# SILLIMAN JOURNAL

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# NOTICE TO AUTHORS

## PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

Silliman Journal welcomes submission of scholarly papers, research studies, brief reports in all fields from both Philippine and foreign scholars, but papers must have some relevance to the Philippines, Asia, or the Pacific. All submissions are refereed.

Silliman Journal is especially receptive to the work of new authors. Articles should be products of research taken in its broadest sense and should make an original contribution to their respective fields. Authors are advised to keep in mind that Silliman Journal has a general and international readership, and to structure their papers accordingly.

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Silliman Journal likewise welcomes submissions of "Notes," which generally are briefer and more tentative than full-length articles. Reports on work-in-progress, queries, updates, reports of impressions rather than research, responses to the works of others, even reminiscences are appropriate here.

Silliman Journal also accepts for publication book reviews and review articles.

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically in one Microsoft Word file (including title page, figures, tables, etc. in the file), preferably in RTF (.rtf). Please send one copy of the manuscript as an e-mail attachment, with a covering message addressed to the Editor: sillimanjournal@su.edu.ph

The Editor will endeavor to acknowledge all submissions, consider them promptly, and notify the authors as soon as these have been refereed. Each author of a full-length article is entitled to one complimentary copy of the journal plus 20 off-print copies of her/his published paper. Additional copies are available by arrangement with the Editor or Business Manager before the issue goes to press.

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SILLIMAN JOURNAL

“Translation is entirely mysterious. Increasingly I have felt that the art of writing is itself translating, or more like translating than it is like anything else. What is the other text, the original? I have no answer. I suppose it is the source, the deep sea where ideas swim, and one catches them in nets of words and swings them shining into the boat … where in this metaphor they die and get canned and eaten in sandwiches.”

**Ursula K. Le Guin**

“Humour is the first of the gifts to perish in a foreign tongue.“

**Virginia Woolf**

# EDITORIAL NOTES

Welcome to this issue of *Silliman Journal* with cover art, “Siquijor Beach in the Twilight,” by Dumaguete/Bacolod-based painter and performance artist Razceljan Salvarita.

Our first article is by outstanding Filipino social psychologist and researcher Allan Bernardo of the De la Salle University-Manila. In “Lost In Translation?” Allan questions the validity of foreign-made psychological tests for Filipino respondents, discusses issues of translation and equivalence, and suggests possible courses of action by the Filipino psychology community.

Then, self-proclaimed poster boy for the Facebook generation Ian Rosales Casocot describes "The Literary Facebook"—"a virtual community where things happen." Writer Ian solicited other writers' thoughts on FB with two questions: How do you use Facebook as a writer? What do you think Facebook means for readers? The responses provide varied and interesting insights, whether or not you love social networking.

Third, in writing about "The Constraints School toward Good Local Governance," Aser Javier of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños cites Goldratt's theory: "the constraints school is like a chain with a weak link such that in any complex system at any point in time, there is most often one aspect that limits its ability to achieve the goal." Further, "for that system to attain a significant improvement, the constraint must be identified and the whole system must be managed with it in mind." Aser presents three cases to show that three-level dynamics influence the shape of local institutions.

The next three papers relate to important environmental issues. The first paper, entitled "Potential Impact of Climate Change on Marine Mammal Biodiversity of Southeast Asia," is by biologists Louella Dolar and Edna Sabater. The study identifies numerous threatened species as well as numerous threats, including "high human population growth rates typical of the coastal areas in Southeast Asia, increased dependence on the ocean as a source of food as the intensifying El Niño brings drought into inland areas, and lack of regulation or enforcement of fishery and conservation laws." The second paper, by Rodelio Subade and Evelyn Galero, observes that the socioeconomic life of a fishing community in Guimaras, Central Philippines was drastically affected by an oil spill in 2006, and suggests how both local and national government may provide assistance. Third, the case of a mangrove reserve in Siquijor Island is used to illustrate participatory conservation in the Philippines. The study was done by scientist-researchers Marla Chassels and Abner Bucol.

The final full-length article by psychologists Betty McCann and Margaret Udarbe and philosopher-theologian Dennis McCann investigates religiosity among Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong, finding that, among other results, the God they know is primarily *Tagapagligtas* (Savior), *Ilaw* (Light), and *Kasama* (Companion).

## READERS FORUM

The *SJ* Readers Forum IV is ushered in by Editorial Board member Muriel O. Montenegro who describes the article under review—"Recovering the 'Body Politic': Racialized and Gendered Diaspora in Accredited Graduate Theological Education," by *SJ* frequent contributor and member of our overseas editorial board, Lester Edwin Ruiz. I wish to thank Lester personally for allowing this paper to be read and critiqued prior to its publication in SJ. The paper is published elsewhere in similar form and appears here courtesy of Regnum Press. I am also extremely grateful to Karl Villarmea who is currently doing post-doctoral studies at the Chicago Theological Seminary, Dennis McCann (another one of our hardworking overseas editorial board members), and Mark Lewis Taylor of Princeton Theological Seminary for their critiques of Lester's paper.

## NOTES SECTION

The Notes section begins with the lovely "The Catalogue of Small Things" where Ian Rosales Casocot has put together a dialogue between the writers Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas and J. Neil C. Garcia—engaged in what Neil refers to as "these altogether lovely bonsai moments."

This first essay is followed by two short science reports: "Additions to the avifauna of Bantayan Island, Cebu Province, Philippines" by regular contributor Abner A. Bucol and "Restocked Giant Clams (Family Tridacnidae) Enhance Community Structure of a Philippine Coral Reef" by Dr. Angel C. Alcala, Ely L. Alcala, and A. C. Cordero.

## BOOK REVIEW

The lone book review in this issue is by Assistant Professor in English at Silliman University, Alana Leilani Cabrera-Narciso, who writes about *Beautiful Accidents: Stories* (University of the Philippines Press, 2011) by her colleague at the Department of English and Literature, the writer-essayist Ian Rosales Casocot. The book itself is a collection of short stories set in the author's home Philippine province of Negros Oriental, particularly the city of Dumaguete, stories that, according to Alana, refuse to be categorized … as obstinate as accidents.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank our contributors and reviewers for this issue as well as our editorial board and my editorial staff. Putting an issue together is always stressful, but it's also exciting. I am especially happy with the variety you should find in this issue.  It reminds me of one of Ovid's sayings because we treat just about "a thousand dispositions in a thousand ways."It keeps the humdrum of an academic life interesting.

**Margaret Helen F. Udarbe**
*Editor*

# Lost In Translation? Challenges in Using Psychological Tests in the Philippines

Allan B. I. Bernardo
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Filipino psychologists often use foreign-made psychological tests in English in their professional practice and in research. The paper raises questions on the validity of such tests for use with different Filipino respondents. Drawing from international standards for translating and adapting tests, the various levels of equivalence (qualitative and quantitative) between the original tests and their translations are discussed. The different types and sources of bias (construct, method, and item biases) that lead to non-equivalent translations of tests are also explained. The paper then reviews research on the equivalence of Filipino translations of tests with their original English versions and points to the strong possibility that the translations, as well as the English versions of the test used with Filipino participants, are not equivalent to the original tests used with the original target populations. The paper ends with a discussion of possible courses of action and the need for collective action from different sectors of the Filipino psychology community to address the concern.

**KEYWORDS:** psychological tests; translation; equivalence; bias; language; bilinguals; Philippines

Psychological tests have long been used in the Philippines—in the recruitment and selection of employees, in the admission of students in schools, in diagnosis of psychological and psychiatric conditions, among others. In recent years, there have been numerous developments that have institutionalized the use of psychological tests in legal and official government procedures such as in the diagnosis of psychological incapacity in petitions for nullification of marriages, diagnosis of whether juvenile offenders are able to discern whether their actions are right or wrong, among others. There have been discussions on the possibility of using psychological tests in other domains like for screening applicants for oversees contract work, and perhaps half-seriously, for screening candidates for political positions. In one sense, these developments recognize the usefulness and validity of psychological testing as a measure of understanding of some facets of a person's experience, and the importance of psychological tests in various aspects of societal functioning. However, there are concerns regarding whether these tests are being used properly, and by people who are properly trained to use such tests.

One specific issue regarding the use of psychological tests in the Philippines relates to the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic validity of psychological tests in English that were developed in North America, Australia, and other English-speaking countries where most psychological tests are being constructed, validated, published, and sold. This issue is not specific to the Philippines, and indeed, is an issue all over the world. As such, there has already been quite a significant amount of work undertaken to safeguard the integrity of psychological assessment as a professional and scientific procedure. Moreover, various standards have been articulated for the use of psychological tests in cultures and languages other than where they originated (Hambleton, 2001; Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). Unfortunately, however, such standards have not been the focus of much attention in the Philippine context.

In the Philippine context, another important consideration is the fact that most Filipinos taking psychological tests are either bilingual or multilingual. Research shows that bilinguals' responses to psychological tasks may vary depending on the language used in the task. In a study looking into perceptions of other people's personality Hoffman, Lau, and Johnson (1986) found that Chinese-English bilinguals from Hong Kong recalled different aspects of a target person's personality depending on whether the descriptions of the person were given in Chinese or in English. When it comes to retrieval of autobiographical memories, Marian and Neisser (2000) found that Russian-English bilinguals recalled life experiences differently depending on whether the elicitation of memories was done in Russian or in English. Moreover, the intensity of the affect expressed during the recall of autobiographical memories depended on the language used as well (Marian & Kaushanskaya, 2004). Marian and Fausey (2006) account for these language effects in the memory-related psychological processes of bilinguals by proposing a language-dependent memory system for bilinguals, which is consistent with various studies showing language-dependent benefits and/or deficits in cognitive processing of Filipino-English bilinguals (e.g., Bernardo, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001b, 2002, 2005; Bernardo & Calleja, 2005). Thus, in administering psychological tests and tasks among Filipino bilinguals, the language used may sometimes influence how the respondent performs in the test.

This paper addresses the various issues related to the use of English-language psychological tests developed in foreign countries with Filipino respondents, who are presumably at least bilingual and even possibly multilingual. The paper discusses the different issues and standards related to the translation of psychological tests, focusing on issues of equivalence and bias. In discussing these issues, examples shall be provided involving psychological tests used with Filipino participants. The paper ends with a series of recommendations regarding how Filipino psychologists can ensure the validity and integrity of psychological testing in the Philippines, as local psychologists continue to use foreign-made, English-language psychological tests.

## GENERAL OPTIONS FOR FILIPINO PSYCHOLOGISTS

To preface the discussion on the general options for Filipino psychologists who wish to use foreign-made psychological tests in the English language, let us consider this earlier version of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI, 1995) which is readily available on the Internet (see e.g., http://www.ibogaine.desk.nl/graphics/3639b1c_23.pdf). The BDI is intended to measure whether the respondent is experiencing depression and to determine the level of depression (e.g., borderline clinical depression, moderate, severe or extreme depression). Because of its availability on the Internet, psychologists and psychology students have often used the BDI for diagnostics and research. The inventory consists of 21 items referring to different aspects of behavior (e.g., pessimism, self-dislike, past failures, etc.). For each item, the respondent is given four options referring to different experiences regarding the particular aspect of behavior, and each of the four options corresponds to a score. The respondent's total score for all 21 items is summed and compared to normed levels of depression.

Now consider the following item (#11) that refers to agitation:

11. Agitation
    0 I am no more restless or wound up than usual.
    1 I feel more restless or wound up than usual.
    2 I am so restless or agitated that it's hard to stay still.
    3 I am so restless or agitated that I have to keep moving or doing something.

What options does a Filipino psychologist have when using this specific item in trying to assess depression in a client or respondent? The psychologist can use the item as it was originally developed and hope that the client understands the item. This option should be fine if the respondent is adequately proficient in English. However, a client who is not proficient in English may struggle with words like "restless," "wound up," and even "agitated."

Translation would be the next option for the Filipino psychologist, and other scholars have reported the translation work that has been done in the Philippines on various psychological tests. But going back to the BDI item on agitation presented earlier, the translator would most likely have a difficult time translating the very same words, "restless," "wound up," and "agitated." The closest Filipino translation of "restless" that comes to mind are low frequency words such as *"balisa," "hindi mapakali"* and *"hindi mapalagay."* However, *"balisa"* is a low-frequency Tagalog word that may not be understood by most Filipinos who do not have a deep knowledge of Tagalog. The other two translations are higher-frequency terms, but may be understood to have a more "physical" element (i.e., similar to *"malikot"*), and thus, may not capture the full affective sense of "restless." In the main section of this paper, the various issues related to test translation will be discussed, as this seems to be the most viable option for Filipino psychologists who want to take advantage of the availability of foreign-developed tests with established reliability and validity.

However, there is still a third option for the Filipino psychologist, and that is not to use these foreign-made tests, and instead develop and validate new psychological tests for local use. Many Filipino psychologists have actually advocated this option as early as the 1970s. Enriquez (1992) criticized foreign-made tests, particularly those in the English language as being invalid for use among Filipinos, and advocated the development of indigenous tests. Over the years, many such indigenous psychological tests of personality and intelligence, among others, have been developed (see Cheung, 2004; Church, 1987; Guanzon-Lapeña, Church, Carlota, & Katigbak, 1998). But interestingly, most practicing psychologists in the Philippines still prefer to use the foreign-made tests. This issue is another topic of discussion and is not addressed in this paper. Instead, the paper focuses on issues related to the first two options (i.e., use of original English tests, and use of translations of foreign made tests in English), as these seem to be the more common practice of Filipino psychologists who do testing today.

## ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSLATING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TESTS INTO PHILIPPINE LANGUAGES

Historically, translation of psychological tests into different languages aimed to achieve a close linguistic translation, and these involved various forward and backward translation techniques (van de Vijver & Leung, 1997; Werner & Cambell, 1970). But not all items in a psychological test are translatable (i.e., the linguistic translation closely captures the psychological meaning of the item). Indeed, there are test items that are poorly translatable; that is, although the meaning is translatable, some conciseness is lost or some nuance in the meaning is lost (see the earlier example about using *"balisa"* to translate "restless"). In some cases, the item may actually be untranslatable, and these occur when there is absolutely no overlap between the linguistic and psychological features of the item in translation (consider for example, how the personality description of "happy-go-lucky" can be translated into Filipino). Thus, many practitioners and testing experts soon realized that a close linguistic translation could also involve many problems. Now test translators emphasize adaptation and localization in translation instead of close translations (Hambleton, 1994; Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004).

Adaptation involves literal translations of those parts of the items that are translatable and modifying other parts of the items (and even creating new items) based on the assumption that a close translation might lead to having a biased or non-valid psychological test. Instead of focusing on the linguistic translation, there is more consideration given to ensuring that the target psychological construct is adequately measured in the various languages. The State-Trait Anger

Expression Inventory (Spielberger, 1988) is one good example of a psychological test that has been translated into almost 50 languages, where the translations do not contain close linguistic translations of all the original English items. But in each language translation the psychological constructs of state and trait anxiety were assessed in a valid manner.

The work on test adaptation and translation has been quite extensive that important testing organizations have already drafted clear guidelines for doing so (see Hambleton, 2001). This paper shall not endeavor to repeat what has been said in these guidelines; instead, it shall emphasize some key concepts and elucidate on these concepts in relation to the experience of psychologists in the Philippines.

We have already noted that close linguistic translations may sometimes cause psychological tests or test items to become less valid measures of the intended psychological construct, and that the goal of translation is also to achieve psychological equivalence in the translations. But what does psychological equivalence mean? There are actually several levels of psychological equivalence that need to be considered, particularly as psychological test items are intended to be a quantitative measure of a psychological construct. The psychological testing literature (see e.g., Poortinga, 1989; Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997; Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004) refers to different hierarchically linked types of equivalence. In the broadest sense, equivalence between translations refers to a) similarity in the psychological meaning of the test, which is more of a qualitative equivalence, and b) similarity in the meaning of the scores of the tests and the items, which is more quantitative.

More extensive discussion of the types of equivalence can be obtained from other sources (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997; Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004), but we should underscore some important distinctions about these types especially as they relate to how psychological tests and their translations are applied. The first type of equivalence is often called construct equivalence (but also functional or structural equivalence). When two translations of the test are equivalent, the same psychological construct is measured in the two language versions. Construct equivalence presupposes that the psychological construct is universally meaningful, or that the concept is understood in the same way in different cultures and languages (Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). In other words, a psychological test that is supposed to measure fluid intelligence is supposed to measure fluid intelligence in the Philippines or in Italy, whether the test is in Filipino or Italian. If the test measures fluid intelligence in the Philippines, but actually measured scholastic ability in Italy, then there is no construct equivalence. Moreover, in multidimensional constructs, construct equivalence also assumes that the construct measures the same dimensions and the same relationships among these dimensions in the different target populations. For example, if the psychological test is supposed to measure five interrelated personality dimensions, it should measure these five interrelated dimensions in the Philippines and in Argentina, whether the language of the test is Filipino or Spanish. If the test measures five personality dimensions in the Philippines, but only four dimensions in Argentina, then there is no construct equivalence.

The quantitative equivalence of psychological tests relates to the scores and their interpretation, and there are two levels of this: measurement unit equivalence and scalar (or full scale) equivalence (Van de Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). With measurement unit equivalence, two translations of the test are assumed to reflect differences in the target construct in their respective target populations to the same degree. In other words, the two tests have the same measurement unit; for example a two-point difference in scores means the same thing within each test. However, measurement unit equivalence does not guarantee that scores from the two tests are comparable to each other, as there might be a constant offset compared to another measure, which is the case when there are different norms for each version of the test. As such, the scores from the two scales may not be comparable to each other, even if scores within each scale can be compared to each other in the same way for both scales. When there is no constant offset, or when the scores in the two versions have the same quantitative origin or intercept, the two tests are said to have full scalar equivalence. In such cases, the interpretation of scores is exactly the same in both versions and is comparable across the scores.

To summarize, when Filipino psychologists translate English-language psychological tests into any Philippine language, they should be concerned about the qualitative and quantitative equivalence of these with the original English versions. Otherwise, there might be no basis for interpreting the tests in the manner suggested in the original test manuals. Unfortunately, it is not safe to assume that a good linguistic translation would have these properties and thus make the translation equivalent to the original. Indeed, there are many factors that create non-equivalence between translations of psychological tests, and these are called different types of bias. These different types of bias are discussed in the next section.

## BIAS IN TRANSLATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS

In the psychological testing literature, the opposite or lack of equivalence is defined as bias. Different types of bias create different degrees of non-equivalence between the translation and the original. There are parallels between the types of bias and the levels of equivalence, but the parallels are not absolute. In this discussion, the three types of bias identified by Van de Vijver and Poortinga (1997, see also Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997) are referred to as: a) construct bias, b) method bias, and c) item bias.

***Construct bias.*** Construct bias is observed when the psychological tests measure different psychological constructs in two different cultural or linguistic groups, or when the psychological constructs measured are merely partially overlapping. Construct bias may also occur when different behaviors and consequences are associated with the psychological construct in different cultural or linguistic groups. Earlier we suggested that some tests that are supposed to measure intelligence may actually be measuring scholastic ability in other cultures, and this is possible in a host of other psychological constructs. Even seemingly simple psychological constructs can be given different meanings in different cultures.

Even a simple affective concept like “happiness” can actually be difficult to measure across cultures. The Happy Planet Index aimed to measure levels of happiness of people in different countries, and it found the people in Costa Rica to be the happiest people in the world; Filipinos were ranked 14th (www.happyplanetindex.org). But does “happy” mean the same thing across all cultures? Comparing North Americans with East Asian, Uchida, Norasakkunkit and Kitayama (2004) found different associations with the concept of happiness. In particular, in North American contexts, happiness tended to be associated with personal or individual achievement, positive affect, and self-esteem. In contrast, in East Asian contexts, happiness tended to be associated with interpersonal connectedness, attaining balance between positive and negative affect, and a perceived embeddedness of the self within one’s social relationships. Even what is considered positive affect may also be different in these two cultural contexts. Tsai, Knutson, and Fung (2006) found that North Americans and East Asians seem to have different notions of what the ideal affective or emotional state involves. While North Americans aspire more often to a high-energy elation, thrill, and excitement (or high arousal positive affect), East Asians aspire more often to a tranquil joy and calm (or low arousal positive affect). These differences also have distinct psychological correlates and consequences in both cultures (Tsai, 2007).

Given these cultural variations, we can see how specific psychological tests that are intended to measure affective states may have some problems related to construct bias. Consider another item in the Beck Depression Inventory (1995) that refers to "loss of pleasure":

4. Loss of Pleasure
   0 I get as much pleasure as I ever did from the things I enjoy.
   1 I don't enjoy things as much as I used to.
   2 I get very little pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.
   3 I can't get any pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.

Will the concepts of pleasure and enjoyment refer to the same thing in all cultures where this item is translated? Would the loss of pleasure be indicative of depression to the same extent across all cultures?

In the Philippine context, our research group has encountered similar instances of possible construct bias of some psychological constructs. One example involves the psychological construct "academic emotions," which is an important construct in the field of educational psychology, and for which there are readily available and validated psychological tests (Pekrun, 2006). In a study that explored the construct of academic emotions, Bernardo, Ouano, and Salanga (2009) observed that the term "emotions" could be translated as *"nararamdaman"* or *"damdamin"* in Filipino. The word "nararamdaman" does not refer exclusively to affective states, and may actually include even physical states. It is not surprising, therefore, that the study found Filipino students reporting *"pagod"* or *"kapuy"* (tired) or *"antok"* (sleepy) when asked about the emotions they experienced in the classroom. This is a case when the translation only partially overlaps with the intended psychological construct of academic emotion. The domain of emotions is likely to be an area where linguistic terms only partially overlap with the psychological construct when studied across cultural or linguistic groups (e.g., think of how "contempt" can be translated in the different Philippine languages).

But construct bias can also be found when assessing non-affective psychological constructs. One compelling example was actually found when Watkins and Gerong (1999) wanted to study the self-concept of Cebuano students. In their study, they used both the English and the Cebuano translation of a standard self-concept scale. They found that the students who answered the test in Cebuano responded to the self-concept scale using aspects of the self that related to their family and community roles and relationships. On the other hand, the students who answered the test in English responded to the self-concept scale by referring to aspects of the self that related to their being a student. Thus, two different components of the self-concept were being evoked by two language versions of one scale in one bilingual population. This is an interesting case where the methodological aspect of the psychological test (i.e., the language) seems to be associated with construct nonequivalence.

But before method bias is discussed in greater detail, we should underscore the importance of considering construct equivalence and bias in the translation, adaptation, and even use of psychological tests. Filipino psychologists should be mindful of the possibility that some of the psychological constructs that are measured in standardized psychological tests actually do not mean the same thing in the Philippine context. Moreover, given the heterogeneity in the cultural environments within the Philippines (i.e., large variations in level of urbanization, industrialization, availability of communication technology), it is possible that what we assume to be standard psychological principles relating to constructs may actually have functionally different meanings for different Filipinos.

***Method Bias.*** The second type of bias relates to different aspects of the psychological testing process, and has three different sources: [a] sample bias, [b] instrument bias, and [c] administration bias. When Filipino psychologists use psychological tests, they have to be mindful that there are vast differences in educational level, language proficiency, and cultural experiences among Filipinos coming from different sectors of society. Thus it is possible that how a score of a respondent differs from the norm reflects differences in experiences relative to the norm group, and not actual psychological differences. In such cases, we have a form of item bias. When test norms and interpretation of scores are derived from a homogenous population, it is difficult to rule out sample bias, especially in a very diverse country like the Philippines.

Related to sample bias is instrument bias, which refers to characteristics of the instrument, such as the nature of the response options, demand characteristics of the tests, and other factors that relate to response biases in different cultural groups. For example, an American study found that Hispanic respondents tended to use the extreme values of the five-point scale more than Caucasian respondents (Marin, Gamba, & Marin, 1992). Interestingly, bilingual Hispanics showed the bias to use extreme values when the questionnaires were in Spanish, but not when these were in English (Hui & Triandis, 1989). Closer to home, Smith (2004) found that the respondents from the Philippines are among the highest in showing an acquiescent bias, or the bias for more extreme responses at the positive end of the response scales (but see Grimm & Church, 1999). Watkins and Cheung (1995) studied various types of response biases (e.g., positivity and negativity bias, low standard deviation, inconsistency of related items, and consistency of unrelated items) in various cultures including the Philippines and suggested that these response biases may reflect differences in academic ability, and perhaps, intellectual ability, among other variables. But at this point, we do not know whether there are differences in levels of these various response biases for different subgroups in the Philippines.

Other than response bias, there are other forms of instrument bias. For example, the language of the psychological test may also be a source of bias, when Filipino translations are given to Cebuano, Ilocano, or Waray speakers. Using standardized computerized testing procedures may create bias for individuals who are not accustomed to using the computer.

The last form of instrument bias relates to the administration of the test, starting with how instructions are communicated by the test administrator to the respondent. There may be differences in how instructions are understood if there are language differences between the administrator and respondent (Gass & Varone, 1991). Even very subtle factors like if the test administrator is perceived to be violating cultural norms of communication in the test administration process (Goodwin & Lee, 1994) can be biases in the testing process. In the Philippine context, attempts to help the respondent who may not be familiar with psychological testing or with the English language can also create method bias. Test administrators in some Philippine testing centers have shared how they sometimes provide additional explanations or elaborations on the items if it seems that the respondent does not understand the question. These procedures are ad hoc and are not standardized for all respondents, creating so much room for method bias.

***Item Bias.*** Even if we assume that problems related to construct and method bias are addressed, there is still the more subtle form of bias, which is the bias at the level of the item. This type of bias has also been called differential item functioning (DIF) in the psychological testing literature (Holland & Wainer, 1993). An informal definition of DIF would be that there are specific problems at the item level that make the item incomparable across translations or test versions. Operationally DIF is observed when two persons coming from two cultures and answering two versions of the same psychological test with the same level of the psychological construct do not score in the item in the same way. For example, imagine a group of Filipino adults and a group of Dutch adults all attain exactly the same score in a psychological test measuring anxiety (but in the Filipino and Dutch languages, respectively), so they can all be presumed to have the same levels of anxiety. But for one specific item of the psychological test of anxiety, the Filipinos score the item significantly higher than their Dutch counterparts. This would be a case of DIF.

Why would specific items function differently in different versions or across cultures? There are many different sources of DIF, the most basic of which may be a poor translation of the item, which may have led to an ambiguous or even incorrect statement of the item in one version of the test. But there could also be cultural specifics related to the connotative meaning or cultural significance of certain words, items, or concepts. Extending the Filipino and Dutch examples, consider a hypothetical item from a hypothetical Dutch test of crystallized intelligence borrowed from Van de Vijver (personal communication): *"Hoe heet de koningin van Nederland?"* The literal translation of the item in English is: *"What is the name of the queen of the Netherlands?"* and in Filipino it is: *"Ano ang pangalan ng reyna ng Netherlands*?" The first problem with the translation of the item is that although knowing the name of the queen of the Netherlands may represent crystallized intelligence for Dutch children, it does not do so for Filipino children, and hence the latter would find this item much more difficult than their Dutch counterparts. The item may be modified and adapted in the Philippine context to *"What is the name of the president of the Philippines?"* Now both items refer to the head of state of the respective countries. However, there are still cultural differences in how salient the head of state is in the lives of children in these countries. In the Netherlands, the queen is head of state for life, and her name and image are everywhere including the coins, stamps, most buildings including schools, among others, and is thus, quite a common sight for most children in The Netherlands. In the Philippines, the president changes every few years, and names and images of present and past presidents can be found in various places in different parts of the country. Thus, knowledge about the name of the president of the Philippines may not be as well established in the knowledge schemes of Filipino children, compared to their Dutch counterparts. This can be a possible source of DIF: given that a group of Dutch children and a group of Filipino children have the same level of crystallized intelligence, the Dutch children might get this item correctly more often than the group of Filipino children.

Another important source of item bias or DIF could be the appropriateness of item content. Still following through with the Dutch and Filipino comparison, consider the following item in the Beck Depression Inventory (1995) which refers to loss of interest in sex:

4. Loss of Interest in Sex
    0 I have not noticed any recent change in my interest in sex.
    1 I am less interested in sex than I used to be.
    2 I am much less interested in sex now.
    3 I have lost interest in sex completely.

A group of Filipino and Dutch adults with the same level of depression might respond to this item differently because the Filipinos might find disclosing their true responses to the item as inappropriate, whereas their Dutch counterparts may not.

Thus far, the paper has pointed to the possible sources of bias that results in the possible nonequivalent translations of English-language psychological tests into Filipino and other Philippine languages. For practical purposes, it should be underscored that there are profound implications of this bias depending on how the test is used. For diagnostic purposes, there can be internal bias in terms of how an individual respondent's personality, intellectual ability, or some other individual difference variable is interpreted. Problems with any of the various forms of bias can result in incorrect assessment of an individual person in any of the possible psychological variables, thus making the assessment invalid. There can also be external bias, when scores from biased tests are used to make decisions—for example to make decisions as to whether an applicant for a school will be admitted, whether a scholarship will be given to one student and not another, whether to hire a job applicant or not, whether a juvenile offender is able to discern what is right from wrong, or whether a spouse will be judged as being psychologically incapable of sustaining a marriage. For Filipino psychologists, the implications of such biases in the use of psychological tests are far-reaching. But what has been done so far to understand and address these issues?

## UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING EQUIVALENCE AND BIAS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

In reviewing what has been done in the Philippines related to equivalence and bias, we can refer to the published studies on these two topics. Unfortunately, there are very few published research studies to be found that address these issues of equivalence and bias. Although there are numerous research studies that involve validating psychological tests, and the number of these has increased markedly in recent years (see e.g., Magno, 2011; Olvida, 2010; Villavicencio, 2010), studies that explicitly address the issue of equivalence are few.

***Construct equivalence research in the Philippines.*** Among the various issues and concerns raised in earlier sections of the article, the area where there has been much work is the topic of construct equivalence (structural or functional equivalence). One of the earlier studies on this concern involves a very popular personality test, the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In a cross-cultural study that included a Filipino sample, McCrae, Costa, Del Pilar, Rolland, and Parker (1998) confirmed the five-factor personality structure of the test, thus providing evidence for the construct equivalence of the Filipino translation of the test in the Philippines and the other test versions. Another example involves comparisons of the Sense-of-Self Scales developed by McInerney, Yeung, and McInerney (2001) to measure various self-concept related constructs among students. Ganotice and Bernardo (2010) analyzed English and Filipino versions of the scale and found structural equivalence between the two versions.

These translation studies do not always find construct equivalence. When Bernardo, Posecion, Reganit, and Rodriguez-Rivera (2005) studied the translation of the Social Axioms Survey (Leung et al., 2002), they found support for the five-factor structure, but only after removing numerous items from the original scale. The Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire (Schommer, 1998) was also translated into Filipino by Bernardo (2008), and the results of the study found construct non-equivalence. Whereas the original questionnaire was intended to measure four interrelated constructs, the translated and English language versions only suggested two interrelated constructs.

Other researchers have explored the construct validity of English language tests with Filipino samples, without translating the tests. Some of these studies validated the original structure of the constructs intended by the original scales. For example, Ganotice and Bernardo (2010) validated the structure of constructs of three scales: Facilitating Conditions Questionnaire (McInerney, Dowson, & Yeung, 2005), Sense of Self Scale, and Inventory of Student Motivation (both by McInerney et al., 2002). All the scales were in the original English language but administered to Filipino respondents, and the respective constructs of the scales were all confirmed in the study. King, Ganotice, and Watkins (2011) also validated the hypothesized four-factor structure of Inventory of Student Motivation with Filipino students and showed that this structure was invariant with a cross-cultural sample from Hong Kong. King (2010) also studied a short version of the Academic Emotions Questionnaire (Pekrun, 2006) in English with a sample of Filipino students and likewise confirmed the intended constructs of the scales. Finally, King and Watkins (2011a & b) also confirmed the intended four-factor structure of the constructs within the Goal Orientations and Learning Strategies Survey (Dowson & McInerney, 2004) with various samples of Filipino students.

But similar investigations do not always confirm the structure of the original scales. De La Rosa (2010) administered the original English version of the achievement goals questionnaire of Elliot and McGregor (2001), which had a 2 x 2 factor structure. Instead of four interrelated constructs, he found only three factors when the psychological instrument was used with his Filipino sample. Bernardo (2001b, Bernardo, Zhang, & Callueng, 2002) also found that with a Filipino sample, the higher order constructs of the Thinking Styles Inventory (Sternberg, 1997) was not equivalent to the higher order constructs found with the original English test, but was more similar to the higher order constructs found in the Hong Kong Chinese version (Zhang & Sternberg, 1998). Zhang and Bernardo (2000) likewise found that the structure of the constructs of the Learning Process Questionnaire (Biggs, 1987) seemed to be valid with students of higher scholastic ability but not for those with low scholastic ability.

Taken together, all these studies suggest that we cannot safely assume that the English language tests are measuring the intended constructs when used with Filipino samples, and that we can also not assume the same with Filipino translations of the scales.

This brief review of studies may suggest that there has been quite a significant amount of work done related to studying the construct equivalence of English-language tests and their translations in the Philippine setting. But if one considers the very wide range of psychological tests used in various settings like schools, companies, hospitals, psychological clinics, and testing centers, the proportion of tests that have been studied in this way probably comprises a very small percentage of the total number of tests currently in circulation.

***Measurement unit and full scalar equivalence research in the Philippines.*** If we consider studies that inquire into the measurement unit and scalar equivalence of scales, there are even fewer to refer to. Perhaps, this is because the research and statistical techniques for doing so are more complex. Indeed, to study construct equivalence or structural equivalence, a researcher only needs to establish exploratory and confirmatory factor analytic procedures, and some other basic multivariate techniques. However, more complicated procedures such as multigroup confirmatory factor analytic techniques and procedures for measuring differential item functioning are required to study the quantitative equivalence between versions of a psychological test. It should be noted that in the educational measurement field, there has been more research work done on this topic (see e.g., Pedrajita, 2009; Pedrajita & Talisayon, 2009).

The few studies that attempt to inquire into psychometric equivalence between English language tests and their Filipino translations actually do not find full scalar equivalence. For example, as part of their theoretical investigation, Bernardo and Ismail (2010) looked into the equivalence of the mastery and performance achievement goals scales in English with Filipino and Malaysian students. They found only partial invariance of the scales and not full scalar invariance or equivalence. Similarly, Ganotice, Bernardo, and King (in press) looked into the equivalence of English and Filipino versions of the Inventory of Student Motivation (McInerney, et al., 2002) and also found only partial equivalence. Note, however, that the absence of full-scalar equivalence and measurement-unit invariance is only a problem when comparing scores across cultures. If tests are being used only within one culture, it is sufficient to construct equivalence, and perhaps some degree of measurement unit equivalence, especially if the scores are being interpreted within the culture, with reference to norms within the culture, and in relation to variables also measured within the same culture.

***Practical approaches to reducing bias.*** Other than doing research establishing the equivalence (or nonequivalence) of psychological tests, there are actually some very practical things that could be done to reduce bias. For example, when it comes to method bias, the standardization of test administration and scoring procedures is important to keep in mind. Thus, more effort should be taken to ensure that test administrators and scorers are sufficiently trained and are guided by very detailed manuals and/or protocols for test administration, scoring, and interpretation. Instructions for such tests should be as detailed as possible, anticipating possible misinterpretations by the respondents.

