications that were observed during the course of the study. First, game players can make changes regarding the colour of the water in the river, which bisects the terrain that the game is played on. This is exemplified below:

"-9:03 [Allies] rinoa13 (Earthshaker): -water red
-9:02 [All] S|3|X.eiNe3eb~ (Warlock): yan...(yes)
-9:01 [Game Command] hambie02 (Tinker): -clear."

The river water can be changed from its regular colour of blue into either green or red. In the conversation above, rinoa13 typed in the command to change the river's colour to red. His choice was applauded by two other players who responded with "yan" and "-clear," both of which are expressions of affirmation. Another aesthetic change that game players can make is the background music in the game. In another match, the following took place:

"-8:12 [Allies] CPG.YanYan (Ulfsaar): -music special
-8:11 [Allies] CPG.Dikoy (Vengeful): -clear
-8:11 [Allies] CPG.Jhayson (Nevermore): -clear."

One of the players in the game above inputted a command to change the ambient music in the game. His choice was also met with affirmative responses of "clear" from his teammates. The instances above are all

manifestations of player agency, indicating their ability to alter given game structures.

Popular Culture Appropriations

Another way that agency is seen in the discourse of Philippine DOTA players is through the way that they creatively appropriate and make use of popular culture references. One such example may be found in a game between teams BAS and CPG:

"20:45 CPG.Jhayson's (Nevermore) courier was killed by ->aLL,eyEs,+. (Lucifer)
21:01 FnK.|^^MaRViN14 (Lion) (1-8) was killed by CPG.Jhayson (Nevermore) (4-1).
21:01 CPG.Jhayson (Nevermore) is on a killing spree!
21:08 ->aLL,eyEs,+ (Lucifer) has used the stored Regeneration rune
21:11 CPG.Khai?? (Tidehunter) (1-4) was killed by FnK.|^eureka (Razor) (1-1).
21:11 FnK.|^eureka (Razor) (1-2) was killed by CPG.YanYan (Ulfsaar) (11-0).
21:11 CPG.YanYan (Ulfsaar) is beyond GODLIKE. Someone KILL HIM!!!!!!
21:32 Scourge middle level 2 tower was destroyed by CPG.YanYan (Ulfsaar) (11-0).
21:39 [Allies] CPG.Khai?? (Tidehunter): ^_^
21:43 [Allies] CPG.Khai?? (Tidehunter): ampatuan
21:47 [All] ->aLL,eyEs,+ (Lucifer): haha."

In the passage cited above, the in-game situation is that many characters in one team are being killed by the members of the opposing team, with one character being on a "killing spree" and another reaching "GODLIKE" status, meaning that he had killed many characters without himself being killed. The decimation of the other team prompted the player CPG.Khai?? to compare the situation to a prominent recent event in the Philippines known as the Ampatuan massacre, where a convoy with reporters and civilians were killed by armed men. Though the event in the Philippines had a negative connotation, it was appropriated and used in the context of the game to describe the massacre of the opposing team.

Popular culture appropriations are also seen in the nonsense chatter that some players engage in, at the start of each game while players are selecting characters and game modifications are being made. The game between the teams RekTa and 3x contains the following exchange:

"-7:03 [All] jigger_01 (Akasha): jai ho
-7:02 [All] Badluck08 (Mirana): =))
-6:53 [All] Badluck08 (Mirana): ohhh ohhhh ohhhhhh
-6:52 [All] jigger_01 (Akasha): uh ow oh...
-5:56 [All] Badluck08 (Mirana): you got me hatin in the club...
-5:39 [All] S|3|X.Wu (Tidehunter): hatin on the club - rihanna?
-5:39 [All] Badluck08 (Mirana): coz you took my luv."

Above, one sees references to the song "Jai Ho," from the official soundtrack of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. Later in the passage, the popular singer Rihanna is mentioned. The content of the conversation above does not have any strategic significance, for the players, but it does reveal that popular culture references can be appropriated and used in game talk.

The appropriation of popular culture references may be thought of as a crossing of an idea from corporeal reality into virtual reality. This idea was articulated by Shields (2003), who discussed that virtuality and corporeality are elements that comprise reality equally. Using examples, such as memory or the Eucharist, he argues that there can be "slippage" between virtual and corporeal reality, whereby the virtual can affect the corporeal and vice-versa. The way that popular culture references are appropriated into DOTA game discourse may be thought of as slippage from the corporeal to the virtual.

In-Game Politeness

Game ethics and politeness are another aspects of the discourse of Philippine DOTA players. Rules of propriety are not built into the structure of the game. Instead, it occurs through the exercise of agency by DOTA players. In a game, politeness is best expressed when players say their farewells as the match ends. In the games observed, the latter is much more common than the former. This is exemplified in the exchange below from a game between the teams AREA E and APOL AND GIERGES:

"55:37 [All] D/\s†/wApAk?? (Vengeful): gg
55:38 :D (Dragon) (10-9) has left the game.
55:38 [All] i <3 :D/\s† (Mirana): ^^
55:39 [All] i <3 :D/\s† (Mirana): GG
55:39 Gg (Morphling) parin??? (3-6) has left the game."

The term "gg" was already mentioned earlier as a form of support that players offer to their teammates whenever they do well in the game. Its more widespread use is as an expression of leave-taking. A game between Dissidia and Gwapol contains similar in-game chat:

"45:06 [All] Kenpanchi (Mirana): GG
45:12 [All] Parky. (Necro'lic): gg
45:15 [All] ~DsR (Warlock): nxt game na>? (Is it time to start the next game?)
45:15 [All] _MarKee_ (Zeus): haha
45:15 [All] _MarKee_ (Zeus): gg."

The use of "gg" is arguably a fitting way to end games, since it stands for the words "good game," an expression that implies sportsmanship in athletic

settings. Like the popular culture appropriations discussed earlier, "gg" may also be thought of as a slippage from corporeal reality into virtual reality.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the discourse of Philippine DOTA players. It looked at Game Strategy and Tactics, Evaluation of Character Strength and Support Talk as forms of discourse that reinforce the structural aspects of the game. Appropriations of Popular Culture, In-Game Politeness and Changing and Negotiating Game Rules are seen as manifestations of DOTA player agency. By analyzing Philippine DOTA discourse as such, the paper attempted to bridge the gap between agency and structure, a major preoccupation of the field of sociology. Though attempts have been made to form a connection between agency and structure, this paper argued that discourse mediates between the two. The data gathered for the study indicate that discourse indeed possesses a dual nature. On the one hand, the game discourse reflected the structural aspects of the game. On the other hand, it mirrored the agency of game players.

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Relationalities of Identity: 'Sameness' and 'Difference' among Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers

Andrea Soco

This paper examines identity negotiations among Filipino migrant domestic workers. For these migrants, the overseas stint becomes a significant moment in the construction of new identities because it affords migrants with opportunities for self-actualization and identification to a particular class and status, having been able to travel abroad. However, identity construction also revolves around the migrants' interactions, which are shaped by the 'maid' label and a time/space that is largely circumscribed by their employers. In order then, to negotiate identities with the intersections of place, 'race', and social class, migrants interface cultures - they make comparisons between themselves and those of other ethnicities, nationalities, and class positions. This is a relational strategy I call transcendent boundary work, because it involves the construction of 'sameness' and 'difference' based on an idea of the 'other' that is not dependent on the normative boundaries of the social categories of ethnicity, race, and social class. This paper argues that the process of constructing sameness or difference as such represents a kind of self-awareness acquired in the course of migration. It is a non financial gain, often overlooked among migrant workers, and is also key to understanding the formation of new self-perceptions and identities.

Keywords: identity, negotiations, Filipino domestic workers and boundary

This paper[1] takes off from literature on mobility and identity (see Silvey 2004; Yeoh et al. 2002; Law 2001; Gibson et al. 2001; Lan 2000; Pratt 1998; Constable 1997) that see female migrants as interpretive subjects whose

identities are fluid, socially constructed in an ongoing process, and built upon both social location and geographical context. It focuses in particular on the identity negotiations of Filipino migrant domestic workers who have worked in Singapore and Hong Kong. For migrant domestic workers, "going abroad' and the overseas stint become significant moments in the construction of new identities, not merely because they are in a different geographical and cultural space, but because by being in such a space, they are able to make comparisons between cultures and experience difference—being different and creating difference by comparing and contrasting—which facilitates a new way of seeing the world and their past and current subject positions. Going abroad provides the context for the interaction of places, bringing about an increased awareness of location among those who cross national borders, regardless of their cultural and financial capital.

The interfacing of geographies that occur with movement leads to new kinds of self-perceptions and learning. Migrant domestic workers acquire these new identities in the course of interfacing home and abroad. Respondents for the study construct abroad as a place for self-actualization as opposed to the home because despite being in an occupation that tends to racialize and marginalize, it is abroad where they encounter different ways of life and identify with a particular class and status as they engage in class-based leisure activities away from the "gaze" of family and community. However, they are still "maids," and as such, they not only have a limited time/space and limited interactions but also experience the kind of hardship that involves not just class but 'race' as well. In the light of identity construction, this paper then attempts to pursue the following question: how do migrant domestic workers negotiate identity given their subject positions as 'Filipina maids' who, in being abroad, do have the ability for class consumption and self-actualization?

Identity is indeed a very broad research topic and for this paper, the focus is on social identity, specifically, on identity as self-perceptions (Jenkins 1996). Findings indicate that as domestic workers weave their way through the spaces of nation, race, class, and culture, they acquire a particular way of looking at the world that is not based on any clear-cut categories, and identify with people based on notions of sameness or difference that are in themselves products of this juxtaposition of spaces. This is what I call *transcendent boundary work*, which is a kind of boundary making not dependent on typical normative categories, and which is also learned in the course of migration (something the migrants had not been doing prior to working abroad).

Boundary making has been examined by Lan Pei Chia (2003) in her study on employers and domestic workers in Singapore. She mentioned boundary markers used by both employers and domestic workers in various assertions, for instance of status and distance. I take the idea of boundary work further in looking at identifications among migrant domestic workers—who do they identify with and why—as these identifications relate to the way they see themselves, and thus, negotiate identities. In this regard, the kind of boundary making that they do is experiential and situational, rather than categorical.

As it is in literature on social identity, the migrant domestic workers' responses to being abroad are framed by the context of their subject positions as female, Filipino, from provincial communities and a generally lower class upbringing, and working in varied domestic conditions in the spaces of abroad. Therefore, how they make sense of the structures of location—the policies of Hong Kong and Singapore, employers and employment conditions, and their space/time as household workers—and negotiate the same structures of marginality will be nuanced based on their particular subject positions. How new learning and self-perceptions are thus created, maintained and negotiated vary according to the interplay of structure and agency. At the same time, in migrant narratives about self-perceptions and new learning, identity is constituted as having an embodied and a collective aspect. Respondents talk about self-image, use labels to describe what it is to be in particular subject positions, and use the body as a canvass for their experiences. Furthermore, identity is always relational. It is formed and negotiated out of the collective interactions with others. The migrants' social relations—their actual interactions and the kinds of relationships formed abroad—influence their self-perceptions and self-image, attitudes, values, and learning, a great deal.