When it comes to translations, several experts in psychological testing have already provided (see e.g., Hambleton & De Jong, 2003; Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996) practical guides for managing the translation processes. These experts now propose what is called an integral management approach in translation. Test translators should not only aim to reproduce the items and instructions of one test in another language but also make judgments about whether the test is suitable and appropriate to the target culture in which the translation will be used. As it is impossible to be completely certain about issues of suitability based merely on theoretical assumptions, test translation experts now suggest that translators do pilot studies on early versions of the translation and closely document and validate these translations. Harkness (2003) suggests that the translation procedures follow several stages: a) the translation stage, which may involve translation and back translation procedures, the committee approach, or a combination of these approaches, b) qualitative pre-testing of the translations using feedback from monolingual and bilingual judges in focused group discussions or think-aloud interviews, c) reviewing the revisions based on qualitative pre-testing feedback, d) quantitative pre-testing with actual administration and tests of equivalence and bias, and e) final adjudication or decision on a final version of the test. More careful and deliberate steps in translation processes could help prevent biases at different levels.

## THE STEPS AHEAD FOR FILIPINO PSYCHOLOGISTS USING FOREIGN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TESTS

After discussing what has been done and what can be done to ensure that foreign made English-language psychological tests are valid for use with Filipino samples (that is, that the tests used with Filipinos are equivalent to those developed in other countries for their intended samples), we come to the question of how do we ensure that these tests are used appropriately by Filipino psychologists? Of course, this question cannot be answered with a simple step that will be a panacea to this rather huge concern. But there are a number of points that need to be emphasized in order for there to be a consensus and collective action on this issue. I list ten propositions, which vary in terms of complexity and feasibility.

***Proposition 1***. We should stop assuming that these tests are valid for all Filipino respondents. Indeed, we should not take the word of the test distributors that the tests are universally valid. Instead, we should inquire into whether the tests have been validated and tested for construct and measurement equivalence with a Filipino sample. In cases when the tests have not been validated, the psychologist using the tests should bear in mind the possible limitations associated with interpreting the scores of a test that has not been validated with the target population and seek additional convergent information using a combination of other validated tests and/or relevant assessment tools (e.g., clinical interview, etc.).

***Proposition 2.*** Teachers of psychological testing and assessment courses should give emphasis to the topics related to bias and equivalence in using psychological tests in different cultures and linguistic groups. Of course this would require that they update themselves on such topics, and teachers should be provided support and resources for doing so.

***Proposition 3.*** Researchers should do more systematic and sustained investigations on construct bias, method bias (e.g., on response biases among different Filipino samples, etc.), item bias (e.g., differential item functioning). There should be more research on establishing construct equivalence or structural validity of foreign made tests with Filipino respondents, whether these tests are translated or not. If possible, there should also be research investigating measurement unit and full scalar invariance, which would allow comparability with norms in other countries or cultures.

***Proposition 4.*** Researchers should prioritize investigations on widely used personality and intelligence tests used by human resource recruiters & personnel, schools and admissions officers, the legal system (annulment cases, juvenile justice system), medical practitioners, and so on. Indeed, much of the research done so far involve psychological tests used for research. These types of research should be directed at the tests that are actually more widely used by practitioners.

***Proposition 5.*** Researchers should work on more translations for different Philippine ethnolinguistic groups and do research on the bias and equivalence of the translations. Filipino is just one of the many languages spoken in the Philippines. It may not be practical to do translations in all the Philippine languages, but it may be necessary to develop and study translations in the major languages such as Cebuano, Ilonggo, Ilocano, Bicol, Waray, and others.

***Proposition 6.*** Researchers should publish and disseminate their results and also ensure that their findings and test translations/adaptations are made available to various users and practitioners. It is not necessary to make these translations available for free; instead, researchers and translators should find ways to provide practitioners and other researchers access to these materials, even for a fee.

***Proposition 7.*** Practitioners, particularly those working with rural and/or less-educated clients, should deliberately seek for test translations and adaptations for their own practice. They should not rely on what is easily available, unless they are certain of their validity. Indeed, applying foreign made tests in an uncritical manner could be the foundation upon which many invalid diagnoses and recommendations are made.

***Proposition 8.*** Practitioners should systematically observe and document their observations and experiences involving English language versions of the test with less educated populations. The experiences of these practitioners are actually rich resources upon which further improvements can be made on the psychological tests being used; but these experiences need to be systematically documented, shared, and analyzed in ways that aim to develop better tests for use with particular clients.

***Proposition 9.*** Practitioners should systematically observe and document their observations and experiences involving translations of the tests. For those who actually translate the tests or use translations made by other people, the qualitative validation is also as important. Again the need to systematically document, and share these experiences should be emphasized.

***Proposition 10.*** As there will always be non-translatable constructs, Filipino psychologists should also invest more effort, or at least provide support for developing indigenous psychological tests. This support should extend to the validation, marketing, distribution, and application of the tests.

There are a lot of challenges facing Filipino psychologists who use psychological tests in their profession. The actions required to face these challenges need to involve the collective action of the whole community of psychological researchers, practitioners, and educators. Practitioners need researchers to develop translations that are valid for use with different Filipino clients. Researchers need to collaborate with practitioners for the qualitative and quantitative validation of translations. Practitioners can provide researchers with rich personal observations on how the tests are applied and how they work. Researchers can guide practitioners on how to reflect on and systematically document their experiences using the test. Educators should create awareness and knowledge related to the issue of validity of using foreign made tests with Filipino clients, especially since their students will be the future psychology practitioners. Indeed, Filipino psychologists need not lose their clients in bad translation if they work together in ensuring that attention and effort is invested on guaranteeing the validity of tests and their translations.

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# The Literary Facebook: Notes on the Possibilities of Literature in Internet Social Networking

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Can social networking be a source of literature? This article posits that there is a possibility of Facebook and Twitter becoming a medium for literary expression. While many contemporary Filipino writers consider time spent on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to be "a waste of time," a growing number of writers have begun looking at the possibilities of the "status update" as a form of literature, akin to the haiku, that is very much a form dictated by the Internet age.

**KEYWORDS:** Facebook, Twitter, social network literature, flash fiction

While I was grappling for things to say in my presentation on Facebook and what it means for literature in general and writing in particular for Taboan 2010—The Second Philippine International Writers Festival in Cebu City, Philippines, the Palanca-winning playwright Glenn Sevilla Mas told me that I was "the poster boy" of my generation: my life was an open book on Facebook by choice, the paragon of the Socratic notion of "the examined life" in the Internet Age. In confession, I am what you would call a Facebook mainliner, a heavy user, an addict—something that nevertheless has affected my literary existence in more positive ways than anything else.

Almost every day, the first thing I do in the morning is to check my Facebook account. On Facebook, I can do several things that makes this online site quite unique for the way it conveniently puts together in one basket the varieties of Internet existence: check my email, check my calendar for upcoming events to attend, give birthday shout-outs to friends, chat, blog, upload pictures to my online albums, check the links to videos and Internet articles shared by friends, and get acquainted with the relatively interesting minutiae in the lives of linked friends via their notes, photos, and little missives on what they're doing which we call on Facebook as "status updates." In the course of a typical day, I would probably post around twenty of my own status updates, which are mostly variations of little observations, information about things we are currently doing, rants, witticisms, and quotations from books or movies or songs. This does not include the replies to subsequent comments done by Facebook friends.

So, yes, Glenn is right. I *am* the poster boy of my generation: I live on Facebook, and Facebook, for the most part, is my life under an Internet microscope. So much so that even my offline dramas eventually find their way in, and are eventually magnified to the rest of the world like an online equivalent of a *teleserye*. I once got famously dumped in Facebook—and my Facebook friends got wind of it first at the moment the "relationship status" of my partner of five years changed from "In a Relationship" to "Single." I remember that day too well: I got a barrage of text messages from everywhere, even from Spain, Australia, and the United States, asking me if I was okay. I was walking down the road headed somewhere, and the messages at first confounded me—until it dawned on me: something was happening on my Facebook page, and so I caught a quick tricycle trip home to find out that, yes, I was suddenly single.

This drama reminds me of a quip: nothing is ever official about our lives these days, unless it is announced on Facebook. I once told a friend that if somebody would just bother to put together all my status updates, that would virtually constitute my autobiography.

I must be painting a horrid picture now of Facebook, especially for those of you who are quite concerned about the intrusions to individual privacy this website seems bent on warping or destroying. Believe me, I too am concerned about that—and there are privacy settings in Facebook that actually allow you to filter who views specific status updates or incriminating pictures and what-not, away from the prying or disapproving eyes of stalkers and ex-lovers and bosses and HRD heads.

But I must admit there is now a significant shift occurring in the way my generation views the blurring of the lines between the private and the public. Somebody once called my generation as the

Confessional Generation, taught in the ways of public dramas by Oprah Winfrey and Jerry Springer and Kris Aquino. These days, there are things that we want to say where we never hesitate to share in a public space like Facebook. A decade ago the very same idea would probably have us recoiling from the sheer horror of oversharing—oversharing information, even such simple, mundane, or useless things such as, "Ian is eating eggs and bacon for breakfast."

But the most fascinating thing you soon find is that, contrary to expectations, most people actually respond to most of the "mundane things" reported in status updates, even the eggs and bacon one had for breakfast. Adam N. Noinson, in "Looking At, Looking Up or Keeping Up with People?: Motives and Use of Facebook" (2008) in the published proceedings of the *26th Annual SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* identified seven unique uses and gratifications in people's utility of status updates, which included social connection, shared identities, content, social investigation, social network surfing and status updating.

What is Facebook, and how has it exactly enthralled most of the online world? Simply put, Facebook is a social networking Internet site—and for the uninitiated, that simply means it allows you to have a personal page crammed with information about you that you want to share ostensibly with the world. This page is linked in intricate ways to the personal pages of other people who happen to be your friends or acquaintances of varying degrees. It is a virtual community where things happen—conversation and connection foremost among them.

Statistics show there are millions of people now engaged in Facebook. Facebook released statistics for 2010 which tells us that there are now more than 400 million active users of the social network worldwide, more than 35 million of which update their status every day, contributing to more than 60 million status updates total each day. While the United States leads the pack with the most users, the Philippines ranks eighth with 10,647,100 users as of last March. (The only other countries in Asia in the list include Indonesia at third and Turkey at fourth.) In Internet parlance, that's a lot of captured eyeballs.

Imagine then the possible ways Facebook has had impact on the various aspects of the writer's life, as well as his or her readers.

I turned to several Filipino writers who happen to be active users of Facebook and emailed them—through Facebook—two questions: [1] How do you use Facebook as a writer? [2] What do you think Facebook mean for readers?

Quite a few replied to my query. The poet Cesar Ruiz Aquino immediately replied with the kind of literary teasing typical of his writings: "Seeeeeeeeecret! It means E.T.-real reality. Look in Facebook & you may see/ Someone who's camera-ready-rie," while the poet Lawrewnce Ypil wrote: "I don't really think Facebook has changed or affected the way I write."

The rest of the responses give the full spectrum of the writerly examination of how social networking has, in one way or other, affected the literary life of the Philippine writer.

**CRISTINA PANTOJA HIDALGO**, *fictionist and essayist*: I can only speak for myself. How do I use Facebook as a writer? [1] I post Notes which are really new short and not-so-short essays of mine, and which really should go into a blog I thought I'd begin keeping, but have never gotten around to; [2] I post announcements about new books (both my own and those of other writers) or old books I've rediscovered; or articles I find interesting; [3] I read other writers' notes which are usually essays too, or poems, even stories—mainly these are writers who are my personal friends, or writers whose work I already know and am interested in. What does Facebook mean for readers? I'm sure the answer will depend on the reader's age, profession/occupation, cultural background, etc. For me it is a quick, easy way to access interesting material (both international and national) that would take too long to find and which I don't have the time or energy to look for myself; and a fun way to keep in touch with other writers—both friends and strangers—and find out what they're doing. I imagine that one source of satisfaction for many readers is the opportunity Facebook affords for instant response, interaction, etc.

**STAN GERONIMO**, *fictionist*: "I don't expect Facebook to improve my writing. But it does have a supplementary function. It wires you to a whole network of writers in the literary scene. It has never been easier to converse with authors you've only seen in anthologies before. This doesn't directly aid our craft, but writing is not just about skill, it is also about contacts and having a wide network of editors, mentors, resource speakers, publishers, and professors who contribute to our work."

**YVETTE TAN**, *fictionist*: "I mainly use Facebook to stay in touch with friends but I find that it's useful for work as well, since I've scheduled interviews and also have been contacted for them via Facebook.

Depending on how a writer uses it, Facebook can give readers a different insight on the writer—this time as a real person instead of a blank entity that wrote the words on a book's page."

**ADAM DAVID**, *fictionist and graphic artist*: "I don't really use Fezboobs as a writer like how [poet] Angelo Suarez—theoretical ponderings and maybe conversation—and [fictionists] Iwa Wilwayco/U Eliserio—networking drive to reap enough peeps for financial mileage to get books printed—use it. It DEFINITELY has a use, mainly as a networking tool, but it requires a certain blurring of the writing with the selling-of-the-writing that I'm not quite ready for just yet. I'm actually still very allergic to that notion as it fosters that particular malignant malaise we call 'the Cult of Personality.' Fezboobs has more meaning for me as a reader, mos def, especially with the various Fan Pages available for subscription, not to mention the actual writers/artists that you can maybe connect to as a Friend. The things I get out of these networking efforts are the regular updates that are pertinent to their production, and also the fact that I get to indulge on my own weakness for celebrity culture and our addiction to the blurring of their public and private personas with my own seemingly little less-than-important life narrative."

**FELISA H. BATACAN**, *fictionist*: "If I really think about it, it's useful for someone based overseas like myself to keep track of what's happening in the Philippine literary scene. For example, when someone launches a new book or project, or when there's a call for submissions, etc. It's always nice to see what people are doing, especially those you know or admire. And it's also great when you realize someone shares your interests—for example I just reconnected with an old schoolmate who also makes jewelry. We've been discussing techniques via e-mail and that has been a learning experience for both of us. Some might suggest it helps to build community among writers, although I suppose I'm not around the site enough to get a solid sense of that. As both a writer and a reader, it's also useful from time to time to see what other people are reading, watching, listening to—or eating! I've gotten the occasional great book, film, music or restaurant tip this way. Usually they're things I wouldn't normally choose to check out on my own. But because I respect a certain friend's judgment, I'll do so and find something new (to me, anyway) and it turns out to be fantastic."

**SUSAN LARA**, *fictionist*: "I go to Facebook the way I'd go to a coffee shop where I'm likely to meet friends, particularly friends who write and love to read. I'd like to know what they're working on now, what they're reading, what they think of a new book or movie, or simply how they're doing. It's an easy way to keep in touch and catch up with friends. I love reading poems posted by friends, offering my two cents worth on them, and sharing essays, poems, links to reviews, etc."

**ROLANDO TOLENTINO**, *fictionist*: "I use it as a repository of columns, additional readership, and a virtual formation of community of readers and authors. By the very characteristics of Facebook, it is a social networking site—to read up on authors and friends, their personal statements, etc. which they might not have the chance to do with traditional media, or even just the limits of physical time and space."

**CARLJOE JAVIER**, *fictionist*: "As a writer, I have been corresponding with other writers and editors, building a base, and really seeing what other people are thinking based on the kind of material that they post on Facebook. There are a lot of brilliant ideas that can be found in Facebook Notes, and ideas that can inspire one to write. What does Facebook mean for readers? There are a lot of things, like finding things online, via being fans or other things, that they would not have been able to find via traditional marketing and the shelves of bricks and mortars stories. Further, based on personal experience, it's a great way for readers to connect with writers. It has happened on several occasions that people who have read my book have looked me up on Facebook and added me as a friend. They get to interact with writers, ask questions, keep updated (like in Twitter) with the writer's projects. There are a lot of fun dynamics to be observed in Facebook. I think that readers get the better of it because writers, seeing the lack of marketing on the part of a lot of publishers, turn to the net and utilize things like Facebook fan pages and the like."

**GIBBS CADIZ**, *critic*: "I use Facebook mainly as an extension platform for my blog/writing. It widens readership, contributes to online traffic and jumpstarts discussions/feedback that are often distinct from what the posts normally generate in my blog (no anonymous comments on Facebook, after all—so the tone/flavor are different, at the very least). Other than that, I'm not much of a Facebook user. I'm unable even to update my shout-outs for days/weeks on end."

**VISCONDE CARLO VERGARA**, *graphic novelist*: "Honestly, I haven't paid much attention to the possibilities of Facebook as a creator because, honestly, I've not been very comfortable with hard-sell, which is what I imagine other creators engage in. It's only recently, when I created fan pages for Zaturnnah and Queen Femina, that I've been able to provide a venue where I can communicate to my readers, albeit assuming the personas of these characters. If you check the fan pages of these two characters, the fans are more active in making casual comments, a kind of interaction I rarely get in my own profile page. So, in that sense, I've been using Facebook as a stethoscope. What is the collective pulse of my readers? From time to time, though, I do promote a few things through my status updates. I rarely use the Notes feature, which could have been a great alternative to my personal blog. But I still prefer my blog when posting lengthy pieces."

**MERLIE ALUNAN**, *poet*: "I've not thought too much about Facebook and writers. I imagine it's the same way other folks, say salesmen, use it, a way to get in touch, a way to bother each other, or help, or, as you and I have been doing, hollering for help. I've had requests for workshops in Facebook and someone has asked me if I'd be willing to take a look at his works. Nothing heavy, though. I've not played any of those games, and I don't think I ever will. The way Facebook allows you to search for 'friends,' I imagine any reader would be able to get in touch with a writer, making them less of a mystery, more accessible."

**GERRY ALANGUILAN**, *graphic novelist*: "Although I joined Facebook primarily to get in touch with old friends and classmates, I've come to use it to network with fellow comics professionals for industry news, jobs, trends and so forth. I also use it as a way to talk about and promote my work. People who appreciate the work I do find me in Facebook and get in touch with me there, and I manage to convert old friends and classmates into readers of my work. As a fan myself, I've managed to get one on one conversations with people whose work I like. Facebook really allows this kind of interaction now, which hasn't been really possible before."

**LUIS KATIGBAK**, *fictionist*: "As an editor, I often use Facebook to contact writers, pitch ideas back and forth, and assign stories. As a writer, I sometimes use it to contact sources and get information and quotes for a story... Also: connecting in general with other writers (reading and responding to their Notes and updates), and checking schedules of writing-related events. Readers can keep track of the activities of favorite living authors (in my case, Dan Rhodes, Jonathan Carroll, etc.), connect with people who share similar tastes in literature, and again, keep abreast of events like lectures and launches and even secondhand book sales."

**JOHN BENGAN**, *fictionist*: "It's a great and quick venue to share a draft to a few friends, maybe let them see and comment on what we've been working on. Although I'm talking about other people here and not really answering the first question. In my case though, maybe coming with a clever status message, I guess, helps me find a good line or two for an actual story. I get to read other people's works a lot through Facebook, so maybe that helps me as a writer? I see a lot of my FB friends posting their own poems and short short stories just to share them, not necessarily for comment, although sometimes they do get feedback. So, I don't really know what Facebook means for most readers, other than that it's another place to continue the act of reading. It may seem really trivial at first, Facebooking, but let's face it most of us are addicted to it. So at least we get to still read posts tagged to us, or to our friends, while we're stalking. It's quick publishing and instant readership! The quality of what you get to read on FB though is another issue. It may still come down to who your friends are."

**FRANK CIMATU**, *poet and journalist*: "I stalk other writers at least with their statuses and activities. I look at the links the writers want to share and also I find it more convenient and much easier to post links and find things that I want rather than with my blog. So Facebook has become another virtual scrapbook for me. As always, dealing with people, I don't really mind if they love or hate what I post but I do listen to what they say. Journalistically, I have written a lot of stories through Facebook. I learned that 'walling' is better because people you haven't 'walled' actually gave the better replies. I am not so fastidious about friends that I friend (although I try not to get politicians) because they can be potential readers."

**EDGAR CALABIA SAMAR**, *fictionist*: "Facebook is the *only* social networking site I actively use these days (I quit Friendster and Multiply; haven't tried Twitter, Hi5 et. al.)—and as a writer, I use it primarily for that—networking. I've met a lot of people online via Facebook who were initially readers of my novel (most of them high school students); they told me that they searched for me online and were eventually led to my Facebook profile. Thus I use this to keep connections with fellow writers, readers and potential buyers of my books (yes, I'm no longer ashamed of that; I realized if I don't want my books bought by many, why bother to have them published at all, right?). I think Facebook is important for readers (I am obviously a reader, too, and I try to introduce other novelists in my *Atisan Novels* blog, which I promote heavily here on Facebook), especially of contemporary literature, for them to get a sense of the dynamism in current literary production—that they can interact with writers; dead authors of textbooks past will soon have to give way to new writers who make use of technology, the Internet, and most of the time, Facebook, as platform of self-advertisement. Online presence I think is very important for writers at present, especially because most of their readers (i.e., literate) access this technology almost on a daily basis—and how often do these people actually visit a (non-online) bookstore in a week, in a month, in a year?"

**KENNETH YU**, *fictionist and publisher*: "As a writer, I'm able to connect with other writers around the world. Virtual networking, I guess. Though I'm not that 'talkative,' it's nice to just lurk and see what more outgoing writers are up to via their Wall. Some of these writers write about their creative processes; it's always interesting and informative to see how others come up with their tales; I simply take what I can learn from the experiences of other writers. On a lesser note, I use Facebook too to plug what pieces of mine get published, but since I don't get published often, that's rare. As a reader, I would think Facebook is very helpful. Since other writers update their statuses, one is always kept abreast of their latest published stories. If the tales are online, they're easy to find and read. Ditto for publishers and editors who also let the public know about their latest releases. It's like, or rather, it is, a live, updated feed of what pieces have been most recently released, a real boon for readers."

From their replies, we can make several common observations about Facebook's role in our lives as writers:

1. Facebook is a tool we use for networking with fellow writers, which also enables us to share content—our stories, essays, and

poems in progress—which always lead to helpful feedback.

2. Facebook is also a chance to recapture a community of people who share your interests—especially helpful for those who are expatriates.
3. Facebook is a platform that helps humanize the writer to his or her reader, and allows interaction between the two.
4. Facebook is a tool for marketing one's work—your published story in a magazine, your new book, your new play, and others.
5. Facebook is a virtual scrapbook, a repository or an extension of one's writings.
6. Facebook is a tool you can use to get the pulse on what your readership is looking for.
7. And, finally, Facebook is a platform for various writing projects, a place where you can pitch ideas with writers and editors.

But I am primarily concerned with Facebook as a literary end-product, or, if I may dare say, "Facebook as literature." Can there be such a thing? Can Facebook *be* literary? These questions occurred to me when I observed that even when Facebook is often described as "a waste of time" which should be better off spent finishing our next novel, most of the things that I do on Facebook—aside from the casual surfing from one personal page to the next—is actually *writing*. I observed the same thing with other writers in my network as well. Sometimes, this takes the form of sharing poetry and flash fiction in the Notes section of Facebook.

But the writing endeavor that is most closely associated with Facebook is the status update—that 420-character "message" following your name that asks you to express whatever is in your head—be it a casual observation, a rant, or whatever—that is immediately shared, from the moment you touch the publish button, to the rest of the world.

This is a possible, unexamined mine for literary expression. Of course, in ordinary, non-literary hands, they can be equally vexing in their gibberish, ungrammatical hellishness. But in the hands of seasoned writers, they become something else—a window to a literature in a hurry, a miniature literature.

Anne Trubek, in her online article "The Art of the Status Update," identifies four kinds of status updates: [1] the **Prosaic**—which describes exactly what the author is doing (i.e., "Ian is writing an article"); [2] the **Informative**—in which the author uses the status update as a medium for sharing information (i.e., "Ian wants you to read this essay on Facebook status updates as a form of literature"); [3] the **Clever or Funny**—which is fairly self-explanatory and might say something like, "Ian thinks McDonald's slipped a tiny circus, complete with clown car, into his cheeseburger"); and [4] finally the **Nonsensical**—in which the author indulges his most poetic sensibilities (i.e., "Ian wishes he could float into the darkness with the stars"), or something else.

It is this "something else" that fascinates me more, and over the past few months, I have increasingly thought of Facebook status updates as the Internet-age evolution to two old literary forms—the drama and the haiku.

When I say drama, I mean the canned and popular variety that has governed our fascination via serialized *komiks* and radio dramas and television soap operas—episodic tales of fascinating twists and turns that people follow, often religiously. I've since found—especially in my own experience—that status updates satisfy that old craving in Facebook form. In detailing dramatic moments in our lives, we tell a story, we tell a narrative. And people actually follow these moments that you post about as if you are their own version of a Facebook reality show. You will know this because everywhere you go, there is always bound to be a friend you haven't seen for some time who is still privy to these twists and turns in your status updates—and wants to know more. This is heaven for the writer with exhibitionist tendencies. But many of these writers are also aware that while they tread the fine line of privacy, their Facebook life is only a concentrated focus of only one or two aspects of their real lives. One writer friend once told me that in many ways his Facebook profile is a character that he has forged based on aspects of himself—but it is not him *him*. "It is a character for the Role Playing Game or RPG that is Facebook," he said.

Let us examine another literary possibility of the status update…

Trubek defines the possibilities of the status update in three ways: "First, there is the question of form. Facebook requires your name to be the first word of every update. Relentlessly first-person, the status update is akin to a lyric poem, dominated by the speaker, the 'I'."

She also posits: "Another defining formal quality is length. Several of my friends remark that the status update is haiku-like in its strictness about brevity. The poet Troy Jollimore compares the status update to an epitaph, and notes that 'we might think of one's epitaph as the very last status update.'"

And finally: "Another quality of the status update is that it is temporally defined. 'Update' suggests one is always writing about the just-arrived present, and assumes a reader's familiarity with the past (something that can be updated). DeSales Harrison, a professor at Oberlin College, sums up the temporality of a status update as: 'the form equidistant from sky writing and the tattoo.'"

The poet Allan Popa has a problem with this, though, when he decried Facebook, in an email, as a waste of time spent on the fleeting, the hurried, and the fetish of the now: *"Yun nga lang, sa palagay ko, panibagong kaagaw sa panahon at atensyon ng mambabasa ang Facebook. Nakatutok ang aktibidad dito sa pangkalahatan sa 'pangmadalian,' 'ang ngayon-lamang' at 'ang mabilisan.' Pero ang sinumang seryosong mambabasa ay kakayaning malabanan ang pwersa nito para mas mapahalagahan ang mga bagay na 'nananatili,' 'pangmatagalan,' at 'mabagal' na siyang naibabahagi ng karanasan ng pagbabasa ng panitikan. Sa bagal naipapadanas ang tagal at talaga ng panahon.* (It's just that, in my opinion, Facebook is another of those that rob the reader's time and attention. The activities here are generally focused on the 'ephemeral,' 'the whatever's-present' and 'the hurried.' But any serious reader will be able to fight against this force in order to give value to the things that 'remain,' 'will last,' 'are not hurried'—which the reading of literature is able to share. In this slowness do we experience the time's length and fate.)."[1]

The essayist and fictionist Rowena Tiempo Torrevillas (personal communication, January 2009) also weighs in on these very possibilities, and she wrote in an email to me:

> This is a truly timely topic, Ian. You and many others … are realizing the tremendous potential for reaching an audience unimaginable before our time: instantaneously, and with geometrically expanding numbers.
>
> The downside of social networking in its present form is its mind-boggling triviality. How many 'friends' have we blocked simply because they have the compulsion to announce to the world at large what they ate for breakfast? (Sheesh, I keep expecting a 'status report' to arrive from one of these get-a-life-already deadbeats saying, 'I have constipation.' And then, one hour later, 'Yehey! I POOPED!')
>
> A frequent poster has this diarrhea need to boast about the books he's reading, name-dropping his current literary crushes with a self-congratulatory eagerness that I find both pathetic and annoying...but at least his pretenses at literary discourse are a relief from the usual snoringly autistic posting of 'I will go to bed now.'
>
> The terseness of the Facebook format should encourage pithy utterances; but instead, as you know, the bulk of what we wade through it pure dreck.
>
> Thus, for me at present. Facebook is 90% a waste—and a waster—of time. Its only virtue for a writer is that one's words, thrown into that void of unknowing, do sometimes get caught...and held, and maybe even thrown back with a new spin added to the toss of language. As with you, I think.
>
> The 17th-century Japanese (Tokugawa dynasty) game of linked verse, from

> which the haiku originated, was far more disciplined and profound. But who knows? —The romance of time has added its patina of glamour to those 17-syllable observations on fish soup and cherry-blossom petals.
>
> Maybe Facebook will lead to something akin to the haiku, transcending its essential ephemerality. As long as it remains participatory, it's a marvelous vehicle. But I fear the lines of words, thrown like fragile cables from writer to reader, are lost in the clutter of cyberspace.
>
> I doubt it, though. This is my conclusion to my thought that the brevity of Facebook postings might someday produce a haiku-like interchange between writer and reader. I do doubt it. My thanks for your thoughtfulness, Ian, and for making me think, too. Cheers, Weena.

I am partial to the notion that Facebook is a "waster of time," as described so by Popa and Torrevillas, which points to the much-described addicting aspect of the website, as attested to by John Bengan. (The clinical psychologist Michael A. Fenichel has coined the term "Facebook Addiction Disorder" to describe this, although sufficient literature on this has yet to be fully considered.) But I also think that the time is not yet right, or ripe, to dismiss the literary possibilities of Facebook—especially the status update—as something that has no gravity for serious consideration, as something fleeting that is the child of momentary whimsy, as Popa describes it. The "bulk of pure dreck" that Torrevillas describes is true, given cursory examination of status updates in general, but this is true for most of everything that we consume in living culture, even in literary publishing. Torrevillas, however, does end her observations with a hopeful, although still doubtful, view of the literary possibilities of Facebook, given "the patina of time" and "practice towards ephemerality."

I remain hopeful that there is such a possibility because I do see status updates—by writers as diverse as David Rankin, Susan Orleans, and Margaret Atwood—in Facebook and also Twitter that strike me as dealing close with a literary sensibility. Can it lead to literature? In the game of popular literature, it has led to eventual book publication for Justin Halpern whose Twitter page "Shit My Dad Says" proved so popular, the book deal followed.

In a 2011 conference, the Canadian author Margaret Atwood had this say about Twitter as literature:

> A lot of people on Twitter are dedicated readers. Twitter is like all of the other short forms that preceded it. It's like the telegram. It's like the smoke signal. It's like writing on the washroom wall. It's like carving your name on a tree. It's a very short form and we use that very short form for very succinct purposes. There is a guy out there who is writing 140-character short stories—I just followed him today … but that's the exception. It's sort of like haikus [and] prose....

> I would say that reading, as such, has increased. And reading and writing skills have probably increased because what all this texting and so forth replaced was the telephone conversation….
>
> People have to actually be able to read and write to use the Internet, so it's a great literacy driver if kids are given the tools and the incentive to learn the skills that allow them to access it.

The New York *Times*' Randy Kennedy also reports about *Lowboy* author John Ray who uses Twitter to do a serialized novel in Twitter about a character named Citizen. He writes about the challenges of the format as a creative writing tool: "I don't view the constraints of the format as in any way necessarily precluding literary quality. It's just a different form. And it's still early days, so people are still really trying to figure out how to communicate with it, beyond just reporting that their Cheerios are soggy." In the same news item, Kennedy quotes the linguist Ben Zimmer who described the "growing popularity of the service as a creative outlet" as springing from the same "impulse that goes into writing a sonnet, of accepting those kinds of limits."

I have observed something similar in Twitter status updates though that has led me to believe that there may indeed be literariness that can be gleaned in the short bursts of expressions we post on social networks. In 2010, just in time for the Philippine Independence Day celebration on June 12, a group of writers who do primarily speculative fiction came up with the challenge of writing revisionist historical fiction in the 140 characters allowed for a Twitter post. The efforts were conveniently grouped together by the hashtag[2] #RP612fic, eventually becoming a virtual anthology of speculative fiction—featuring stories that were grounded in a common convention: a limitation in the number of characters used.

My own entries in this Twitter project were experiments in brevity, something I welcomed as a literary exercise in form, and I was aware of the fact that I gave the same amount of effort that I give long-form writing in the telling of my stories. Consider the following:

> The old cardinal's voice broke through the February air over the radio. "Please come. Come join us," he pleaded. But nobody came.
>
> The crowd was lively, and the little woman was about to cast her candidacy for Congress in this town. Suddenly, a gun shot rang.
>
> Marcela did not like the red cloth as she sewed the flag. "What if I made this pink? Wouldn't it be fabulous?" she said.
>
> "Dear Paciano. What was I thinking? A depressing novel about a guy who goes

home? I'll write a romance novel instead. Love, Pepe."

"Where's Lapu-Lapu?" the angry conquistador snarled as he stormed the beach with his men. The guide blinked. "You mean, the fish?"

"Tell me you love me," Emilio said. "But I don't love you," said Andres. Emilio sighed, "Then you leave me no choice. You die."

"Okay I will marry you," the young Imelda smiled. The young politician was happy. She said, "Imelda Aquino. Does that sound okay?"

"Transfer it to June 12," Diosdado gravely said. "My 17-year old daughter wants me to take her shopping on July 4, that's why."

My effort[3] and that of the others soon made me remember and consider a possible grandfather to status updates taken to the heights of literary practice. Ernest Hemingway reportedly once wrote a very short story that consisted of just the following: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." *Six words.* And they contained a universe of meaning and the narrative demands of fiction, evoking as much as a regular story could.

Who's to say status updates cannot do the same?

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## NOTES

[1] Translation from the Filipino by Edgar Calabia Samar.

[2] A "hashtag" is a tagging convention utilized by Twitter users for grouping posts by various users that dwell on similar topics or issues. This can be recognized by a short one-word category name following the pound sign. The hashtag makes it easy for users to follow a Twitter "conversation," enabling them to read and respond to "tweets" by other users that they don't even "follow."

[3] These pieces of "lit-tweets" subsequently published as "Alternate History" *in Philippine Speculative Fiction 6*, edited by Kate Osias and Nikki Alfar in 2011.

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# The Constraints School Toward Good Local Governance: Local Governments of the Philippines Circa 2001—2010

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This paper aims to account the constraints school that emerged in the local governments of the Philippines from the period 2001-2010. The constraints school argues that changes in the external landscape represented by national institutional indiscretion limits the internal landscape that local actors must deal with. This paper argues that the national tradition of governance shapes and influences local institutional factors and holds the key to the constraints school toward good local governance in the Philippines. It does so by examining the national-local experience and the interactions among these factors through three cases.

The study found out that a three-level dynamics influences the shape of local institutions. The first level dynamics refers to the national formal normative orientations that characterize the national government as a political institution that influences local governments. Second is the local government's capacity that structure local actions towards dependency. The third refers to the politics-corporate balance of local government policy on decentralization. This paper concludes that the evolution of the constraints school implicitly establishes the outcomes of the current local governance in the Philippines as an unintended consequence of the national practice of decentralization throughout the nine-year period.

**KEYWORDS:** constraints, local governance, governance values, constraints school, governance, local governments

## INTRODUCTION

A major issue confronting developing countries that are today decentralized concerns the experience of how national normative orientations, local government capacities, and the need for corporatization are used by local institutions to govern. The Philippines portrays a similar scenario in its 19 years of decentralization. These concerns range from the practice of new responsibilities placed on national leadership, citizens, and local institutions in general within an environment of global pressure. These concerns, however, are not new, but what remains far from certain is the dynamics by which these national experiences and local practices in decentralization and governance as a whole have been taken up and thus create a new dimension in the local government politics. The work reported in this paper assumed that the way of national tradition of governance and the dynamics of its implementation process affect local politico-administrative system thus determining the constraints school in good local governance.

The paper investigates the manifestations of the constraints school viewed from the influence of the national governments to local governments. The study is drawn from secondary neo-liberal and institutional and international relations literature. It depicts how the Philippines draws understanding from three national-local case experiences studying the local government as institutions that evolved due to the decentralization process. Cognizant that local governments are part of the state and are the beneficiaries of decentralized powers, the researcher investigated the arguments of a constraints school.

## ELEMENTS OF THE CONSTRAINTS SCHOOL DISCOURSE

### What is the Constraints School?

The body of knowledge and analytical tools of the constraints school came from the experience in the natural sciences and are based on a rigorous, but easily understood, cause-and-effect logic (Goldratt, 1984). Goldratt argued that the constraints school is like a chain with a weak link such that in any complex system at any point in time, there is most often one aspect that limits its ability to achieve the goal. For that system to attain a significant improvement, the constraint must be identified and the whole system must be managed with it in mind. Goldratt referred to his work as the theory of constraints (TOC).

Earlier, Leibig (cited in Brown, 1942) likened the constraints to that of a process in crop science where it was found that increasing the amount of abundant nutrients would not improve plant growth. Increasing only the amount of the limiting nutrient (insufficient in relation to "need") leads to growth or improved crop. The idea of Leibig developed from Carl Sprengel (1828) and became known as Liebig's Law or the Law of the Minimum where growth is controlled not by the totality of the resources available but by the scarcest resource (limiting factor), which in this case are referred to as the constraints. Institutional growth in this sense is limited by the "nutrients" from the insufficient supply (Brown, 1942).

Until very recently, Weiss (2003) stated that powers have been severely constrained or have entered the era of state denial. These constraints result from presuppositions of the state's loss of power and its perceived obsolescence as an organizing power. Weiss further contends that domestic institutions are the starting point to account for the impact of external forces like globalization. Weiss (2003) says that the constrained state powers are ultimately transformed by globalization and there is now a need to bring in the domestic institutions, such as the local government units (LGUs).

Further, Clingermayer and Feiock (2003) said that in an uncertain world, consistent trends in politics and policymaking would be either caused by or represented by institutional irregularities. Institutions themselves are the products of other forces (i.e. sets of preferences, economic or military power, and changes in technology or relative prices), but once created they become a force with which other forces and actors must contend with. From this view, institutions and what they have become, constitute the "rules of the game" for any political society (North, 1990). Taking the domestic institutions at one level lower would construe that local governments are the best benchmarks of states' performance. In this paper, the constraints school (e.g. Weiss, 2003; Lingermayer & Feiock, 2003; and Goldratt, 1984) argues that changes in the external landscape of the LGUs and represented by national institutional indiscretion, limit the internal landscape that local actors must deal with. This national landscape of course does not exclude the global governance paradigmatic shifts pushed by supra-national institutions to which developing countries have been subservient.

However, there are constraints school theorists who would generally assert that national governments are no longer the central focus of power. This is a consequence of loss of control due to the numerous actors already at play in governance (Held & McGrew, 1998; Rosenau, 2000 as cited by Weiss 2003). However, the state would not simply retreat and surrender its loss of effective political power. This non-surrender is treated differently and is influenced by the scheming use of political power as well as the bargaining and negotiation process to regain loss of centrality. This "short cut" process to development leads to unfortunate outcomes, such as the "filling in of the state" (Jessop, 2004), where there are institutional and political settlements of "holding on to power and authority" by the state and the "yielding in" of local governments." This leads to what Gera (2008) refers to as two-track implementation scheme of decentralization.

Harry Blair wrote in his USAID report (cited by Kimura, 2011):

> Historically, decentralization initiatives have not enjoyed great success, largely for two reasons: all too often, despite their rhetoric, central governments do not truly want to devolve real power to the local level; and when significant authority is devolved, a disproportionate share of the benefits is often captured by local elites. The new democratic variant of decentralization, however, may overcome these problems by introducing greater participation, accountability, and transparency in local governance, and by empowering marginal groups. It also offers more scope for local revenue generation by linking services to local payment for them. (p. vi)

Complementarily, international relations theories identify parallel constraints through the conception of the politics in the field. This is characterized as the 'politics of yielding in.' It is argued that politics from below may be transformative or dependent in nature because of the domination of politics from above. This hegemony causes the eventual yielding in of local institutions; thus, creating the constraints of "local development." Often this view is disregarded due to globalization, which all states or countries for that matter have to contend with (Boggs, 1986; Yauval-Davis, 1997; Fraser, 1997; Hamel, 2001; Harding, 1992; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; and Woods, 1995 as cited by Maiguashca, 2003). This results in the shaping of new forms of national-local institutional arrangements at play, where powers are shared as a result of financial difficulties through the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) vis-à-vis the increasing demand for social services at the local government level.

This contention pressures poor countries to do a benchmark study of themselves with reference to rich countries. This, however, creates a pseudo good governance agenda, which in the first place is very difficult to attain. This is the gist of the arguments of Grindle (2004) who proposed that poor countries adapt a good enough governance agenda in place of good governance. The course of action is associated with 'playing catch-up,' where the developed countries do not earn dividends. The inability to attain the agenda has created a new culture and behavior in local governments such that politics is prioritized over managerialism.

At the local organizational level, this goes with the third idea of the constraints school, which emanated from a culture that has developed because of the practice of decentralization. Edgar Schein (1985) took it up from an organizational culture perspective where language and formal and informal boundaries are set up. This refers to "the way we do things around here," "the way we think about things around here," or "the commonly held values and beliefs held within an organization" (Hudson 1999 as cited by Schein, 1985), including "the overall 'character' of an organization" (Handy, 1988 as cited by Schein, 1985). Schein (1985) argues that these values now shape what governance will be. This shaping of governance is now taught to others (whether formal or non-formal), i.e. capacity development, considering its working in the past, whether correct or incorrect through the years. Behaviorally speaking, this also constitutes the organizational behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2006) of LGUs. The constraints school from Schein's work shows, in a more pragmatic sense, that the governing practice of LGUs emanate from their perception of how they perceive national governments' governance of the state based on their developed capacities.

We now see a multifaceted interaction involving a complex array of actors. In this situation, there is usually an attempt to seize the interest at whatever levels, whether national or local, by each of the actors, creating a contest of politics of influence and negotiation. This is where the local governments usually yield. This now becomes the core of the constraints school—seen as the new rules of the game in Philippine local governments, especially that despite decentralization, only about 10% of 1,696 local government units have maximized their new corporate powers (Amatong, 2005 as cited by Javier & Mendoza 2007).

## From Governance to Government?

In this paper, it is assumed that through the adoption of a decentralization policy via the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160), the Philippines ventured into the complex world of governance. This assumption is indicative of a purposive desire for institutional change, especially in the formulation of the concept of governance. This paper was thought out from the idea of James Rosenau's (in Rosenau & Czempiel, 1992) 'governance without government' because of the perceived state governance inadequacies that shape the governance of local governments. While Rosenau generally did not qualify developing countries as having governance, he distinguished the government from governance by suggesting that the government refers to the activities that are backed by formal authority, while governance refers to the activities backed by shared goals.

This idea of governance in developing countries comes from the presumption of the major public sector reforms that emanated from the Thatcher and Reagan era in the late 1980s and signaled the start of a global spillover of massive reforms (Kooiman, 1993) creating both a renewed vigor for public sector reforms and hope for the governmental institutions. This happened at the same time with the massive public awareness of the dysfunction of the state (Bevir, 2007). These arguments later became the platform of participatory and accountability anchors that the state, business, and civil society constructed to form the decentralization mechanics and policies.

In the Philippines, the twenty-year Marcos rule and the growing movement of non-government organizations (NGOs), later termed as the civil society, can trace its roots from post-war agrarian unrest. Various movements, parties, ideologies, and personalities converged with the idea to ultimately topple the Marcos regime. Thus, when people power happened in 1986, the transition government of Aquino focused on restoring democracy and eventually distributing the powers across the state.

Redemocratization through decentralization became the hallmark of the transition government of the Aquino administration. The efficiency factor in devolution began to surface during the Ramos administration. The government vigorously pursued market reforms. Trade, banking, and industry were liberalized. A privatization program was pursued to relieve the central government of several functions where it has no comparative advantage (Guevara, 2000). Largely, public sector reforms in the first wave were based on new public management (NPM) principles (Bevir, 2007) particularly on corporatization and democratization and their combinations. Javier

(2002) labeled this as the emergence of public entrepreneurship in the Philippine local governments. The local governments, prescribed by a host of actors and stakeholders including donors, national government agencies, civil movements and the private sector shaped up, and soon best-practice approaches or simply being entrepreneurial mushroomed, validating that the Philippines' decentralization is patterned after supplants of NPM. This constitutes the first wave of decentralization or the Philippines' manifestations of its entry to governance.

The venture of Philippine LGUs into its supposed corporate existence can be classified from both the governance definition of World Bank (1987) as NPM and the United Nations as social development[1] and a third view of governance from a neo-institutionalist perspective, where governance is defined as the steering of institutional arrangements. This steering of institutional arrangements presupposes of course whether it is the state or the LGUs steering their institutions. This does not preclude the idea that the Philippines ventured into decentralization because of both exogenous and endogenous pressures.[2]

The LGC of 1991 has changed many features of Philippine LGUs towards corporate governance. This argument emanates from the general powers and attributes that establish the political and corporate nature of local government units (Chapter 2, Section 14-15). It promulgates that

> every local government unit created or recognized under this Code is a body politic and corporate endowed with powers to be exercised by it in conformity with the law. As such, it shall exercise powers as a political subdivision of the national government and as a corporate entity representing the inhabitants of its territory.

The success of the LGUs' corporate existence can be summarized by the basic premise of a business principle—profitability.

In some ways then, the quality of governance, or to put it succinctly, good governance, is measured using Bevir's definition (2007, p. xl), referring to the institutional barriers to corruption and a functioning market economy. Further, Kooiman (1993) defines governance from an interaction and network perspective that emerges in a socio-political system because of the common efforts of all actors. In this definition, the system becomes once again a progression from local government to local governance and from the hierarchical to the inclusion of other actors. This managerialism provides for the inclusion of actors, meaning a focus on establishing networks and on results.

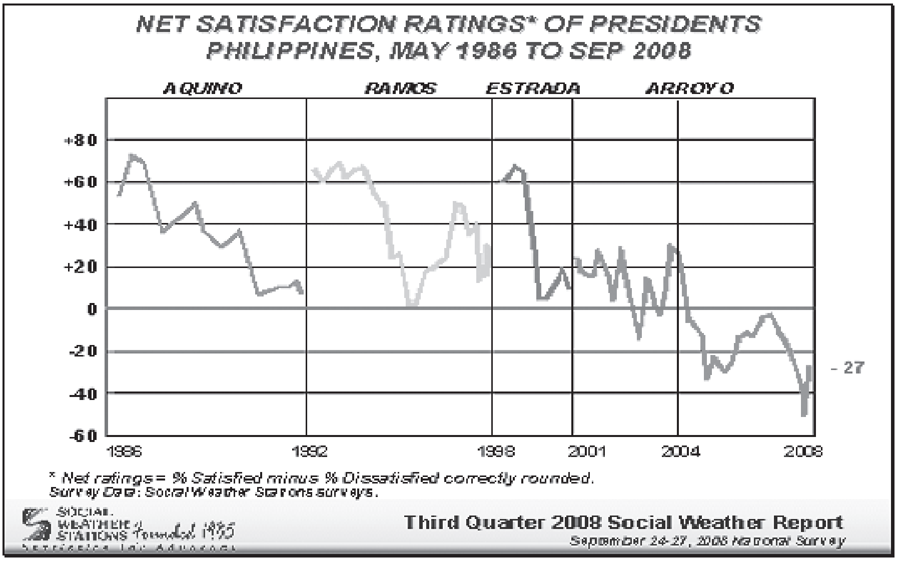
From these definitions, coupled with Rosenau's standpoint on governance definitions, the results from using the complex interplay of actors with shared goals become the basis of governance success. Grindle (2004), however, already presupposes that developing countries will have a difficult time to achieve success based on the good enough governance agenda. The limited capacities and gaps in governance mean there is more to the gradation in the understanding of the evolution of local governments. There are no technical or easy fixes to what is inevitably a long, slow, reversible, and frustrating path towards better performing local governments. This is because as B. C. Smith wrote, "decentralization is essentially the relation between center and local governments" ( 1984).

Understandably, based on the results of several studies, local resistance to national mandates that impose costs is even more severe when state oversight is weak and when the policy goals of the state government are vague (Grindle, 2004). However, in the Philippines and in most developing countries whose democracies are still young, national unfunded mandates while displacing local priorities in favor of state priorities are embraced. This is largely because of loose local development planning, budgeting and capacity, creating state dependence and consequently constraining the management flexibility and autonomy of LGUs. This creates the opportunity for the state to exercise its authority leaving the LGUs to look up to the state, even if they are the final links of the chain in the government hierarchy. This second wave of decentralization is characterized by the difficulty of both the state and local governments to practice and meet decentralization objectives and is leaned towards politics. This reverses the trends from governance to government.

## From Theory to Evidence

The national government's desire for development cannot be doubted. What makes the national government actions or inactions doubtful are the deep-seated distrust that has developed as a result. The conversation of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo with a Commission on Election (COMELEC) official happened at the height of the presidential elections in 2004 and has rocked and continually moves the sentiments of the people against the national government. This opened up the proverbial black box of governance so to speak of the Arroyo administration and stirred up the citizens, the media, and the political opposition to advocate for impeachment complaints—filed year in and year out since Arroyo's assumption into office. The continuous high distrust rating of the former President in particular and her government in general went on a five-year downturn, unprecedented in Philippine history since 1986[3] (Figure 1).

To move status quo, Kurt Lewin's (1943) famous force-field analysis suggested the influence on the passive to become either negatives or positives. In the case of the Philippines, the negative far outweighs the positive through the trust ratings (Social Weather Station, 2008), making fundamental changes for reforms very difficult. This fundamental change is affecting the functions, scope, and tier of local governing. Thus, economic interventions, such as pushing for the expanded value added tax, have sounded national alarms for citizens' concern and worry even if these meant increasing revenue bases. The initiative led to the thinking that the expanded value added tax might be used for political purposes. In fact it caused the defeat of very popular senators for their reelection bid and twenty others in the former President's 24-strong party senatorial line-up in the national elections of 2007. This perceived weak political leadership consequently causing ineffective institutions has undermined reform efforts such as lifestyle checks, the new procurement law, and several



*Source: Social Weather Station, 2008*

*Figure 1.* Net Satisfaction Ratings of Philippine Presidents Since 1986.

national pronouncements on corruption among public officials (Llanto & Gonzales, 2007, not in the list). Pierre and Rothstein (2008) attribute to trust impartiality, accountability, and other governance qualities, which in turn become a major precondition for reforms.

However, at the local government level, the results of the elections showed that the administration candidates overwhelmingly won. The LGUs then became the support base of national government. The meeting of local officials at the Malacanang Palace with former President Arroyo incited concern from the people as the local officials were handed out envelopes containing half a million pesos (Php500,000) which up to now remains unsolved as to what purpose it would serve the local chief executives. Initially, it was justified as party funds, then, poverty alleviation funds, and nothing was heard about this since then. Further, the seven hundred twenty eight million pesos (PhP728,000,000) fertilizer budget to local governments prior to the national elections in 2004 was distributed in known urban areas even in Metro Manila where there are no agricultural lands to speak of. There were no criteria for the distribution; the fund was distributed even during an election ban on downloading of funds. This case caused one high Philippine Department of Agriculture official to be jailed in Kenosha, Wisconsin in the United States—there allegedly to escape a Senate inquiry—creating international embarrassment. The list of irregularities that affect the LGUs as a result of national traditions of governance is long[4] and when it becomes public, the administration suddenly becomes silent and the supposed offenders go scot-free. This partly explains local governmental support to the state, as the windfall largely favors them. (The said official even ran for the highest elective post in one province in the last elections.)

A very recent blow to autonomy was the peace agreement that was supposed to be signed by the national government with the Islamic separatists. The Supreme Court of the Philippines finally ruled on the issue of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) and ascertained it as unconstitutional. The MOA-AD was not known among key stakeholders, specifically the local governments whose geographical areas in Mindanao were included. It was the local governments, specifically the office of then Vice Governor Emmanuel Pinol of North Cotabato in Mindanao that sought a redress in the Supreme Court, as the administration was defiant. The tribunal refused to go along with the argument of the Arroyo administration. The secrecy by which the administration conducted its supposed governing process ran contrary to the basic tenets of accountability and good governance. Now, war is brewing again in Mindanao and thousands are displaced.

In the many cases of deemed irregularities, the fundamental prerequisites of democratic institutions are missing (Crook & Manor 1998; Manor 1999; Bardhan & Mookherjee 2000 as cited by Rodriguez-Pose & Sandall, 2008), i.e. accountability, and even the credibility and capacity to govern. Local governments are likely to become captured by national elites if transactions are without a minimal degree of accountability thus increasing local rent-seeking. A good case in point is the devolved function of agriculture extension that has re-emerged as a centralized feature from the agriculture and fishery extension system (AFES) proposal under the Strengthening of the National Extension System to Accelerate Agriculture and Fisheries Development bill. The policy instrument dictates that the municipal agriculture staff devolved to the municipalities should be transferred to the province as the core LGU unit of operation[5]. These actions by national governments has been referred to as decentralization within centralization.

## CASE ONE

### National Normative Orientation as a Constraints School: The Case of the Local Financing Policy

In the policy arena of local financing, the LGC of 1991 enables the LGUs to exercise their power to create and broaden their own sources for revenue collection and claim their right to a just share in the national taxes. It also gives the LGUs the power to levy taxes, fees or charges that would accrue exclusively for their use and disposition. In addition, the 1996 LGU Financing Framework, developed by the Philippines Department of Finance (DOF) with assistance from the World Bank, forms the cornerstone of the existing LGU financing arrangements. The role of the government credit programs is to pave the way for a greater private capital markets' participation in financing local development. Thus, the main objective of the government policy is to improve LGUs' access to private capital markets (Llanto, Lamberto, Manasan, & Laya, 1998). These objectives of the financing framework emanate from the recognition that [1] LGUs have varying levels and records of creditworthiness and bankability, and [2] their financing needs are huge. Therefore, the private sector (BOT investors, bondholders, commercial banks), the GFIs and MDF all have a role to play in achieving LGU financing needs (1996 LGU Financing Framework, DOF).

To assist LGUs in the financing scheme of their functions, the LGC of 1991 provides that approximately 40% of the national government revenues be distributed to LGUs in the form of internal transfers (IRA). This allocation gives LGUs of all sizes and all classes a stable source of revenue. This has also served as collateral against which almost all loans issued to LGUs have been secured. This corporate function of local financial planning and management (LFPM) play a critical role in the management of the LGUs in the Philippines. Without the IRA, the LGUs would not have been able to issue bonds or to borrow from the GFIs. Further, concrete action plans were not formulated and agreed upon by concerned government agencies for implementation of the 1996 local financing framework, on top of the concomitant dependence on IRA. As a result, the progress made on the objectives embodied in the framework has been quite uneven (Pelligrini, 2006) (See Table 1).

A very good case in point was an experience of the Mandaluyong City local government. Mandaluyong is one of the metropolitan cities in Metro Manila that has managed a population growth rate of less than one percent. The city suffered a decrease by almost sixty million pesos in the annual share of cities and towns from the proceeds of the national internal revenue tax collection, the IRA. The IRA was computed using a formula that took into account population, territory, and equal sharing. Under the Local Government Code, each province, city, and municipality's share is based on the following formula: 50% for population and 25% each for land area and equal sharing. As a result, cities with the biggest populations get the highest IRA share. Those with smaller populations receive less. Former Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. bewailed the fact that cities and towns that successfully practiced good population management are "punished," instead of rewarded, by having their share of national taxes severely cut because they have managed their population growth very well. In this case, population growth is managed by a rate of less than one percent (Yap, 2008).

At the same time, many LGUs, particularly municipalities, are highly dependent on IRA with an average of around 70.7% since 1992 with their own source of revenue averaging only at 25.97% (Commission on Audit, various years, as cited by Gera, 2008). Further, it has been found that releases are not timely and appropriations not full. Manasan (2007) said that the mandated IRA share was not appropriated in full for the fiscal years 2000, 2001, and 2004, while the IRA appropriations were not released in full for fiscal years 1998 and 1999. The IRA appropriations were also not released on time for fiscal year 1999. Thus, many LGU chief executives, especially those outside Luzon, have made follow-ups with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Further, many LGUs have avoided updating their tax codes as there is no incentive element to the IRA transfer formula. They have found it more convenient to avoid raising taxes (a power granted under the LGC) by relying on IRA transfers (Pelligrini, 2006). Thus, former Secretary of Finance Juanita Amatong commented that only about ten percent of the total LGUs have maximized their corporate powers ( 2005).

Scholars like Llanto et al. (1998) identified several constraints that further impede the development of local financing in various arenas. Among these are: the lack of reliable information about LGUs; the possibility of political interference in project management or in debt servicing; uncertainty in the management capacity at the LGU level; uncertainty in the quality of feasibility studies; lack of an independent rating agency; lack of a market for secondary trading; and lack of access to IRA as security for LGU obligations. This makes the objective of LGU Financing Framework of accommodating the more creditworthy LGUs to private sources of capital mainly untouched. One reason for this is the heavy dependence on the IRA and the very weak revenue generating capacity of LGUs, specifically their local economic enterprises (LEEs). In a 2007 study by Manasan, it was found that the LEEs that posted net loss were 77% in the province, 63% in the cities, and 56% in the municipalities. Another reason is the very weak enabling local policies enacted by LGUs to support local economic development (LED). The results of studies such as these weaken the argument of corporatization of LGUs.

*Table 1.*

*The LGUs Financing Framework Practice Today.*

| 1996 LGU Financing Framework Objectives | Current Financing Framework Practice |
|---|---|
| 1. Number of LGUs practicing their corporate powers | 1. Less than 10% of all LGUs exercise their new financing mandate (Amatong, 2005) |
| 2. Develop the LGU bond market | 2. Only 21 of 1,696 or 1.24% of all LGUs have issued bonds (BLGF, 2005) |
| 3. Increase LGU use of BOT (build-operate-transfer) arrangements | 3. Only 15 of 1,696 or .88% of all LGUs have BOT projects (BOT Center, 2005) |
| 4. Improve the capacity of LGUs to raise their own revenues (Excellence in Corporate Practice) | 4. Only 8 of 171 or 4.8% of all LGU awardees of Galing Pook are LFPM-related (Galing Pook Foundation, 2006) |
| 5. Promote LGU access to private banks | 5. Private banks are not encouraged to provide LGU financing schemes and arrangements |

*Source:* Javier, A.B. & Mendoza, R.R. (2007). Organizational Assistance to Local Financial Planning and Management in the Philippines.

## CASE TWO

## Local Governments' Capacities as a Constraints School: The Case of Local Actors Association

In the Philippines, an association of local government units' officials has been established with membership reaching more than 15,000. Since 2004, continuing capacity-building programs have been offered and conducted to equip the members to become effective legislators. This association has also launched a continuing local legislation education program which members can avail of depending on the decisions made by the executive committee. These are subject to the approval of the members' travel and attendance by their respective local government units, usually by the mayor.

Essentially, the education program has as its focus the leadership capability of the members. The Local Government Academy (LGA-DILG), having been able to co-sponsor a training event in 2004 is supportive of this initiative. A policy development course, in cooperation with a leading university, also supported this capability building initiative in 2007.

However, the absence of a standard legislative capacity-building framework hindered the progression of the initiative. The former must be put in place to provide the necessary legislative support system with backing from the academe and full assistance mechanisms for its members and the community. This is critical to the effective functioning of the association.

Factors affecting the progression of the initiatives to strengthen the association of LGU officials were identified and validated through a national survey conducted in January 2008. There were 1,466 respondents to the survey. The national executive committee utilized results of the survey to come up with responsive policy formulation guidelines and an efficient administration proposal (see Table 2).

The results emphasized the importance of capacity building as a service of the group. However, it should be noted that capacity-building ranks only third among the three priorities identified by the association. The members of the association prioritized their membership from an administrative benefits standpoint stating they should be provided health, hospitalization, and scholarships and from an awards standpoint saying they must be recognized for their accomplishments.

Further, 94.1% of the respondents called for the clarification of their roles as legislators, leaders, and politician's vis-à-vis the executive branch of the local government hierarchy. This is in the area of the legislative role perception as confused with executive roles through their oversight functions of the local bureaucracy. The data represented glaring governance constraints.

*Table 2.*

*Summary of Local Capacities as a Constraints School.*

| Local Government Roles | Needs Perspectives | Demand Perspectives |
|---|---|---|
| **As League Members** | Provision of benefits to family dependents | Prioritization of administrative benefits and recognition over capacity building |
| **As Politicians** | Primacy of political roles over legislative roles | Exposure and orientation about legislative, community, and citizen engagement |
| **As Legislator Leaders** | Legislative function as councilors | Political role perception as councilors versus policy development and enforcement vis-à-vis the bureaucracy |
| | Knowledge and background in legislative governance | Research and policy knowledge on new laws |
| | | Translation of policies into poverty alleviation projects with the LGU executive branch |

While the continuing local legislation education program is a good take-off for interventions, there remains a void on the work to be fulfilled for the objectives of the members. In particular Section 1.1 and 1.2 of Article IV of their Constitution and by-laws states that the objective of the group is to establish a nationwide forum to give life, meaning, and substance to the constitutional mandate on local autonomy and decentralization of powers and bring the government closer to the people. Research and policy knowledge on new local laws and their ability to translate policies into poverty alleviation programs are acknowledged deficits.

Current leaders of the association are exploring the possibility of re-creating the existing group and forming an agreement such that it will be called a Local Legislators Center. The aim of the association includes contracting out research to study the establishment of a center. The establishment of the center is aimed to provide grants for training, credited as degree units. A key feature is also to provide for the structure and mechanisms of a standard delivery of all capacity-building programs. Further the center will stress the importance of a common legislative agenda such as food security.

The initiative is also aimed to progress and incorporate a policy think tank that provides a nationwide policy service to its members and the community at large. As such, it is envisioned to transform the current association and provide an influence in policy formulation at the national and local levels. The Legislators Center can dispense policy advice, lobby for, and provide assistance as their key services on top of the capacity building program.

## CASE THREE

### Politics-Corporate Balance as a Constraints School: The Case of the Participatory Policy on Recall

In the Philippines, the law on decentralization provides both a systems theory and a network of societal actors' assumptions in the decision making process as part of the autonomy provided for by the law on decentralization. The citizens' participation is guaranteed under the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 where the LGUs are mandated to create their local development councils (LDC) to collaboratively plan and decide for the community's future.  Here 25% of the LDC members should come from civil society. Citizens' participation is likewise guaranteed to recall publicly elected officials as a policy of the state. This is to ensure accountability of public officials through recall mechanisms (LGC 2001, Chapter 1, Section 2b) by the citizens or network of citizens. Recall is a process that allows citizens to remove and replace a public official before the end of a specific term; thus, creating a balance tilted towards the LGUs to be more corporate or managerial in their approach to good local governance.

The law on citizens' recall as part of the LGC of 2001 was amended through RA 9244 on February 19, 2004 (Table 3). The amendment generally provided each LGU an opportunity to classify the total number of registered voters to allow the petition for local officials to commence.

*Table 3.*

*Policy on Citizen Recall of Elective LGU Officials.*

| Local Government Code of 1991 | RA 9244 amendment approved on Feb. 19, 2004 |
|---|---|
| Recall of any elective provincial, city, municipal, or barangay official may be validly initiated upon petition of at least 25% of the total number of registered voters in the local government unit concerned during the election in which the local official sought to be recalled was elected. At least 25% in the case of local government units with a voting population of not more than 20,000 | At least 20% in the case of local government units with a voting population of at least 20,000 but not more than 75,000, provided that in no case shall the required petitioners be less than 5,000 |
| | At least 15% in the case of local government units with a voting population of at least 75,000 but not more than 300,000, provided, however, that in no case shall the required number of petitioners be less than 15,000 |
| | At least 10% in the case of local government units with a voting population of over 300,000, provided, however, that in no case shall the required petitioners be less than 45,000 |

Over the years, pro-decentralization scholars have pointed to citizens' engagement as a mechanism of voice and exit. It pressures the government to perform well and be accountable in its responsibilities. These mechanisms extend even within the bounds of removing public officials through the instrument of recall. The recall of public officials by the citizens is aimed at an effective and speedy solution to the problem of officials with unsatisfactory performance. Recall is a power granted to the people who, in concert, desire to change their leaders for reasons only they, as a collective, can justify (Angobung vs. COMELEC, 269 SCRA 245, 1997).

The case of Pampanga Governor Eddie Panlilio was in the news during this period. Governor Panlilio is a Catholic priest who ran as governor in the 2007 elections. His bid for office created quite a stir in both local and national government circles. It has been a public secret that Pampanga has become a haven for the illegal numbers game, popularly known as "jueteng." Thus, a priest running for the highest local position piqued the interest of the public. Pampanga is also the hometown of the then President Arroyo and one of her sons served as a representative. Election polls presented six candidates whose votes were as follows: Eddie Panlilio (219,706), then Board Member Lilia

Pineda (218,559), and then Governor Mark Lapid (210,876). Panlilio got only 33.8% of the total vote, but this was enough to give him victory by a 1,147-vote plurality over his closest rival Pineda. The total votes cast were 649,844 or about 65% of the estimated one million voting population (Pascual, 2008). Thus, followers of either Pineda or Lapid by virtue of the logic of applying RA9244, of at least ten percent of total votes cast, can mobilize those who voted for them and initiate the recall against the incumbent, in this case, Governor Panlilio. In fact, it was a campaign staff of Ms Pineda who filed the citizens recall and it was the running mate, the current vice governor, Joseller Guiao who was leading the provincial government to officially fund the recall by allotting Php20,000,000 of the provincial coffers.

Earlier, in 1997 in Caloocan City in Metro Manila, then incumbent Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo won over former Mayor Macario Asistio Jr, a member of the moneyed and well-entrenched political family that has ruled the city for decades. Malonzo’s recall was the first heavily publicized practice of recall in the Philippines. In 1996, barangay captains loyal to Asistio filed a recall petition against Malonzo and demanded new elections. The group stated that the mayor had lost the trust and confidence of his constituents for allegedly misusing funds meant for the city's teachers (PCIJ, 2002). The 1,057 village officials, constituting a majority of the members of the Preparatory Recall Assembly of the City of Caloocan, met and upon deliberation and election, voted for the approval of recall, expressing loss of confidence in Mayor Malonzo.

The same is true for an economic zone local government, the Municipality of Cabuyao in the province of Laguna, 45km south of Manila. Mayor Isidro L. Hemedes, Jr. ran on a platform of change against a husband and wife team occupying the town hall for a combined 12 years. Mayor Hemedes won with close to 7,000 more votes cast for him against the losing mayoralty candidate. The wide winning margin notwithstanding, a recall petition is still possible given the number of votes by the losing party. The same scenario happened as in the first two cases where it was a party mate of the losing mayoralty candidate who lodged the citizen’s recall. Hearsays abound regarding the authenticity of the signatures that attested a vote of no confidence and loss of trust against the incumbent Mayor. The national COMELEC suspended the recall proceedings against the incumbent mayor.

In the three cases (the province, the city and a municipality), smart and manipulative politicians and those who have lost in the elections have used the same voice and exit to empower citizens, maneuvering the citizens through recall elections. This has resulted in the use of citizens' engagement to launch a massive campaign against a political opponent outside the regular schedule of an election. This happens within the bounds of law that supposedly ensures the participation of the people for a vote of no confidence against a public official. In order to capture elective positions that they were unable to gain through the regular electoral routes, the elite now use this same mechanism. This situation leaves out corporate efficiency as a major priority in the local government as almost all politicians are on the lookout for political survival.

## FURTHER ANALYSIS

The three cases suggest that local governments have no specific distinctiveness as they are shaped by the multiple interactions with society at various levels. However, the formal authority of how the national government performs its politico-administrative function over the local governments has to a large extent shaped what the LGUs are today. This is because the LGUs' autonomy provides them the leeway to move vertically and horizontally within and outside the bureaucracy. Vertically, the national government still controls and influences the local governments, as majority of the LGUs are not into sustainable revenue generation programs, creating a culture of "holding on to power and authority" by the national government and the "yielding in" by the local government. Second, party politics is not influencing voter results; thus, loyalty to persons/candidates becomes norm.

This ushers in the situation where each of the local governments have their own understanding and perceptions of how national governments influence the governance of the local governments. Rhodes & Bevir (2001) provide a very good complementary decentered analysis that states that external factors influence governance only through the ways in which they are understood by the relevant local actors. How local actors perceive the state structures local actions. Because a vast majority of the LGUs are not into the practice of their new corporate functions, they are opting for the safest structuring of governance, which is state dependence. This explains why the LGUs are banded by a common interpretation of collective support from the national government particularly former President Arroyo despite the national government's shortcomings and low trust ratings in recent history that even limit local autonomous governance. On a parallel note, the impeachment cases filed at the national level have also been adopted or mimicked at the local level. The three cases on recall validate these and have created their own local adoption of impeachment procedure, as the recall for election becomes an alternative. This explains the national normative orientation that shapes local governance.

In the case of capacities, the local actors' association's preference for administrative benefits takes precedence over their own capacity building. Highlighting their demand for clarifications of their legislative roles vis-à-vis project development, management reflects the high level of political and technical understanding required for their elective position. For decentralization to work, it requires the existence of democratically functioning local governments to keep politicians accountable (Agrawal & Ribot, 2000; Ostrom, 2000; Andersson, 2003; Rodden, 2003 cited in Rodriguez-Pose & Sandall, 2008) including a capacitated workforce.

In this case, three variables stand out, i.e. demand, supply, and content which have influenced or shaped local institutions. While the Philippine government invested in local capacity development 43 years ago, way ahead in the region, certain practices have eroded its usefulness and urgency (Briones, 2008). There are many reasons why the need for local capacity development is not translated into demand. Oftentimes, heads of LGUs and policymakers do not appreciate the relationship between recognized demand for reform and capacity development. They can be preoccupied with demands for more education, health and infrastructure but do not see the link with capacity development.

Further, many elected local officials treat capacity development as junkets by either sending ill-prepared staff, defeating capacity development objectives. Second, the ability as supplier of capacity development is also a big question at whatever levels. It can be noted that a large number of capacity development institutions are concentrated in the National Capital Region while the need and demand for capacity development is obviously greater in the countryside[6]. The LGUs are also seeking various providers aside from the DILG Local Government Academy. Lastly, the content of capacity development interventions throughout the Philippines is very uneven. These would range from innovative, cutting-edge tools and programs to the age-old practice of lectures and recitation, including donor-driven methodologies as well. Even as capacity development institutions are organizing themselves into capacity development service provider networks, many providers and practitioners are still out of the loop (Briones, 2008).

On the state's side, Weiss' (1998) arguments of capacity exist in a given context only on issues that are under study; meaning they vary across areas. For example, while there may be good economic indices demonstrating good state performance, politically it is not translated into actions that create increased trust. The performance showing distintegration into self-serving interest of the national bureaucracy rather than achieving collective goals is what is influencing the local governments more; thus failing in its transformative capacity.