Abroad, migrants interact not only with employers but also with other groups including fellow Filipino domestic workers, other foreign workers, and Filipino professionals. Some of these interactions might be limited to some extent as migrants are free only on their off-days, if they have any, which range from once a month to once a week, but these interactions are enough to allow migrants to develop ideas about cultures, practices, similarities, and differences. Given the diversity of their cultural encounters as well as the intersecting spaces of class and race, one of the ways by which migrants identify with various social groups and form relationships is by interfacing of cultural contexts, which entails making comparisons between themselves and those of other cultures—those of other ethnicities, nationalities, and class positions—as they rationalize the consequences of their subject positions, engage in social networks, and create continuities of home.

Social relationships among different groups of people are generally marked by the normative boundaries of social categories, for instance, groups identify with one another on the basis of gender, 'race,' ethnicity, social class, among others. However, for the migrant domestic workers, comparisons and differentiations in identity negotiations make use of *transcendent boundary work*, in which markers are fluid, and the 'other' is not based on bounded social categories. While migrants do utilize these same social categories, identifications transcend their normative boundaries in that, notions of who is similar to, or different from, them go beyond just race, ethnicity, or social class, but are instead products of the intersections of these categories with the experiences of the migrants. Transcendent boundary work is primarily manifested in particular notions of sameness and difference: differentiations based on nationality to gain a sense of advantage; sameness as shared suffering to cope with marginality; differentiating employers based on socio-cultural standing to rationalize ill-treatment; sameness as 'foreign-ness' rather than nationality to equalize positions with fellow nationals; and sameness as a function of cultural understanding in the formation of social networks.

This strategy of transcendent boundary work enables social positioning – migrants are able to construct and maintain an identity that allows them to position themselves within these spaces of race, class, and culture, and especially in situations where they feel less empowered. While boundaries are still constructed and maintained, migration has given the migrant domestic workers new ways of looking at 'sameness' and 'difference' that would not have otherwise been present had they remained in the home.

A NOTE IDENTITY CHANGE

While this paper will not discuss new self-perceptions and new learning, a brief account will be given to provide a better picture of the outcome of the interfacing of cultural contexts. On the level of attitudes, the social relations experienced abroad have led to a greater empathy towards other people and better skills in interpersonal relations. Respondents who used to be shy have become more outgoing in return, some of them even participating in, and leading, community affairs. This kind of change has been more apparent among those who returned from Hong Kong than from Singapore, primarily because of Hong Kong's longer history of hiring Filipino domestic workers, as well as policies that require a mandatory day off and a minimum wage for migrant domestic workers, and allow migrants to organize, mobilize, and even speak out in public space. Many respondents however, regardless of

the destination abroad, expressed greater patience and tolerance of other people. This is perhaps a significant non-financial gain that goes unrecognized among migrant domestic workers. The multiplicities of their cultural encounters and exchanges, regardless of being in work considered "unskilled" has led to a kind of self-awareness, of knowing one's location vis-a-vis those of other people in the globe, and thus, to greater empathy. According to Leny, a 40-year old housewife who worked in Singapore for eight years, working abroad changed her attitude when it comes to dealing with people:

> "We already know, so to speak, how to have smooth interpersonal relations/ to adjust to people who are different from us, like that so to speak/ then in our self-image/ we already dress differently/ compared to before when we have not been away, gone out to other countries/ then in our attitudes.../...it's easy for us to understand/ easy for us to have compassion to our fellow humans."

The idea of being more tolerant and compassionate could also be a function of gender. Filipino values socialize women to be more caring compared to men, and in reproductive occupations such as domestic work and for instance, nursing, women draw on the value of care-giving even more. Domestic work in Singapore and Hong Kong are especially wont to push women into a position where they have to tolerate the characteristics and habits of their employers who are of a different culture, not only because their job requires them to take care of children and elderly, but also because of proximity. Domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong are usually 'stay-in,' which means they live with their employers. Under these circumstances, the need to engage becomes even more urgent and smooth interpersonal relations become crucial to the performance of one's job. At the same time, as foreign domestic workers from developing countries, they are also subjected to the kind of racialization that could have perhaps enabled them to see beyond "race" and into the commonalities of all human beings. Out of these experiences of being female in a reproductive occupation that transpires within a domestic space, and of being an "other," a greater sense of compassion and understanding towards those of other cultures could have developed among migrant domestic workers.

DIFFERENCE AND MARGINALITY

As Filipino maids and therefore part of the marginalized "others" in Singapore and Hong Kong, migrant domestic workers utilize notions of difference when comparing themselves with those who are in similar positions

of marginality, such as other foreign domestic workers. Despite a shared status as foreign workers with limited rights, respondents differentiated themselves from other foreign workers using national identity to gain a sense of advantage. By setting themselves apart from others in the same social position, migrants are somehow able to transcend feelings of marginality and be less of an "other." Respondents agreed that Filipino domestic workers exhibit a greater deal of modernity, higher educational levels, and better English skills, than other foreign domestic workers. These qualities are not attributed by migrants to individual achievement and merit but rather, they are seen as cultural traits intrinsic to Filipinos in general.

> "Filipinos are really talented / The Indonesians... as long as they have money they are okay / it's like they no longer... it's like when they see money / that's big for them.../ And Filipinas are mostly business-minded.../ but Indonesians, they are already contented /... We [Filipinos] are also more attentive to our work compared to them." - Jennifer, 35, Singapore

> The Filipino is like... more ahead [than Indonesians] in terms of behavior / then in education, the Filipino has a higher level.../ then in attitudes, the Filipino is ... a fighter." - Judy, 32, Singapore

These kinds of intercultural differentiations are based on the respondents' interactions with other foreign workers and minority groups, whether in superficial encounters or deeper friendships. Respondents utilize these distinct cultural traits to separate themselves from other foreign workers in similar situations because these are also the kinds of traits that make them more privileged as domestic workers. Filipino domestic workers get higher wages[2] compared to domestic workers of other nationalities and are also more 'sought after' because, according to most of the respondents, Filipinos work harder, are cleaner, and have initiative. Thus, domestic workers' perceptions of themselves as Filipinos often draw on the racialization and categorization imposed by those of a higher class position or status, such as employers or the majority ethnic group. Zydith, a 31-year old who worked in Singapore for five years sets Filipinos apart from other minority groups by referring to how the majority ethnic population in Singapore describes Filipino domestic workers:

> "Ah the Filipino/ not that I'm bragging/ but the Chinese they're the ones who are saying/ that the Filipino is higher when it comes to education/ the Philippines has a higher [educational] level than Myanmar, Pakistani, and also the Indonesian, Malay/ most of them have a low level of education/ so a lot of... they say there in the news that [in] Singapore/ a

lot commit suicide/ because they can't handle the stress there/ they can'tconceive/ they don't know how to widen themselves/ how to do it step by step..."

Zydith's narrative indicates the relationship between education and one's ability to locate oneself in context (widen self), which she attributes to nationality in her claim that Filipinos are able to do this more so than those of other nationalities. While this further reinforces "othering" in a sense, as well as the status position of employers, it also provides Filipino domestic workers with alternative ways of looking at themselves abroad and disregards intra-national divisions of social class and ethnolinguistic background. According to Zydith, Filipinos are more capable of handling stress because they know how to broaden their perspectives. While these kinds of comparisons may not lead to any structural change and may even reinforce the authoritative voice of those who are structually in a higher social position, they nevertheless provide migrant domestic workers with a greater sense of power and agency because these notions are often used to resist ill-treatment. As Zydith mentions further about her Korean female employer:

"But her, I cannot stand her attitude/ sometimes when I was ironing/ she, like, I don't know what she told me/ I almost pulled her hair/ she almost pulled my hair too/ I told her try to slap me/ I will do everything.../ I really fought with her because/ then she told me I'm the only maid who fought against her/ I told her, I'm not like Indonesian/ that everything you say, nothing/ just keep their mouths shut/ I said, when you're dealing with a Filipina/ when there's an enemy, they will fight you/ so I told her don't try your best/ don't try your luck..."

SAMENESS AND MARGINALITY

The preference for nationality-based groupings (discussed later) reinforces this 'difference' as many domestic workers choose to engage primarily with fellow Filipino domestic workers out of greater cultural understanding. However, the shared social positions of all foreign domestic workers have also lead to a shared sense of suffering that is "race-blind." While Jennifer, 35, who has worked in Singapore for two years, distinguishes Filipinos as more talented, she also pointed to shared experiences between Filipino and Indonesian domestic workers when she said that Indonesians are "like us [Filipinos] in that they also aspire to improve their situation in life." Comparing themselves to other marginal groups who are in the same plight and experiencing the same difficulties becomes a means by which migrant domestic workers cope with hardship. Given that abroad means hardship

("everyone suffers"), respondents feel less so when they think of other domestic workers who have it worse. Helping others then becomes a source of accomplishment and pride, and assistance in various forms is provided to other domestic workers regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

> "Some employers can be too much / There are many like that / That's why we are helping out a lot of [domestic workers] there / If they no longer want [to work] / if they cannot take it anymore / we find other [employers] or sometimes we encourage them to run away /... Filipinos and Indonesians, it's the same." - Judy, 32, Singapore

Respondents from Singapore are in a better position to speak of assisting domestic workers of other nationalities as it is in Singapore where greater ethnic diversity in terms of domestic workers can be found. Most of the domestic workers in Singapore are from three countries – Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. In terms of opportunity structures, Filipino domestic workers receive a higher salary compared to their Indonesian and Sri Lankan counterparts primarily because of their educational backgrounds and English skills. In this sense, even the structures promote distinctions between foreign domestic workers while still keeping their subordinate status intact. Out of this kind of situation, many of my respondents from Singapore mentioned that they knew of, for instance, Indonesian domestic workers (most of them neighbors) who are unable to directly confront oppressive employers. It is therefore not uncommon for Filipino domestic workers to intervene, at least indirectly, mainly in terms of giving food and advice.

While there is also some ethnic diversity with regard to foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong, this category is still dominated by Filipinos and therefore, encounters with domestic workers of other nationalities are less common, especially for those who have begun working in Hong Kong in the early 1980s. Many of the respondents from Hong Kong however, mentioned helping out fellow Filipino domestic workers in need. This is usually in the form of looking for alternative employers in case the domestic worker is terminated, or running boarding houses where domestic workers can either hang out or seek temporary shelter when they have run away or are in-between employment. These boarding houses, while usually Filipino-run, are not limited to taking in only Filipino domestic workers.