In addition, national normative orientations and local capacities manifest in the understanding of the politics-corporate balance at the local level. Most politicians complain that citizens pressure them for personal favors whether legitimate or not because of the nature of being a public servant. The idea they say presupposes that citizens might as well get a slice of the pie of government services. Thus, services outside the bureaucratic mandates became the norm. These services are reflected in government expenditures as the local pork barrel, which was regarded as binding and legal.

The patterns developed as a result are the extreme point of view where the poor ask their benefit from government and the same question is asked by the middle up to the highest level. In this case, the bureaucracy which is supposed to provide the corporate balance for politics is at a status quo. This is because politics is gaining the upper hand. The politician who is the chief executive controls it. This validates institutional economics literature, where, institutional actors such as politicians behave in accordance with what helps them to advance their political careers, while bureaucrats respond to rules that provide rewards and punishment in their organizations. In other words, bureaucrats pursue their own agenda, which does not necessarily coincide with the interest of the politician. Therefore, nothing has been done to respond to the needs of the communities (Pagaran, 2001).

Thus, corporate functioning marked by private financing under the 1996 local financing framework, even after 12 years, will be hard to come by on the premise that politics might intervene with financing. This happens because budget decisions fail to identify real issues as majority of the LGUs are not doing projections and assessment of trends and growth rates (Carino, 2008, cited in Llanto et al., 1998), virtually making the annual investments plan largely discretionary rather than corporate. There is a regressive trend where richer LGUs (e.g. Quezon City, Makati, and Manila, among others) maximize their corporate powers instead of those LGUs that are in need. With this scenario, government-financing institutions become a monopoly funder of local development projects. This is why the objective even of a graduation policy, meaning good performing and creditworthy LGUs to graduate on IRA, is wishful thinking.

*Table 4.*

*Summary of the Constraints School.*

| **Constraints** | **Should Be** | **Actual Trend** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Politics From Above*** | | |
| Normative orientations | A decentralized system where more power, authority and responsibilities are provided (Sec 2a, Ch.1, LGC 1991) | Decentralization happens within a centralized bureaucracy with LGU national support due largely to hard budget constraints. |
| Institutional Capacities to Respond | Optimizes regulation and authority and rationale usage of authority e.g. the President shall exercise general supervision over local government units to ensure that their acts are within the scope of their prescribed powers and functions (Sec. 25, Ch. 3, LGC 1991) | The general supervision of LGUs has largely been on a rent seeking approach emanating from the high distrust rating of the President. |
| Politics-Corporate Balance | Establish a Government that shall embody the people's ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop patrimony, and provide security, independence, and democracy under the rule of law and provide for a regime of truth, justice, freedom, | The pork barrel system or grants from the President's Office that are distributed through political patronage are regressive and are inconsistent with devolution (Guevara, 2005). This system has been adopted as a practice at the local government level. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | love, equality, and peace (Preamble, 1987 Philippines Constitution) | |
| Politics From Below | | |
| Normative Orientations | The operative principles of decentralization which includes effective allocation of powers, function and responsibilities; accountable, efficient and dynamic organizational structures; just share in revenues; inter-local cooperation; upgrading of local leadership qualities; participation of all sectors; and continuing LGU improvement and quality of lives of the community (Sec. 3 Ch.1 LGC 1991) | Local leadership stemming from a politicized bureaucracy both national and local is hierarchical. Local bureaucracy and legislatures yield in to national leadership in the hope of self-seeking windfall. |
| Institutional Capacities to Respond | The capabilities of LGUs, especially the municipalities and barangays, shall be enhanced by providing them with opportunities to participate actively in the implementation of national programs and projects and continuing mechanisms by legislative enabling acts and administrative and organizational reforms (Sec. 3g-h, Ch.1 LGC 1991) | Capacity building has been a continual prioritization of supra national, national and civil movements to assist the LGUs. However, there is a shift in focus from individual to institutional capacity development where the linkage between and among capacity development and budget is still a big issue. |
| Politics-Corporate Balance | Every local government unit is a body politic and corporate endowed with powers to be exercised by it in conformity with law. As such, it shall exercise powers as a political subdivision of the national government and as a corporate entity representing the inhabitants of its territory (Sec 15, Ch.2, LGCC 1991) | Majority of LGUs depend on the national government. The corporate powers have not been fully optimized. The citizens in general have been disengaged with civil movements, each institution creating their own spaces for local governance. |

## CONCLUSION

A focus on conceptual analysis like the constraints school provided the mode of understanding traditions in shaping local governance. The workings of any policy, capacity, both individual and institutional depend on the ways in which all sorts of actors internalize behavior, policies, and actions. The exposition of the constraints school requires a shift in the understanding of local governance storyline to introduce the basics of the new concepts involved in the balance between politics and corporate as political institutions. This means that the balance of the political versus the corporate becomes a homogenous concern for all local governance actors.

The governance approach gives the state a prominent feature of being a model for local governments where it will be able to generate the needed structure for the local actors to adapt, solve their problems, and conduct themselves professionally and display characteristics associated with good governance. Regrettably, the nature of institutional improvement adhered to by the Philippines is biased. It is partial to a best practice managerial model and does not produce the politics-corporate balance needed from a political organization such as the local governments. This is due largely to national and local capacities to govern, consequently alienating them.

Lastly, the reluctance of the national government and its agencies to surrender their authority in the appellation of decentralization vis-à-vis LGU performance means local governments have been re-shaped by national traditions of governance. This complements Goldratt's earlier argument that there is one aspect in the institution that constrains its ability to achieve the goal, which is considered as its weakest link. This evolution of the constraints school implicitly establishes the outcomes of the current local governance in the Philippines as an unintended consequence of the practice of decentralization through the nine-year experience. Further, this denotes how Rosenau has defined the government on its activities backed by formal authorities—these have become the rules of the game, unfortunately, again.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## END NOTES

[1] The World Bank defines governance as the management of the country's economic and social resources for development and it refers to the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. The United Nations defines governance, as the complex mechanisms, process, relationships, and institutions through which citizens articulate their interest, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences, respectively.

[2] See Javier, Aser B. (2002) where he argued that decentralization in the Philippines emerged because of global pressures (exogenous) and desire for changes in politics and management (endogenous).

[3] The Social Weather Station (SWS) net satisfaction ratings for President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo have been consistently low in the last five years.

[4] The long lists include the North Rail Project whose costs have lately ballooned from $503 million to $900 million. Another classic case is the $329-million national broadband network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. and various incidents that implicate national governments.

[5] The proposal of the Department of Agriculture is to strengthen the present Agricultural Training Institute and transform it into the Philippines Agriculture and Fishery Extension Agency (PAFEA) where the province is the operational core.

[6] See Mendoza and Javier 2006. Institutional Mapping of Assistance in Local Financial Planning and Management in the Philippines. EPRA-Ateneo de Manila University for detailed capacity development programs.

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# Potential Impact of Climate Change on Marine Mammal Biodiversity of Southeast Asia: (A Review)

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Climate change is affecting the oceans, and various studies have shown potential impacts on marine mammals. Impacts could be direct via habitat loss; or indirect through changes in the availability of prey, thus changing distribution and migration patterns and decreasing reproductive success of marine mammals. Further, increased water temperature could increase susceptibility to diseases and enhance impacts of other stressors. Species that have limited distributions and have little chance of expanding their range will be most vulnerable.

Although most recent studies have focused on marine mammal species found in mid to high latitudes because of the relatively greater potential temperature changes in these areas, impacts on tropical species are also being recognized. Most vulnerable are those with limited distributions, particularly the tropical riverine, estuarine and coastal species. Many of these species are found in Southeast Asia, a region that houses 32 of the 109-plus species of marine mammals. Among those with limited distribution that are already threatened are the Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*); finless porpoise (*Neophocaena phocaenoides*); Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*); and the dugong (*Dugong dugon*). These species have been classified as Vulnerable by the IUCN in its Red List, except for *S. chinensis*, which is considered Near Threatened. Five sub-populations of the Irrawaddy dolphins, all found in Southeast Asia, are Critically Endangered. Adding to

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these threats are the high human population growth rates typical of the coastal areas in Southeast Asia, increased dependence on the ocean as a source of food as the intensifying El Niño brings drought into inland areas, and lack of regulation or enforcement of fishery and conservation laws.

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**KEYWORDS:** climate change, Southeast Asia, marine mammals, dolphins, cetaceans, dugongs, sea water temperature, Irrawaddy, finless porpoise, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, shifting geographic range

## INTRODUCTION

Scientific evidence has shown that the earth's climate is changing (IPCC, 2007a). Land and sea surface temperatures have been increasing over the last century in a large-scale and consistent manner. It is believed that at least in the last 50 years, human activities have contributed largely to the trend through combustion of fossil fuel (IPCC, 2007a) and this trend is likely to continue (Learmonth et al., 2006).

Over the 20th century, the global average surface temperature has increased by 0.6 ± 0.2 °C, with an increase of 0.4-0.7 °C in air temperature over the oceans and a 0.4-0.8 °C increase in sea-surface temperature (IPCC, 2001). The increase in global temperature from 1956 to 2005 is nearly twice that of the 100 years from 1906 to 2005 (IPCC, 2007a). Depending on the climate change model used, it is projected that globally, land and sea surface temperatures will increase by between 1.1–6.4 °C by 2100, with increases in higher north latitudes being more pronounced (IPCC, 2007a). It has also been observed that the ocean has been taking up over 80% of the heat being added to the climate system, and 69% of that heat is being absorbed in the upper 700 m of the oceans (IPCC, 2007b).

Climate change can impact the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems by first altering their physical and geochemical characteristics (Learmonth et al. 2006), then impacting their biological components. Among the physical and geochemical impacts of climate change on the marine environment are increase in temperature, decreases in sea-ice cover, rise in sea level, increases in $CO_2$ concentrations, and changes in salinity, pH, oxygen solubility, rainfall patterns, storm frequency and intensity, wind speed, wave conditions and climate patterns (IPCC, 2007a).

These alterations in the physical and biochemical characteristics can, in turn, influence the biological components of the ecosystem, affecting the distribution and abundances of plants and animals, community structure, prey availability and abundance, composition and abundance of competitors and predators, habitat use, timing and range of migration, vulnerability to diseases and pollutants, timing of breeding, reproductive success and survival (Tynan & De Master, 1997; Würsig, 2002; Booth & Zeller, 2005; Learmonth et al., 2006). Climate change can also add more strain to species and populations that are already burdened by other anthropogenic pressures such as overharvesting, pollution, fragmentation and habitat destruction (Salvadeo et al. 2010). Such pressures could lead to local extirpations or even species extinctions and undermine the resilience of ecosystems to adapt to other changes.

Ecosystems and species have been affected by climate change in the past. For example during the Pleistocene (in the last 1.8 million years) temperature and precipitation also fluctuated, but in a much slower rate compared to this century, giving the global biota a chance to cope through evolutionary changes by employing natural adaptive strategies (IPCC, 2002). Past changes took place in a landscape where ecosystems were not severely stressed, habitats not alarmingly fragmented, and with the plant and animal populations not receiving added pressures from human activities as they do today. Habitat fragmentation has isolated many populations and most likely decreased genetic variability, affecting their ability to cope through natural evolutionary means (IPCC, 2002).

Whereas impacts of climate change are easily measured and predicted in some marine organisms (e.g. coral reefs, plankton, shellfish, fish), their likely effects on large animals and those that are found at the top of the food chain are not immediately evident (Moore 2009). Several recent reviews have dealt with potential effects of climate change on marine mammals (e.g. MacLeod et al., 2005; Booth & Zeller 2005; Simmonds and Isaac, 2007; Elliot & Simmonds, 2007; Learmonth et al., 2006; MacLeod, 2009; Alter, Simmonds, & Brandon, 2010; Gambaiani et al., 2009; Moore, 2009; Salvadeo et al., 2010). Many of these reviews deal with the effects on species found in mid and high latitudes where impacts can be more profound. Only a few authors have considered implications of climate change for marine mammal species in the tropics. This review will focus on potential effects of climate change on marine mammals as a whole but particularly on potential impacts on marine mammals in Southeast Asia.

## Marine Mammal Distribution

The term marine mammals includes three higher taxa of mammals that are not phylogenetically related, the Cetacea (dolphins, whales and porpoises) in the Order Cetartiodactyla, the Order Sirenia (sea cows, manatees and dugongs) and members of the Order Carnivora (seals, sea lions, sea otters, walruses and polar bears). Although lacking in phylogenetic links, these mammals are often thought of as a group because they all rely in the aquatic, though not necessarily marine environment, in all, or part of their existence, and have evolved similar anatomical and physiological adaptations to aquatic life (Jefferson, Hung, & Würsing, 2008).

Although some marine mammal species like the killer whale, (*Orcinus orca*), and the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) occur throughout the world's oceans, the distribution of most species is influenced by physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the environment (Forcada, 2009). Water temperature, water depth and the availability of prey (influenced in turn by bottom topography, salinity, ocean currents and primary productivity) tend to determine the ecological distribution of many marine mammals (Forcada, 2009; MacLeod, 2009).

In general, water temperature appears to be the main factor that influences the geographic ranges of most marine mammals, with the other factors primarily influencing the fine-scale distribution of the species within that geographic range (MacLeod, 2009; Learmonth et al., 2006). Latitudinal zones, i.e. tropical, sub-tropical, temperate, Antarctic or Arctic define the distribution of many marine mammals (Forcada, 2009). Some species are exclusive to a particular zone. For example the bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*), the beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*), the narwhal (*Monodon monocerus*) and the polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*), are restricted to the icy waters of the Arctic (Forcada, 2009). Others, like the long-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala melas*) and the Atlantic white-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*) are temperate species with thermal limits in either directions, and some, like Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*), and spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*) are restricted to only tropical waters (Forcada, 2009; MacLeod, 2009; Learmonth et al., 2006). Some species move between these latitudinal zones. For example the grey whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) and humpback whale undergo long-distance seasonal migrations between warm-water tropical calving grounds in winter and high-latitude cold-water feeding grounds in summer.

MacLeod (2009) proposed three hypothesis to help explain the linkage between water temperature and the geographic ranges of marine mammals: [1] various species have thermal limits, although this would seem unlikely given the well insulated large bodies of marine mammals and their ability to thermo-regulate, [2] temperature affects the distribution of the marine mammals' preferred food and therefore indirectly also affects their distribution (Simmonds & Isaac 2007) and [3] water temperature determines the results of competitive interactions between species of similar ecological requirements (MacLeod et al., 2008). More research is recommended to ascertain which of these hypotheses is most likely to explain the linkage.

## Impacts of the Changing Climate on Marine Mammals–Global Scenario

Predicting the impacts of climate change on marine mammals is difficult. Firstly because predicting future changes in global climate, which will be the result of various interactions between its components (i.e. atmosphere, ocean, land surface, ice areas and the biosphere), is a challenging task and secondly because very little is known about the specific habitat preferences of marine mammals and their abilities to adapt to rapid changes in their environment (Elliot & Simmonds 2007, Learmonth et al. 2006). To complicate matters, climate change is also predicted to modify human behavior and activities. For example decreased ice cover in the Arctic may increase shipping activities, oil and gas explorations and fishing, adding more pressure to the already stressed Arctic species (Alter et al., 2010).

### *Direct Effects*

The impacts of climate change on marine mammals are expected to be varied in different areas. Some impacts may be direct, such as [1] increased water temperatures resulting in shifts in species' geographic range (MacLeod et al., 2005; Learmonth et al., 2006; Elliot & Simmonds, 2007; MacLeod, 2009) and, [2] reduced sea-ice and rising sea level affecting polar seals' haul-out sites (Learmonth et al., 2006).

It is expected that as the sea surface warms, the tropical zones will expand into higher latitudes, the temperate zones will shift toward the poles and the polar zones will contract (MacLeod, 2009). Alongside this change it is expected that mobile organisms will react by also shifting their distribution in order to remain within their preferred 'environmental envelope' (MacLeod, 2009; Simmonds & Elliot, 2009). This shift has already been observed in the white beaked dolphin in Scotland (MacLeod et al., 2005), northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*) in the Bay of Biscay (MacLeod, 2009) and the Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) in the northeastern Pacific (Salvadeo et al., 2010).

Shifting geographic ranges, however, may be limited by the presence of barriers such as land masses. For example, the land mass of Asia may prevent the northward movement of some cetacean species in the Indian Ocean as the water warms. Another example is the endangered vaquita (*Phocaena sinus*) whose distribution is limited only to the northern Gulf of California. The 'closed embayment' of its habitat would prevent it from moving northwards to cooler waters if water temperature increases and prey availability changes (Simmonds & Elliot, 2009). In the same manner, bathymetric discontinuities can limit cetaceans from moving into their preferred habitat (MacLeod, 2009). The opposite may be true for other species. Because of changes in water temperature, barriers that have prevented them from colonizing other habitats in the past may be weakened or even may disappear, "releasing" them to have access to new resources. In the framework developed by MacLeod (2009) that incorporated 'barriers', 'releasers', temperature ranges, water depth preferences, climatic category and conservation status due to changes in species' range, he predicted that the geographic range of 88% of all cetacean species may be affected by changes in water temperature brought about by climate change. Of these, 47% of cetacean species are "anticipated to have unfavorable implications for their conservation" and for the 21%, the changes may "put at least one geographically isolated population of the species at risk of extinction".

The shift will have more serious implications for the distribution and survival of polar species such as the beluga, the bowhead whale, narwhal and polar bear, as there will be a limited amount of colder areas to move into (Elliot & Simmonds, 2007). Because climate change in the polar zones will be "among the most rapid of any regions on earth" (IPCC, 2007a), these species will have less time to cope with and accommodate to changes in their shrinking habitat. In the Arctic, sea ice cover during summer has been decreasing at a rate of about

9% per decade (IPCC, 2007a). Decrease in sea ice cover will directly affect species that rely on ice for breeding (e.g. ice seals) and those that require solid ground on which to hunt or haul out to rear their young (e.g. polar bears, walruses) (Moore, 2009; Learmonth et al., 2006). Most vulnerable are the pinniped species in inlands seas and lakes such as the Caspian Seal (*Pusa caspica*) and the Baikal seal (*Pusa Siberia*), (Learmonth et al., 2006). These animals are limited in their ability to track decreasing ice cover (Harwood, 2001).

Whereas geographic ranges of temperate and polar species are expected to decrease in total area, tropical species' range is expected to expand. As water in higher latitudes warms up, tropical species can move into new environments and colonize new habitats. With a few exceptions, these species will probably be the least affected negatively (MacLeod, 2009) in this direct way.

### *Indirect Effects*

Climate change will have indirect impacts on marine mammals, such as [1] changes in the distribution and density of prey species, [2] changes in reproductive success and survival, [3] changes in migration patterns, [4] changes in community structure, and [5] increased susceptibility to diseases and pollutants.

Shifts in the geographic range of species could be an indirect effect of climate change. Like all organisms, marine mammal distribution is highly influenced by the availability of prey, and prey distribution is intricately linked to oceanographic conditions like water currents, upwelling, eddies and primary productivity, all of which can be affected by water temperature. Variation in plankton composition, distribution, and abundance as a result of regional changes in sea surface temperatures has been documented in many areas (Beaugrand & Reid 2003 in Learmonth et al., 2006; Gambaiani et al. 2009). Baleen whales feed mostly on large patches of plankton and therefore their distribution can be influenced by the same factors that influence plankton distribution. Toothed whales feed mainly on fish, squid and crustaceans. The distributions of these preys are influenced by oceanographic variables including temperature (Sims et al., 2001; Sissener & Bjørndal, 2005). The change in the distribution of the near shore population of the common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in southern to central California has been indirectly linked to increases in temperature through the effects on prey during the El Niño year in 1982-83 (Wells & Scott, 2007).

Reproductive success and calf survival are also tied to prey abundance. For example, there appears to be a close relationship between food abundance, body fat and fecundity (Lockyer, 1986). Female fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) may produce a calf in two consecutive years if food is abundant but only one in three years if prey supply is poor. Prey availability and reproductive success has also been found related in sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), humpback whales, pinnipeds and sirenians (Whitehead, 1997; Boyd, Lockyer, & Marsh, 1999; Learmonth et al., 2006).

Generally the reproductive cycle and migration patterns of whales are timed to coincide with maximum prey abundance in their feeding grounds in higher latitudes. This timing is important for the lactating mother and the calf being weaned. Observations gathered in the last 40 years on the migration pattern of grey whales show delay of one week (from January 8 to Jan 15) in migration timing in response to the El Niño event that occurred in 1998/1999 (Moore 2009).

Another indirect effect of climate change on marine mammals is change in their community structure. The expansion of the geographic range of some species in response to the warming of water temperatures would lead to changes in the species composition and abundance of marine mammals, as observed in the cetacean community in northwest Scotland, where abundance of cold water white-beaked dolphins declined, and abundance of short-beaked common dolphins, a warm-water species, has increased (MacLeod et al., 2008). Effects of changes in community structure have implications for competition and survival of member species (MacLeod, 2009).

Mixing of populations and species not previously associated with each other could also lead to introduction of novel pathogens and parasites into the 'naïve' population (MacLeod, 2009). The situation will be exacerbated by increased water temperature that could increase infection rates and growth of pathogens. Increased temperature can also increase susceptibility of marine mammals to pollutants that could further complicate the situation (Learmonth et al., 2006). For example Booth and Zeller (2005) predicted that increasing water temperature due to climate change will increase methylation rate of mercury in the water and therefore increase concentrations of methyl mercury in the food web. Top predators, like marine mammals, are more likely to accumulate this pollutant into their system.

Lastly, climate change is bound to modify human behavior, which indirectly can affect marine mammal distribution and even survival (Alter et al., 2010). For example, decrease in ice cover in the polar region will increase shipping, oil and gas exploration and fishing activities, which in turn can increase ship strikes, acoustic disturbance, by-catch and prey depletion. In the tropics, climate change may result in increased pressure to the marine environment as droughts in inland areas intensify as a result of climate variability - one of the impacts of climate change.

While most of the concern about the effects of climate change is focused on the temperate and polar areas, very little attention has been given to species found in tropical waters, which are considered by many to be at a lesser risk from the impacts of climate change. Alter et al. (2010), on the other hand, consider that many tropical species are vulnerable, especially to human-mediated actions induced by climate change. Marine mammal species and populations that are restricted to coastal, estuarine and riverine habitats are particularly at risk. Many of these populations are found in Southeast Asia.

## Climate Change and the Marine Mammals of Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is a sub-region of Asia, comprised of two geographic regions: the mainland and the island arcs and archipelagos. The mainland section consists of Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Peninsular Malaysia, while the island arc section consists of Brunei, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, and East Timor (Timor Leste).

Occupying only approximately 3% of the earth's surface, Southeast Asia is home to 20% of all known species of plants and animals[1]. The mountains, jungles and seas of the countries found in it "form one of the biggest biodiversity pools in the world"[2]. Southeast Asia has the most extensive coastline in the world, the most diverse coral reefs and the richest marine biodiversity. And it is also the most ecologically threatened region of the world.

At least 32 species and one subspecies of marine mammals belonging to seven families have been reported to occur in Southeast Asian waters (Table 1). Twenty-seven percent of these have strictly tropical distribution, 46% extend their distribution to warm-temperate waters and 27% have a worldwide distribution. Impacts of climate change to the species found in the region are shown in Table 1, taken from the assessments of MacLeod (2009), Learmonth et al. (2006) and Alter et al. (2010).

Following MacLeod's (2009) framework, tropical species are expected to expand their distributional ranges as the seas warm up due to climate change, giving them the ability to colonize new areas. This scenario offers favorable implications to the conservation status of the species found in the Southeast Asian region, wherein most of the effects will be expansion of distributional ranges (Table 1). Assessments made by Learmonth et al. (2006), also based on water temperature increases in latitudinal zones, on the other hand, show that distributional ranges of 14 species (42%) of cetaceans found in Southeast Asia would expand and one (3%), the Irrawaddy dolphin, would have a decreasing range. The fate of 55% of the species cannot be predicted. Both of these assessments, however, did not include other climate change impacts (i.e. droughts and changes in precipitation, rise in sea level, and storm frequency and severity) that could potentially affect the abundance, distribution and even survival of tropical marine mammal species. Most importantly they did not include in their assessments impacts resulting from changes in human behavior in response to climate change that could greatly impact marine mammal conservation in tropical climates. These factors are particularly important in predicting impacts on species with restricted distributions and those that inhabit coastal, estuarine and/or riverine areas (Alter et al, 2010).

Six species and one subspecies of marine mammals that are found in Southeast Asia have coastal distributions. These include Omura's whale (*Balaenoptera omurai*), Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*), Indo-Pacific hump-backed dolphin; finless porpoise, Irrawaddy dolphin, a subspecies of the spinner dolphin, the dwarf spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris roseiventris*) and the dugong. Of these, three species (Irrawaddy dolphin, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin and finless porpoise) are considered most vulnerable not only because they inhabit very shallow coastal, estuarine and sometimes riverine environments but also because they have very restricted geographical ranges, most of which are centered in areas that are densely populated by humans. These species are already under great extirpation pressures (considered Vulnerable-IUCN Red List, except for Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin which is considered Near Threatened), with some sub-populations declared as Critically Endangered (Reeves et al., 2008a; Reeves et al., 2008b; Reeves et al., 2008c; Reeves & Martin 2007).

### *Irrawaddy dolphin*

Irrawaddy dolphins have a discontinuous distribution in the Indo-

Pacific region, with almost all populations exclusively tied to estuarine and freshwater systems (Stacey & Arnold, 1999). Distribution ranges from Borneo and the central islands of the Indonesian archipelago north to Palawan and the Visayas in the Philippines and west to the Bay of Bengal, including the Gulf of Thailand (Reeves et al., 2008c; Dolar et al., 2009). Freshwater populations occur in three large rivers: Ayeyarwaddy in Myanmar, Mahakam in Indonesia, and Mekong in Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR, and two brackish water lakes in India and Thailand. Twenty-seven of the 32 locations (85%) where Irrawaddy dolphins have been recorded to occur are found in Southeast Asia (Kreb, 2004; Smith, 2009).

Many of the Irrawaddy dolphin sub-populations are at the brink of extirpation. For example IUCN has declared five sub-populations to be Critically Endangered: the Ayeyarwaddy River sub-population in Myanmar where there are only 58-72 individuals (Smith, Mya, & Tint, 2007), the Mahakam River subpopulation in Indonesia with 70 individuals (Krëb, Budiono, & Syachraini, 2007), Malampaya Sound with 77 animals (Smith et al., 2004), Mekong River with at least 125 individuals (Beasley et al. 2007), and Songkhla Lake, where it is estimated that probably fewer than 50 adult individuals exist (Smith & Beasley, 2004). The newly discovered Irrawaddy dolphin population in Guimaras and Iloilo Straits (Visayas, Philippines) with less than 40 individuals may also be critically endangered as well (Dolar et al., 2011).

### *Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin*

Though currently considered a single species with two variable types, some biologists believe that the two types are distinct species: *Sousa chinensis* and *S. plumbea* (Reeves et al., 2008b). The distribution of the *plumbea* form includes the western Indian Ocean, from South Africa to at least the east coast of India. The *chinensis*-form ranges from the east and west coasts of northern Australia and from southern China in the east throughout the Indo-Malay Archipelago and westward around the Bay of Bengal (Reeves et al., 2008b). Recent phylogenetic studies, however, indicate that the humpback dolphins from Australia are significantly different and may represent a different species (Frere et al., 2008). The separation of the Australian group implies that most of the range of the *chinensis* form is within the Southeast Asian region. The population of this form is declining, with most of the estimates being in the low hundreds, except for the Pearl River Estuary in southern China (Reeves et al., 2008a).

Like the Irrawaddy dolphin, the humpback dolphin is a coastal obligate occurring on open coasts and in bays, lagoons, around rocky and/or coral reefs, mangrove swamps, and estuarine areas, preferring shelf waters less than 20 meters deep (Ross et al., 1994; Parra & Ross, 2007; Reeves et al., 2008b). The dolphins sometimes enter a few kilometers into rivers but remain within tidal range.

### *Indo-Pacific finless porpoise*

Two species of finless porpoise are currently recognized: the Indo-Pacific finless porpoise (*N. phocaenoides*), which ranges from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea and the East Asian or narrow-ridged finless porpoise (*N. asiaeorientalis*) (Wang et al., 2008). The distribution of the Indo-Pacific finless porpoise includes the northern rim of the Indian and western Pacific oceans from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Indo-Malay region in the east to Indonesia. Finless porpoises prefer shallow waters (<50m in depth) in mangrove zones of tropical waters. They also inhabit the estuaries and lower reaches of large river systems such as the Ganges and the Indus rivers. Populations of both species are declining (Reeves et al., 2008a).

### *Vulnerability of the tropical coastal marine mammal species to impacts of climate change*

The affinity of coastal cetaceans to estuaries and freshwater sources has serious implications concerning the impact of climate change on these species (Fig. 1). Severe weather changes, the strengthening of El Niño and decreased precipitation could bring droughts into the region (IPCC, 2007a). This, coupled with an increasing trend of deforestation could diminish freshwater input into the estuaries. For cetacean populations living in rivers, that means decrease in their habitat size, and for those adapted to the estuarine environment, it means alteration in the salinity of their habitat. Further, sea level is predicted to rise as a consequence of melting ice in the Polar Regions and of thermal expansion (IPCC, 2007b). This will bring more seawater into estuaries and most likely, salt water will also encroach into river systems, exacerbating the effects of decreased freshwater inputs (Fig. 1). Sea level is predicted to rise about 0.5 m by the end of the century (IPCC, 2007b). The combined effect would be an increased salinity in estuarine areas and saltwater intrusion into rivers, resulting in a

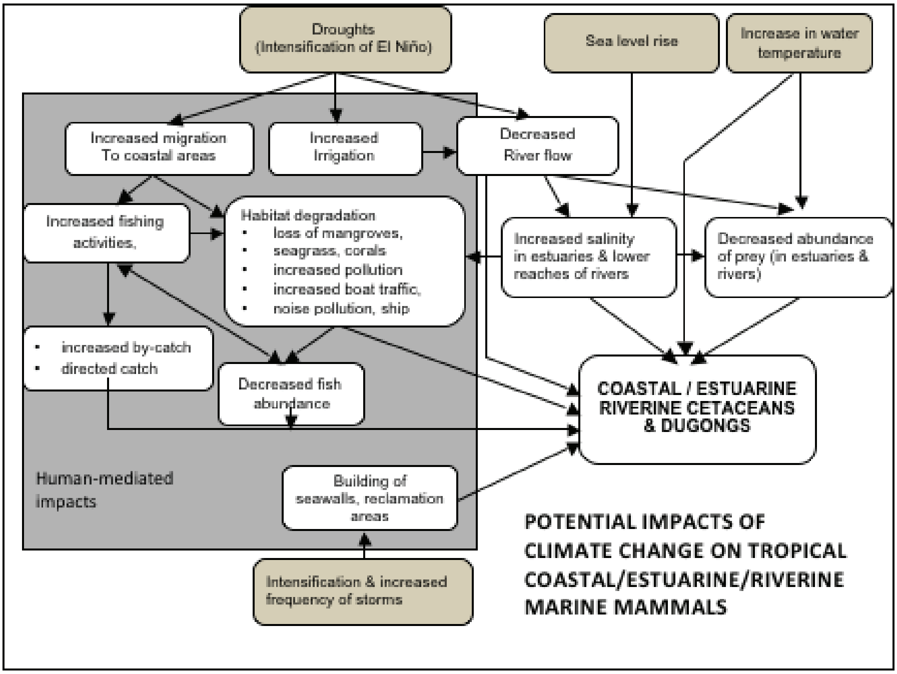
Droughts (Intensification of El Niño)
Sea level rise
Increase in water temperature
Increased migration To coastal areas
Increased Irrigation
Decreased River flow
Increased fishing activities.
Habitat degradation
loss of mangroves,
seagrass, corals
increased pollution
increased boat traffic,
noise pollution, ship
Increased salinity in estuaries & lower reaches of rivers
Decreased abundance of prey (in estuaries & rivers)
increased by-catch
directed catch
Decreased fish abundance
COASTAL / ESTUARINE RIVERINE CETACEANS & DUGONGS
Human-mediated impacts
Building of seawalls, reclamation areas
Intensification & increased frequency of storms
POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON TROPICAL COASTAL/ESTUARINE/RIVERINE MARINE MAMMALS

*Figure 1.* A model showing potential effects of climate change on tropical, coastal, estuarine and riverine species of marine mammals.

shrinking habitat for species that have become adapted to estuarine or riverine existence.

Although there is little information on the abilities of estuarine cetaceans to adapt to increasing salinities, it is speculated that these changes could affect their survival, either directly through physiological limitations to cope with high salinity, or indirectly through decreasing prey/food abundance. Estuaries are especially productive ecosystems with unique assemblage of organisms including fish and crustaceans that have developed adaptations to the brackish water environment. Decreased river flow means decreased nutrient inputs from land which can affect the overall productivity of estuaries. Mangroves which contribute greatly to the productivity in estuarine and coastal areas are also greatly vulnerable to climate-change-induced sea level rise (IPCC, 2001). Already, mangroves are under great anthropogenic pressures. They have been disappearing at an alarming rate.  For example, 75% of mangrove forests in the Philippines have been lost in the last 70 years, and in Indonesia, an estimated 44,000km2 of mangroves have been destroyed in the past

35 years (IPCC, 2001).

Affinity of coastal species with shallow shelf waters may mean that they will be vulnerable indirectly to changes in water temperature. Shallow waters heat up faster than deep waters. Rise in environmental temperature increases the animal's metabolic rate and correspondingly increases demand for food. Meanwhile, general fishery productivity in tropical waters is expected to decline by about 40% as a consequence of warming seas (Cheung et al., 2009). Dolphins would then be faced with increasing demand for food but decreased food availability.

Other coastal marine mammal species found in Southeast Asia that are not tied to freshwater and estuarine habitats but are dependent on the productivity of shallow water ecosystems are the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, the dwarf spinner dolphin and the dugong (Perrin, Dolar, & Robineau, 1999; Wang & Yang, 2009). Productivity of coral reef systems is predicted to decrease as a result of impacts of climate change (IPCC, 2002). Warming ocean waters and ocean acidification observed in the last decades have resulted in increased coral bleachings and in some cases large-scale coral mortality (IPCC, 2002). Sea grass beds are also at risk. It is predicted that increased flooding brought about by intensification of storms will increase sedimentation rate, which in turn will put many of the sea grass beds at risk of extirpation, affecting species that rely on them for food. Dugongs are purely herbivorous, feeding mainly on seagrasses. Destruction of this habitat will have very serious effects on the survival of dugong populations in Southeast Asia, where they are already under tremendous extirpation pressures (Marsh 2009).