Despite the crossing of ethnic lines in the provision of assistance, particularly in the case of Singapore, cultural stereotypes still exist and distinctions are still being made. But as De Sousa Santos (2007) maintains, the idea of empathy is a significant indicator of, and a factor for, subaltern

cosmopolitanism. Empathy towards people who are not from one's own country and who might be from countries that are relatively poorer than one's own becomes more present in lives of Filipino domestic workers as they interact with those "others" who are in similar positions of marginality. It is relatively easier to empathize with fellow Filipinos, but the recognition of the plight of others is a start at getting to know about how people from other parts of the world are being treated and how they are faring. Perhaps an element of pity might be present here since Filipino domestic workers do have a higher salary and speak better English and are therefore comparably less marginal. But nevertheless, for Filipino domestic workers who, given their socio-historical backgrounds, have probably never encountered a foreigner who shares their situation, this experience enables them to situate themselves within the cultural complexities of marginality as a function of work.

DIFFERENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

When it comes to employers, notions of difference are also utilized. Just as domestic workers make inter-cultural distinctions among similarly marginalized groups in Hong Kong and Singapore, so do they recognize social and cultural differences among their employers, from nationals of Hong Kong and Singapore to expatriates. Migrants rationalize the kinds of social relations that are developed with employers by exploiting distinctions among employers of different nationalities, ethnicities, social class. American and European employers are placed on higher level than Asian, particularly Chinese, employers. Aside from ethnicity or nationality, distinctions are also made between highly educated and less-educated employers, and between upper and middle class employers. By using these distinctions to categorize employers, migrants are somehow able to either resist ill-treatment, although not structurally, or feel at par with their employers.

Carmen, 53, who worked in Hong Kong for 11 years, differentiates the three employers she had worked for based on how they had treated her, which tends to be attributed to ethnicity. All of her employers were British nationals, but in terms of ethnicity, one was Chinese, another was Scottish, and the other she referred to as "really" British. She said that among them, she preferred the Scots because they treated her as part of the family. She said that her British employers were also a great deal better than the Chinese because the Chinese "really belittle you." As such, cultural exposure may not just encourage compassion but may also bring forth enmity.

Many of the respondents who have experienced having both Western and Asian employers said that 'white' employers tend to be more open when it comes to giving off-days while the Chinese are very strict, even with the performance of household work. Some of them also said that female Asian employers are relatively more difficult to get along with. Surprisingly, this has not really been attributed to gender, as has been shown in studies that look into the issues that come with having female foreign workers in the household. Migrants rationalize tension with female employers by saying it is a cultural quirk, while others point to social class and education. They do not expect females who have married into wealth, or employers who are members of the working class, to be kind and generous. When migrants attribute the severity of employers to culture or social class, they are better able to accept ill-treatment. And as foreigners, they feel that it is their job to adjust. As long as their rights are not being trampled on, Zydith mentions that when it comes to employers who are very harsh:

> "Just say that this is not my country/ I need to be patient…/… isn't it that where we come from we also have a culture that they might not like? / so just tell yourself that this is not my culture…/…so whatever their culture is, just understand / because we also have our own / it's necessary that when it is them who are in another place / they should understand the culture of one another right?"

SAMENESS OR DIFFERENCE AS A FUNCTION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

Many of the respondents also use their own educational and linguistic capital to put themselves on equal footing with employers whom they do not regard as highly. To equalize social positions or to resist being looked down on, domestic workers compare the social and cultural traits of their employers to those of their own, as Filipinos, so that they become their employers' equal on certain things. For instance, they do not shy away from saying that an employer has a low educational level, or an employer used to be poor and just married someone rich. Even the manner of dressing is given attention as Leticia, 57, a domestic worker from Hong Kong noted:

> "I was also stylish even before/ that really I also knew how [to dress]/ my employer is even the one who asks me what she should wear/ the Chinese/ sometimes they're a bit tacky."

Caroline, 29, echoes this sentiment when she said that having worked in Hong Kong, she finds the Philippines to be very modern in comparison,

primarily in terms of clothes and culture. She finds the manner of dressing in Hong Kong to be tacky. And Laila, 30, who has also worked in Hong Kong, said that in terms of language, the Philippines seems to be more modern because the Chinese speak "carabao[3] English." Laila did point out that if one were to turn things over, Filipinos do not really know how to speak Chinese.

In this sense, English becomes an indicator of modernity, especially in Hong Kong where employers who are Chinese and of a lower social class and educational background do not speak the language fluently. When migrant domestic workers view themselves and their own culture (as Filipinos) as more modern, they are capitalizing on their knowledge of English and on a certain level of cultural capital. Cultural capital also plays a role in the migrant's ability to resist, and even to negotiate rights and work demands. As mentioned previously, respondents have identified Filipinos as having a higher level of cultural capital and therefore a greater ability to negotiate than domestic workers of other nationalities. However, when it comes to dealing with employers, regardless of whether it is in Hong Kong or Singapore, there will always be times when choosing to go against, or argue with, employers are difficult. While migrant domestic workers do go abroad for a number of reasons, earning money is a major concern and when they do not have that financial capital to hold on to, the room to negotiate is smaller. Having more money, which is also a function of having been abroad longer, means having greater capacity to negotiate or handle problematic employers.

> "My problem was the old one was so strict/ she keeps talking/ even though it's just a small mistake that's like/ they say that she had a lot of maids before me…/ when it was [me] because I didn't have any money/ it was my first time to go abroad/ I endured it."

What perhaps makes for further subjugation is the inability to resist, the lack of power. Respondents mentioned that recruitment agencies tell them that in order for them to have smooth interpersonal relations with employers, they just have to say yes to all the orders. However, there is a fine line between saying yes all the time and defending one's rights. If a domestic worker cannot argue even though she is in the right, then it leads to her further subjugation. While domestic workers do not have a choice all the time, even the decision to leave an employer whom they feel is too harsh becomes an act of agency in itself.

> "The others you don't know/ inside the house/ they are maltreated…/ so what we have experienced/ we tell ourselves that we are still lucky/ because the others/ when their employers do those things/ they no longer have the courage to speak up/ they just say yes."

> "I do have other domestic worker friends... Sri Lanka... India....then... Thai, Thailand.../ They also share with me / when we get together / they're okay / but they tell me what their employers do to them / They are maltreated /... [because] they don't know how to speak English ... / ...they are hit with those... spoons... or anything, those pointed objects." - Aida, 53, 16 years in Hong Kong

When domestic workers compare themselves to other marginal groups of a different nationality, the kind of cultural capital that they have gains value. Such cultural capital is attributed to being Filipino; because compared to other nationalities such as Indonesians, for instance, Filipino domestic workers in general, regardless of their province of origin, are more educated, can speak better English, and are therefore more modern, because they are Filipino. This knowledge gives them a leverage when it comes to negotiating with people of a higher social status and can become a tool for resistance because it gives them at least the idea that they can exercise power over situations, which exerts a big influence on their self-perceptions. This cultural capital also becomes an equalizing force with regard to employers whose nationality (for instance as citizens of Hong Kong or Singapore) might give them the capacity to look down on domestic workers, but whose socio-cultural background is not considered superior enough by domestic workers to merit that kind of authority. Thus, even the thought that they might be better than their employers in terms of particular forms of cultural capital already brings about the notion that they are on equal footing with their employers.

SAMENESS AND RACIALIZED LABOR

Filipinos abroad are not a cohesive and happy group however. Among Filipino domestic workers, there are indeed factions, and some domestic workers express grievances against others by bringing their province of origin and distinct cultural traits into the picture. They say, for instance, that a certain domestic worker acts the way she does because she is from a particular province (and people there are known to be such). But generally, ethnolinguistic origins are not the cause for factions and in-fighting[4] in Singapore or Hong Kong. Furthermore, when respondents talk about being Filipino, it does not only pertain to their regional origins or being residents of their villages in the Philippines but being a citizen of the Philippines as a whole. They speak of the Philippines as a nation and hardly of their regional origins except when specifically asked.

What is more striking however, particularly in Singapore, which receives not only a significant number of Filipino domestic workers but also a significant number of Filipino professionals and expatriates including nurses, IT workers, and those who are posted by multilateral corporations, is that class divisions in the Philippines get transported abroad. The Philippines is a highly class-based society, which is apparent even among Filipinos in Singapore. For many Filipino professionals, the presence of a similarly large, or even bigger, group of Filipino domestic workers has been the object of 'transnational shame' (Aguilar 1996), which has often led to professionals constructing barriers between themselves and domestic workers. Given their status and socio-economic background, they can better assimilate and integrate into Singapore society and can afford to distance themselves from domestic workers despite having the same nationality. It is especially vital for Filipino female professionals to separate themselves lest others think that they too are domestic workers, which leads to grievances among domestic workers because such marginalization is being done by their own countrymen and women.

In these instances, notions of sameness are employed by migrant domestic workers in comparing themselves to fellow Filipinos who might have the same national identity but whose professional occupations lead to the 'othering' of Filipino domestic workers, who are in a different class position. While Filipino professionals may have the upper hand because they have the right to be residents, to bring their families to Singapore, and to send their children to Singapore schools, this does not give them the right to snub fellow Filipinos just because of their class position. After all, according to respondents, they too are foreigners working in a foreign land. In this sense, "foreign-ness" becomes the basis for similarity, and not simply national identity. While it is true that given their shared culture as Filipinos, cultural adjustment would also be shared in many ways even though social class and status are different. But in terms of equalizing social positions, racialized labor becomes the point of comparison. For instance, Filipino nurses are a group with whom domestic workers feel the most affinity, as both occupations involve care-giving. Some respondents however, claim that Filipino nurses are among the most condescending towards them.

Zydith mentions how they used to tease one of their friends who is a nurse whenever they would get together and the friend would just laugh about it:

> "I tell her 'why are your fellow nurses so boastful'? / then she would just laugh / we would get together with Inday Fen... because that's what I say / why are they like that? / Why do they belittle the maids just like that / because sometimes when we're eating / I tell her why, you're picky because you're a nurse? / ... because sometimes that's the truth / when professionals face the maids, they seem so boastful / I tell her, why, what's your job there? / if your body doesn't ache because of all the bedridden people / and because of wiping the bottom of the people there.../ that's your job / you know nurses are no different from maids / at least maids have it better because when employers are not around they can rest / but you, your time is set / you are just higher because you have diplomas...."

Based on Zydith's account, resistance is done by comparing the nature of the care given by domestic workers and that administered by nurses. They claim that nurses are no different from maids because even though nurses have degrees and certifications, they all clean up after people. In this sense, while respondents are talking about a neutral (if gendered) occupation, the racial dimension is present because they are talking about nursing as performed by fellow Filipinos, who are also subjugated (albeit less so than domestic workers) by foreign employers.

In Hong Kong, grievances are usually against Filipino women, often former domestic workers, who were able to marry Chinese or British nationals. Salva, 40, a college graduate who worked in Hong Kong for five years and is acquainted with Filipina residents said:

> "You know how it is / because they were able to marry Chinese / I actually prefer having Chinese employers rather than Filipino ones / Because I have a friend but she's no longer there now / from Urdaneta / her employer was a Filipina who got married to a Chinese/ but the way she treats her maid / it's really [bad] / Yes, I prefer a Chinese employer than a Filipina / Isn't it that most of us / they're your fellowmen but they are still the ones who will put you down."

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

While national identity is a basis for sameness when migrant domestic workers try to compare themselves with fellow Filipinos in Singapore to resist "othering" by these groups, the idea of 'us' vs. 'them' still exists. This is most apparent in their choice of social networks. Social networks become jump-off points for transnational belonging because it is through these networks that migrants are able to feel integrated abroad. They can assert their cultural identity, create continuities of home, and cope with being "others" through networks.

> "It's like after one year/ you don't really go out as much/ because you still don't know…/…but after two years/ when you have a lot of friends/ you go everywhere…"

The formation of social networks, especially when it involves individuals of other nationalities, is what makes abroad different from home, or even the urban spaces of home. The significance of being abroad is that it allows Filipino domestic workers to interact and foster ties with individuals of other nationalities, even if these ties are location-specific, which means that some of these ties were no longer maintained in return. Relationships with non-Filipinos have also been developed out of church attendance, through classes they have enrolled in, in apartment building lifts, or while waiting to pick children up from school. For the younger respondents from Hong Kong, they meet other foreign domestic workers through sports events that are organized by associations and usually compete against each other in matches. These spaces suggest that interactions are limited to specific groups of non-Filipinos, mainly other foreign workers. Respondents are quick to mention however, that while they do have Indonesian or Chinese friends, networking with fellow Filipinos is preferred.

> "It's difficult because the Indonesian/ it's like sometimes when you're talking to them/ but you can't converse for a long time, no/ because it's hard to "spell" them out…/ …it's like the two of you can only talk about one two three."

Siony, 58, says that in her 22 years in Hong Kong, her experience is that when foreign workers get together, they usually stick to their own kind: "If Filipino, it's just mainly Filipino / if [for example] Indian, it's just Indian / it's like that / they don't mix… because they don't… they cannot speak English / so they just do it that way."

In a way, the formation of social networks also utilizes notions of sameness or difference. For Filipino domestic workers, linguistic capacity is important in developing deeper relationships with others because it is a key to better understanding. According to respondents, conversations with non-Filipino friends usually revolve around language-teaching, how things are said in each other's language, or what the conditions are like in each other's home countries. While this makes for a good past-time and does increase awareness of other cultures, it does not provide the kind of support that migrants need abroad. Based on their narratives, cultural understanding remains a key in forming relationships, and this hinges on a shared national identity that is coupled with a shared social position. This is why respondents expressed

preference for interacting with fellow Filipino domestic workers rather than with Filipino professionals, although this does not mean that they do not have friends who belong to the latter. Within the context of nationality therefore, the notion of "us vs. them" reappears in social groupings. Domestic workers turn to their social network in times of need and they prefer to seek help from those who understand their situation in its entirety, which means those who are not just from the same country but also in the same social position.

> "They [Filipino professionals] are already PR there [in Singapore]/ they work in the office/ of course they are able to move up/ we are just maids so to speak/ they are already [on top] there/ so they kind of belittle/ but it also depends on the person how to/ of course there are different nationalities so to speak/ I make friend with -/ comparing the maids to those who are working/ the engineers or what/ it's better that you are with the maid/ fellow maid/ rather than with them."

Same nationality groupings are also preferred because social networks are vehicles by which migrants create continuities of the home and thus assert cultural identity. One of the means by which continuities are created is when migrant domestic workers get together and cook Filipino food. Food has been mentioned almost all the time as a control agent among employers. It becomes a gauge for the domestic workers' living conditions when good or bad employers are judged based on how much freedom they give when it comes to food. A good employer is one who "feeds" their domestic workers well, provides enough food, or allows the domestic workers to cook Filipino food. To resist this kind of control from their employers, domestic workers use food to acknowledge their agency. They give the extra food from their employers' households to fellow domestic workers, regardless of ethnicity, if they know these domestic workers are being "starved."

When it comes to cooking Filipino food, regional divisions collapse because while every region in the Philippines would have its delicacy and local food, and migrants who cook would usually specialize in food from their region, these dishes would still be referred to as Filipino. This further asserts the significance of Filipino food as a platform for national and cultural identity and that abroad, it is national identity that counts, not regional proclivities. While creating continuities of home through food might seem like an excuse among labor migrants to remain within their cultural bubble, given the domestic workers' experience of marginality and the importance of food to Philippine culture, food becomes a way of breaking out of a limited

space/time. Respondents likened being able to cook Filipino food to being free, and not being "fed" rice by employers to being starved. Food/eating is symbolically important to Filipinos as a sign of fellowship and celebration. Rice in itself is not just a meal but a way of life that the lack of it becomes a major source of hardship.

Church-going is also a way by which migrant domestic workers create continuities of home. Almost all of the respondents mentioned going to church as one of the highlights of their off-days. Some of them even said that going to church regularly was something they did abroad but not in the Philippines. While most of the respondents are Catholic, there are also some who tried attending other church services, for instance Protestant ones, because they were encouraged by other Filipino friends. Church-going then, is primarily a social activity, and one which respondents engage in to feel a sense of community with fellow Filipinos. Even though they do meet non-Filipinos in church, church is not as much a venue for making new friends as it is for re-living Filipino traditions with Filipino friends (fellow domestic workers) abroad, and as such, also a space where they feel free to perform a cultural identity. In relation to this, respondents mentioned that one of the reasons why they prefer same-nationality groupings is because of religious differences between Filipinos and non-Filipinos. Indonesians, for instance, are Muslim and would go to mosques on a regular day-off while Filipinos would be going to church[5]. Because of differences in religious practices, church-going as a major social activity that reinforces social ties is done separately.

Notions of sameness in this case are based on the idea of religion as a key to cultural understanding, which is also why religion has been linked to nationality. Migrants express greater understanding and affinity among those who practice the same religion, which would be fellow Filipinos, even though some of these Filipinos might be practicing other religions.

Creating continuities through food and church provides domestic workers with a sense of home abroad while at the same time furthering their sense of stradling between cultures because food and religion is also juxtaposed within the dynamics of class and culture. As a means by which national identity is asserted, food could also be a space for resistance to racialization – that even though they may be marginalized not just because of their occupation but also because they are considered "racially" inferior, they are still proud of their cultural identity and will manifest this through the consumption of Filipino food on their off days, often in public spaces such as Central in Hong Kong or Orchard Road/Lucky Plaza in Singapore.

SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE: AGENCY WITHIN SPACES

While their subject positions as domestic workers largely determines who they deal with and how they do so, there is still choice in the formation of social networks and in the dynamics of interaction. The process of constructing sameness or difference based on the idea of who is the 'other' forms the basis of many of the migrant domestic workers' interactions and relationships, which then influence the formation and maintenance of new self-perceptions and new identities. In using different bases for sameness and difference to negotiate and assert identities abroad, migrants not only draw upon culture but combine cultural elements with other imagined boundaries based on their experience of interfacing their location vis-à-vis the location of other groups of people. Migrants encounter difference in many ways, and this has led to the kind of boundary work that recognizes the dynamics of class, culture, race, and nationality. Migrants utilize social and cultural elements to assert their ground, which means asserting modernity through national identity and asserting national identity through the performance of cultural elements. Even the idea of national identity is utilized differently depending on who they are dealing with. In comparing themselves to Filipinos of a higher social position, national identity is combined with the idea of 'foreign-ness'— that all Filipinos are doing some sort of racialized labor abroad and are therefore equals. National identity, on the other hand, takes on the form of cultural understanding in imaginations of the Filipino domestic worker community abroad. As Filipinos, domestic workers would likely be sharing the same religion, cuisine, and cultural capital.

At the same time, however, there is also the notion of a shared experience that comes from shared social positions, regardless of country of origin. And in these instances, showing compassion to those who are also othered crosses ethnic lines. As such, even though the idea of boundary work seems to reinforce cultural stereotypes and othering, the experience of Filipino domestic workers abroad has enabled them to go beyond just ethnicity or nationality in the way they think about other people and other cultures. In transcendent boundary work, these categories are still used, but not in the normative sense. The lines have already been blurred. This shows in a way the transformative possibilities present in migration – had these domestic workers remained in the home, their relational boundaries would still be those normative categories. Without their varied experiences of difference and of being different, the world would still be much smaller, and boundary work still categorical, for these migrant domestic workers.

NOTES

1 This paper is extracted from one of the chapters of my Ph.D. thesis on cosmopolitanism among return Filipino migrant domestic workers. Findings are derived from narrative interviews conducted among return migrant Filipino domestic workers from Hong Kong and Singapore in two municipalities in the Philippines.

2 In Singapore, the salary for Filipino maids is at S$300 - S$350 a month. Indonesian maids on the other hand, get around S$220 - S$250 a month while Sri Lankan maids get around S$200 - S$240 a month. The range depends on the educational background of, and domestic duties assigned to, the domestic workers (see http://www.expatsingapore.com/content/view/1174).

3 broken

4 The paper will not be dealing with this.

5 None of my respondents are Muslim; Muslim Filipinos could have had a different take on this.

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RESEARCH NOTES

Ethnicity and Social Mobility in the Era of Globalization: The Journey of the SADAKI Mangyan-Alangans

Alvaro Calara

The study focuses on the changing ethnicity of the SADAKI Mangyan-Alangans. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation were used to gather data on the changes in the Mangyan-Alangans' ideo-religious, socio-political, and economic practices. These changes show that the SADAKI exhibit an acculturated attitude. This has partially been brought about by mining explorations in the area, which have challenged their cultural identity but have also ushered in opportunities for social mobility. The decision to participate in dialogue and open up the core of their cultural identity signal an attempt to accommodate development for possible upward social mobility. Given the necessary support and guidance, the SADAKI will be better able to engage in development plans.

Keywords: *social mobility, ethnicity, culturally-appropriate development*

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has ushered in tremendous changes across the world. Deemed as the "widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life" (Held et al. 1999: 2), globalization is not just a state but a process that constantly creates various ramifications. In the course of transformation, "some states, societies and communities are becoming enmeshed in the global order while others are becoming increasingly marginalized" (pp. 7-8). Global transformations nevertheless entail social mobility as these enable individuals or groups to move across the social hierarchy in either way (Schaefer 2009). It is in the context of downward social mobility that globalization becomes undesirable as it further marginalizes and excludes some sectors of society from gaining

advantages to any form of development. In the Philippines, certain ethno-linguistic groups are often at a disadvantage, and many find ways to not just cope with the situation, but also push for upward social mobility, among them are the SADAKI Mangyan-Alangans.

This study looks at the changes in the ethnicity of the SADAKI Mangyan-Alangans as they adapt to changes in the environment brought about by global processes, specifically mining operations on their land. The implications of these changes are also discussed with the aim of empowering the Mangyan-Alangans in their articulation of the development path they want to pursue.