### *Human-mediated threats to tropical species induced by climate change*

Alter et al. (2010) evaluated likely impacts on cetaceans caused by changes in human behavior and activities resulting from increasing temperatures, flooding, storm surges, aridity and decreasing ice cover and new focus on renewable energy. Their results suggest that not only are the species in polar areas at risk but also the tropical species, especially those with coastal estuarine and riverine habitats and with restricted distributions. For the species found in Southeast Asia, six (18%) have impact scores of 8, the second highest score, which implies high vulnerability, similar to that for belugas in the polar region (highest score of 11 was given to gray whales). The six species with impact scores of 8 are the Irrawaddy dolphin, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, finless porpoise (the two species combined), Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, common bottlenose dolphin, and short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*). The humpback whale scored 7. Six (18%) have scores between 1 and 3, and 12 species (36%), most of which are pelagic and/or deep water species, do not appear likely to be affected at all (Table 1). Although there are no impact scores for the remaining three species and one subspecies, it is most likely that the dugong, because of its dependence on shallow waters and complete dependence on seagrasses for food, would have an impact score of 8 or greater. Factors that they predicted would have the greatest impacts on tropical species are drought, increase in storm severity, sea level rise, coral reef decline and possible increase in use of marine renewable energy.

Coastal species are particularly vulnerable because their habitats overlap with areas heavily used by humans. This is particularly significant in Southeast Asia where total human population is over 594 million, with a density of 750 people / km$^2$. This density is almost 10 times higher than the global average. The archipelagic nature of the region brings most of the human population near the coast, i.e. 65% of major cities with population of 2.5 million or more are located along the coasts (Hinrichsen, 1990). In addition, people in these islands are maritime in nature, using the seas extensively as a source of food and for travel between islands.

Droughts inland are expected to drive people to migrate to near the coast and increase reliance on marine ecosystems (Fig. 1). This will add pressure to the already overburdened fisheries in the area (Alter et al., 2010). Fishery effort is expected to increase while overall productivity of the oceans decreases in response to increasing sea water temperature. A recent study predicted that while climate change could increase fishery catch potential in the mid and high latitudes by 30-70%, there will be a decline of 40% in the tropics (Cheung et al., 2009). Increased fishing effort could result in increased marine mammal by-catch while depleting prey (Fig. 1). There is also a possibility that directed fisheries for marine mammals will increase, especially in areas where cetaceans are not protected or where there are few resources to enforce regulatory measures. The greatest threats that marine mammals face in Southeast Asia today are by-catch, and in some areas, directed catch (Perrin et al., 2005). It is expected that these threats will increase as fish yields decline. Increased human migration to the coast will also increase pollution. This, aided by increasing temperature will help promote algal blooms (Alter et al., 2010). Toxins released from algal blooms have caused mass dolphin mortality in several areas in the past (Gambaiani et al., 2009).

Because of declining precipitation and diminished freshwater flows, it is expected that more dams will be constructed to irrigate agricultural lands. Dams will fragment riverine dolphin populations.

Strong storm surges, flooding and sea level rise will drive people to construct protective structures such as seawalls, dikes, levees, floodwalls, breakwaters, flood gates, tidal barriers, beach replenishment and dune restoration and creation (Alter et al., 2010). The threat of flooding is predicted highest for South and Southeast Asia, Africa, southern Mediterranean coasts, the Caribbean and most islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Nicholls, Hoozemans, & Marchand, 1999). Coastal construction will affect marine mammals through noise pollution produced by activities such as dredging and pile driving, habitat loss and degradation (Jefferson et al., 2008).

In summary, while the impacts of global warming have been predicted to be greatest for arctic and temperate marine mammal species, it is clear that impacts on tropical marine mammals will likely also be substantial and may lead to extirpation of some populations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## ENDNOTES

[1] ASEAN Center for Biodiversity. http://www.aseanbiodiversity.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79&Itemid=98

[2] ASEAN Center for Biodiversity. http://www.aseanbiodiversity.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79&Itemid=98

*Table 1.*

*Predicted impacts of climate change on marine mammal species in Southeast Asia.* (**Habitat:** C = coastal, P = pelagic / **Distribution:** W = worldwide, WTE = warm temperate, CTE = cold temperate, TE = temperate, TR = tropical, STR = subtropical / **IUCN Conservation Status:** CR = critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient; LC = Least Concern / CC (Climate Change) Impacts: ML (MacLeod 2009): un = unchanged, f = favorable; L = Learmonth et al. 2006: ↑ = range increase, ↓ = range decrease, ? = not known; Alter et al. 2010, numbers represent impact scores. High score means more impact.

| **Species** | **Habitat** | **Distribution** | **IUCN** | **CC Impacts** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | **ML** | **L** | **Alter** |
| **CETACEA (Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises)** | | | | | | |
| **MYSTICETI / Baleen Whales** | | | | | | |
| **Family Balaenopteridae—Rorquals** | | | | | | |
| *Balaenoptera musculus* (Blue whale) | P | W | EN | un | ? | 3 |
| *Balaenoptera physalus* (Fin whale) | P | W | EN | un | ? | 3 |
| *Balaenoptera edeni* (Bryde's whale) | P | WTE,TR | DD | f | ? | 1 |
| *Balaenoptera omurai* (Omura's whale) | C | TR | DD | no info | ? | no info |
| *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* (Minke whale) | | W | VU | un | ? | 3 |
| *Balaenoptera borealis* (Sei whale) | P | CTE,TR | EN | no info | ? | 2 |
| *Megaptera novaeangliae* (Humpback whale) | P | W | LC | un | ? | 7 |
| **ODONTOCETI / Toothed Whales** | | | | | | |
| **Family Delphinidae—Ocean Dolphins** | | | | | | |
| *Delphinus capensis* (Long-beaked common dolphin) | O | STR | DD | f | ↑ | no info |
| *Delphinus delphis* (Common dolphin) | O | TE,TR | LC | f | ↑ | 8 |
| *Feresa attenuata* (Pygmy killer whale) | O | TR,WTE | DD | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Globicephala macrorhychus* (Short-finned pilot whale) | O | TR,STR | DD | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Grampus griseus* (Risso's dolphin) | O | CTE,TR | LC | f | ? | 1 |
| *Lagenodelphis hosei* (Fraser's dolphin) | O | WTE,TR | LC | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Orcaella brevirostris* (Irrawaddy dolphin) | C,R,E | TR | VU, CR | f | ↓ | 8 |
| *Orcinus orca* (Killer whale) | O | W | DD | un | ? | 2 |
| *Peponocephala electra* (Melon-headed whale) | O | TR | LC | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Pseudorca crassidens* (False killer whale) | O | WTE,TR | DD | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Sousa chinensis* (Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin) | C | TR | NT | f | ? | 8 |

*Continued on the next page...*

*Table 1. (Continued...)*

*Predicted impacts of climate change on marine mammal species in Southeast Asia.*

| Species | Habitat | Distribution | IUCN | CC Impacts | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | ML | L | Alter |
| *Stenella attenuata* (Pantropical spotted dolphin) | O | W | LC | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Stenella coeruleoalba* (Striped dolphin) | O | CTE,TR | LC | f | ↑ | 1 |
| *Stenella longirostris longirostris* (Gray's spinner dolphin) | O | TR | DD | f | ↑ | 1 |
| *Stenella longirostris roseiventris* (dwarf spinner dolphin) | C | TR | DD | no info | ↑ | no info |
| *Steno bredanensis* (Rough-toothed dolphin) | O | WTE,TR | LC | no info | ? | 0 |
| *Tursiops aduncus* (Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin) | C | TR | DD | no info | ? | 8 |
| *Tursiops truncatus* (Bottlenose dolphin) | O | W | DD | f | ↑ | 8 |
| **Family Kogiidae—Pygmy and Dwarf Sperm Whales** | | | | | | |
| *Kogia breviceps* (Pygmy sperm whale) | O | WTE,TR | DD | f | ↑ | 0 |
| *Kogia sima* (Dwarf sperm whale) | O | WTE,TR | DD | f | ↑ | 0 |
| **Family Physeteridae—Sperm Whale** | | | | | | |
| *Physeter macrocephalus* (Sperm whale) | | W | VU | un | ? | 3 |
| **Family Ziphiidae—Beaked Whales** | | | | | | |
| *Ziphius cavirostris* (Cuvier's beaked whale) | O | W | LC | f | ? | 0 |
| *Mesoplodon densirostris* (Blainville's beaked whale) | O | WTE,TR | DD | f | ? | 0 |
| *Indopacetus pacificus* (Longman's beaked whale) | O | TR | DD | f | ? | 0 |
| **Family Phocaenidae** | | | | | | |
| *Neophocaena phocaenoides* (Indo-Pacific finless porpoise) | C | WTE,TR | VU | f | ? | 8 |
| **SIRENIA (Manatees and Dugongs)** | | | | | | |
| **Family Dugongidae—Dugong** | | | | | | |
| *Dugong dugon* (Dugong) | C | TR | VU | no info | ? | no info |

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# Socio-Economic Monitoring of Fishers' Conditions in Selected Sites of Guimaras Affected By the 2006 Oil Spill

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On August 11, 2006, M/T Solar 1 sank off the southern coast of the province of Guimaras, Philippines carrying with it some 2.2 million liters of bunker fuel. The oil leaked from the tanker and affected 194 km of coastline in the municipalities of Nueva Valencia, Sibunag, and San Lorenzo. The concomitant huge environmental impacts of the oil spill led to the temporary collapse or cessation of fishing in several villages during the first few months of the environmental disaster. In monitoring the recovery, restoration, and resiliency of social and economic systems affected by the oil spill, it was vital to analyze major economic activities such as fishing. This study aimed to determine how fishers, after two years, recovered from the impact of the oil spill that affected Barangays La Paz and San Roque of Nueva Valencia municipality. A non-affected site, Brgy. Lawi in Jordan, Guimaras was selected to serve as a control site. Socio-economic survey was conducted to a total of 135 fisher-respondents. Key informant interviews and focused group discussions were also conducted.

Results of the study showed that the oil spill had directly affected people in Guimaras who engaged in fishing. Results of the first and second year socio-economic monitoring revealed that majority of the fishers in Brgys. Lapaz, San Roque and Lawi have resumed fishing, but fish catch two years after the oil spill did not improve significantly. Survey data revealed that monthly fishing income was subsistence in returns and was below the poverty threshold. In order to improve the socio-economic condition of fishers in Guimaras, recommendations were provided for national and local government units.

**KEYWORDS:** socio-economics, Solar 1 oil spill, Guimaras fishers, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

On 11 August 2006, M/T Solar 1, which was en route from Bataan to Zamboanga del Sur, sank off the southern coast of the province of Guimaras carrying with it some 2.2 million liters of bunker fuel. It went down to an approximate depth of 640 meters at 100 15′31″N and 1220 29′ 13.3″ E, about 13.4 km from Unisan island—the southernmost part of the province of Guimaras (Figure 1). The oil leaked from the tanker and moved in the northeast direction affecting 194 km of coastline in the municipalities of Nueva Valencia, Sibunag, and San Lorenzo. It further moved northward along the Guimaras Strait affecting several coastal barangays in Ajuy and Concepcion, Iloilo. The oil directly hit the mangroves and the seaweed farms. About 0.9 ha of mangroves in Guimaras and 0.04 ha in Ajuy, Iloilo died as a result of the oil spill. The oil slick also passed through coastal marine habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves and sea grasses. Several estimates have placed the total volume of bunker fuel oil spilled between 500,000 to 1.2 million liters (Subade, 2006).

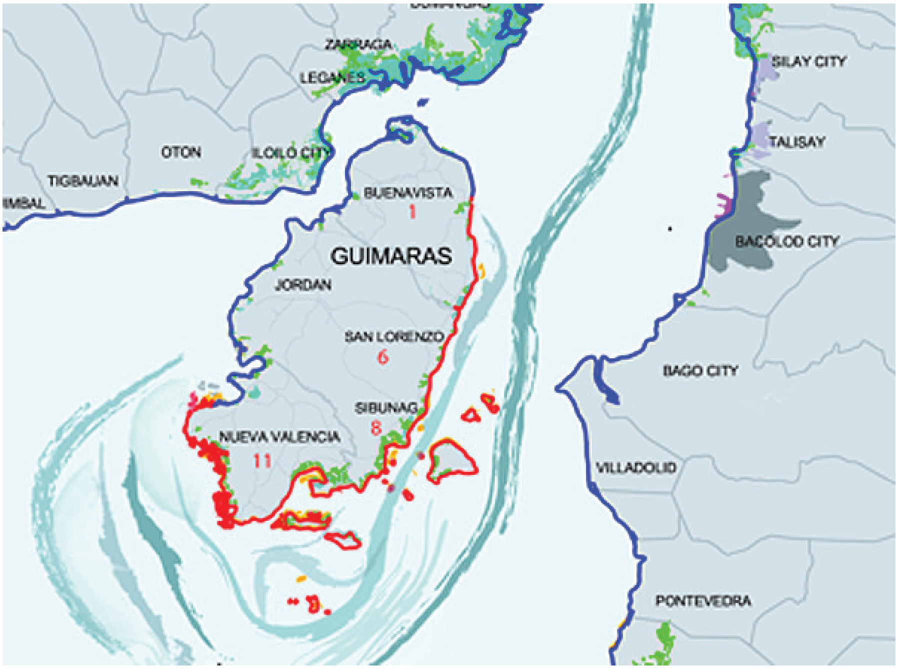
ZARRAGA
LEGANES
OTON
ILOILO CITY
TIGBAUAN
IMBAL
BUENAVISTA
1
GUIMARAS
JORDAN
SAN LORENZO
6
SIBUNAG
8
NUEVA VALENCIA
11
SILAY CITY
TALISAY
BACOLOD CITY
BAGO CITY
VILLADOLID
PONTEVEDRA

*Figure 1.* **Guimaras oil spill, Philippines in August 2006.** SOURCE: assets.panda.org.

The concomitant huge environmental impacts of the oil spill led to the temporary collapse or cessation of fishing in several villages of Southern Guimaras during the first few months of the environmental disaster. Either the fishers could hardly catch fish or the fish caught could no longer be sold in the market due to absent product demand. Such realities were major disincentives for fishers to go back to their usual livelihood source.

In monitoring the recovery, restoration and resiliency of biological, social and economic systems affected by the oil spill, it is vital that major economic activities like fishing be analyzed and studied. Moreover, studies on how the major stakeholders (i.e. fishers) recovered from such economic disturbance should also be undertaken.

This study aimed to determine how fishers, after two years, recovered from the impact of the oil spill and to determine their recent major source of livelihood and the nature of their economic recovery, if any. The study specifically aimed to:

- characterize the fishing activities—in terms of fishing time, fishing trips and gear used by selected fishers, to provide a basis for determining how they were able to recover or go back to their livelihood;
- characterize the non-fishing related activities undertaken by sampled fishers, in terms of volume and value of output, and duration of involvement per unit of time;
- determine the fishing-related and non-fishing related activities undertaken by sampled fishers, and monitor the costs and revenues associated with such; and
- provide recommendations to improve the condition of fishers.

In order to provide needed and relevant information, this study was conducted in two succeeding years.

## THE NEED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC MONITORING

Marine oil spill effects can be numerous. It can directly impact fishery resources thereby affecting livelihood of fishing communities and the health conditions of people in the affected community and possibly altering the normal (usual) activities of the residents especially the fishers. In some cases, assistance provided and damage claims are sometimes used to lessen the economic and psychological impact.

Fishing communities are often involved with clean up during fishing bans or whilst fishing areas are oiled. This can help offset short-term financial hardship of the affected individuals (ITOPF, 2003).

In assessing the impact on livelihood, socio-economic monitoring can be a useful tool. Several variables must be considered in assessing the impacts and/or recovery of the fishers and the fishing community. Pido et al. (2009) defined socio economic monitoring as a tool for collecting and analyzing basic socio-economic data useful for coastal management. Socio-economic monitoring was used to assess the awareness of people's dependence on marine resources, perceptions of resource conditions, threats to marine resources, use levels, and status of governance of two locally-managed marine-protected areas (MPAs) in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan Province, Philippines. Also, it has huge potential for between- and across-sites comparison to better inform management decisions, including communication with stakeholders, and to form a baseline for current socio-economic conditions of MPAs and coral reef areas.

Subade (1991) examined the socio-economic profile and fishing characteristics of Guimaras Strait fishers. The study was able to analyze the profitability and economic efficiency of such fishers, who were operating 121 sampled gillnet boats (considered as fishing firms). He found that many small-scale or municipal fishermen, to whom the gill net fishermen belong, were living below the poverty threshold. Average household size was 5.7 and 71% of the households were dependent on only one income earner in the family. Sixty one percent of the households were dependent on fishing as the only source of income. During that period, fishing in Guimaras Strait was profitable for gillnet fishers which could be due to a better environmental condition and lesser number of fishers in the area. The study also found that aside from fishing, there were other employment alternatives available for the gill net fishers that could have contributed to a better economic condition at that time.

In the study of Born et al. (2003), fisheries monitoring data was used to assess the fishing characteristics of Galapagos artisanal fishery after the oil spill. They found that the impact on the local Galapagos artisanal fishery during the January 2001 grounding of the *Jessica* and subsequent oil spill was relatively minor. No significant changes in fishing effort, total fishing catches or catch-per-unit effort were detected after the spill based on analyses of fisheries monitoring data. Nevertheless, large boats tended to move away from sites near the path of the spill following the grounding in 2001, with no fishing recorded from the oil-affected regions of Floreana and southern Isabela in February 2001. The total fishing effort of small boats operating from the Jessica-grounding island of San Cristobal also declined immediately after the spill, probably in part because such boats were used in clean up operations. During 2001, prices paid to fishers remained stable at levels higher than in 2000, with the notable anomaly that prices fell precipitously to 30% of previous levels during a 1–2 week period in early February 2001. Fish exports remained at similar levels for the years 2000 and 2001. However, as in the previous year, little fish product was exported from Galapagos in the month following the spill, with most fish product dried and stored for up to two months prior to transport to the continent.

Furthermore, a socio-economic study was also employed as method to assess the impact of a disaster other than oil spill. Siwar, Ibrahim, Harizan and Kamaruddin (2006) highlighted the socioeconomic impacts of the 26th December 2004 tsunami on fisheries, aquaculture and livelihood of coastal communities in Malaysia. Data for the discussion were collected in the months of January to February 2005, based on a rapid assessment survey of communities impacted by the tsunami in the states of Kedah (including Langkawi Island) and Penang. In March 2005, and recently in September 2006, another rapid follow-up survey was conducted in Kedah to assess recent progress, development and remaining issues facing the impacted communities. The socioeconomic analysis focused on accounting the loss and damages to human lives, properties, fishing equipment, and aquaculture enterprises. In addition, financial estimates of damage were provided. Impact on livelihood covered loss of employment, income and psychological trauma experienced by the affected populations.

In summary, the study of Subade (1991) provided a good background on the fishing and socio-economic characteristics of fishers in Guimaras before the onset of the oil spill. The studies of Born et al. and Siwar et al., on the other hand, revealed the importance of socio-economic study and monitoring in determining the impact (recovery if any) after any event of disaster. Moreover, it was found that socio economic monitoring is important in determining diversity of income sources and access to other livelihood other than fishing. Diversifying income sources of the households also builds resilience and helps the families to cope with sudden changes and disasters.

## METHODOLOGY

The University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) Oil Spill Research Program was tasked to undertake various studies ranging from biological, chemical, fisheries and socio-economic to determine the impact of the oil spill on the Guimaras island. UPV chose to focus its various studies in the affected (and neighboring) barangays of La Paz and San Roque of Nueva Valencia municipality. The UPV Marine Biological Station is located in these two barangays. Moreover, in this particular study, another barangay—Lawi in Jordan, Guimaras—was selected. It was believed that this barangay was either not affected or was less affected by the oil spill

The study focused on collecting data and information from clustered villages/ communities of fishers. The unit of analysis was the sampled fisher—either the owner-operator or the fisher-operator. A list of full time fishers was acquired for each of the Sitios based on an earlier list from the municipal hall, verified with the barangay captain, head of the barangay fisheries and aquatic resource management council (BFARMC) and other key informants. From each of the lists, 45 fishers were randomly selected for each barangay.

The first period of monitoring was done in the month of November 2007 while the second period was conducted in May 2008. Two years after the oil spill or during the second period of data monitoring, researchers went back to the field (in the same season) and interviewed the same fisher-respondents. Key informant interviews and focused group discussions were also conducted to verify other important indicators.

Socio-economic survey was conducted to a total of 135 fisher-respondents. The survey consisted of items about their perception and attitudes after oil spill, fishing characteristics (e.g. fishing gear used, species caught) and fishing cost structure. Sources of income other than fishing were also determined. The framework for analysis (Figure 2) is a simple illustration on the socio-economic monitoring that focused more on fishing activity, costs and revenues. It is expected to provide inputs to management strategies or local policy and programs that will affect fishers' household/family income.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was first decided that only full time fishers will be interviewed and included in this study. However, results of the first year monitoring revealed that some of these full time fishers were no longer as active as fishers as before. Some of them did fishing on a part-time basis depending on season and/or profitability. Nevertheless, it was decided that these part time fishers would be interviewed for the second year of monitoring study.

Results of the first year socio-economic monitoring showed some indicators of recovery among fisher-respondents. Fishers were able to go back to fishing but their catch decreased after the oil-spill. They also claimed that their situation worsened a year after oil spill.

During the first year, two periods of data monitoring were conducted to determine the indicators of recovery and resiliency among the oil spill affected sites. The first period in the month of November was believed to be the lean season of fishing while the second period in the month of May was believed to be the peak season of fishing. For the purpose of comparison, sampled fishers from affected sites (Lapaz and San Roque, Nueva Valencia, Guimaras) and fishers from a less-affected or non-affected site (Brgy Lawi, Jordan, Guimaras) were interviewed. All fishers interviewed were utilizing traditional fishing gear like hook and lines, long lines and gill nets. Characteristics of the fishing gear and boat used revealed that they were indeed municipal fishers.

It could be observed that the livelihood of fishers affected by oil spill had somehow returned to normal but whether or not fishing remained profitable, was a big question. Did fishers eventually shift to other sources of livelihood? What happened to fishers two years after the oil spill? This study tried to answer these questions.

## Perceptions and Attitudes of the Respondents Two Years After Oil Spill

During the first year of data monitoring fishers opined that their present situation was poor because they could hardly catch fish. Some respondents pointed out that fish catch even before oil spill was already low. The major reason for such decrease in fish catch according to them was brought by the increase in population and thereby an increase in the number of fishers. Two years after the oil spill, majority (80.99%) of sampled fishers perceived that their situation had worsened—they were still poor and fish catch per trip was still very low (Table 1). Only about 5% of the respondents said that their situation is much better now, two years after the oil spill.

*Table 1.*

*Respondents' perception on their situation after the oil spill.*

| Response | 1 year after the oil spill | 2 years after the oil spill |
|---|---|---|
| Same/No change | 43 (34.4%) | 16 (13.22%) |
| Poor/Become worse | 73 (58.4%) | 98 (80.99%) |
| Better | 5 (4.0%) | 6 (4.95%) |
| Fine (*Ok lang*) | 1 (0.8%) | 0 |
| Surviving (*Makakaon pa man*) | 2 (1.6%) | 0 |
| No answer | 1 (0.8%) | 0 |
| For food consumption only (*Gapangisda pangsud-an na lang*) | 0 | 1 (0.83%) |
| **Total** | **125** | **121** |

When fishers were asked if they still engaged in fishing given the perception that they can hardly catch fish, 80.16% still continued fishing while nearly 20% of the respondents either temporarily or permanently stopped fishing (Table 2).

*Table 2.*

*Fishers' engagement in fishing.*

| Response | Year 2 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Period 1 | | | | Period 2 | | | |
| | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi | Total | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi | Total |
| Not anymore | 11 (26.2%) | 11 (26.2%) | 2 (5.4%) | 24 (19.8%) | 6 (15.4%) | 5 (12.2%) | 9 (23%) | 20 (16.81%) |
| Still engaged | 31 | 31 | 35 | 97 (80.2%) | 33 | 33 | 30 | 96 (80.67%) |
| Rarely | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 (2.52%) |
| **Total** | **42** | **42** | **37** | **121** | **39** | **41** | **39** | **119** |

The cited reasons for temporarily stopping include poor catch and health reasons. Fish catch according to some respondents was sometimes good only for family's viand. They also perceived that fishing revenue could not offset fishing costs. Some of them migrated or transferred residence, while others shifted to other sources of livelihood. Despite such unfavorable fishing outcomes, still a bigger percentage of the fisher-respondents continued fishing since fishing is their main source of income. Others still have plans to go back to fishing once the (future) catch becomes better.

## Number of household members involved in fishing

Table 3 shows that most of the fisher-respondents have at least one family member involved in fishing. Other ranges were from 2-4 household members. Respondents who indicated one means that either only one family member or the household head is involved in fishing.

*Table 3.*

*Number of household members involved in fishing.*

| No. of Household Members | Year 1 (Average for 2 Periods) | Year2 Period 1 | Year2 Period 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Temporarily stopped fishing | 0 | 6 (4.95%) | 5 (4.20%) |
| 1 | 62 (49.6%) | 50 (41.32%) | 53 (44.54%) |
| 2 | 31 (24.8%) | 34 (28.10%) | 33 (27.73%) |
| 3 | 18 (14.4%) | 19 (15.70%) | 16 (13.45%) |
| 4 | 10 (8.0%) | 6 (4.95%) | 7 (5.88%) |
| 5 | 2 (1.6%) | 3 (2.48%) | 4 (3.36%) |
| 6 | 1 (0.8%) | 2 (1.65%) | 1 (0.84%) |
| 7 | 1 (0.8%) | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **125** | **121** | **119** |

About 25% of the fishers were fishing crew (locally called "boso") while close to three-fourths (71.43 %) of fisher-respondents had their own fishing gear (Table 4). Usually a "boso" owns no fishing gears; either he borrows fishing equipment from the boat or gear owner and pays usually in the form of share in the fish catch or he assists the master fisher/boat captain and gets a share afterwards.

*Table 4.*

*Gear Ownership (Do you have your own gear used during fishing?)*

| **Response** | **Year 2** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | | **Period 2** | | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** |
| No (Boso) | 14 | 6 | 11 | 30<br>(24.79%) | 13 | 7 | 15 | 34<br>(28.57%) |
| Yes | 28 | 36 | 26 | 90<br>(74.38%) | 26 | 34 | 24 | 85<br>(71.43%) |
| Total | 42 | 42 | 37 | 121 | 39 | 41 | 39 | 119 |

## Fishing Characteristics

Respondents were again asked to categorize themselves as part-time or full-time fishers. It was assumed that fishers who took at least five fishing trips per week were considered as full time fishers. On the other hand, part-time fishers had less than five fishing trips per week. The two fishing periods in Year 2 of Table 5 show that the number of full-time fishers had reduced and those who did part-time fishing increased in number. This confirms fishers' claim that it was disincentive for them to go out fishing because of poor catch, thus making them resort to other sources of livelihood.

*Table 5.*

*Self-Categorization by fishers according to time spent in fishing activities/ livelihood.*

| **Fisher's Type** | **Year 1** | | | **Year 2** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** |
| Part-time | 10 (24.4%) | 11 (25.6%) | 5 (12.2%) | 20 (44.4%) | 20 (44.4%) | 15 (33.3%) | 12 (30.8%) | 15 (36.6%) | 14 (35.9%) |
| Full-time | 30 (73.2%) | 32 (74.4%) | 36 (87.8%) | 22 (48.9%) | 22 (48.9%) | 22 (48.9%) | 27 | 26 | 25 |
| No answer | 1 (2.4%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **41** | **43** | **41** | **42** | **42** | **37** | **39** | **41** | **39** |

## Fishing Gear Owned and Used by Sampled Fishers

From the distribution of fishing gear owned by a fisher (Table 6), it should be noted that per barangay, the total number of gear exceeds the total number of respondents because there were fishers who used/owned two or more gears. Usage of these gears depends on fishing trip type, season of fishing, and/or weather condition. As cited by 46.28% of the fisher-respondents, gill net was the commonly-used fishing gear, particularly in Barangays San Roque and Lawi. In Brgy. La Paz, hook and line and long line were the most commonly used gear. Other full-time fishers either did not have fishing gear of their own or were just full-time fishing crew.

*Table 6.*

*Distribution of Fishing Gear Owned/Used by Sampled Fishers Year 2 Period 1.*

| **Fishing Gear Type** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gill net | 6 | 29 | 21 | 56 (46.28%) |
| Hook and line | 9 | 5 | 7 | 21 (17.36%) |
| Long line | 10 | 4 | 3 | 17 (14.05%) |
| Spear | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 (2.48%) |
| *Punot*/screen | 2 | 8 | 7 | 17 (14.05%) |
| Fish corral | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 (0.83%) |
| *Into-into* | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 (1.65%) |
| No fishing gears owned (*Boso*) | 17 | 6 | 4 | 27 (22.31%) |

*Total exceeds number of respondents since this is a multiple response question. Percent over the total number of respondents (n=121)

## Fishing Trips and Catch

The number of fishing trips had decreased two years after the oil spill (Table 7). During this period, the number of fishing trips per week had decreased from an average of four fishing trips during the first year to an average of three fishing trips per week in the second year. The number of fishing trips and fishing hours had declined since fish catch was perceived to be poor.

Respondents were also asked on the number fishing trips per month. There were two sets of results for Year 2: the perceived and the derived. The "perceived" was the response of the respondents when asked on the usual number of trips of fishers per month. However, the "derived" value of the number of fishing trips was computed using the given number of fishing trips per day multiplied to the number of fishing trips per week, then multiplied again to four weeks (1 month) in order to get the average number of fishing trips. Translating the "perceived" number of trips monthly, San Roque and Lawi fishers took 22 fishing trips while Lapaz fishers took 14 fishing trips only. Comparing the results of Year 1 and Year 2, the number of fishing trips for Lapaz significantly decreased in Year 2. The respondents perceived that average number of fishing trips per month was 19 to 20 trips. However, when the figure was derived using their actual number of trips per day and week, the average number of trips per month was only 12 trips.

When outliers were included, the average fish catch per trip ranged from 2.79 kg to 4.35 kg in Year 2, Period 1 (Table 8). An increase in the average fish catch per trip was observed in Year 2, Period 2, average fish catch ranged from 2.78 to 7.59 per fishing trip. The Period 2 fishing season was between months of April and May and was considered as peak season of fishing. Fish catch was higher in Period 2 compared to the catch during period 1, thereby confirming that Period 1 (November to December) was within lean season while Period 2 (May) was within peak months.

As compared to Year 1 results, there was a decrease in the average fish catch across three fishing communities except for San Roque which showed an increase in Year 2, Period 1. However, San Roque fisher-respondents had the lowest average fish catch per trip across four periods of data monitoring.

The average fish catch when outliers were deleted and those that did not fish during that season were deleted from the analysis. Table 9 reveals that the average fish catch per trip generally decreased except for Brgy. San Roque, despite exclusion of non-fishers during this season and of those fishers whose fish catch went beyond 10kg. There was also no significant changes in the fish catch during Year 2, Period 2. In Barangay Lawi, the number of fishers engaged in fishing activity had declined due to their involvement in fish pens/cage culture in the area, one of which was funded by the BFAR as oil spill related livelihood project for the community. This project gained financially during their first harvest, so other private individuals were also interested and tried to venture in such activity.

*Table 7.*

*Fishing Trips Details.*

| Variable | Y ear 1 (n=125) | | | | | | Year 2 (n=121) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Period 1 | | | Period 2 | | | Period 1 | | | Period 2 | | |
| | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi | Lapaz | San Roque | Lawi |
| Fishing trips per day | 1.07<br>(0.64) | 1.12<br>(0.66) | 1.32<br>(0.72) | 0.80<br>(0.55) | 1.28<br>(0.73) | 1.44<br>(0.77) | 0.88<br>(0.57) | 0.90<br>(0.56) | 0.89<br>(0.58) | 0.79<br>(0.55) | 1.01<br>(0.63) | 0.67<br>(0.52) |
| Fishing days per week | 4.80<br>(2.67) | 4.60<br>(2.64) | 4.41<br>(2.71) | 3.63<br>(2.70) | 4.77<br>(2.39) | 4.71<br>(2.21) | 3.04<br>(2.25) | 3.64<br>(2.64) | 3.72<br>(2.41) | 3.31<br>(2.76) | 4.28<br>(2.77) | 3.42<br>(3.04) |
| No. of hours of fishing | 6.24<br>(4.94) | 5.69<br>(4.42) | 3.84<br>(3.27) | 5.94<br>(4.86) | 5.44<br>(3.45) | 4.20<br>(2.20) | 4.40<br>(3.68) | 5.34<br>(0.47) | 3.81<br>(2.97) | 7.13<br>(6.65) | 4.94<br>(3.68) | 3.22<br>(3.47) |
| No. of hours to reach fishing ground | 0.93<br>(1.58) | 0.76<br>(0.78) | 0.68<br>(0.55) | 0.76<br>(1.02) | 0.74<br>(0.59) | 0.879<br>(0.63) | 0.61<br>(0.64) | 0.55<br>(0.68) | (0.72)<br>(0.62) | 2.91<br>(4.77) | 3.10<br>(4.83) | 1.76<br>(3.94) |
| No. of hours setting nets | 0.86<br>(2.37) | 0.862<br>(3.63) | 0.44<br>(0.75) | 0.46<br>(0.88) | 0.457<br>(0.55) | 0.53<br>(0.78) | 0.22<br>(0.29) | 0.45<br>(0.59) | 0.45<br>(0.59) | 4.72<br>(7.24) | 5.54<br>(8.29) | 3.76<br>(6.50) |
| No. of hours waiting | 1.69<br>(2.32) | 1.35<br>(2.15) | 1.03<br>(0.97) | 2.26<br>(3.58) | 1.621<br>(2.54) | 1.35<br>(1.21) | 1.57<br>(2.68) | 1.69<br>(2.11) | 1.22<br>(1.48) | 5.11<br>(5.77) | 3.92<br>(5.66) | 1.43<br>(3.29) |
| No. of fishing trips per month(perceived) | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 17.9 | 18.9 | 19.21 | 14.21 | 22.48 | 22.03 |
| No. of fishing trips per month derived) | 20.54 | 20.61 | 23.28 | 11.62 | 24.42 | 27.13 | 10.70 | 13.10 | 13.24 | 10.46 | 17.29 | 9.17 |

Note: figures in parentheses are standard deviation

*Table 8.*

*Average Fish Catch and Catch Disposal (Outliers Included).*

| **Variable** | **Y ear 1 (n=125)** | | | | | | **Year 2 (n=121)** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz**<br>**(41)** | **San Roque**<br>**(43)** | **Lawi**<br>**(41)** | **Lapaz**<br>**(41)** | **San Roque**<br>**(43)** | **Lawi**<br>**(41)** | **Lapaz**<br>**(42)** | **San Roque**<br>**(42)** | **Lawi**<br>**(37)** | **Lapaz**<br>**(39)** | **San Roque**<br>**(41)** | **Lawi**<br>**(39)** |
| Average catch per trip | 9.01<br>(12.00) | 3.94<br>(5.25) | 7.01<br>(8.49) | 8.02<br>(17.30) | 7.23<br>(30.94) | 9.12<br>(11.96) | 3.15<br>(3.06) | 4.35<br>(5.42) | 2.79<br>(2.66) | 7.59<br>(12.84) | 2.78<br>(3.15) | 6.54<br>(10.89) |
| Average Kg consumed | 0.69<br>(0.87) | 0.75<br>(0.72) | 1.3<br>(1.82) | 0.68<br>(1.80) | 0.775<br>(2.33) | 1.13<br>(1.63) | 0.47<br>(0.44) | 1.01<br>(1.14) | 0.70<br>(0.65) | 0.93<br>(1.51) | 0.74<br>(0.92) | 0.74<br>(1.01) |
| Average Kg given away | 0.54<br>(0.95) | 0.14<br>(0.43) | 0.25<br>(0.55) | 0.22<br>(0.64) | 0.04<br>(0.17) | 0.085<br>(0.34) | 0.11<br>(0.30) | 0.10<br>(0.36) | 0.17<br>(0.58) | 0.13<br>(0.52) | 0.00 | 0.01<br>(0.08) |
| Average Kg sold | 7.80<br>(10.60) | 3.06<br>(4.65) | 5.47<br>(6.82) | 7.12<br>(15.84) | 6.67<br>(30.97) | 7.85<br>(11.63) | 2.57<br>(2.78) | 3.25<br>(4.64) | 1.91<br>(2.03) | 6.7<br>(11.91) | 2.03<br>(2.97) | 5.93<br>(10.08) |

Note: Figures in parentheses are standard deviation

*Table 9.*

*Average Fish Catch When Outliers Were Deleted and Those Who "Did Not Fish" Were Removed From the Analysis.*

| **Variable** | **Y ear 1 (n=125)** | | | | | | **Year 2 (n=121)** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz (n=23)** | **San Roque (n=30)** | **Lawi (n=24)** | **Lapaz (n=24)** | **San Roque (38)** | **Lawi (26)** | **Lapaz (31)** | **San Roque (28)** | **Lawi (29)** | **Lapaz (n=25)** | **San Roque (n=30)** | **Lawi (n=16)** |
| Average catch per trip | 4.72<br>(2.73) | 3.0<br>(2.25 | 3.23<br>(2.69) | 5.26<br>(3.56) | 2.88<br>(1.97) | 3.94<br>(2.76) | 3.90<br>(2.64) | 3.09<br>(2.33) | 3.18<br>(2.14) | 4.83<br>(1.01) | 3.09<br>(1.95) | 2.95<br>(3.45) |
| Average Kg consumed | 0.48<br>(0.63) | 0.79<br>(0.65) | 0.83<br>(0.67) | 0.40<br>(0.89) | 0.55<br>(0.57) | 0.59<br>(0.65) | 0.63<br>(0.41) | 0.98<br>(0.79) | 0.85<br>(0.63) | 1.01<br>(1.71) | 0.96<br>(0.97) | 0.51<br>(0.68) |
| Average Kg given away | 0.15<br>(0.32) | 0.09<br>(0.21) | 0.08<br>(0.24) | 0.08<br>(0.19) | 0.05<br>(0.17) | 0 | 0.15<br>(0.35) | 0 | 0.18<br>(0.63) | 0.04<br>0.20 | 0 | 0 |
| Average Kg sold | 4.09<br>(2.30) | 2.15<br>(1.75) | 2.31<br>(1.83) | 4.69<br>(3.43) | 2.28<br>(1.85) | 0.35<br>(2.64) | 3.14<br>(2.44) | 2.14<br>(2.05) | 2.14<br>(1.60) | 4.04<br>3.27 | 2.11<br>(1.91) | 2.75<br>(2.32) |

**Note:** Average catch greater than 10kg was considered outliers. These were extreme values, which if were included in the analysis, would have resulted to unbelievably high average values

## Cost Structure and Profitability of Fishing

As mentioned earlier some fishers had stopped fishing as the revenue from fishing could not even cover operation costs. Only fishers who were engaged in fishing activity at the time of the study were included in the analysis of fishing operation cost. Of the 119 respondents, only 71 did engage in fishing. However, some fishers specifically the fishing crews did not incur any costs because fishing cost was financed either by the gear or boat owner. Fuel cost during Year 2, Period 1 ranged from 22.50 to 52.07 pesos only or equivalent to 0.5 to 1 liter of fuel. Unlike in Year 1, the average liters of fuel used per fishing trip was more than 1 liter. The total variable costs (TVC) in Year 1 were estimated to range from 44.80 to 104.14 pesos while the TVC in Year 2 ranged from 48.19 to 138.03 pesos (Table 10). San Roque fishers incurred the lowest variable costs since many of the fishers used non-motorized banca and did not incur fuel cost. Regardless of fishers' type and gear used, fishing cost in Year 2, Period 1 and Year 2, Period 2 had no significant difference. Fixed costs did not vary since fishers were using the same fishing gear, boats, and fishing equipment; hence, depreciation costs for these equipment would be the same across the two years/periods.