Ethnicity, in the broadest sense, is shared cultural heritage. People who are distinctly categorized or identified as ethnic groups share common ancestors, language, or religion. The global-local dialectic discourse of Waters (1995: 137) argues that ethnic communities respond to globalizing forces either by being "translationist" or "traditionalistic." The former connotes a syncretistic disposition of coming up with new forms of expression upon experiencing such external forces, while the latter resorts to going back to fundamental traditions and history as a form of retreat. The cultural heritage that drives the Mangyan-Alangans to maintain their cultural identity is the very same heritage that constrains them from moving upward in the social hierarchy. It confines them to the lower positions in Philippine society, as genuine development remains elusive for ethnic groups in the country.

The mining industry[1] poses a huge challenge to the ethnicity and social mobility of the Mangyan. Pursuing development through mining is a viable economic endeavor for the country as this brings in investments. Such strategy however forces the Mangyan to acculturate to accommodate the possibility of better opportunites that might pave the way for upward social mobility. To realize such opportunities, the Mangyan should make a choice that will chart the future of their tribe.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Mangyan are collective of eight ethno-linguistic groups that reside in the plains and mountains of the island of Mindoro, one hundred miles south of Manila. The Mangyan dominated the island of Mindoro up to the second decade of the twentieth century (Helbling and Schult 2004). With the expansion of trading during the American period, migrant settlers from different areas were recruited into the island to cultivate agricultural lands for the production of export crops (Helbling & Schult 1997). During this

time, transnational business corporations started coming into the island through various logging concessions, mining activities, and other extractive industries that encroached on the vast ancestral lands owned by the indigenous peoples (Gaspar 1977). At this time, Tagalog, Visayan and Ilocano migrants began to dominate the area (Baes 1987) and the Mangyan tended to be excluded from the economic activities taking place.

Believed to be risk-averse and peace-loving people, the Mangyan resorted to moving further up the hinterlands rather than confront the abrupt surge of migrants who were pursuing their own interests. Outright and large-scale land-grabbing (Lamberte 1983), land privatization (Helbling and Schult 2004) and land titling,[2] and lowlander migration into the area during World War II (Schult 1991; Lopez-Gonzaga 2002; Leykamm 1979 as cited in Gariguez, 2008: 80), have further deprived the Mangyan of their land and their lives.

With Republic Act 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), signed into law in 1997, ancestral domain has finally been recognized. The IPRA aims to address the ancestral domain claims of the indigenous peoples across the country. Through this provision, the rights of indigenous peoples have finally been given attention, thus allowing them opportunities for social mobility and the attainment of a better social status.

The cultural identity of the Mangyan revolves around their relationship with the land and their environment (Gariguez 2008). Land has always been communal. The concept of private ownership through registration and land titles is alien to their culture and even to their consciousness. For them, land sustains their community, their cultural identity, and their oneness. Their ethnicity is sustained by living harmoniously with nature. Land is not just a source of livelihood but the core of their cultural heritage as it constantly shapes and defines who they are as Mangyan.

THE STUDY SITE

Barangay Villa Cerveza has a total land area of 10,989 hectares and a total population of 1,700, comprising 305 households. It is bounded by Barangays Alcate and Loyal on the north, Barangays Pakyas, Bambanin, and Concepcion on the east, the municipality of Naujan on the west and municipality of Sablayan on the south. It has a hilly to mountainous terrain. Some areas have concrete roads, while the rest of the area have dirt roads. The provincial road from BPI to Villa Cerveza, which is 1.35 km long and six meters wide, is still gravel while the Villa Cerveza to Dangare Road, which

is four kilometers long and six meters wide, is half-gravel and half-earthfill. Villa Cerveza is home to different ethnic groups, although seventy percent of the population are Mangyan, mostly from the Alangan tribe. The name Alangan comes from a major river system located along the slopes of Alangan Valley (Leykamm 1979: 4-5).

In 1964, the barrio received two sprayers and 1 radio transistor. In 1979, the elementary school of Villa Cerveza was opened. A chapel was erected and a barangay stage constructed. Around this time, Victoria's Milling Company (VMC) provided for the construction of a system of irrigation and barangay roads.

In 1982, the barangay started to have potable drinking water through a project under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 1994, the barangay was able to acquire radio communication. Residents were given opportunities for several livelihood projects such handicrafts-making and animal dispersal. Seminars and trainings for cooperatives were also conducted. In 1997, the Mangyan in Sitio Buhuan were provided a minority school, in coordination with Department of Education and the governor at that time. Several projects were also implemented such as the installation of a water system and solar driers, and the construction of public toilets, a waiting shed, concrete benches, and a school classroom. A livelihood program was implemented by the Rural Improvement Club. A 100-meter concrete road was constructed through a cost-sharing project of the municipal and the barangay government.

Prior to EO 270, a mining exploration in Villa Cerveza was undertaken, but this was opposed by the people (Gariguez 2003). Despite the opposition, a total of 2,290 hectares were placed under a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) in 2000. The agreement was secured by a mining company called MINDEX. Under the agreement, 25 percent of the mining area would be locally-owned and 75 percent foreign-owned. However, in 2002, a 25-year mining moratorium was issued by the Local Government in response to the social unacceptability of the mining operations, especially as the mining site in Villa Cerveza was located within a watershed area. The mining site also falls within the ancestral domain of the Mangyan communities found near and within the mining concessions (Gariguez 2008).

Some Mangyan-Alangans are now residing in Kisluyan. The area is the nearest sitio from the southern end of Villa Cerveza. According to the elders, the place was formerly called Candido, the name of the original settler in the

area (Gariguez 2008:133-134). Mangyan-Alangans in Kisluyan came from the upper part of Malangis but were forced to migrate and live closer to each other when a heated encounter between the military and the New People's Army (NPA) transpired in 2003. Out of fear, they decided to live near each other to avoid the conflict.

With the mining exploration and the possibility of a mining operation in the area, the Mangyan-Alangans of Sitio Kisluyan are facing a great challenge – the inevitability of interacting with, and integrating into, mainstream society, while at the same time preserving the integrity of their ethnicity, which is anchored to their ancestral domain. Tomlinson (1997) argues that people are not cultural dopes, or culturally passive, but are agents actively participating in cultural exchanges that are capable of translating, mutating, adapting and even creating hybrid cultures (cited in Bombongan 2006: 5). Indigenous peoples are not exempt from this dynamic process of cultural exchange as they "no longer live in isolation" (Gariguez 2008: 22).

Such cultural exchange is highlighted by Quiaoit's (1997) ethnological research, which identified changes that occurred in a traditional Mangyan-Alangan community as a result of the acculturation process. The distinctions he made parallel those in Waters' (1995) study of an ethnic community's dichotomous response to globalization – as either traditionalistic or translationist. Table 1 highlights Quiaoit's (1997) study on the translationist response of the acculturated Mangyan-Alangans. This was prior to mining explorations in the area.

METHODOLOGY

In-depth interviews with key informants and participant observation were used to generate information regarding ethnicity among the Mangyan. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with a group of Mangyan-Alangans belonging to the Samahan Apo Diya Alangan Kisluyan, Inc. (SADAKI) were conducted to identify the various changes taking place among tribe members.

SADAKI is an organization of the Mangyan-Alangans of Sitio Kisluyan. The group was formed in 1978, a year after it separated from KABILOGAN, another group of Mangyan composed mostly of the tribe called Ruang. Since the SADAKI identify more with the Alangan tribe, they decided to form their own group to represent their tribe. The group is comprised of seven small communities called sitios. These sitios are Alyanay, Candido, Lipak Lakoy,

Table 1. Ethnological Comparison of Traditional Mangyan-Alangan and Acculturated Mangyan Alangan (Quiaoit 1997)

	TRADITIONAL MANGYAN-ALANGAN	ACCULTURATED MANGYAN-ALANGAN
IDEO-RELIGIOUS	Rituals are faithfully performed in all phases of agricultural activities.	Planting and harvesting rituals are performed with lesser intensity and frequency.
	Land restrictions and the corresponding taboos are strongly observed.	There are many rituals performed to appease the spirits to lift land use restrictions.
SOCIO-POLITICAL	Closed relationship: all are Alangans and are related either directly or by affinity to the two domain clan claimants.	Open relationship: Any Alangan from elsewhere is welcome to reside with them. Intermarriage with non-Alangan is allowed.
	Clan elder allows community members to open a swidden farm anywhere within the domain.	Individual family lots are already delineated.
	The forest, cogonal areas for securing roof thatching, and waters are communal.	There are no communal areas except for the burial grounds and waters.
	Conflicts seldom occur. When these occur, they perform rituals to the spirits to settle them.	Many conflicts arise regarding the boundaries and these are resolved by the barangay council.
ECONOMIC	Forests, with their variety of flora and fauna, are direct and almost sole sources of food and basic necessities.	Diminishing role of land as a source of food. Land as a source of cash crops to purchase lowland goods.
	Swidden farming is the basic subsistence activity.	Swiddens are becoming smaller and fewer, and they are planted mainly with cash crops.
	To assure a continuous source of food, there are two types of swiddens: main and provisional.	Trend: intensive and continuous cultivation, permanent sedentary agriculture.
	73% to 76% of community members have their own swidden. Children begin to manage fields as early as 6 years old.	Swidden cultivation losing its relevance. Only 41% of the community work in swidden farms.
	Reverence and fear of spirits restrain them from altering the natural environment.	Traditional belief in spirits is overshadowed by the concern to make land produce more and generate cash.

Maigat, Malauan, Puting Bato and Taluto. Each of the sitio is headed by a *kapitan* or captain responsible for representing the community in decision-making and other consultation processes.

The SADAKI group was chosen on purpose to highlight the dynamics evolving in the community as they take on a more acculturated attitude and a translationist response. The framework provided by Quiaoit is used as a benchmark in examining the changes occurring among the SADAKI. Data was analyzed using the phenomenological approach of Gabriel Marcel, who espoused an emic approach to contextualizing, interpreting, and understanding field experiences through a process of reflection (Marcel 1951). For this research, two levels of reflection[3] are used to identify changes in the ethnicity of the acculturated Alangans in Villa Cerveza. This study also intends to raise some points that might be useful in discussing the key issues that confront the Mangyan-Alangan community.

CHANGES IN IDEO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Traditional Mangyan-Alangans have a high regard for rituals being performed by the tribe. Almost all aspects of their lives are anchored on rituals. Being animists, Mangyan-Alangans believe in *Kapwanbulod*, the spirit of nature that gives life to the diversity of the forest. Even rivers are believed to be protected by the spirit called *Alulaba*. Aware of the fact that they are part of the wholeness and oneness of the forest, and of nature itself, Alangans have a high respect for nature and all life forms. Before any undertaking is carried out in the community, Alangans would always resort to *agpansula,* a ritual performed by sacrificing an animal (i.e., chicken or pig), to appease disturbances caused to spirits. Agpansula acts as a gateway in consulting with the spirits.