## Cost and Returns from Fishing

In summarizing the costs and returns from fishing per trip and per month, respectively (Tables 11 and 12), total revenue was derived by multiplying the number of kilograms of fish caught (per fish species) by its price per kilo. In Year 1, revenue ranged from 250.83 to 767.25 pesos and in Year 2, it ranged between 281.08 to 590.40 pesos per trip. Fishers from Brgy. San Roque had the lowest revenue from Year 1 to Year 2 (except in Period 2 of Year 2), and also had the lowest profit. Fishers from Brgy. La Paz had the highest revenue and profit, due primarily to bigger catch per trip compared with other sites.

The prevailing sharing system across three barangays was "mitad" (where expenses are subtracted from the total profit and what was left was divided by three). Gains from fishing are divided into three because of this sharing system; two parts of the share is for the gear owner, one part is divided among fishing crew. The share of the fishing crew ranged from 45.93 to 203.19 pesos while the share or profit of the gear owner ranged from 93.26 to 337 pesos per trip. It is interesting to note that the gains from fishing of the fishing crew were relatively small, subsistence in returns, and below the minimum

*Table 10.*

*Fishing Costs Per Trip.*

| **Variable** | **Year 1** | | | | | | **Year 2** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz (25)** | **San Roque (30)** | **Lawi (16)** |
| Fuel | 106.00<br>(96.93) | 45.58<br>(84.66) | 80.78<br>(79.67) | 73.48<br>(103.36) | 31.74<br>(55.39) | 60.37<br>(81.49) | 40.58<br>(79.59) | 22.50<br>(46.82) | 52.07<br>(69.13) | 55.48<br>(74.98) | 21.97<br>(31.81) | 35.56<br>(61.85) |
| Oil | 2.92<br>(4.7) | 1.72<br>(2.69) | 2.50<br>(3.32) | 1.60<br>(6.28) | 0.93<br>(3.45) | 1.92<br>(3.77) | 0.35<br>(1.49) | 0.30<br>(0.83) | 0.93<br>(1.41) | 0.84<br>(2.23) | 0.99<br>(1.96) | 0.81<br>(1.75) |
| Ice | 2.12<br>(4.96) | 0.93<br>(3.66) | 1.22<br>(7.81) | 3.90<br>(12.82) | 1.05<br>(4.16) | 1.71<br>(6.38) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.19<br>(0.75) |
| Bait | 79.34<br>(112.15) | 0 | 1.95<br>(7.15) | 22.68<br>(55.69) | 1.73<br>(8.84) | 16.27<br>(53.37) | 37.02<br>(84.59) | 4.17<br>(16.89) | 3.38<br>(11.43) | 42.40<br>(83.27) | 0 | 13.13<br>(37.90) |
| Miscellaneous (food, cigar, etc...) | 14.51<br>(27.77) | 15.19<br>(26.79) | 11.66<br>(20.74) | 12.02<br>(28.68) | 9.56<br>(14.48) | 10.17<br>(20.00) | 5.79<br>(9.15) | 9.56<br>(13.45) | 14.65<br>(19.15) | 4.76<br>(13.47) | 12.59<br>(19.18) | 11.88<br>(21.59) |
| Gas | 25.24<br>(49.75) | 17.69<br>(64.57) | 0 | 15.80<br>(46.83) | 11.62<br>(58.65) | 6.59<br>(30.46) | 10.62<br>(40.85) | 6.40<br>(23.88) | 0 | 23.39<br>(49.33) | 3.70<br>(9.77) | 0.31<br>(1.25) |
| Gasa | 0 | 0.19<br>(1.22) | 0 | 0.68<br>(3.18) | 0.42<br>(2.78) | 0.00 | 0.49<br>(2.55) | 0 | 0 | 0.56<br>(2.80) | 0.33<br>(1.83) | 0 |
| Maintenance (repair) | 26.96<br>(57.70) | 11.67<br>(13.36) | 9.43<br>(14.96) | 5.50<br>(10.69) | 11.62<br>(58.65) | 6.59<br>(30.46) | 9.29<br>(26.18) | 1.87<br>(6.71) | 3.33<br>(9.71) | 10.96<br>(25.78) | 8.61<br>(18.45) | 1.88<br>(5.12) |
| **Total Variable Costs** | **257.09** | **92.97** | **107.54** | **135.66** | **68.67** | **103.62** | **104.14** | **44.8** | **74.36** | **138.03** | **48.19** | **63.76** |

*Continued to next page...*

*Table 10. (Continued...)*

*Fishing Costs Per Trip.*

| **Variable** | **Y ear 1** | | | | | | **Year 2** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz (25)** | **San Roque (30)** | **Lawi (16)** |
| Styro Box | 0.13 | 0.09 | 0.05 | 0.13 | 0.08 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.08 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.08 | 0.14 |
| | (0.33) | (0.30) | (0.22) | (0.43) | (0.39) | (0.31) | (0.43) | (0.39) | (0.31) | (0.43) | (0.39) | (0.31) |
| Pail | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.06 |
| | (0.18) | (0.20) | (0.12) | (0.04) | (0.14) | (0.16) | (0.04) | (0.14) | (0.16) | (0.04) | (0.14) | (0.16) |
| Basket | 0.02 | 0.09 | 0.13 | 0.02 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.50 | 0.00 |
| | (0.07) | (0.19) | (0.34) | (0.10) | (3.24) | | (0.10) | (3.24) | | (0.10) | (3.24) | |
| Flashlight | 0.18 | 0.09 | 0.13 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.08 |
| | (0.60) | (0.31) | (0.60) | (0.10) | (0.08) | (0.26) | (0.10) | (0.08) | (0.26) | (0.10) | (0.08) | (0.26) |
| Petromax | 0.45 | 0.07 | 0.00 | 0.91 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.91 | 0.09 | 0.06 | 0.91 | 0.09 | 0.06 |
| | (2.29) | (0.48) | | (5.86) | (0.41) | | (5.86) | (0.41) | | (5.86) | (0.41) | |
| Licenses and Permits | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.04 | 0.06 |
| | | | | (0.34) | (0.27) | (0.27) | (0.34) | (0.27) | (0.27) | (0.34) | (0.27) | (0.27) |
| Boats (Dep. Costs)* | 12 | 5.86 | 16.9 | 12.37 | 5.86 | 16.9 | 12.37 | 5.86 | 16.9 | 12.37 | 5.86 | 16.9 |
| | (15.43) | (8.31) | | (15.43) | (8.31) | (24.89) | (15.43) | (8.31) | (24.89) | (15.43) | (8.31) | (24.89) |
| Gill nets* | 2.35 | 12.39 | 14.23 | 2.35 | 12.39 | 14.23 | 2.35 | 12.39 | 14.23 | 2.35 | 12.39 | 14.23 |
| | (5.33) | (13.86) | | (5.33) | (13.86) | (20.91) | (5.33) | (13.86) | (20.91) | (5.33) | (13.86) | (20.91) |
| TFC (Dep. Costs) | 15.2 | 18.67 | 31.48 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 |
| **Total Costs** | **272.29** | **111.64** | **139.02** | **151.52** | **87.7** | **135.15** | **151.52** | **87.7** | **135.15** | **153.89** | **67.22** | **95.29** |

Figures in parentheses are standard deviations

*Table 11.*

*Cost and Returns of Fishing in Selected Sites of Southern Guimaras (Per Trip).*

| **Variable** | **Y ear 1** | | | | | | **Year 2** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** |
| Total variable costs | 257.09 | 92.97 | 107.54 | 135.66 | 68.67 | 103.62 | 104.14 | 44.8 | 74.36 | 138.03 | 48.19 | 63.76 |
| Total fixed costs | 15.2 | 18.67 | 31.48 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 | 15.86 | 19.03 | 31.53 |
| Total costs | 272.29 | 111.64 | 139.02 | 151.52 | 87.7 | 135.15 | 151.52 | 87.7 | 135.15 | 153.89 | 67.22 | 95.29 |
| Total revenue | 775.27 | 250.83 | 408.75 | 767.25 | 382.19 | 535.49 | 368.62 | 281.08 | 384.76 | 590.40 | 332.21 | 312.97 |
| A. Gains after cost is deducted | 502.98 | 139.19 | 269.73 | 615.73 | 294.49 | 400.34 | 217.1 | 193.38 | 249.61 | 436.51 | 264.99 | 217.68 |
| B. Share of the gear/ boat owner | 337.00 | 93.26 | 180.72 | 412.54 | 197.31 | 268.23 | 145.46 | 129.56 | 167.24 | 292.46 | 177.54 | 145.85 |
| C. Share of the fishing crew (*boso*) | 165.98 | 45.93 | 89.01 | 203.19 | 97.18 | 132.11 | 71.64 | 63.82 | 82.37 | 144.05 | 87.45 | 71.83 |

*Table 12.*

*Cost and Returns From Fishing Per Month.*

| **Variable** | **Y ear 1** | | | | | | **Year 2** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | | **Period 1** | | | **Period 2** | | |
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** |
| Total variable costs | 5,141.80 | 1,859.40 | 2,150.80 | 2,713.20 | 1,373.40 | 2,072.40 | 2,082.80 | 896.00 | 1,487.20 | 2,760.60 | 963.80 | 1,275.20 |
| Total fixed costs | 304.00 | 373.40 | 629.60 | 317.20 | 380.60 | 630.60 | 317.20 | 380.60 | 630.60 | 317.20 | 380.60 | 630.60 |
| Total costs | 5,445.80 | 2,232.80 | 2,780.40 | 3,030.40 | 1,754.00 | 2,703.00 | 3,030.40 | 1,754.00 | 2,703.00 | 3,077.80 | 1,344.40 | 1,905.80 |
| Total revenue | 15,505.40 | 5,016.60 | 8,175.00 | 15,345.00 | 7,643.80 | 10,709.80 | 7,372.40 | 5,621.60 | 7,695.20 | 11,808.00 | 6,644.20 | 6,259.40 |
| A. Gains after cost is deducted | 10,059.60 | 2,783.80 | 5,394.60 | 12,314.60 | 5,889.80 | 8,006.80 | 4,342.00 | 3,867.60 | 4,992.20 | 8,730.20 | 5,299.80 | 4,353.60 |
| B. Share of the gear/ boat owner | 6,739.93 | 1,865.15 | 3,614.38 | 8,250.78 | 3,946.17 | 5,364.56 | 2,909.14 | 2,591.29 | 3,344.77 | 5,849.23 | 3,550.87 | 2,916.91 |
| C. Share of the fishing crew (*boso*) | 3,319.67 | 918.65 | 1,780.22 | 4,063.82 | 1,943.63 | 2,642.24 | 1,432.86 | 1,276.31 | 1,647.43 | 2,880.97 | 1,748.93 | 1,436.69 |

**Note:** Assuming that number of Fishing Trips per month is 20.

wage rate (minimum wage rate in Western Visayas is between 193-203 pesos according to National Wages and Productivity Commission). Results of fishing crew share for year 2 did not show improvement as it ranged from P 63.82 to P 144.05.

### Other Fishing and Non-fishing related activity of fishers

Table 13 shows that only 68 (57.14%) of the respondents had other sources of income while the remaining were purely dependent on fishing as their main source of income.

*Table 13.*

*Respondents' Reply When Asked If They Have Other Sources of Income Other Than Fishing (Year 2, Period 2)*

| **Response** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | 19 | 15 | 17 | 51<br>(42.85%) |
| Yes | 20 | 26 | 22 | 68<br>(57.14%) |
| **Total** | **39** | **41** | **39** | **119** |

During Year 1, a total of 63 respondents had sources of income other than fishing. In Year 2, the number of fishers who had other sources of income had increased to 83.

*Table 14.*

*Other Sources of Income of Respondents and Estimated Monthly Income.*

| **Source of Income** | **Year 1 (N = 63)** | **Year 2 (N = 83) Multiple Answers** | **Estimated Monthly Net Income** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10% share *sa uma* | 0 | 1 | Not stated |
| Assistance from family member | 0 | 3 | 3,000.00 |
| Bantay Dagat/Kagawad | 0 | 3 | 2,890.00 |
| *Bodegero* | 0 | 1 | 4,944.00 |
| Fish cage caretaker | 0 | 6 | 1,125.00 |
| Driver |  | 2 | 2,900.00 |
| *Pang*-chainsaw | 0 | 1 | 3,500.00 |
| Hog-raising (*panagod sapat*) | 22 | 4 | 1,162.50 |
| *Panabo* | 4 | 1 | 6,000.00 |
| Carpentry | 19 | 15 | 867.34 |
| Net-mending | 5 | 3 | 610.00 |
| Charcoal-making (*pang-uling/pangahoy*) | 2 | 5 | 1,058.33 |
| Farming (*pananom*) | 8 | 12 | 449.29 |
| Construction worker |  | 6 | 2,251.00 |
| Electrician | 0 | 1 | 6,000.00 |
| Fish Vending | 0 | 3 | 1,175.00 |
| *Gama kawayan* | 0 | 3 | 520.00 |
| Small business | 0 | 6 | 640.00 |
| Odd jobs (*pamugon*)/on-call labor work | 3 | 20 | 1,059.00 |

Odd jobs cited as source of income by 20 fishers included *pamugon, pang-ani*, and on-call laborers (Table 14). Carpentry ranked second (n=15) followed by farming or *pananom* (n=12). However, during Period 2 of Year 2, the number of respondents who had other sources of income had decreased (from 83 to 68), meaning that the sources of income of these 15 respondents during Period 1 were just temporary or seasonal. The temporary income sources like *pamugon* and farming may involve fishers only during farming season.

The sources of income of the respondents who had temporarily stopped fishing during Period 2 were also determined (Table 15). It was found that 36 of them had no source of income, five relied on family’s assistance, nine were laborers or contract workers, five were involved in farming, and three were involved in small business like sari-sari stores.

*Table 15.*

*Source of Income of Respondents Who Temporarily Stopped Fishing (Year 2 / Period 2)*

| **Source of Income** | **Primary Source** | **Average Net Income** | **Second Source** | **Average Net Income** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No income source | 52 | NA | 113 | 0 |
| Bugkos kahoy | 1 | 366.67 | 0 | 0 |
| Business (small)/*sari-sari* store, rice retailer | 2 | 3,600.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Chainsaw | 1 | 1,500.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Copra | 1 | Not indicated | 0 | 0 |
| Driving | 2 | Est. at 400/day + 3000/2 | 0 | 0 |
| Farm laborer/farming | 7 | 4,630.56 | 0 | 0 |
| Fishpond/fish cage caretaker | 2 | 2,250.00 | 0 | 0 |
| *Gama kawayan* | 1 | Est at 390/week | 0 | 0 |
| Gardening | 2 | No income yet, est. at 5000/yr | 0 | 0 |
| Hog raising/animal raising | 3 | 1,033.33 | 1 | |
| Honorarium as Kagawad | | | 1 | Not indicated |
| Just wait for the assistance of the family members/remittance | 4 | (8500+270$)/2 | 3 | 750 |
| Laborer/*pamanday/pamugon* | 27 | 1,641.25 | 1 | 0 |
| Mangrove planting | 1 | No income yet/ new project of DENR | 0 | 0 |
| Panabo | 1 | Not indicated | 0 | 0 |
| Pananom *utan, saging,* etc | 4 | 2,583.33 | 0 | 0 |
| *Panghilot/pamulong* | 1 | Not indicated | 0 | 0 |
| *Pang-uling* | 4 | 175.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Poultry farm caretaker | 1 | 3,000.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Resort maintenance (in-charge) | 1 | 4,800.00 | 0 | 0 |
| Salary/wages | 1 | 3,000.00 | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **67** | | **6** | **0** |

**Note:** Estimated income per month

Twenty-eight respondents said that hours spent on sources of income other than fishing were greater than before oil spill during Period 1 and when asked again during Period 2, 26 of them said that hours spent for the present livelihood were still greater (Table 16). However, almost the same number of respondents also said that there was no change in the number of hours spent on other livelihood.

*Table 16.*

*Respondent's Response When Asked if Hours Spent on Livelihood (Other Than Fishing) is Greater Than Before Oil Spill (Year 2)*

| **Response** | **Period 1** | | | | **Period 2** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** | **Lapaz** | **San Roque** | **Lawi** | **Total** |
| No | 11 | 8 | 9 | 28 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 25 |
| Yes | 8 | 8 | 12 | 28 | 8 | 13 | 5 | 26 |
| Same | 3 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| No other source of income | 20 | 21 | 15 | 56 | 24 | 18 | 25 | 67 |
| **Total** | **42** | **42** | **37** | **121** | **39** | **41** | **39** | **119** |

## Resiliency and Recovery of Fishers

From data showing the average number of fishing time spent before, during, and after oil spill (Table 17), it is interesting to note that the average number of fishing trips before and after the oil spill was not significantly different. This could show that fishers went back to their usual fishing activity despite their perceived low catch on fishing. However, the number of fishing trips per month had decreased two years after oil spill which means that fishing activity was no longer that active as it was before the oil spill.

*Table 17.*

*Average Number of Fishing Time Spent on Fishing Before, During, and After Oil Spill*

| **Period** | **No. of trips per day** | **Fishing trips per week** | **Fishing trips per month** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Before oil spill[1] | 1.17 | 5.83 | 27.28 |
| During oil spill[1] | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| After oil spill (Period 1)[2] | 1.10 | 4.7 | 20.68 |
| After oil spill (Period 2)[2] | 1.04 | 4.2 | 17.47 |
| 2 years after oil spill (Period 1) | 0.89 | 3.47 | 12.35 |
| 2 years after oil spill (Period 2) | 0.83 | 3.68 | 12.21 |

**Notes:**
[1] Based on the rapid assessment data (Economic Valuation of the Environmental Damages due to the MT Solar 1-Petron Oil Spill Offshore Guimaras, Philippines)
[2] Based on the first year data monitoring however only affected sites (Lapaz and San Roque) were included in this analysis since there was no data on fishing trips of Lawi before and during oil spill.

The average fish catch per trip during oil spill (Table 18) was expected to be zero because there was no fishing activity. Fish catch per trip had not improved even two years after the oil spill. There was still no significant increase in the fish catch per trip. Fish catch per trip was only subsistence in returns as confirmed from an analysis of fishing costs and returns.

*Table 18.*

*Average Catch Before, During, and After Oil Spill.*

| **Barangay** | **Average Catch (kg)** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Before** | | **During** | **After** | | **Two Years After** | |
| | **Period 1** | **Period 2** | | **Period 1** | **Period 2** | **Period 1** | **Period 2** |
| Lapaz | 4.86<br>(5.03) | 18.09<br>(17.14) | 0 | 4.72<br>(2.73) | 5.26<br>(3.56) | 3.90<br>(2.64) | 4.83<br>(1.01) |
| San Roque | 3.73<br>(4.01) | 15.01<br>(14.08) | 0 | 3.0<br>(2.25) | 2.88<br>(1.97) | 3.09<br>(2.33) | 3.09<br>(1.95) |
| Lawi | 3.70<br>(3.96) | 16.85<br>(15.81) | 0 | 3.23<br>(2.69) | 3.94<br>(2.76) | 3.18<br>(2.14) | 2.95<br>(3.45) |

**Note:** Figures in parentheses are standard deviations
*outliers deleted

The data on the usual catch of fishers before and two years after the oil spill (Table 19) was based on the fishers' claims. Before oil spill (during the months of November to December), fishers claimed that they were able to catch an average of 12.75kg to 28.64 kg of fish per fishing trip. Two years after the oil spill, they claimed that average fish catch had decreased dramatically to 3.0 kg to 3.54 kg per fishing trip.

*Table 19.*

*Perceived Usual Catch Before Oil Spill and Two Years After the Oil Spill.*

| **Barangay** | **Perceived Usual Catch (kg)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Before Oil Spill** | | **After Oil Spill** | |
| | **Period 1** | **Period 2** | **Period 1** | **Period 2** |
| Lapaz | 12.75<br>(10.64) | 17.61<br>(9.02) | 3.54<br>(3.31) | 5.29<br>(3.46) |
| San Roque | 14.82<br>(14.95) | 10.45<br>(7.14) | 3.45<br>(4.33) | 3.35<br>(4.33) |
| Lawi | 28.64<br>(36.28) | 17.13<br>(15.32) | 3.0<br>(2.65) | 3.81<br>(3.52) |

**Note:** Figures in parenthesis are standard deviations

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An assessment of the status of fishers and fishing activities of the oil spill-affected communities found that the oil spill directly affected the fishers in Guimaras, Philippines. A two-year monitoring study provided the basis for determining how the fishers were able to recover or go back to their livelihood.

Results of the first and second year socio-economic monitoring revealed that majority of the fishers in Brgys. Lapaz and San Roque Lawi have gone back to fishing after the oil spill. However, fish catch two years after the oil spill did not significantly improve regardless of site. The average fish catch per trip two years after the oil spill was estimated at 3 to 4 kg per fishing trip. The respondents perceived an even worse situation two years after the oil spill. They also pointed out that fish catch even prior to oil spill was already low.

When fishers were asked if they still engaged in fishing given the perception that they can hardly catch fish, 80% continued fishing while nearly 20% of the respondents either temporarily or permanently stopped fishing. Fish catch according to some respondents was sometimes just enough for family's consumption. In addition, fishing revenue could not offset fishing costs. In spite of this, fisher-respondents continued fishing, the latter having been their main source of income.

The number of fishing trips had decreased two years after the oil spill from an average of four fishing trips per week during Year 1 to an average of three fishing trips per week in year 2. Number of fishing trips had declined since fish catch was low and it was disincentive for the fishers to go out fishing.

Many fishers had to stop fishing because fishing income or revenue could not offset the fishing operation cost. Share of the fishing crew ranged from 45.93 to 203.19 pesos in Year 1, while in Year 2, it ranged from P 63.82 to P 144.05. Gain from fishing was relatively small and was below the minimum wage rate. Translating the income derived from fishing per month revealed that income was subsistence in returns and was below the poverty threshold. Access to other income sources was also limited and resulted in continued pressure on fishing resources. Educational attainment of the respondents was low and this may explain the limitation of their skills to labor work. Indicators of recovery are bleak among the affected fishers of Guimaras as revealed through the data on their fishing efforts and fish catch.

Fisher-respondents who stopped fishing resorted to other sources of income. Many were laborers; others relied on family's assistance, while some engaged in small businesses like sari-sari (retail) stores.

In order to improve the socio-economic condition of fishers in Guimaras, the following recommendations may be considered:

1. Support state policies for wider and comprehensive payback for fishers from oil polluters. A fishers' cooperative may be encouraged to propose a better compensation package.
2. Improve the condition of the coastal environment through integrated coastal management and intensive campaign against illegal fishing. Considering that fish catch is getting worse, a biological assessment of the coastal environment is necessary to determine other impacts on the environment. Collaboration with others must be undertaken to create a comprehensive strategy to improve the whole system.

3. Ask government assistance for other sources of income (i.e. farming and animal raising). A soft loan financial scheme may be provided that will give them the capacity to generate profit and lessen dependence on fishing. Other livelihood programs to augment family income include basket weaving or bamboo products making.
4. The local government in collaboration with other agencies may also provide training on carpentry and welding for young fishers who might have a chance to work abroad and in return assure remittance to their family.
5. Subject to the availability of local government funds, scholarships for deserving fishers' children may be provided. Considering that fishers' income is below the poverty threshold, their children, once graduated and earning may eventually help support the family.
6. Finally, considering that most areas in Guimaras island are still in pristine condition despite the impact of oil spill in the area, an intensive information campaign for tourism will provide another opportunity for people to earn and eventually support environment conservation. Some fishers may be involved in tourism programs to help lessen pressure on the fishing environment.

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# Participatory Conservation in the Philippines: The Case of Luyang Mangrove Reserve in Siquijor, Central Philippines

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In this paper, we present the results of a case study (conducted in 2006-2007) of Luyang Mangrove Reserve, a project managed by a local fisherfolks' association on the island of Siquijor in the central Visayas region of the Philippines. We determined the level of environmental awareness and perception of the community on the mangrove reserve. Crucial issues and shortcomings are also presented for possible improvements of participatory conservation effort in the Philippines.

**KEYWORDS:** ecotourism, mangrove, fisherfolk, livelihood, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Mangrove forests are among the world's most productive ecosystems (Calumpong & Meñez, 1997). They enrich coastal waters, yield commercial forest products, protect coastlines, and support coastal fisheries (Kathiresan & Bingham, 2001). However, mangrove ecosystems are rapidly declining in many parts of the world resulting in the loss of important environmental and economic products and services including forest products, flood mitigation, and nursery grounds for fish (Kathiresan & Bingham, 2001). Polidoro et al. (2010) projected that 16% of 70 species are at elevated threat to global extinction.

In the Philippines, approximately half of the 279,000 ha of mangroves have been lost from 1951 to 1988 due to aquaculture development and other human activities (Primavera, 2000), although conversion of the remaining mangrove stands was already prohibited by law in 1981 (Ron & Padilla, 1999). To address this problem, several approaches have been implemented elsewhere in the country, one of which includes community-based reforestation and protection of remaining mangrove stands.

The success of Apo Island Marine Reserve, the first community-based conservation in the country, has been described by many authors in terms of biological restoration and ecotourism (Oracion, 2006a,b, 2007; Alcala, Bucol, & Nillos-Kleiven, 2008). However, the shift in the management scheme from bottom-top to top-bottom approach due to implementation of the National Integrated Protected Area Systems (NIPAS) Act of 1991 also gained criticism (see Hind, Hiponia, & Gray 2010). Like Apo Island, many protected areas in the Philippines have both positive and negative management experiences.

The present paper describes a case study done in Siquijor Island on the level of awareness of the stakeholders in terms of the over-all status of the environment, natural resource in the area, and knowledge on the mangrove protected area, including management controversies and issues that might serve as lessons for other community-based participatory conservation initiatives.

## METHODS

### The Study Site

The Luyang Mangrove Reserve is located in Barangay Luyang (9.23616°N, 123.56295°E), Siquijor, Siquijor (Figure 1). It has an area of 10.0 hectares of mangroves, dominated by pagatpat (*Sonneratia alba*). This strip of mangroves is continuous to the west in Olo, Siquijor and to the northeast in Sabang, Larena. By coastal highway, this reserve lies approximately six kilometers from downtown Siquijor and four kilometers from downtown Larena in the municipality to the east.

The mangrove reserve was established in 2003 by St. Catherine Family Helper Project Inc. (SCFHPI), a non-government organization based in Dumaguete City, through the Siquijor Integrated Management of Coastal Resources (SIMCOR) Project in collaboration

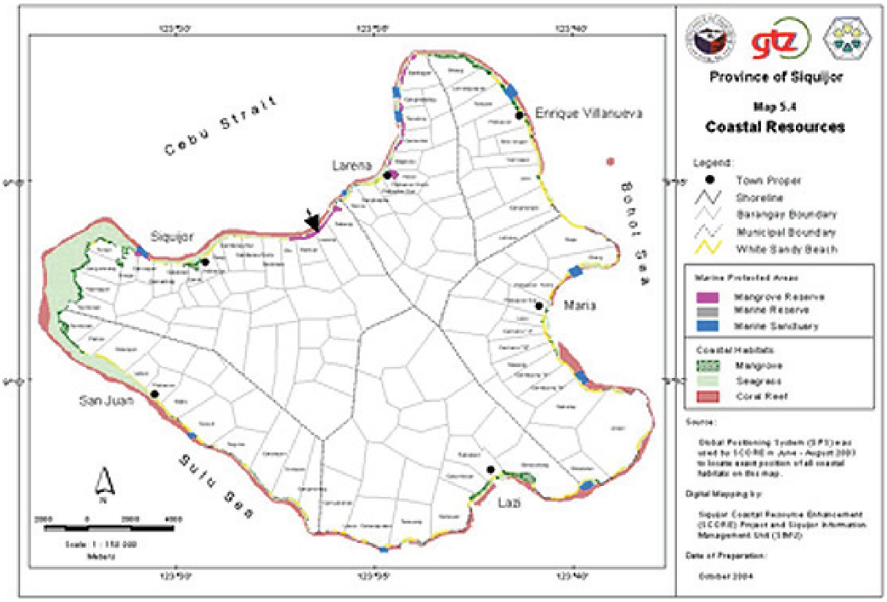
Province of Siquijor
Map 5.4
Coastal Resources
Legend:
Town Proper
Shoreline
Barangay Boundary
Municipal Boundary
White Sandy Beach
Marine Protected Areas
Mangrove Reserve
Marine Reserve
Marine Sanctuary
Coastal Habitats
Mangrove
Seagrass
Coral Reef
Source:
Digital Mapping by:
Siquijor Coastal Resource Enhancement (SCORE) Project and Siquijor Information Management Unit (SIMU)
Date of Preparation:
October 2004
Cebu Strait
Bohol Sea
Sulu Sea
Enrique Villanueva
Larena
Siquijor
Maria
San Juan
Lazi
N
Scale 1 : 150 000
Meters

*Figure 1.* **Map of Coastal Resources in the Province of Siquijor. Courtesy of the Siquijor Coastal Resource Enhancement (SCORE) Project and Siquijor Information Management Unit (SIMU). Location of Barangay Luyang indicated by a shaded arrow.**

with the local government unit (LGU), and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). The local people's organization, the Luyang Fisherfolks' Association (LUFA) is managing the mangrove reserve and is at the same time operating the Guiwanon Spring Park Resort as an income-generating project.

## Data Gathering

We conducted semi-structured interviews (N=41) with the pre-determined stakeholders in the vicinity of Luyang Mangrove Reserve in 2006-2007. Prior to the survey, the Principal Investigator (M. Chassels) consulted with the barangay captain (head of the local community) and explained the purpose of the study. We then began individualized introductions of the project to potential participants. Staff working at Guiwanon Spring Park helped identify current, inactive, and former LUFA members and gave directions to their homes. We then spent several days going from house to house to make the subjects more familiar with us and what we were doing in the community. In any case, these unstructured interviews were a valuable tool for acquiring background data, building rapport, and familiarizing participants with the research.

We asked respondents to sign a consent form agreeing to be a part of the study and granting permission to audiotape the interview. Interviews were audio-taped using a microcassette for transcription purposes. The questions were in three categories: socio-economic background, environmental awareness, and the protected area/ environmental conservation project. We intentionally incorporated some redundancies in the questions to check if the same subject area when approached in a different way might generate more complete responses. We tailored the questions in a manner that would better translate linguistically and culturally. After the first set of interviews, we re-examined the questions and rephrased and expanded them as deemed necessary.

When the interviews were completed, we asked the respondents' permission to photograph them, their families, and their homes. These photographs served as further evidence of economic status.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Economic Status and the Perception of Poverty

If one relied on interview transcriptions alone, one could easily conclude that most of our subjects were of the same, poor, economic status. However, when field notes and photographs were compared with the interview responses, a common incongruity became apparent. Despite drastic, observable differences in the quality of domiciles and standards of living, most respondents described their own situation as though they were living dangerously close to or below the poverty line. Residents of cement houses with metal roofs, running water, and indoor, tiled comfort rooms (CRs) described the same standard of living as community members inhabiting dilapidated structures with no running water and an unfinished, exterior CR. We find it very difficult to believe that subjects with office jobs, big screen televisions, and abundant carved and/or upholstered furniture endured the same threat of poverty as those surviving off of the land/sea or manual labor whose houses were furnished with rudimentary basics. Often, even houses with dirt floors would contain small television sets and stereos; however, some houses did not have any element of luxury. Many interviewees likely underrepresented their economic status, probably due to a colonial mindset.

Because the succeeding sections will tackle some management issues involving the fisherfolk association and the community, we opted not to present photos of houses mentioned above so as to protect the interest of our sources.

## Environmental Awareness

In general, the concept of natural resources was poorly understood. The phrase was difficult to translate to Cebuano, and even when translated, it holds little meaning. If any examples of natural resources were given to aid comprehension, then respondents seemed to think that the example was the actual definition of a natural resource. At least 46.3% of the respondents could list one or two resources beyond any example given, while only 7.3% could list three or more natural resources (Table 1).  Even though they could list few, if any, natural resources found in their community, they could identify ways in which they relied upon mangroves and the sea as sources of products.

Only 85.3% of respondents were asked if they viewed mangroves and corals as beneficial (Table 1). Of these, 100% stated that the mangroves and/or corals are beneficial. Additionally, 51.2% of them recognized mangroves and/or coral as breeding ground, shelter, and/or habitat for fish and sea life while 17.1% of them named other benefits of mangroves and corals (Table 1). In fact, many community members articulated benefits of mangroves and corals quite well. There have been several educational campaigns and seminars in Siquijor on coastal resources. It is possible that such widespread awareness of the benefits of mangroves and corals can be attributed to the success of these efforts.

Views on the sustainability of resource use were mixed (Table 1). There were 19.5% of the respondents who expressed unconditional optimism that natural resources will be available for future generations. Many of them credited the protected area as the reason resources would be available while 48.8% of them articulated conditional optimism that resources would be available in the future. They expressed that the sustainability of resources is contingent upon certain conditions such as the cessation of illegal fishing. On the other hand, 14.6% expressed doubts that natural resources will be available for future generations.

The interconnectedness among different aspects of nature was poorly understood.  Most respondents did not associate the way one person uses land as affecting other land around him/her. While 56.1%

*Table 1.*

*Results on the Environmental Awareness of the Respondents (N=41)*

| **Environmental Awareness** | **No.** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| *I. Identification of Natural Resources:* | | |
| Three or more resources identified beyond any example given | 3 | 7.32 |
| One or two resources identified beyond any example given | 19 | 46.34 |
| Concept poorly understood / example given was reiterated | 10 | 24.39 |
| No response / concept not understood | 7 | 17.07 |
| None / natural resources are lacking | 2 | 4.88 |
| *II. Benefits of mangroves and corals:* | | |
| Viewed as beneficial | 35 | 85.37 |
| Recognized as breeding grounds/shelter/habitat for fish and sea life | 21 | 51.22 |
| Other benefits articulated | 8 | 19.51 |
| Not asked | 6 | 14.63 |
| *III. Sustainability of resource use:* | | |
| Optimism that natural resources will be available for future generations | 8 | 19.51 |
| Conditional optimism expressed | 20 | 48.78 |
| Doubts that natural resources will be available for future generations | 6 | 14.63 |
| Uncertain | 4 | 9.76 |
| No response | 1 | 2.44 |
| Not asked | 2 | 4.88 |
| *IV. Interconnectedness among different aspects of nature:* | | |
| No effects perceived of land use on neighboring land | 23 | 56.10 |
| Some effects of land use or complaints of neighbors' practices mentioned | 5 | 12.20 |
| Land use impacts well-understood on a larger scale | 0 | 0.00 |
| No relevant response | 5 | 12.20 |
| Not asked | 8 | 19.51 |

expressed that they were not affected by the way their neighbors use their land (Table 1), it may be important to note that in Filipino culture, individuals do not usually criticize or unearth the secrets of their neighbors especially if the person being asked has benefited from his/her neighbor's help.

*Table 2.*

*Community Perception on the Mangrove Protected Area*

| Community perception | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| *I. Support for the mangrove protected area:* | | |
| Supported/benefits seen | 36 | 87.80 |
| Opposed/negative opinions articulated | 1 | 2.44 |
| Unclear | 4 | 9.76 |
| *II. Misgivings prior to establishment of protected area:* | | |
| No misgivings identified | 27 | 65.85 |
| Misgivings identified | 6 | 14.63 |
| No response | 1 | 2.44 |
| Not asked | 7 | 17.07 |
| *III. Community consultation prior to establishment of protected area:* | | |
| Individual stated the community had been consulted or informed | 28 | 68.29 |
| Individual felt the community had not been adequately consulted, represented, or informed | 1 | 2.44 |
| Uncertain | 4 | 9.76 |
| No response | 1 | 2.44 |
| Not asked | 7 | 17.07 |

## Perceptions of the Mangrove Protected Area

Support for the mangrove protected area was virtually universal in Luyang (Table 2), where 87.8% of respondents clearly supported or saw the benefits of the mangrove protected area. Only 2.4% (one respondent) expressed negative opinions. It was unclear how the remaining 9.8% felt about the mangrove protected area. There were 65.9% who did not express having had any misgivings about the establishment of the protected area when it was first introduced while 14.6% identified some initial misgivings. Some of the respondents (17.1%) were not asked about this topic.

We suspect that even if more respondents had had misgivings about the establishment of the protected area, they would not have been likely to admit to that after the project showed signs of success. The concept of the “right” answer is very strong in the Filipino education system and is perpetuated into adulthood. It is usually considered unacceptable to be unsure or incorrect. Therefore, many

Filipinos go along with the status quo and retract previous statements that may prove to be "wrong."

The majority of respondents (82.9%) were asked if the community had been consulted prior to the establishment of the mangrove protected area (Table 2); 68.3% stated that the community had been consulted or informed. In most instances, consultation was considered equivalent to being informed. Only one, representing 2.4% of the total, felt that the community had not been adequately consulted, represented, or informed about the establishment of the mangrove protected area while 9.8% were uncertain about consultation. Because consultation was synonymous with being informed, it is difficult to determine whether true community consultations took place in which stakeholders' concerns and interests were addressed and influenced is the establishment of the protected area in any way.

After the establishment of the protected area, interviewees cited noticeable improvements in the health of the mangroves. One aspect repeatedly mentioned was that the branches of the mangroves used to be cut way back to feed cattle (especially during the dry months of March to May) and that the branches have recovered.

It is interesting (but disturbing) that some of the activities claimed by most respondents to have "ceased" after the mangrove protected area was established still persist. Interviewees explained that "formerly" the spring was used for laundering clothes, the intertidal area was used for washing cattle, and the mangroves were used for fuel. LUFA's draft brochure even states, "in the recent past, this area was used as a pasture, as a laundromat, [and] as a source of firewood." Community members seemed well aware that these actions are detrimental to the mangroves, but they are also turning a blind eye to the fact that they still continue.

Undoubtedly, the rate of detrimental use has decreased, but nonetheless, one of us (M. Chassels) personally witnessed these activities on more than one occasion. Community laundry sessions were not a completely uncommon sight in the spring. Additionally, when LUFA members washed the laundry and dishes from Guiwanon, they dumped the soapy water off the boardwalk and into the tidal area below. Cattle were still led through the mangroves and under the boardwalks to be washed in the seawater. LUFA members have also peeled sacks of bark off of the mangroves at Guiwanon for their own benefit—either to personally use as fuel or to sell for this purpose. Supplementing the data from interviews with first-hand observations gives a clearer picture of what is happening in the community.

## Controversies / Issues

During the course of the interview, several issues arose beyond the scope of the original interview guide. The most puzzling of these issues is that the vast majority of the Luyang Fisherfolks' Association members are not actually sustenance fishers. The few (about five) members who do fish, do so recreationally instead of as a source of income or livelihood. The Philippine government's definition of fisherfolk (see Republic Act 8550), however, may include those that are not actually fishers such as occasional gleaners. The other fisherfolk organizations such as Tubod Fisherfolk Association are also dominated by non-fishers (A. Bucol, pers. obs.).

Why are there so many non-sustenance fisher members of LUFA? It seems that the majority of LUFA members joined the organization either because they were interested in improving the mangroves or because their peers (friends) had joined the organization. Core LUFA members participated in the educational seminars and project planning meetings hosted by SCFHPI and other coastal resource programs. The remainder of members joined LUFA as more of a social networking activity.

Why are the primary local fisherfolk not members of LUFA? When asked about this, the local fisherfolk who rely upon the sea for their livelihood responded that they did not have the time or money to be part of LUFA. They must spend their time hard at work to continue to meet their families' needs [rather than on-duty at Guiwanon or at LUFA meetings]. They cannot afford to take time away from fishing or to pay monthly membership dues. Also evident was a social dichotomy. While there certainly are some members of LUFA with much lower socio-economic status than others, the overall impression of the local fisherfolk seems to be that the LUFA members are well-educated office workers with whom they would not be comfortable associating.

The social dichotomy is most likely the genuine cause for lack of fisherfolk membership in LUFA. While it is true that monthly membership dues must be paid, the LUFA members also share the profits of Guiwanon Spring Park Resort, so the monetary issue cancels itself out. It is also true that fisherfolk must spend a vast amount of time hard at work. However, there is also clearly down time to engage in recreational activities such as drinking circles and cock-fighting (*tare/ sabong/tigbakay*). Therefore, if motivated to do so, the local fisherfolk could find the means to participate in an association. The question becomes: why should they join an association that does not represent their interests and needs?

Another controversial issue in Luyang is illegal fishing. While highly destructive, illegal methods such as dynamite (blast) fishing are not used, there are still methods currently employed that have been banned. Use of these illegal fishing methods is typically recognized, but ignored. LUFA members may on occasion make derogatory remarks about illegal fishing, but they do not report such activities even though they have a perfect vantage point to witness them. On the other hand, the actual fisherfolk dependent upon fishing for their livelihood are resentful of LUFA members who fish recreationally. The fisherfolk are struggling to make a living from the sea and feel it is inappropriate for recreational fishers to create greater competition for these resources. The fisherfolk also clearly object to the use of illegal fishing methods by recreational fishers. While they may use illegal methods themselves, the fisherfolk seem to feel somewhat justified in doing so because of the difficulty of this livelihood. At the same time, recreational fishers who use illegal practices are faulted with unfairly depleting the fishing stock.

One interviewee was particularly upset because, according to him, LUFA officers were engaging in illegal fishing practices. Of particular note, one officer accused of illegal fishing is also a member of the Bantay Dagat, supposedly a “civilian fisheries patrol force made up of volunteers that try to keep a 24 hour watch on Philippine coastal waters up to 15 kilometers from shore” [Bantay Dagat (Sea Patrol) Forces, n.d.]. So it would be doubly hypocritical for a LUFA officer and member of the Bantay Dagat to engage in illegal fishing practices. The interviewee discussing this situation used it as a reason for his disinterest in joining the association.

Toward the end of the study, seminars and community consultations were being held in Luyang and neighboring barangays regarding the possibility of creating an expanded marine protected area. The possibility of expanding the protected area in Luyang further out into the coastal waters cropped up repeatedly during interviews. This local issue was more the subject of speculation than of opposition. One thing was clear, however. Community consultations were targeting participation of key LUFA members and not a more inclusive sampling of other key stakeholders, e.g. the actual fisherfolk of the area.

## CONCLUSION

This case study stressed three major findings, which probably describes the status of participatory conservation in Luyang Mangrove Reserve, Siquijor Island: 1) high level of environmental awareness among stakeholders which might be attributed to several education campaigns conducted by NGOs, LGUs, and academic institutions; 2) lack of participation among primary stakeholders (i.e. full-time fisherfolk), which might be a result of social dichotomy; and 3) persistence of violations within the protected area due to weak enforcement.

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# *Tagapagligtas, Ilaw, Kasama*: Religiosity Among Filipino Domestic Workers in Hong Kong

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The plight of Filipino domestic workers abroad is much documented, especially in relation to economic pressures and psycho-emotional stresses. This paper investigated their patterns of coping by looking at their religious activities and attitudes towards their situation and life away from their families and country. A quantitative-qualitative study done in 2005 was supplemented by interviews made in 2009.

In the 2005 study, the majority of the 121 respondents were college-educated, young adults, married with children, and had been working in Hong Kong for over a year. Many of those who indicated they were single had also left children in the Philippines. Similar demographics were characteristic of the 17 Filipinas interviewed in 2009, but this group was made up mostly of residents of Bethune House who had taken shelter there after having experienced significant difficulties with their employers.

In the 2005 study, virtually all (118 out of the 121 respondents) reported attending church in Hong Kong—most of them of the Roman Catholic faith. Attending church is an activity that gives them inner peace and wholeness and also allows them a fellowship with other Filipinos. Prayers focused on practical problems, for example, personal health and family members' health so that they could remain employed in Hong Kong, as well as the welfare of their employers and the Hong Kong economy. The religious person is one who has personal discipline and applies this discipline to life and circumstances. God is viewed as powerful above all things, *tagapagligtas* (Savior), *ilaw* (guiding light), *kasama* (companion). In the 2009 study, while the primary focus was on the respondents' happiness or well-being in general, the importance of religiosity for them was evident in their ranking of God (Religion) as a source of happiness higher than family, friends, and work.

It was confirmed that Filipina domestic workers derive much comfort and support from a strong and active faith that in their view is crucial for their survival in Hong Kong. This conclusion is offered in order to stimulate further research on the role of churches and religious institutions in supporting Filipinas who must work overseas to meet the needs of their families.

**KEYWORDS:** religiosity, spirituality, foreign domestic helpers, women's migrant labor, Hong Kong

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

On any given Sunday in the Central District in Hong Kong, visitors are likely to encounter masses of Filipina domestic helpers, catching up with friends and acquaintances from their home provinces in the Philippines, buying or selling "load" for their mobile phones, lining up to make remittances at the branch offices of major Philippine banks, or simply relaxing on their one day off a week. These women may be regarded by some as a tourist attraction, "a spectacular site" (Constable, 1997) now well entrenched as part of Hong Kong's social landscape (Tam, 1999), but to those whose relatives may be among the helpers hanging out at Statue Square or seeking shelter in the vast shady space created for *Feng Shui* purposes under the HSBC building, the sight of so many Filipinas may evoke mixed emotions: dismay that so many of our fellow citizens have had to seek employment abroad, joy in the company of so many sisters whose laughter resonates so deeply with one's own heart, and perhaps, curiosity, an eagerness to learn where they came from, how they got here, how they manage not only to survive but to remain proudly and incorrigibly Filipina, in spite of the hardships that they have had to endure and that we somehow have been spared.

Our study is a result of efforts to turn these mixed emotions to good account, in the hope of learning from our sisters. It seeks to begin an investigation into one of the major sources of their strength and resiliency in coping with the heavy burdens they bear as "Heroes of the Filipino People." After rubbing shoulders with them in various ways for many years, here we will attempt to share the results of interviews that we believe may help our readers to understand better the role of religious faith and practice in their lives as foreign domestic helpers. While our investigation is preliminary and hardly scientific in any definitive sense, it is offered in the hope of stimulating further research and discussion. We contend that religious faith and practice are a crucial, though often neglected dimension of the experiences reported to us in these interviews. We hope to convince the reader that religion and spirituality play an important role in sustaining the mental health of Filipina domestic helpers working in Hong Kong. As such they must be factored into any well-informed explanation of the resourcefulness and resiliency of most Filipina workers because these factors empower so many of the workers to preserve their basic humanity under often stressful circumstances. This essay is meant to open a discussion of the role of religion and spirituality among the domestic helpers. This is also meant as a challenge not only to previous academic studies of women's migrant labor under conditions of globalization but also to religious institutions both at home and abroad to render pastoral support for these women more effectively.

Let us begin our inquiry with the Filipinas on their Sundays in Hong Kong, since this was the day of the week when most of our interviews were conducted. The Central District in Hong Kong is a convenient location for various reasons. Statue Square, which fronts Hong Kong's "Legco" or Legislative Council building, is the terminal point for various political demonstrations, and thus well known to the tens of thousands who have participated in the protests against the various forms of discrimination and abuse that they routinely endure in Hong Kong. Statue Square is just two blocks away from the Mission for Migrant Workers[1], an NGO founded by Filipinas, former domestic helpers themselves. It, among other things, sponsors Bethune House, a shelter where domestic helpers may find sanctuary when they get into serious trouble with either their employers or the government. After documenting their cases, the Mission provides legal aid as well as counseling and other support services, while Bethune House gives them a place to stay as they await the disposition of their cases before the Labour Tribunal (Constable, 1997). St. John's Anglican Cathedral, where the MFMW has its offices, is half way up Garden Road. Further up the hill just beyond the US Consulate is St. Joseph's Catholic Church, whose Sunday masses in Tagalog and English are packed with Filipinas who consistently form the bulk of the congregation worshipping there. One readily observes the Filipinas moving in groups up and down Garden Road, visiting the churches, as friends and relatives save their spaces for them in and around Statue Square or over at Exchange Square, opposite the World Wide House, where the remittance centers as well as various boutiques catering to Philippine tastes may be found.

The history of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong began in 1969, when expatriates were allowed to bring along their servants from overseas (Tam, 1999). In 2007, Filipinas were still the largest nationality group of domestic helpers, followed by groups from Indonesia and Thailand (Rivera, 2007). It is estimated that in 2010 only 48% of the 284,901 foreign domestic helpers living and working in Hong Kong were from the Philippines, while it is commonly reported that 90% of the Filipino residents in Hong Kong are domestic helpers.[2] These trends indicate not only Hong Kong's increasing reliance on foreign domestic helpers but also a decreasing share of that work going to Filipinas. The dramatic rise in the number of Indonesians employed as domestic helpers may reflect the fact that Hong Kong employers generally regard the Indonesians as more manageable and often willing to work for less than the minimum wage. The Filipinas' superior skills in social networking, and greater awareness of their rights under HKSAR law, may actually make them less competitive than helpers hailing from Indonesia and Thailand.

Filipinas bound for service in Hong Kong are usually recruited through employment agencies or by the word of mouth of helpers who make referrals for relatives and friends (Tam, 1999). The regulatory framework for such employment is established through a series of bilateral agreements between Hong Kong and the Philippines, dating back to the Marcos regime. The work visa specific to foreign domestic helpers restricts them to domestic duties in service to a specific employer. The official "Employment Contract for a Domestic Worker Recruited Outside of Hong Kong" governs relations between the helpers and their Hong Kong employers (Constable, 2003). The contract outlines the rights and obligations of both the helper and the employer. Covering a two-year period, it can be legally terminated with one month's notice or one month's pay in lieu of notice by either the helper or the employer. A helper whose contract ends or is terminated is usually required to return to the Philippines within two weeks.

Foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong had been receiving a monthly minimum allowable wage (MAW) of HK$3,400 until an increase of HK$80 was given effective June 6, 2007 (Rivera, 2007). For all contracts signed after July 2008, the MAW is now set at HK$3,580[3]. Aside from wages, the contract stipulates the helper's holidays and benefits, and the employer's responsibilities for providing suitable and furnished accommodation and food free of charge, as well as a list of reimbursable fees and expenses[4]. In exchange for these considerations, the contract stipulates a range of "domestic duties" that helpers are expected to perform, specifically including "household chores, cooking, looking after aged persons in the household, baby-sitting, and child minding" as well as other unspecified services. The HKSAR Immigration Department's rulings on "Foreign Domestic Helpers" are quite detailed on what may and may not be demanded of them[5]. While such regulations may be intended to protect the helpers, they are in fact difficult to enforce (Constable, 2003). The many violations of these contracts have been well documented by migrant and labor organizations based in Hong Kong, as well as various foreign observers, including Constable (1997, 1999), Momsen (1999), and Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2002).

In taking a step back from the immediate situation facing domestic helpers in Hong Kong, we must remind ourselves that the migration of Filipino workers has become so commonplace that the Filipino family without members working abroad is now a thing of the past. With good reason, Padilla (1994) describes this phenomenon as the creation of a Filipino diaspora, literally "the scattering of Filipinos all over the world." He further characterizes it as "the road from bagumbayan"—the road of the diaspora. The term Bagumbayan comes from the Filipino word "bagong bayan," literally meaning New Country or New Town. Its historic significance stems, in Padilla's view, from two ways of interpreting bagumbayan: there is the road to bagumbayan—raising the question "What happened to us?"—and the road from bagumbayan—which shifts the focus to "What lies ahead of us?" (Padilla, 1998).

Answers to these questions have usually concentrated on explaining the structural characteristics of Philippine history, with particular emphasis on the political economy and globalization. Such perspectives tend to highlight the ways in which labor migration is controlled, regulated, and sponsored by states, whose priorities are governed less by humanitarian concerns than by capitalist interests, reflecting the power of local elites as well as the international financial system (Aguilar, 2002). While such analyses may help inspire organized resistance to globalization, they also prompt observers to lose sight of the fact that migrants are not just victims but subjects capable of actively responding to the opportunities and constraints that confront them. As sociologist Maruja Asis notes, "when we deploy overseas workers, we send out human beings, with all their potentials and vulnerabilities" (Asis, 2002). Thus, receiving countries have to reckon with human beings, even if their intention may only have been to exploit cheap foreign labor. "Limiting migrants' rights," as Asis observes, "has not kept migrants from expressing their humanity. Despite the conditions they find themselves in, or perhaps because of such conditions, they seek out other migrants, they build communities or alternative institutions, and some become settlers."

While Asis' emphasis on the Overseas Filipino Worker's (OFW's) moral agency has prompted our investigation of the role played by religion and spirituality, we must acknowledge the context in which the domestic helpers' agency is exercised. The global services sector, in particular, depends upon a markedly gendered labor market, through which the demand for domestic help in Hong Kong has been matched with an enthusiastic supply from poorer neighboring countries (Aguilar, 2002). Because of its geographic proximity and relatively high wages, Hong Kong has been one of the most popular destinations for migrant workers from the Philippines (Groves & Chang, 2002). Once the system was established, the burden of household chores was relieved for Hong Kong women, thus enabling them to accept paid employment outside the home, particularly in managerial positions. Rimban (1999) points to the irony that while middle-class women in the receiving countries can now afford domestic helpers and thus pursue careers of their own, it is the Filipinas who, along with other foreign women, have been brought in to do the household chores. One consequence, so painfully evident in Hong Kong, is that the gender discrimination that all women confront has been compounded by racial discrimination (Lee, 1996). "What divides women from women," in the words of psychologist Meredith Kimball, "are not the political strategies of different feminisms, but the economic and social differences that are associated with racial and other forms of domination that operate across gender lines. The issue of domestic workers is illustrative of these differences."

The cultural and psychological impact of going abroad to work as a domestic helper should not be underestimated. Except for Sundays, most Filipina domestic helpers live the rest of their week in a condition of "surreal timelessness" (Parreñas, 2001). They are isolated by racial and cultural differences from the families they serve in Hong Kong and removed in both time and space from their families at home. These post-modern Cinderellas—generally as well-educated as the women they work for, yet often treated as wayward children, continually at risk of becoming the object of whatever dysfunctionalities their employers may be plagued with—are dispossessed of their personal identities, at least until next Sunday. Their quotidian isolation means that their experience of the Filipino diaspora is more of an "imagined community" than as a source of real solidarity (Alegado, 2003). While our Hong Kong kababayans (compatriots) will never come to know or meet the great majority of their counterparts, on Sunday they can at least return symbolically to their barangay, unfailingly marked off by cardboard and picnic blankets somewhere in the Central District. There they may be reunited with relatives, schoolmates, and others from their home neighborhood, and if only for a few hours they can renew the bonds of culture, national identity, custom and tradition, that define them as *tao*. The stress involved in such a surreal existence inevitably raises questions: How do they survive? How do they cope as well as they do? What is their support? Does religion and spirituality play a sustaining role in their lives?

Myers (2005) has described how religion can give people a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives, help them accept their setbacks gracefully, connect them to a caring, supportive community, and comfort them by putting their ultimate mortality in perspective. This new emphasis on the ways in which religion can help sustain mental health and overall wellness marks a departure from the skepticism that marred the work of the major philosophers who paved the way for the social scientific study of religion in the 20th century, namely, Hobbes, Hume, Comte, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. Such writers formed what philosopher Paul Ricoeur termed "the school of suspicion" (1977), whose perspectives have been refuted by later, more insightful approaches inspired primarily by field work in social psychology and cultural anthropology. One prominent representative of this reassessment is Clifford Geertz's definition of "religion as a cultural system" (1973) that may serve as deep background for the present study. We hope to illuminate the religious aspects evident in the coping patterns of Filipina domestic helpers and determine whether and to what extent religious faith and practices help them overcome the stresses they routinely face as OFWs.

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Previous studies have featured attempts to analyze the mental health of OFWs but with little attention paid to the role of religion in either sustaining or subverting it. Psychological studies on the impact of employment in domestic service overseas have focused on working conditions (French & Lam, 1988), labor economics (Lane, 1989), and demographic factors (AMWC, 1991). More recent studies have focused on stress factors and mental health (Bagley, Madrid, & Bolitho, 1997), the effects of extended parental absence on the children of migrant workers (Wolf, 2002; Parreñas, 2003), the challenges and adjustments involved in their return home (Constable, 1997), the impact of power differences between the OFWs and their employers (Groves & Chang, 2002; Constable 2002), and the organizational activities of migrant workers (Asato, 2003; Ogaya, 2003).

While recent studies have underlined the importance of investigating the impact of working overseas on the children and families these women leave behind (Wolf, 1997; Scalabrini Migration Center, 2003-2004), some researchers have also focused on the personal experiences of the women themselves. In particular, the Hong Kong study of Bagley, Madrid, and Bolitho (1997) conducted in 1995 among 600 Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong found that potential stress factors included employment-related issues; debt problems in the Philippines; and domestic problems concerning husband, children, or extended family. Two groups had particularly good mental health adjustment: one group (14% of the sample) consisted of single women without dependent children, college educated prior to emigration, and free of major debts in the Philippines; the other group (17% of the sample) was composed of women over 30 years old, who were in their third or subsequent contracts as domestic helpers, with strong ties to Filipino social organizations, including many personal friends in Hong Kong. By contrast, two other groups had particularly poor mental health: one group (7% of the sample) consisted of women experiencing conflicts with employers over alleged inefficiency or carelessness, and suffering through various forms of abuse inflicted by a household member; another group (5 % of the sample) was composed of women with high debt burdens in Hong Kong or the Philippines.

Nicole Constable's (1997) study took a deeper look at the lives of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, focusing particularly on the employer-employee relationship as seen through the eyes of the employee. Using a theoretical framework influenced by Michel Foucault, Constable observed the forms of control that Filipina domestic workers experience and the multiple ways they responded to the disciplines imposed by their employers, noting the dynamics of resistance and protest, docility and self-discipline, pleasure and power. In each of these sets, Constable shows how the complexity of Filipina responses makes their experiences difficult to interpret according to standard binary paradigms of oppressed and oppressors.

Similarly, Stiell and England's (1999) study looked at the employer-employee relationship as experienced by Filipina domestic workers in Toronto, Canada. Their investigation compared the Filipinas with Jamaican and English domestics, and found evidence to support the notion that they are comparatively more "docile, subservient, hard-working, good-natured, domesticated, and willing to endure long hours of housework and child care with little complaint." Indeed, it appears that Filipinas have the dubious reputation in Canada of being preferred "because they are seen as less aggressive," surely a comparative advantage in some circumstances but not in others. It also stands in marked contrast to their image in Hong Kong, where they are regarded as more aggressive and resourceful than, say, their Indonesian competitors. Filipinas have a comparative advantage in their ability to speak English and Spanish. Their Roman Catholicism is also a benefit in Europe, particularly in Italy and Spain (Momsen, 1999).

Parreñas' (2001) study of migrant Filipina domestic workers in Rome and Los Angeles attempted to broaden the focus beyond investigating domestic work as an occupational issue toward a more comprehensive analysis of the institutional settings to which they are responding. She, thus, viewed the workers' experiences through the lens of four key institutions of migration—the nation-state, family, labor market, and the migrant community. Based on the women's stories that she collected, Parreñas analyzed her findings that ranged from the politics of domestic work in the context of globalization to the existential "dislocation of nonbelonging" that shapes the Filipinas' interpretations of their own experience. A sense of "nonbelonging" or isolation may be the greatest psychological challenge faced by those who must work abroad.

Despite the superficial appearance of community conveyed by the clusters of OFWs gathered in locations like Statue Square, Parreñas

(2001) points out that such gatherings are actually isolated pockets—so-called because the term pockets suggests a segregated social space, in which social interactions are enclosed—reflecting the dispersion of Filipinas for purposes of social control at scattered geographic sites in the city. The groups of OFWs seen trudging up and down Garden Road to St. Joseph's Catholic Church or St. John's Anglican Cathedral indicate that the church, wherever and whenever Sunday services are offered in either English or Tagalog is an example of such pocket. Like all religious believers, migrant workers participate in such religious rituals in order "to implore God to assist them in their temporal and spiritual needs."

While previous studies on Filipina domestic workers have described the church as "a way station of some sort" (Mateo, 2003), researchers generally seem incurious about what goes on in these pockets formed under such conditions in a foreign country. When viewed in the context of the isolation most experience in their weekly work routines, however, regular church-attendance can be understood as providing an important time and space for Filipino women to establish their own support system and social networks (Cheng, 1996). The gatherings, including regular church-attendance, provide a valued opportunity for exchanging information and sharing experiences, and overcoming their shared sense of "nonbelonging," if only for a few hours on Sunday.

But highlighting the social function of religion may only be the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. While church-attendance is generally the most visible and therefore most readily measured indication of religious faith and practice, it should lead us to further inquiries into what lies hidden beneath it. For example, to what extent do female Filipino domestic workers turn to religion when they are not in church, that is, when they are at work? Understanding what religion may mean to them personally as well as socially should be a top priority for researchers, given the challenges specific to the nature of the work they do. Psychological studies of religion and its importance in people's lives have become more positive in their assessment in recent years. If at one time, coping strategies based on religious faith and practice tended to get dismissed as infantile, today spiritual health is considered a vital aspect of one's overall health, just as the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of it are.

Nevertheless, the reassessment of religion's positive contribution to spiritual health does not entail an uncritical acceptance of all forms of religious activity, social or personal. Turner et al. (1992), for example, have cautioned that while some people find deep spiritual meaning in institutionalized religious practices, living by a set of rules is not what spirituality is about. Spirituality should not be confused with indicators measuring how often people attend church. Regardless of religious affiliation, people who value spirituality seem to share a faith that consists of certain experiences that they regard as ultimately trustworthy: they believe that a power greater than themselves exists; they believe that this power is omnipotent, in the sense that it is in control of the universe and everyone's lives within it; and they believe that this power is good, cares for and loves them, and controls and guides their lives according to their best interest (Turner et al., 1992). Religious beliefs, as disseminated by religious institutions like churches that build upon these experiences of basic trust, name them, explain them, and teach people how to live more consistently by them.

The ways in which common human experiences are identified as religious, named and explained in religious beliefs, and reinforced through participation in religious rituals is well known among psychologists starting with William James whose Gifford Lectures, published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*[6] (1902), is credited, among other things, with initiating a genuinely scientific study of religion. James' empirical approach to the study of religious experience broke with previous critics, such as Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, whose "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Ricoeur, 1977) seemed more intent on explaining away religion rather than understanding it. A similar trend can be seen in the development of anthropology, which as it became more rigorously empirical eventually set aside post-Enlightenment perspectives that dismissed religion as representative of a "primitive" stage in the evolution of human civilization. While such negative attitudes continue to influence the ways in which some researchers ignore or underestimate the significance of religion (Larson, 1995), anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1977) along with other revisionists have made it possible to take a more positive view of religion and its role in shaping cultures, and the social and personal identities emergent in them.

In order to understand the observed complexity involved in the ways religions actually function in human communities, Geertz defined religion as a "cultural system": "Religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in [women and] men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (1977, p. 87). This definition is not biased against the study of religions in favor of one religious perspective or another, nor does it focus on religious beliefs as if these were the most salient features of religious experience. It provides instead a template for understanding how religions develop and change, as religious people inherit them and adapt them to the different challenges they face in life. It also establishes a context for addressing philosophical questions about the truth-claims of religion. The fact that religions are thought to convey an ultimate truth about life is not to be dismissed as a sign of irrationality or pathological insecurity, but as the normal result of allowing religious symbols to shape one's personal and social identity, the practical results of which can be tested, revised, and renewed or repudiated in light of one's own experience. Religions continue to shape their adherents' perspectives on reality for pragmatic reasons: in short, they work—or at least they work better than any other option currently available to those who remain committed to them. It is natural that, for those whose identities are shaped by them, religious beliefs and practices are considered normal, if not uniquely realistic.

Not surprisingly, such positive reassessments of the general significance of religion find their echoes in the studies of various psychologists. Curran, for example, says there is no doubt that religion or religious teachings play an important part in people's lives (1995). Consistent with Geertz's perspective, sociologists use the term religiosity to refer to the intensity of commitment of an individual or group to a religious belief system. As to why religion is appealing, the simplest explanation is that all religions, despite the tremendous variation among them, respond to particular human needs (Curran, 1995). Even so, as psychiatrist David Servan-Schreiber points out, however, spiritualities can be both healthy and unhealthy spirituality. If prayer produces a state of calm, of love and a sense of belonging, it has positive correlates to one's health. But if spirituality reinforces fear, self-loathing, and various anxieties, it is hardly conducive to mental health (Power, 2003). Ellis (1995), for example, warns against the fanaticism that often results from dogmatic religious devotion. Such fanaticism, he says, is mentally and emotionally unhealthy.

Rather than rely on gross generalizations about religiosity and mental health, more empirically oriented studies of what religion means to people who take it seriously seem long overdue. Duke University's Harold Koenig, for example, suggests that further research might consist in taking people's "spiritual histories," asking such questions as “Is religion a source of comfort or stress?” and “Do you have any religious beliefs that would influence decision making?” (Kalb, 2003). The investigations we are reporting here are meant to respond to this constructive suggestion, and develop it further in understanding the spiritual struggles of Filipina domestic helpers. If Parreñas (2001) is right in characterizing domestic work abroad as a “labor of sorrow” or a “labor of grief” because the dislocations of migrant Filipina domestic workers involve the pain of family separation, the experience contradictory class mobility, partial citizenship, and the feeling of social exclusion or nonbelonging in the migrant community, we need to know more about how religion has enabled them to survive under such difficult conditions.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to situate our research methodology in relationship to other approaches, we find useful to start with Lee’s critical analysis (1996) of the two previously dominant approaches to understanding migrants’ labor experiences: either a micro-level or a macro-level approach. In the micro-level approach, the individual migrant worker is the unit of analysis. Her human capital (individual characteristics such as schooling, work experience, skills) and her motivations become paramount in defining migration and her success or failure in the job market. The structuralist macro approach, on the other hand, shifts the inquiry toward explaining personal experience in terms of world systems as in, for example, dependency theory. This theory has been criticized for depicting an overly rigid scenario of class and status divisions in an undifferentiated capitalistic labor market. But, as we have already seen, the relationships between migrants and employers are diverse and cannot be reduced to such a single-minded formula.

Alternative to both of these, Lee (1996) cites the work of Goss and Lindquist (1995) as offering a more promising approach. Goss and Lindquist seek to understand international migration in terms of the moral agency of the workers. Their responses to the challenges they face is best examined not as the result of individual motivations and structural determinants, although these must play a role in any explanation, but as the actions of agents with particular interests who play specific roles within an institutional environment, drawing knowledgeably upon sets of rules in order to increase their access to resources.