Agpansula

The sacrificial animal will be prayed over by the elders of the tribe while the fire is started. Once the praying is done, the animal will be put on fire. After scraping the burnt epidermis, the animal will be cut open. In the case of a pig, for example, the pancreas will be removed. An elder heading the cultural committee of the tribe will determine whether the spirits are pleased based on the state of the pancreas. Firm and upward-pointing pancreas would indicate an approval of the spirits. If the pancreas is soft and drooping, the prayer is not sufficient to appease the spirits. Another round of agpansula will be performed to make up for the shortcomings of the first round of the ritual.

Agpansula encompasses the communal life of Mangyan-Alangans as it is performed in almost all the daily undertakings of the community, which include planting, gathering, hunting, and curing of the sick. It is also performed on special occasions such as feasts, weddings, and burials (Café 2008). Even the entry of outsiders to the community or the introduction of development projects, or any other type of activity, requires the performance of the agpansula. The entire community gathers for the ritual, performed in a ritual site called *Balay Lakoy,* a communal place where important meetings are held. The ritual attests to the communal and consultative way of life of the Mangyan-Alangans. Unity among community members and harmony with the spirits are at the very center of their cultural identity as a tribe, as seen in their observance of the values of *mahalto* and *kapyaon pagsarigan*, which mean peace and harmony. The Mangyan-Alangans are conformist – they would always resort to a consensus before any decision is made.

With the onset of the mining exploration and other mining-related activites, the values of mahalto and kapyaon pagsarigan are being challenged. During the FGD, some kapitan from other sitios expressed concern regarding the fact that the agpansula was held only in Kisluyan. The agpansula was carried out prior to the Envronmental Impact Assessment (EIA) mandated by Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR). The other six sitios were not able to conduct the agpansula, and as such, the ritual was incomplete. The Alangans attributed the frequent rains that delayed their *kaingin* farming to the fact that the ritual has not been undertaken in all the areas. The other kapitans were strongly in favor of undertaking agpansula in the other six sitios to complete the ritual and appease the spirits.

The ritual also entails the provison of goods such as sacks of rice, coffee, sugar, *bolos* (a kind of knife used in kaingin) and other consumable items. Since the other sitios were not able to receive this kind of support granted to Kisluyan, given that it was only there that the ritual was conducted, the other kapitans said that friction was building up among the different sitios of SADAKI. The other kapitans expected the same kind of support that the mining company accorded to Kisluyan. This kind of discord should be addressed properly to avoid future conflict that may strain the values of mahalto and kapyaon pagsarigan.

According to Quiaoit (1997), acculturated Mangyan-Alangans perform rituals prior to agricultural activities at a lower degree of frequency and intensity. Land use restrictions have now been lifted and agpansula is

performed only to negotiate with the spirits. As shown in this particular case, the spirits take on a more consultative role, instead of the originally deterministic one, as SADAKI now define the appropriate use of the lands.

Sacred Sites

The SADAKI are also now exhibiting pragmatism by accommodating the mining exploration carried out in their ancestral domain. However, *libingan* or burial sites remain sacred and non-negotiable. Other sacred places that must be given due respect are the *buwisan*, where the Alangan elders perform yearly rituals, and the *pangaisdaan /sakahan*, areas where they would normally hunt for, and obtain, food. These sacred places must not be disturbed at all. However, initial drilling and exploration in the area affected one libingan in Alyanay. The disturbance brought about further deaths among family members and relatives of the deceased. This incident created fear among the community because they attributed the deaths to the intrusion of the libingan.

Although the community is beginning to entertain possible mining operations in their land after a three-year consultation process, members maintain that sacred places should be given due respect and must never be disturbed at all times. The mining company should be responsible enough to respect and maintain the sacredness of these sites. During the FGD, it has been decided that a marker should be placed along the periphery of the libingan to segregate the sacred sites. The group also suggested the formation of a monitoring team to ensure that these areas are respected while drilling operations are conducted.

The acculturated Alangans still fear their God, called *Agalapot*, and they often call upon *Pamuwagan*, the spirit that acts as a bridge between them and Agalapot. However, the constant fear of poverty is more compelling, and they look forward to the prospects of a better life that the mining operations can bring. As one of the leaders of Lipak Lakoy said:

> *Sa tagal na namin, kami'y lagi na lang paikot-ikot…wala nga kaming kasiguraduhan…pabalik-balik lang kami sa gano'ng proseso. Sa ngayon, ay kami ay unti-unti nang namumulat. Sa pagsulong ng panahon ay mag-iba ng kuwan [a]ng mga katutubo. Unang-una, napapag-aralan na rin ng mga katutubo yang mga kakulangan.* (For as long as we have existed, we just go around in circles…no assurance…we always go back to that same process. Nowadays, we are becoming more aware. Through time, we, the indigenous peoples, are also changing. We start to learn from our shortcomings.)

CHANGES IN SOCIO-POLITICAL OBSERVANCES

Changes in marriage, the judicial system, education, and the youth are highlighted to reflect the different socio-political issues that need to be addressed by the community. Exogamy or intermarriage with the *siganon*, a term used to refer to the lowlanders, particularly the *Tagalogs*, is now being discouraged as it may cause marriage conflict due to cultural differences. The judicial system, called *tigian*, is still maintained, but is being complicated by the presence of the siganon, who constantly challenge the value of mahalto and kapyaon pagsarigan. Education remains paramount to developmental changes in the lives of the Alangans, and preparing Alangan youth to rise to the challenges of these developmental changes must be undertaken.

Exogamy

Intermarriage with non-Alangans is now observed in the community. Many Mangyan-Alangans are now married to non-Alangans, or to people from other ethnic groups such as the Tagalogs. Although arranged marriage is still a norm, an Alangan can marry whoever he or she wishes. Eloping can be an option but castigated only if the girl's parents do not approve of the boy. The boy then pays a penalty in kind (i.e., two pigs) after a series of meetings with the elders and the sitio's *kapitan*.

The practice of exogamy, or marriage between two people of different social categories, can facilitate acculturation, especially in cases of marriage with Tagalogs. In cases where Mangyan-Alangan men marry siganon women, the cultural identity of the Tagalog is subsumed to the Mangyan way of life. The rearing of children in this case mainly follows Mangyan norms. The kapitan of Lipak Lakoy, however, expressed concern about marriage between Alangan women and siganon men, since the Mangyan family name will not be carried out by the children anymore. The ways of the siganon will be imposed on the wife and the children, and this might cause abrupt assimilation and subsequent conflicts in the marriage. Exogamy is now being discouraged to avoid future conflict resulting from cultural differences, even if exogamy might engender a possible movement across the social hierarchy.

The Judiciary

One of the things that Mangyan-Alangans want to preserve is their *batas katutubo* or tribal law. Peace and harmony (mahalto and kapyaon pagsarigan) are at the heart of Alangan culture. The integrity of these values is manifested in how they carry out justice through the pratice of *tigian*. Since the Alangans

have a high regard for relationships, conflicts are usually settled within the sitio. If a crime has been committed by a community member, it is announced within the sitio with the aim of identifying the suspect, and the kapitan of the sitio is consulted. It is assumed that once the suspect's family members learn of the crime, they will talk it out with the suspect and make him admit the crime and accept the punishment.

If no one admits to the crime, *tigian* will be performed in two ways – the identified suspect may be asked to fish out white stones submerged in a cauldron filled with boiling water, or touch a flaming bolo. The tribe believes that if the person is innocent, no amount of heat can burn the hands of the person. *Tigian* is just one of the ways by which sanctions can be imposed on crimes committed in the community. The *batas katutubo* is effective in minimizing conflicts because it guarantees peace and order in the community and upholds the respect members have for one another. As such, crimes rarely happen in the community.

Education

Mangyan-Alangans are very vocal about the importance of education, especially for their children. They realize how education can help ease their present situation. They are aware that they need to pursue schooling in the way lowlanders do, and let their children participate in mainstream education to catch up with their lowland counterparts. But because the cost of sending their children to school is high, the drop-out rate in elementary school is also high, although a number of Alangan students are still determined to learn how to read and write.

But even before lessons on reading and writing begin, teachers assigned to the area are asked to teach the Mangyan proper hygiene. This is an unfamiliar concept to them, and the teacher often has to demonstrate the use of a toothbrush or a face towel. Furthermore, as many of the Mangyan students have to walk two to three hours to school, the teacher is required to be lenient when students fall asleep during the class.

The SADAKI are secure of their ethnicity, having guarded it for almost four centuries now. An Alangan mother noted that even if her children learn lowland or mainstream culture, Mangyan culture will remain intact. While children learn and acquire skills based on a mainstream curriculum, Mangyan parents are likewise committed to passing on their culture to offspring. Mangyan-Alangans rely on oral traditions in transmitting their culture.

Parents teach their children the values and norms of their tribe orally. It is common pratice to select one offspring to act as the guardian or keeper of their culture. The selected offspring will be the repository of the cultural heritage of the tribe, as passed on by the parents. This system has proven effective for almost four centuries now.

The Youth of SADAKI

With community transformations looming in the distance, the role of the youth becomes important. However, preparing the youth to take on such a role remains of low priority. When asked of the plans they have for their youth, the leaders and elders of SADAKI admitted to being remiss on this aspect. Although the SADAKI are looking to education to prepare children for possible labor demands from future mining operations, engaging the youth in discussions and deliberations remains minimal, particularly where mining explorations are concerned. The SADAKI now realize that their youth should be given enough preparation to carry out certain responsibilities that changes in the community may bring about.

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC PRACTICES

The emergence of a market economy proves difficult for the Mangyan-Alangans who remain heavily dependent on *kaingin* as their main form of subsistence. With their high regard for spirits, the Alangans do not see the relevance of economic production. The forest, river, and kaingin are more than enough to provide for their daily needs. Besides, *Kapwanbulod*, *Alulaba* and *Bakwel* (the spirit of kaingin) are always ready to listen to them when they perform agpansula.

The Mangyan have always been dependent on the environment for survival and have managed to subsist with limited access to the market economy. But things have changed. Forest provisions do not suffice anymore. The climate has changed, making subsistence more difficult. Participation in a market economy has become inevitable. However, the Mangyan have not been fully equipped to face this challenge. They have not been well-integrated into the market economy. During one of the market days in Villa Cerveza, Mangyan-Alangans are still subjected to exploitation and manipulation.

Focusing on the Mangyan-Alangans' economic practices in Villa Cerveza, the following information on agricultural farming, hunting, and the trading of crops and other commodities with lowlanders were gathered:

Farming System

Each household now cultivates a parcel of land that they own. Areas to be planted have already been allocated to each household, as determined by their ancestors. Markers, which include bodies of water or trees, are put in place to determine the boundaries. If disputes occur, often caused by a *siganon*, the barangay council intervenes to resolve the conflict.

Mangyan-Alangans follow a certain ritual in planting palay. From December to March, they start clearing new lands to prepare for the planting season. They practice *pilagumanwa* or multiple cropping (e.g., rice and corn). Alangans sow palay in May and harvest in October. Average yield is four *balde* (cans) for every *balde* of palay planted in approximately one hectare of *kamuros*, an area cultivated for rice. During the month of May, they also start planting sweet potato, cassava, yam and other tubers, which are then harvested after five months. Yield depends on weather conditions. During the rainy season, kaingin stops because burning is not possible. After the harvest of palay and corn in October, Alangans start planting and harvesting fruit trees such as jackfruit and bananas in the forest. The time of *garo*—when grass shoots start to appear above the soil—signals a fallow period that enables the land to rest.

In various interviews, the Alangans expressed willingness to plant perennial crops such as rambutan, lanzones and durian, but they have little money to buy seedlings. They are aware that that their farming system is unproductive as it relies on good weather conditions. Improving the sytem, however, is almost impossible, as one of the SADAKI leaders remarks:

> *Kulang kami sa abono, wala kami nyan. Umaasa lang kami sa tinatawag na likas, sa panahon. Kung eto man ay mamunga at anong kinalabasan ay yun na lamang ang aming pwedeng i-harvest. Kaming mga Mangyan, kaya namin ang mga ganyan. Matiyaga kami, masipag. Ang problema lang namin ay yung sapat na pondo.* (We lack fertilizer, we don't have that. We rely completely on nature, on the weather. If our crops bear fruits, whatever the yield will be, that's the only thing we can harvest. We Mangyans, we can accept that kind of fate. We are patient, industrious. The only problem is we lack the necessary funds.)

Hunting

Alangans also rely on hunting to augment their food supply. They say a prayer before they leave the house to hunt. Hunting takes place when they are not busy in the fields, from December to February. Even the elderly still hunt as livelihood in the area is very limited.

Hunting wild pig using bamboo sticks is called *Balatik*. The hunter sharpens the tip of the bamboo and attaches it on wooden frames. Hunting rats during the rainy season is called *agsagawak/piyaksarangawa*. Once rats are trapped, they practice *agtibawa*, another ritual, as they get ready to eat the trapped "meat." Alangans refrain from standing or moving while eating their catch. Observing these beliefs ensures them of continued "good catch" in the next season. They also chase monkeys (*bakus-matsing*), which are also sources of meat.

In Payungan, another sitio of SADAKI, the use of shotguns to kill birds is prohibited. Once they enter the area, they are not allowed to use a lighter or a radio. At night, they burn *almasiga* (a kind of wood) to provide some light.

The Alangans also raise pigs and chicken purchased from fellow Mangyan. Prices range from P50 to P100 per chicken, and P1,500 per pig. Animals are confined underneath their houses. The animals are fed with left-over food that drops straight to where the animals are kept. Droppings are readily consumed by the animals, minimizing food wastage.

Economic System

Every Wednesday and Saturday, *viajeros*—assemblers and wholesalers —visit Villa Cerveza and Alcate to buy crops and other commodities from the Alangans. Alangans harvest different crops for household consumption. Root crops are abundant in the area since they can easily be planted and harvested. Camote is usually traded for rice. Camote commands a price of P5 per kilo while cassava sells for P20 per balde. *Gabi*, another type of tuber, sells for P5.50 a kilo.

In early days, people from Villa Cerveza relied on gathering rattan or *uway* as their main source of livelihood. Most of them did not own lands yet and rattan was abundant in the area. Rattan gathering is still practiced today but not on a large scale because it has been prohibited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. A bundle of rattan costs P20. Lemon grass or *salay* sells for P4 a kilo. Jackfruit is sold for P300 per sack, coconut for P6 per piece, and *puso ng saging* (immature banana flowers) for P4 a kilo. Three different types of bananas are also traded. *Bungulan* or *lakatan* is the most expensive, at P85 per 100 pieces. *Bangalan* or *latundan* sells for P50 and *saba* for P40 per 100 pieces, respectively.

To date, there are three viajeros in Villa Cerveza. One viajero has been doing business in the area for seven years. Another viajero started only a

month from the time of the research, while the other viajero has been in business for around three years but only purchases bananas. The first viajero uses an agent who assembles all the commodities traded in the agent's house. Mangyan traveling on foot start arriving in the area at around seven in the morning. The commodities will be weighed and the agent pays the Mangyan the agreed price. The jeepney of the viajero arrives to haul the assembled commodities, ready to be shipped to Divisoria, Zapote, and Manila. As a strategy, the agent provides free lunch to the Mangyan to entice more sellers.

The other viajero rents a jeepney for five hundred pesos. From Villa Cerveza, more goods are brought from the municipal market of Victoria before shipping them to Divisoria. The banana viajero trades only on Saturdays. He has a regular client from Victoria and he brings the *bungulan* in Cavite. He has an advantage compared to the other viajeros because he is from the area. He goes down to Dangare on Fridays and proceeds to Villa Cerveza on Saturdays. He lends money to some of the Alangans, which obliges them to trade their goods with him.

Competition in the area builds up as the three viajeros compete with one another. Some Alangans are confounded when it comes to choosing buyers. The competition leads to some amount of discord, but most of the Alangans are content with getting paid by, and having a free lunch from, their buyers.

Another source of income during the lean months is the provision of labor. Landowners in the area contract the services of the Alangan and pay them a daily wage that ranges from P30 to P100, inclusive of meals. This is below the minimum wage, and doing manual labor is not deemed as a good alternative for the Alangans.

In the area of commerce and economic exchange, the Alangans, and the Mangyan in general, are at a disadvantage, even as they try to participate in a cash economy, because they still depend on traditional subsistence farming. Making the Alangans rely on a monetary system, while retaining subsistence production, results in further exploitation and manipulation (Dinter and Leuterio 1986). Subsistence farming barely allows the Alangans to meet their needs in this era of globalization. At the same time, they are ill-prepared for a cash-based economy. Without meaningful participation in the market, Alangans will continue to be the target of exploitation and will thus be further marginalized.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

After four centuries of keeping their culture to themselves, the SADAKI finally shared it with the rest of the society in a focus group discussion conducted by the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) team of Lichel Technologies, Inc. (LTI). This FGD aims to come up with a solid resettlement plan in the advent of mining operations in the area. Aware of the consequences of the FGD, the SADAKI took the risk of opening up in the hopes that such dialogue will create awareness and understanding of Alangan culture. This deliberate act of reaching out to the "outside world" signals the readiness of the SADAKI to take on a more acculturated attitude in redefining their cultural heritage in order to pursue their aspirations and hope for a better future.

Supporting the SADAKI chart a culturally appropriate plan of development will lead to true empowerment. For the SADAKI, ecological considerations involve their right to ancestral domain and cultural identity. Preserving the latter is especially important to them, and this is connected to the land. While they value the integrity of their cultural heritage, they are also aware of the opportunities ushered in by globalization, including the prospect of mining activities in their ancestral domains. Accomodating these opportunities might finally open doors for social mobility and an improved social status. The Alangan wanted to be involved in crafting a development plan that will ensure the integrity of their cultural heritage without compromising the socio-economic benefits that can be derived from such a plan.

A development plan that aims to preserve the Alangans' cultural heritage should uphold the customary rights of the SADAKI and take into account their cultural and spiritual values. For them, the environment is not simply physical but spiritual as well, guarded by the spirits Kapwan Bulod, Alulaba, and Bakwel. The eco-spirituality adopted by the SADAKI in managing their natural resources ensures its long-term sustainability. Changing land use will affect the cultural identity of the Mangyan because rituals at the very core of their cultural identity such as *agpansula, agpamago*, and *taw-taw* might no longer be practiced.

The SADAKI must also able to participate actively in projects that affect them. Any form of misinformation and deception are unacceptable if true empowerment is desired. A sincere dialogue should be conducted with the SADAKI, who are willing to impart their knowledge and sentiments given a proper and appropriate venue. Engaging the SADAKI in designing,

implementing, and monitoring development projects will make these projects more culturally-appropriate. The SADAKI however, should also be given the necessary capability-building training for a more meaningful participation.

CONCLUSION

The changing ethnicity of the Alangans poses opportunities and constraints as far as social mobility is concerned. Historically, the Alangans have been displaced from the coastal areas of Mindoro to the hinterlands because of colonization, land encroachment, and migration to the island. Globalization might have changed the dynamics of mobility but its effects remain unfavorable to the Mangyan-Alangans. The mining industry opens up a new set of challenges for the Alangans, who as yet have been living harmoniously within the confines of the uplands. Globalization has also led to the inevitability of constant interaction with lowlanders. Integrating the Mangyan-Alangans into mainstream society can be a viable option for upward social mobility if appropriate structures are created for genuine integration and empowerment.

Acculturation among the SADAKI will ensure survival. A conscious effort to change certain aspects of their ethnicity will redefine their culture, but it is deemed necessary in order to address issues brought about by the mining exploration in their area. The SADAKI are willing to make this compromise for a better future for their tribe. A more culturally-appropriate development plan can be made if the Alangans are provided a venue for dialogue. One of the leaders of a sitio outlined the development path that their group wishes to undertake as such:

> "*Kung sa kultura ay bibiyakin na muna namin yung aming dati. Kung sa dati, balik-balik na lang doon sa proseso. Baka naman kung kami'y magbago pa, mag-iba ng paraan o plataporma, sa mga plano, yun pa ang aming hahanapin at aming susubukan*. (With regard to our culture, we might break the old for now. Before, we always go back to where we started and we go in circles. If we make some changes now, in terms of our ways, framework, and plans, that is what we will look for now and we will give it a try).

The previous strategy of the Mangyan to flee rather than to fight manifests a traditionalistic response to external pressures. This response has worked in the past, in their avoidance of the assimilative effects of colonization and land encroachment. The challenge presented by globalization remains

daunting. Early on, the Mangyan were successful in protecting their ethnicity by using the mountains as their shield. Today, the pervasiveness of global forces compels them to speak up and face the contemporary world in order to achieve upward social mobility.

NOTES

1 In January 2004, the Arroyo administration virtually signed into law the Mining Act of 1995 through Executive Order (EO) 270, or the National Policy on Revitalizing Mining in the Philippines and the Mineral Action Plan (MGB, n.d). EO 270 aims to gain more investments to boost the economy of the country. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR – MGB) estimated a total of $US607 million investments from mining projects in 2009 and a projected increase to $US2.5 billion in 2010 (Go, 2009). The rich mineral deposits of the country were estimated by National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) to be worth US$840 billion, a great wealth that should be tapped (de Alban et al. 2005).

2 The study of Tauli-Corpuz and Alcantara (2004) depicts how the Mangyan of Mindoro in particular, and the IPs in the Philippines in general, were dispossessed of their ancestral lands. The promulgation of the Land Registration Act of 1902 and the Public Land Act of 1905 upheld Spanish titles, while the Cadastral Law Act (Act 2259) of 1913 stipulated the compulsary registration of land titles with private ownership (Department of Justice (DOJ n.d.). Under this Act, registration of titles became judicial in nature.

3 Marcel points out two levels of reflection: Primary reflection breaks the unity of experience. It looks at the world or at any object as a problem, detached from the self and fragmented. Primary reflection is the foundation of scientific knowledge because science assumes a stand where the world is apart from the subject. The subject does not enter into the object investigated. Secondary reflection "recaptures the unity of the original experience. It does not go against the data of the primary reflection but goes beyond it by refusing to accept the data of the primary reflection as final . . . For Marcel, the level of secondary reflection is "the area of the mysterious because here we enter into the realm of the personal. What is needed in the secondary reflection is an in-gathering, a recollection, a pulling together of the scattered fragments of our experience" (Dy 2005: 47).

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Notes and references

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 I) 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 and 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.

      For example: Scholars (Karaos 1997; Porio 1997; Tapales 1996)

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.

Journal or Magazine Article

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, pp. B3

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PREFACE

A number of scholars have called the present age a postmodern one because it has increasingly been characterized by the fluidity of boundaries and the declining influence of any single power, in particular, the nation-state (see Best and Kellner 1991, Lash and Urry 1994, Beck 2000). Postmodern thinking recognizes the multiplicities of meanings, interpretations, and representations that such a condition creates. However, many of the trends and issues current in the Philippines remain products of modernity – they are results of the processes of modernization and the continuing hold of the nation-state over individual agency. Some of the topics covered in this issue of the *Philippine Sociological Review* are examples of these, among which are rebellion within the military, overseas workers, and indigenous peoples.

While these topics have been studied quite exhaustively in the literature, their persistence necessitates a rethinking that goes beyond traditional narratives and structural approaches. Such is the intention of this issue. In this issue, we are revisiting and re-examining 'old' themes in new ways, ways that go beyond the modern, while still acknowledging the embeddedness of these concerns within a condition of modernity.

Gerardo Lanuza starts off with a comparative analysis of C. Wright Mills' notion of the 'sociological imagination,' a response to the wars and the 'ascendancy of mass society' in the late 20th century, and Michel Foucault's poststructuralist view of the 'aesthetic of existence,' a view that Lanuza maintains, is better suited to our current postmodern condition. In comparing Mills and Foucault, Lanuza points to the significance of the Foucauldian critique and what social scientists could gain from it in terms of a 'sensibility' more relevant to examining present conditions. Like Mills, Foucault also grounds his thoughts within the Enlightenment and believes that the 'central task of the Enlightenment is to enlarge human freedom.' Both Mills and Foucault are opposed to 'grand theories' that tend to disregard the historical and social milieu of individuals. The difference between the two however, is that in talking about freedom and empowerment, Mills looks at the totality of structures in society – seeing the larger picture of how biography links to

history, personal troubles to public issues. In doing so, individuals can be emancipated from 'hopelessness.' While Foucault also recognizes the importance of locating subjects within history, he foregoes any 'total view of the structure of a given historical period.' Foucault believes in preserving the 'ethos' of the Enlightenment – rather than looking for formal universal structures, one must look at 'how subjectivities were constituted at different historical moments' (genealogy). This would allow us to see ourselves as 'subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying.' The 'ethos' of Enlightenment, for Foucault, is not a 'promise' as Mills suggests, but an 'exit' or a 'way out' from the 'normalizing discourses of subjectivization.'

Mills and Foucault also differ in their idea of the role of the intellectual and their notion of power. While they both agree that intellectuals should intervene in political and social affairs, Mills maintains a 'grand view' of the intellectual as one who would diagnose 'modern ir-rationalities' while Foucault sees intellectuals on a more micro level, as intervening in specific sectors of society in relation to grassroots struggles. With regard to societal concerns, the question of power comes into play. Mills supports a modernist notion of power as located within nation-states. Foucault problematizes power as dispersed and found on a more minute level. As such, in his 'aesthetic of existence,' power is the ability to constantly 'change who we are.' For Mills, the sociological imagination can challenge and transform institutions, while for Foucault, change comes with the transformation of the self, and this comes with a realization of power as residing in everyday relationships.

Lanuza mentions that some of Mills' modernist arguments for a sociological imagination still holds true to our present condition. But Mills remains totalizing in a number of his views. The Foucauldian critique, which looks at specific historical junctures and the emergence/creation of specific subjectivities, could, as Lanuza suggests, provide a framework for examining how Mills' vision of the social sciences can be made more relevant to today.

Espousing both a modern focus on structures and a more postmodern emphasis on agency, **Manuel Enverga III** examines the current cultural trend of video gaming among the youth. Enverga looks, in particular, at 'game chat' among players of a popular online video game called *Defense of the Ancients* (DOTA). He argues that discursive practices among players reflect their 'creative agency' amidst the structural constraints of the game. Using text analysis of 'in-game chat'—the text that is typed in during play—Enverga shows how DOTA players make innovations within the context of the game

and appropriate popular culture references from the non-virtual world to subvert the structures of the 'game world' and push the game in their favor, thus asserting agency.

According to Enverga, the dual nature of discourse—as both reinforcing social structures and providing a vehicle for the emergence of agency—is clearly manifested during play. Discourse as reflective of the game structure can be seen in the ways players (i) evaluate the choice of characters that either their own teams, or the opposing teams, make; (ii) talk about in-game strategy such as positioning and tactics; and (iii) provide 'support talk' to team members through messages of moral support. Communication patterns in these activities are all indicative of how players interact within the context of the structures or the rules of the game and its constraints. At the same time, there are also spaces within the structure that allow players to negotiate and change the often 'unchangeable givens' of the game, including the rules. Discourse as reflective of agency can be seen in the players' use of commands, in their word play, and in the way they influence certain pre-determined features of the game, for instance, characters to be banned and game aesthetics. Players insert popular culture references such as events or songs, illustrating the 'slippage of the corporeal into the virtual,' in order to comment on the way the game is unfolding. Furthermore, agency is also manifested through the players' 'in-game politeness' despite the fact that there are no rules of propriety within the structure of the game.

In his analysis of DOTA discourse, Enverga attempts to bridge the gap between structure and agency, a primary concern in sociological thought and a theme that rings throughout this issue. The interplay between structure and agency can be seen in **Nicole Curato**'s examination of the roots of the Oakwood Mutiny, an uprising among about three hundred junior officers and enlisted men in the Armed Forces of the Philippines who, in 2003, 'forcibly took over' the Oakwood Serviced Apartments in Makati City to express their grievances against the administration of then President Gloria Arroyo. Curato situates this mutiny within a 'politics of recognition' framework. She maintains that such expression of dissent stems from 'ritualised practices of disesteem' in the military which hinder members from realizing their identities as 'honourable protectors of the state.'

The Oakwood Mutiny is essentially an issue of recognition – it is not simply a matter of material redistribution or the politicization of the military, as is commonly viewed in popular discourse, but a statement against power

relations within the armed forces, particularly with regard to norms of recognition. Despite formal rituals that acknowledge military personnel, there are still institutionalized practices that 'devalue' the officers and push them to seek avenues outside of the service to air their experiences of injustice. Within this 'culture of status subordination,' there are 'patterns of disrespect' that lead to 'poor troop morale' and the inadequacy of formal institutions to serve as channels for accommodating grievances. Aside from the lack of material and social support, a common concern that leads to low morale among troops is the tendency of higher-ranking officials to use junior officers for corrupt practices and personal gain. Furthermore, officers are discouraged from formally articulating their concerns as this would often result in stigmatization, thus rendering the officers 'voiceless.' In order to gain that voice, officers who deem themselves in similar situations hold 'gripe sessions,' a venue outside of formal structures where they can talk about their grievances without fear of humiliation or retaliation, as it is by invitation. This is an example of a 'counter-public,' a 'discursive enclave' away from the dominant public that enables officers of different ranks to forge bonds of solidarity and 'reset the terms of mutual recognition.' Such has eventually led to their entry into the broader public sphere.

The mutiny can be seen as a 'reaction to a series of contingencies' that prompted the officers to get out of the barracks and break away from the chain of command. While it generally failed, it did accomplish two things: (i) it enabled the officers to recover their voice as they were able to make their experience of suffering explicit, and (ii) it disrupted the existing power relations, thus making known the need to redefine how military officers were governed. For Curato, framing the mutiny as an issue of recognition will allow for the identification of the kinds of injustices that need to be addressed to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The interplay of structure and agency as it figures in identity construction is also a theme in the article that examines notions of 'sameness' and 'difference' among Filipino female migrant domestic workers. Looking at identity as self-perception, **Andrea Soco** argues that as domestic workers weave their way through the spaces of nation, race, class, and culture abroad, they begin identifying with people based on notions of sameness or difference that are products of this juxtaposition of spaces.' Soco calls this 'transcendent boundary work,' a kind of boundary making that goes beyond the normative boundaries of social categories, is learned in the course of migration, and is often deployed as a strategy for assertions of agency.

Filipino migrant domestic workers utilize notions of difference when comparing themselves with those who are in similar positions of marginality, such as other foreign domestic workers, in order to transcend their marginal status and be less of an 'other.' The preference for nationality-based groupings reinforces this 'difference' as many domestic workers choose to engage primarily with fellow Filipino domestic workers out of greater cultural understanding. The shared social positions among foreign domestic workers however, also lead to a shared sense of suffering which is 'race-blind.' Notions of difference are also utilized as migrants rationalize relations with employers by exploiting social and cultural distinctions among employers of different nationalities, ethnicities, and even social classes. Using these distinctions to categorize employers enables migrants to either resist ill-treatment or feel at par with employers. Notions of sameness, on the other hand, are employed when migrants compare themselves to fellow Filipinos who might have the same national identity but whose professional occupations lead to the 'othering' of Filipino domestic workers, who are in a different class position. Invoking national identity as the basis for sameness allows migrant domestic workers to equalize the circumstances, although there is still the idea of 'us' vs. 'them' when it comes to Filipino professionals.

While their subject positions as domestic workers largely determines who they deal with and how they do so, there is still choice in the formation of social networks and in the dynamics of interaction. The process of constructing sameness or difference based on an idea of who is the 'other' forms the basis of many of the migrant domestic workers' interactions and relationships, which then influence the formation and maintenance of new self-perceptions and identities.

Finally, the section on Research Notes presents **Alvaro Calara**'s study on the impacts of mining on the cultural identity of a group of Mangyans. His study details the adjustments that a group of Mangyan-Alangans had to make in order to negotiate their culture and ethnicity amidst the modernization brought about by global forces. Some of these adjustments include making certain changes in their ideo-religious practices, as in their rituals; economic practices, such as in farming, hunting, and trade; and in their socio-political observances, such as in marriage, law, and education. The Mangyans have had to make these changes and incorporate aspects of 'mainstream culture' with their own in order to participate in, and perhaps benefit from, the development brought about by globalization. According to Calara, the very act of engaging with others outside of the Mangyan community, for instance,

through a focus group discussion conducted in the area, shows how the Mangyan-Alangans are deliberately 'reaching out to the outside world' and signals their readiness to redefine their cultural heritage for a 'better future'.

Calara's article outlines recommendations on how a development plan can properly accommodate the cultural heritage of the Mangyans and as such, lead to empowerment. At the same time, Calara's research could also serve to invite readers and social scientists to further problematize the concept of ethnicity and how it figures in an increasingly postmodern world.

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