Given the prominence of women in contemporary trends in globalization, Lee (1996) also points out that the role of gender as a fundamental basis for defining migration and labor market experiences can no longer be neglected. Women's moral agency and how they choose to exercise it must be understood in terms of their gender, a point that has been established philosophically by Gilligan (1993) and personally observed in the USA by Ehrenreich (2001). While the social, political, and cultural meanings of gender often operate to women's disadvantage, it is useful to remember that women can also benefit from migration and work. Lee quotes Morokvasic (1984) in support of the relevance of an agency approach to the investigation of women's employment and its impact on their lives: "…[M]igration and incorporation of women in waged employment bring both gains and losses … [W]omen can gain independence, respect, and perhaps awareness that their condition is not fated and that it can be changed." The focus of this present study is to determine whether and to what extent religion is a positive factor in the way Filipina domestic helpers in Hong Kong discover and exercise their moral agency, and thus overcome to whatever extent possible their fate as victims of oppression.

## METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

A 2005 study consisted of 122 brief interviews in Hong Kong among randomly selected Filipina domestic helpers. This sought specific information on their personal religious faith and practices. A subsequent 2009 study consisted of 22 in-depth interviews, lasting two hours each, 17 of which were conducted among the workers who had taken refuge in the Bethune House shelter in Hong Kong operated by the Mission for Migrant Workers. While the latter interviews were focused on the question, "What makes you happy?" the answers received also confirmed the importance of religious faith and practice in the lives of those interviewed.

### The 2005 Interviews

One hundred and twenty-two Filipina domestic helpers working in Hong Kong were approached for an informal interview, in the tradition of *pakikipagsalamuha*—or communion fellowship. That is, the people who agreed to an interview recognized their common bond with the interviewers, who themselves were Filipinas with either direct experience of or a sympathetic understanding of their work. Three interviewers conducted the sessions between March 19 and April 5, 2005, usually on the Sundays in the parks of Hong Kong where most Filipino domestic workers congregate when they have their weekly day off.

## Demographic Characteristics

Slightly over half of the respondents in this study (59.5%) are young adults aged 35 years old and below with 16% of that number 25 years old and below. About 30% of the group appeared to be those in middle adulthood, which is significant in confirming what the literature previously indicated regarding the fact that many of the Filipina domestic helpers have families and children at home, whose needs they are seeking to fulfill by working abroad. Among the women we interviewed, almost half (48%) have been married, with five of these indicating that they are separated and two are widowed. Nearly 40% of the married women reported having children of their own in the Philippines. Several of those who indicated that they are single also reported having children to support.

As to their levels of education, the women reported facts that are consistent with the findings of previous studies. Far from representing the less educated elements in society, those who seek employment as foreign domestic helpers report education achievements well above the national average. Almost half of our respondents (about 40%) are college graduates with an additional 30% having had some college education. Only one of the respondents completed her education with an elementary school diploma; on the other hand, only one respondent had earned a Master's degree.

Here is what was reported about their length of service in Hong Kong: 63% of the respondents have spent between one and ten years working there with about a quarter having been in Hong Kong less than a year and about 14% over ten years. Restated in terms of the number of two-year contracts they had fulfilled, slightly over half the respondents (57%) have had only one or two contracts, 26% have had three or four contracts, and the rest—a little over 20 %—have completed contracts whose numbers range from five to 12. What this suggests—consistent with previous studies—is that the Filipina domestic helpers generally expect to work in Hong Kong for a limited number of years, in order to fulfill specific economic objectives.

Apparently they neither intend to stay in Hong Kong permanently, or in any case, they have only rarely succeeded in doing so.

When asked about their wages in Hong Kong, the range reported by our respondents was from HK$2,500 to HK$6,685 per month, with vast majority (almost 80%), not surprisingly, receiving the standard minimum allowable wage (MAW) of HK$3,270 per month. After some political struggle, including street demonstrations, organized by various groups of Filipina domestic helpers and their supporters, in August 2010 the MAW was raised to HK$3,580 per month, with a mandatory food allowance—when food is not provided for "free" by their employers—of not less than HK$750 per month. Given the increasingly high cost of living in Hong Kong, it is remarkable that more than half of the respondents (60%) send between 41% and 80% of their salary home to their families and an additional 7% sends home between 81% and 100% of their salary. Conversely, only about 13% of the respondents keep between 81% and 100% of their salaries for themselves, a figure that is less likely to reflect a taste for luxury than the incessant demands of their creditors, who often are able to have their charges withheld from the workers' wages before they receive them. Our respondents' reported success in sending remittances home at such remarkably high rates is testimony not only to the heroic sacrifices thus routinely make for their families, but also is consistent with findings reported in previous studies[7].

What, then, are the Filipina domestic helpers actually doing in exchange for the wages they earn? Housekeeping tops the list of the type of work done by respondents, followed closely by cooking and laundry as well as childcare. A few of the respondents, less than 20, also listed such work as elderly care, car wash, pet care, tutoring, and marketing.

## The Role of Religion in the Lives of Filipina Domestic Helpers

Our informants were asked the following questions: [1] What is a religious person? What personal qualities do you identify as religious? What practices do you think of as religious? [2] What image of God emerges from your own experience? [3] Do you go to church or participate in religious services? If so, how often do you go to church? What do you get out of going to church? and [4] What do you pray to God for?

According to our respondents, a religious person is first, one with personal discipline, secondly, one who applies this discipline to life and its challenges, and third, one who engages in religious practices. When asked to explain what they meant by personal discipline, they tended to focus on outcomes, namely the personal characteristics that they believe are cultivated in religious faith including such virtues as humility, patience, open-mindedness, honesty and truthfulness, selflessness, faith in God, God-fearing, loving, devoted, and responsible. When further asked about the application that these characteristics have in their lives, they gave the following responses: communicates well with others, avoids committing crimes, does not use vulgar language, is generous, is a peacemaker, and so on. Asked to give examples of religious practices, they cited going to church, attending Bible study, inviting others to attend church, and obeying God's commandments.

Responses to the question "What is the image of God that you keep as you do your work here in Hong Kong?" fell into three categories: God as omnipotent, God as omnipresent, and God as omniscient. These terms, of course, are generalizations based on the concrete images that our respondents put forward in their own way. A plurality of them (close to 30%) viewed God as omnipotent—powerful above all things, *pinakadakila* ("supreme"), *tagapagligtas* ("the Savior"), the source of strength, the provider, and the protector. Another 24% of the respondents viewed God as omniscient using images such as the light, my guide, the One who has many plans for me. About 18% then described God as omnipresent—God as spirit, father and friend, *kasama ko dito*, ("the one who is with me here"), God is trust, He tries me, everything to me, my anchor. Some of the respondents, less than ten percent, indicated either both omnipotent and omnipresent or both omnipotent and omniscient. A few responses, such as carpenter, hardworking and "cannot be described" could not be placed in any of these categories, although they are suggestive of theological references to Jesus, on the one hand, and the sheer Otherness of God, on the other.

When asked about their own participation in religious services, only three respondents in the entire sample signified that they do not attend church in Hong Kong. The vast majority of the one hundred and eighteen who do attend church do so regularly, with 58% going four times a month, and 22% three times a month. Most attend Roman Catholic services because most (79%) of the respondents were Roman Catholic—roughly parallel to the religious affiliation reported for the Philippines as a whole—while the rest were a mix of Methodist, Aglipayan—members of the Philippine Independent

Church that was formed as a result of the Catholic church's refusal to bless the Philippine Revolution—and Charismatic group affiliations. Respondents testified that they attend church because it gives them inner peace and a sense of wholeness—for example, they feel blessed, feel forgiven, feel new, find peace of mind or spiritual relief. About 34% felt that going to church provides them with knowledge, guidance, and inspiration—*magandang aral* (teaches good lesson, edifies me), enlightens me, God's word, a guide to living. Quite a few (7%) indicated fellowship with God and with others—they feel close to God, they feel at home, as one said, "I feel I have a home here." Other responses indicated that going to church is "more of a practice," an "opportunity to pray," or the expression of a commitment to God.

When asked what they usually pray about while in Hong Kong, over half (about 54%) have asked for "good health" for themselves and for their families, but especially so that they may continue to do their work. Many prayers (44%) have been for their families in general—for God to take care of their families in their absence, for their families' well-being, and so on. Many (26%) have also asked for peace—for themselves and their families, and for world peace—and for comfort and strength (18%), guidance in solving work related problems (17%), and personal safety (17%). Quite a number (23%) have prayed for their employers—that they continue to be good—and even for the Hong Kong economy. Other concerns (27%) were very personal in nature, for example, prayers "for my youngest child to find a job," regarding "anything that affects my relationship with Jehovah and Jesus," "that my partner will marry me and give my son his name," "to get married soon."

The interviews in this first set concluded by asking whether, in addition to participating in religious services, the Filipina domestic helpers had availed themselves of other, more concrete forms of assistance, such as the programs at the Mission for Migrant Workers. Only 23 respondents (less than 20%) indicated that they had approached an organization for help in Hong Kong. Most of the organizations approached were religious groups, though one respondent said she had sought help from the Philippine consulate. The fact that the assistance sought usually was for advice, as well as the relatively low proportion seeking any assistance, suggests that in general this group of respondents were confident of their own resourcefulness—with the help of God—to meet the challenges they face in Hong Kong.

In response to the final question "Now that you are working in

Hong Kong, would you rather be in the Philippines?" the majority (61%) said "No", 30% said "Yes" and the rest either did not answer (8%) the question or simply said "not sure" or "depends." Low pay in the Philippines was the number one reason why the respondents (30%) preferred to stay in Hong Kong, followed by the lack of jobs in the Philippines and the difficult life there (17%). However, they would rather be in the Philippines if jobs were available (13%) in order to be back with their families. Working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong may be a difficult life, even for these respondents, but it remains their best option so long as economic and social conditions in the Philippines continue to work against them and their families.

## The 2009 Interviews

While intended primarily as an in-depth elaboration of the earlier study, the subsequent investigation also explored a question not directly focused on the role of religion in their lives, but on the question of how happiness is experienced, and to what extent it is possible, even among the domestic helpers who have had an especially hard time in Hong Kong[8]. Rather than a random sample, selected for interview were women in residence at the Bethune House, sponsored and managed by the Mission for Migrant Workers. These women, 13 of them Filipinas and five of them Indonesians, lived together in a religiously diverse community at Bethune House. They had taken shelter there so that they could pursue their options once they had been fired by their employers or forced to break their employment contracts. The contrast with the first set is evident in the fact that only 20% of that group had sought help—mostly in the form of advice—from organizations like the Mission. While the respondents in this second set roughly match the first set in demographics, in contrast to the first set they were clearly in crisis over the difficulties they had encountered. All the more remarkable, then, is their testimony to the role of religion in sustaining their personal struggles to achieve their goals and thus find happiness in Hong Kong.

The interviews were conducted primarily at Bethune House and lasted for approximately one hour each. While they were focused on two major questions: the informants' work experience and their perceptions regarding their own happiness, they also sought to document the respondents' personal information, their employment history, and the specifics concerning their last employment situation in Hong Kong. Most of the information about their religious faith and practices emerged from the way they chose to discuss the question of their own happiness. In focusing on the question of happiness, the intent was to collect enough information so that their responses could be compared with the more generalized findings on happiness reported by the World Values Survey and related national studies[9].

There were roughly three groups of interviewees: 1) Group One, consisting of Filipinas who have not had recourse to Bethune House, 2) Group Two, consisting of Filipinas who were currently sheltered at Bethune House, and 3) Group Three, consisting of Indonesians who were currently sheltered at Bethune House. Group One consisted of four women working in Hong Kong as domestic helpers at that time, two of whom had extensive work experience in other countries. Group Two consisted of twelve Filipinas living at Bethune House, plus one Filipina volunteer supervisor at Bethune House. Group Three consisted of four Indonesians living at Bethune House, plus one working in Macau while serving as a volunteer for Migrante International, an organization affiliated with the Mission. Since the focus of this study is primarily Group Two, Groups One and Three served as reference groups for making comparisons in evaluating the responses of Filipinas at Bethune House.

## Demographic Characteristics

The Filipinas in Group One correspond roughly to the 30% of the earlier study's total who are over the age of 35. The average age in Group One is 42, three of whom are married, and one married but legally separated from her spouse. Three of the four were mothers, with an average 3.3 children. As to religious affiliation, one is Protestant; the other three are Catholic. Their levels of education, while not as high as those reported in the earlier study, are well above average for the Philippines as a whole: one attended high school through 3rd year, two graduated from high school, and one was also a college graduate. Thus the group as a whole has an average of 13 years of formal education.

Group Two, corresponded roughly to the 59.5% of the earlier study described as young adults, average age, 32.7. Six of 13 are single, five currently married, one married but legally separated, and one widowed. Eight of the 13 are mothers, with an average of 1.5 children. These figures are higher in the proportion of married with children than what was reported in the first set of interviews. As to religious affiliation, Group Two tracks consistently with both Group

One and the earlier study: ten identify as Catholics, one as Aglipayan. All 13 had graduated from high school, and two of these also were college graduates, with an average of 13.9 years of formal education[10]. Given the fact that their educational achievements are just as high as those of Group One, education or a lack thereof cannot explain the difficulties that prompted them to seek shelter at Bethune House.

The Indonesians (Group Three) are clearly comparable to the young adult group described in the earlier study, with an average age of 28, but their marital status is somewhat different in that one is single, one is married but separated, and two are already divorced. The fact that none is currently married may be indicative of a difference between Indonesia and the Philippines, in terms of marriage and divorce law. The Indonesians also report fewer children, with only two women having given birth to one child each. As to religious identification, all are Muslims, which makes the Bethune House unusual, if not unique, in its success in fostering a community with such diversity in religious orientation. The Indonesians all reported high levels of education, even more dramatic in their contrast with the averages reported for their sisters back home. While one attended high school through the 11th grade before seeking employment, the other three were high school graduates and one of these also a college graduate. On average then Group Three reported 12.75 years formal education among the four of them.

One of the areas in which information was requested concerned work experience. In Group One, three of the four had previous employment in the Philippines and had worked for an average of 4.5 employers overseas, for an average of 14.75 years. How this average translates into number of contracts is unknown, since some of the overseas employment occurred in venues outside of Hong Kong. While none in this group had ever felt the need to take shelter at Bethune House or similar institutions, they did testify to the problems that led to the termination of their previous contracts: Four reported leaving because of underpaid or unpaid wages, three because of overwork, two because of illegal work, one because of sexual harassment, one because of other disputes with employers, and two because their employer had been relocated. The total number of incidents is higher than the total number of responses since each had worked for several employers over their careers as domestic helpers. Group Two also reported previous employment in the Philippines, with ten of the 13 having worked there before going overseas. On average they reported 2.1 employers overseas with an average of 4.2 years working experience. Their reasons for leaving previous employers indicate that despite their short careers, they had faced more extreme difficulties than what was reported by Group One: While none of them claim to have been harassed sexually, nine had been abused or physically assaulted, three left because of underpaid or unpaid wages, three because of illegal work, one because of overwork, five because of other disputes with employers. Those who left but not because of a negative experience with the employer included one because the employer was relocated, one because of family needs at home, one in order to start a business at home, and three simply because the contract was successfully completed. In Group Three, three had previous employment in Indonesia, with an average of two employers overseas, and 4.2 years of employment overseas. Their reasons for leaving previous employers, not surprisingly, paralleled the incidents reported in Group Two: underpaid or unpaid wages, two; overwork, one; illegal work, one, other disputes with employers, two; abused or assaulted by employer, two; and one, because the contract had been completed.

## The Pursuit of Happiness among OFWs

In order to establish a baseline on their responses to other questions about happiness, the respondents were asked to rate how happy they felt on the day of the interview, on a scale of one through seven, with one being “very unhappy,” and seven being “very happy.” Since this question was not asked explicitly of the respondents in Group One, their answers remain unknown; nevertheless, Group Two averaged 4.4 on this scale, and Group Three 4.0, which seem to suggest that, despite the difficulties that led them there, they are generally content with their situation at Bethune House.

Significant variations, however, began to emerge with the follow-up question, on the same scale, asking them to rate their happiness at [a] overseas job locations other than Hong Kong, [b] Hong Kong job locations, [c] Bethune House. Group One’s responses were: [a] overseas job locations: 2.75, [b] Hong Kong job locations: 4.17, [c] Bethune House: N/A. Not surprisingly, given their success in Hong Kong, they reported significantly greater average happiness there than in previous overseas employment. Group Two’s responses were just the opposite: [a] overseas job locations: 5.6, [b] Hong Kong job locations: 2.9, [c] Bethune House: 5.6. This, too, is no surprise, given the fact that they had recently left their employers under difficult circumstances, and considered themselves fortunate to have found shelter at Bethune House. Group Three's averages differ somewhat from either of these: [a] overseas job locations: 2, [b] Hong Kong job locations: 3.5, [c] Bethune House: 5. Despite their recent unhappy experience, they still considered themselves happier in Hong Kong than in previous overseas locations. The overall impression created by these results is that happiness is situational. The Filipinas and their Indonesian sisters are normal, healthy women, who are reasonably content with their lot in life, so long as they are not exploited or abused.

Finally they were asked to rate the highest source of happiness in their lives. In response to the question, "We can summarize the things that make you happy in terms of four categories: Family, Friends, God (or Religion), and Work. Can you rank these in order of importance to you?" The following report the average scores from each group: The closer the score approximates to 1, the higher the factor rates as top priority; the closer the score approximates to 4, the lower the factor rates as top priority. Group One gave the following ratings: [a] Family 1.3, [b] Friends 4, [c] God (or Religion) 2, and [d] Work 2. For them, family is their greatest source of happiness, followed by God and, not surprisingly, their employment success. Group Two, consisting of the Filipinas sheltered at Bethune House, gave the following ratings: [a] Family 1.6, [b] Friends 3.75, [c] God (or Religion) 1.27, and [d] Work 2.72. God (or Religion), for Group Two, is even more important than Family and Work. The Indonesian Muslims (Group Three) gave these responses: [a] Family 2, [b] Friends 3, [c] God (or Religion) 1.8, and [d] Work 2.6. God (or Religion) is their top priority with Family a close second.

## Experiencing God at Bethune House

Given what we have already learned from the first set of interviews about the role of religion in the lives of Filipina domestic helpers in Hong Kong, what else emerges from the second set, particularly from Bethune House? When asked to explain their ratings, the respondents typically understood God as their best friend. Given the routines of a domestic helper's daily life, prayer is both more informal and more intense than it may have been at home in the Philippines. When asked to describe her prayer life, one muses that she thinks of it as talking to God, as intimately as a Filipino child talking with his "Lolo." God is "Diyos," the Creator Spirit, the One to whom thanksgiving is due for all good things, the One with whom we can talk about our problems, who can give us the strength to face the difficulties of the moment. She prays to God in her tiny room, at the end of the day, in the lonely hours when, exhausted from her daily chores, she becomes aware once more of her separation from loved ones at home. Only one person—a resident of Bethune House, who had recently experienced some very hard times—said she thought God was punishing her for her sins. None of those interviewed expressed morbid fears of God, as if they felt like hiding themselves from Him. Only one informant, an evangelical Protestant, had anything to say about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

William James' psychological observations about religious experience may be useful here insofar as he made a diagnostic distinction between "healthy-mindedness" and "the sick soul," and their corresponding religious expressions in the "once-born" and "twice-born" religious personalities. The "twice-born" personality is classically expressed in "born-again" or evangelical Christianity, in which the primary focus is upon accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal savior in order to be saved by His Grace from one's sins. The "once-born" personality, however, is conscious of the presence of God continuously in his or her life, and has rarely if ever, experienced the feelings of alienation from God that make being "born-again" seem so compelling to some. The Filipina domestic helpers' thoughts about God in their lives typically exhibit the characteristics of "healthy-mindedness" and their intimacy with God through informal prayer rather than the formulaic invocations of sin and grace seemed convergent with the "once born" religiousness. Filipino Catholicism encompasses both in its doctrines and practices; for that is part of what it means to be "catholic." But Catholics are typically selective in what they take from their faith traditions, emphasizing some points while ignoring others and relying upon what seems to work for them.

The respondents interviewed at Bethune House did not focus on sin and guilt; they did not speculate on whether God was angry with them; they did not interpret their struggles as indicative of a questionable or shaky relationship with God. They seemed self-confident about already living in the presence of God, and thus could speak directly to Him simply and from the heart. They were not particularly concerned about religious services or where they received the sacraments of the church. While most claimed to regularly attend church services, this does not mean that they go to mass every Sunday. Indeed, a handful of them said they went to St. John's Cathedral for mass, the Anglican church where the Mission for Migrant Workers has its offices. At least one Catholic helper described participating in evangelical prayer meetings organized for the Filipinas by Protestant missionary organizations. While she had no intention of abandoning her inherited Catholic faith, she felt that the prayer meetings were helping her grow closer to God in her own way. The somewhat broadminded approach to religious faith and practice evidenced in their responses may also be testimony to the deep but unspoken spirituality that unites all those sheltered at Bethune House, both Christian and Muslim. At a time when in many parts of the world there is so much hostility and mutual misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims, Bethune House seems to offer a way forward in which the reality of God can be affirmed without exacerbating the divisions already existing among all His peoples.

## DISCUSSION

The interviews confirm that religious faith and practice form an important part of the personal identities of Filipina domestic helpers, and provide various ways of coping with the challenges involved in their work in Hong Kong. The fact that nearly 80% of them report going to church regularly and find positive spiritual support in what they do there, also suggests that organized religious activities in which they experience not only communion with God but also solidarity with each other still define the core of their faith and practice. The images of God reported by them, though categorized in classical theological terms, signify that the self-discipline they find in religion emerges from and flows toward a vivid personal sense of God's intimate presence in their lives, empowering and sustaining them in their work. Nothing in their responses indicates either superstitious reliance on a god to solve all their problems, or an attachment to the traditional religious rituals for fear of provoking the god's anger against them. Our findings, therefore, confirm the positive association between religion and mental health that other researchers have observed, while also not reducing this association to the vague appeal of individualistic forms of spirituality.

*Magpakumbaba*—a capacity for acting humbly or humility—is often celebrated as a positive Filipino value. And yet this virtue exists in tension with other Filipino values that honor education and teach us to stand up for our rights. The resulting conflict in our state of mind does not automatically lead to positive results. Perhaps this is why it is very important to create what has been referred to as a "psychological safe space" (Kotani, 2004), something that exists both in our inner world (that is, the intra-psychic or mental space) and in the outer world of reality where our relationships with other people play out. Recall Parreñas' analysis of our need for "pockets" of social space. Our interviews confirm that for Filipino women working overseas, religion has become an important venue for the creation of this protective pocket or safe space.

Curran (1995) was cited earlier as stating that all religions, despite the tremendous variation among them, respond to particular human needs. We believe that our findings help document the kind of comfort and support that Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong have derived from their religious faith and practice, while living away from their families in the Philippines. It is worth noting that it seems only natural that these women turn to their churches and religious organizations because almost all of them have Sunday—the day of worship—as their day off from work. It is also true that precisely because they are striving to save as much money as they can to send home as remittances, that they will forego other, consumer oriented, leisure time activities, in favor of gathering with their friends at religious services. While the comfort and support provided by the churches and religious organizations is primarily moral and spiritual, we should not forget that there are economic and social benefits as well. Indeed, for similar reasons, many if not all of the migration and labor organizations also make themselves available to the workers on Sundays.

Nevertheless, it is not so much the religious organizations that are responsible for the domestic workers' wellbeing as the spirituality and religious faith of the workers themselves, who are changing these organizations to fit their specific needs. The personal discipline that they expect to find, and their participation in religious services are the characteristics that they believe will ensure their success in responding to the challenges of working overseas. In order to overcome any challenges they face in Hong Kong, they recognize their need to be faithful, God-fearing, honest, loving, open-minded, truthful, and they hope to become more so because of their weekly participation in religious services. By the same token, they expect God to be powerful—a savior, provider, and protector—without whom they are left to the tender mercies of an indifferent and often hostile environment. That practically all of the respondents go to church regularly reflects and serves to renew the hopes and expectations that they bring with them from home.

Thus the interviews confirm that the religious attitudes of the Filipina domestic workers are actually very positive, optimistic, and hopeful. They believe they find genuine comfort and support in church attendance and prayerful fellowship. Their prayers tend to focus on economic questions: they pray for good health and peace as prerequisites to remaining in a foreign work setting. This is understandable given that the reason that these women are working abroad in the first place is to relieve the financial burdens on their families. While their religious faith and practice can wave no magic wand over their underlying hardship—loneliness, homesickness, and their understandable anxieties over what may be happening to those they have left at home—it still enables them to cope with the hazards along the path they have chosen, far better than any of the usual means of escape that Hong Kong has to offer.

## CONCLUSION

Our findings are offered here in the hope of stimulating further research on the role of religious faith and practice in the lives of Filipina domestic helpers. There are several areas for further study.

One of these concerns is what, if any, transformative impact carries over from the role religion plays in their Hong Kong lives when the Filipinas return home, when they resume their duties, perhaps as wives and mothers, perhaps as entrepreneurs, perhaps as students returning to school in order to begin a new career. If the Filipinas in Hong Kong seem to be unusually faithful in their church-attendance and devout in their personal prayers, how does their experience compare with the role religion plays in the lives of their sisters at home? Our impression is that the experience of migration in search of employment tends to intensify religious faith and practices rather than undermine it. It is as if, before going overseas, workers had access to an answer without knowing very well what questions it addressed. Such an impression needs to be tested by further research. What is the role that religious faith and practice actually plays in the lives of women in the Philippines today? Does it change when some of them go abroad in search of work? Once they return home, do they maintain their level of religious participation, or do they revert to whatever is considered normal among their families and friends?

Another concern might focus further on research in comparative studies of Filipina domestic helpers in other venues. In Hong Kong the Filipinas form a highly visible community—at least on weekends—where newcomers can readily find access to existing social networks that will help them survive the challenges of living and working abroad. But is Hong Kong an exception? Given the fact that the helpers are part of the vast Filipino diaspora, with large numbers working in the Middle East, in Europe, and in North America, the question is whether religious faith and practice is as significant in these venues as in Hong Kong? Are the churches and other religious organizations as receptive to their needs as some of them are in Hong Kong? Does the pocket of social space needed for mental health and spiritual renewal shrink in these other venues? Does Filipina religiosity under such circumstances become more intensely personal or does it fade away altogether?

Given findings such as ours that emphasize the role of churches and religious organizations in the lives of the Filipina domestic helpers, further study and analysis should be focused on what they are doing—or failing to do—to assist these women and their families before, during, and after their working days overseas. Are those contemplating going abroad for work finding adequate counseling and support in their home parishes and congregations? What, if anything, are churches and religious organizations doing to prepare the workers for the cross-cultural challenges of working in a foreign home, with employers who may know even less than they do about the kinds of problems that can lead to a breakdown in communication, and the likelihood of abuse? What, if anything, are the churches and religious organizations doing to challenge the predatory practices of some employment agencies—both in Hong Kong and in the Philippines—whose chief aim seems to be to burden the workers with impossible levels of debt? What, if anything, are they doing to support the families of the Filipinas working overseas? Have they, for example, sought to develop any pastoral strategies specifically targeting the needs of the caretakers at home, particularly, the husbands and fathers, who have been left to look after the children while their mothers are away? What, if anything are they prepared to do to assist the return and reintegration of the Filipinas, once their contracts are completed?

Given our findings regarding the kinds of issues that occasion the prayers of Filipina domestic helpers, we feel more needs to be done by churches and religious organizations to provide concrete answers for them. As we have attempted to show, prayers can be overheard, and when they are, it is up to everyone concerned to get involved. Bethune House, which has made such an important difference in the lives of domestic helpers in desperate circumstances, did not happen miraculously. It is the result of hard work, hard lessons learned, and a willingness of many to respond concretely to the prayers of their sisters. Such efforts need to be multiplied, not only in Hong Kong, but wherever Filipinas find themselves working abroad. In order to make this possible, further research needs to be done on precisely how the system of Filipina labor migration works, understanding the challenges involved, identifying the institutional problems—on the part of both the sending and receiving countries—that heighten the risks of abuse, surveying the actual costs and benefits of such employment, not just in financial terms, but also in psychological and spiritual terms as well. We hope to encourage other researchers to follow up on the tentative leads we believe our findings suggest, particularly, in understanding and strengthening the role that churches and religious organizations can play in supporting the Filipina domestic helpers abroad.

## ENDNOTES

[1] For more information on the Mission for Migrant Workers, please consult its website: http://www.migrants.net/.

[2] For a survey of information available online regarding “Foreign Domestic Helpers” in Hong Kong, see the Wikipedia article on this topic at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_domestic_helpers_in_Hong_Kong.

[3] HKSAR Labour Department Public Support and Strategic Planning Document on Foreign Domestic Helpers: http://www.labour.gov.hk/text/eng/plan/iwFDH.htm.

[4] HKSAR Employment Contract for a Domestic Helper Recruited from Outside Hong Kong—English Version: http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/id407form.htm#SADD.

[5] Foreign Domestic Helpers—Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/faq_fdh.htm.

[6] William James (1842—1910) is an American philosopher who did pioneering work in the field of psychology of religion. An online text of his classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), along with many of James’ other works, is available at http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/james.html.

[7] The total remittances from overseas workers to the Philippines in 2005 were US$10.7

billion dollars, which ranked 3rd among nations worldwide, with only citizens of India and Mexico sending home more. Figures are unavailable for the % of this total that is sent by women working abroad as domestic helpers. Source: www.nationmaster.com/graph/lab_wor_rem_rec_bop_cur_us-remittances-receipts-bop-current-us.

[8] The full results of this second set were reported in an unpublished paper given at the 46th Annual Convention of the Psychology Association of the Philippines (August 2009), "Are We Having Fun Yet?! Happiness and Strength of Character among Filipina Domestic Helpers (OFWs) Living and Working in Hong Kong." A copy of this paper is available by request. Email dmccann@agnesscott.edu.

[9] Information on the World Values Survey, its methodology, and its findings particularly on the question of happiness, and whether people's attitudes toward it or experience of it change under different circumstance is available at its website: www.worldvaluessurvey.org/index_findings. The relatively high ranking reported for the Philippines—in comparison with societies that rank higher in terms of economic development—provoked quite a bit of controversy among Filipinos. Here is one representative response: Alan C. Robles, "Happiness Viewpoint: It Doesn't Take Much" *Time*, 20 February 2005. Source: www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1029896,00.html.

[10] The significance of the educational achievements of the OFWs, as reported in our first set and confirmed in the second, can hardly be overstated. According to statistics issued by the World Bank and disseminated through the NationMaster.com website, the average adult Filipino has completed 8.2 years of schooling, while the average for 17 Filipinas interviewed for this study is 13.7 years. The 8.2 years earns the Philippines 28th position in a field of 100 countries, which is quite impressive, given that only Japan has a higher ranking among east and southeast Asian nations. The Indonesians' educational achievements are also worth noting: the 5 interviewed for this study averaged 12.75 years, in comparison with their national average of 5 years of schooling, ranking 66th worldwide. By comparison, the Nation Master statistics indicate that the highest number of years of schooling among adults, predictably, was reported was the USA's average of 12 years. This means that the average domestic helper interviewed for this project has achieved a higher level of formal education than the average American. Statistical source: www.nationmaster.com/graph/edu_ave_yea_of_sch_of_adu-education-average-years-schooling-adults.

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# READERS FORUM

# The Body Politic and Diaspora in Theological Education: An Introduction to the Conversation with Lester J. Ruiz

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Accreditation is crucial in shaping and setting the standards of quality theological education, wherever they are located. What has theological education got to do with the deplorable situation of the marginalized and exploited people, like the domestic helper in Hong Kong who looks at her life as metaphorically like that of a roll of toilet paper? As director of the Accreditation and Institutional Evaluation of North America's Association of Theological Schools (ATS), Lester Edwin J. Ruiz speaks of issues beyond the usual categories outlined in an instrument of accreditation for theological education. From his vantage point, Ruiz writes the essay "Recovering the "Body Politic": Racialized and Gendered Diaspora in Accredited Graduate Theological Education." It is notable that Ruiz is conscious of his privileged social location as an Asian male in the U.S., and that he heeds Focault's caveat on the dangers and possibilities of intellectual work—in production and reproduction of knowledge. In this way, he is able to challenge the commonplace views and practices of traditional theological education.

Ruiz treads into the path of looking at how theological education in the U.S. performs "race" and "power" at the intersection of gender. Quoting a lament from a domestic helper and Focault's vision of a criticism that awakens life as a prelude, Ruiz sets his agenda to map out the elements of theological education that is crucial in the description and evaluation of "race" and power. He seeks to explore metaphors useful in interpreting and rethinking “race” and “power” towards social transformation. In doing this, he puts forth his desire to engage in conversation with his audience on the question of how “race” and “power” are interpreted and practiced, as well as their role in shaping or (de)forming theological education.

Ruiz’s locus is the accredited graduate theological education in the United States of America, and he focuses this desired conversation on the metaphor of “body politic” in interpreting the practices of race and power, particularly in situations of the “gendered Diaspora.” Yet, his essay may still be used as a lens to examine the interpretation and practices of race and power in theological education in the Philippines, in wider Asia, and in other parts of the globe.

Steeped in the postmodern and postcolonial discourses, Ruiz asserts one must not separate the notion of “the body” with the “praxis” of responding to specific contexts. The root metaphor of the “body”—as “political body”—informs one’s notion of “race” and thus, it is crucial in understanding the problems of race and power. He pointed out that we can learn from the way feminists and women of color articulate their struggles in light of the question of the “body,” of it being socially inscribed. Here, Ruiz also used dance as an analogy to illustrate the body as an “inscribed surface of events” that can be shaped with “racialized and gendered meanings, appropriate behaviors, expectations, and standards or norms” such as femininity, ethnicity, and “race.“ Women have retrieved the place of the body in their struggles for the production and reproduction of knowledge, and in surfacing subjugated, situated knowledge. These women have re-claimed their subjectivity and spirituality that affirms one’s experience of the self, the other, and of the Divine. Ruiz cites the film *Babette’s Feast* as a metaphor for spirituality, and I add, of liturgy. Furthermore, the feminist and womanists endeavored to retrieve body politic in empowering practices.

Ruiz turns our attention further to a re-orientation of the practices of race and power in the context of Diaspora, where the latter is understood not only in terms of epistemic paradigm but especially as a “way of being.” Here, he helps us to appreciate the distinction of intersectionality from interstitiality and its bearing in transforming a condition that drives people away from their homes and becoming strangers not only in their own places but also in foreign lands. In the experience of migrant Filipinos, Ruiz used the metaphor of “turbulence” to understand the reality of estrangement as encompassing movement and “disruptive, unpredictable, volative speed." Intertwined with the notion of body politic, (racialized and gendered) Diaspora is forced not only to re-conceptualize the notions of time and space and articulate their "homing desire," but also to re-invent themselves and their agency. To drive home his point, Ruiz cites the condition of Asian and Asian-North Americans as example of the racialized and gendered migration. He points to the phenomenon of the emergence of new forms of identities and hybridities, of images of borderlands and border crossings, as well as of de-territorializing and re-territorializing projects and trajectories. Yet, these are accompanied with nostalgia, of the longing for what Ruiz calls the "idyllic Garden of Eden." Diaspora disrupts the traditional system, as it forces us to gaze at the Stranger, whose existence demands that new visions, knowledge, possibilities, communities, and notions of hospitality must be fashioned. In this context, Ruiz reminds his audience of the role of language in Diaspora, and that is both "productive, performative, and coercive" at the same time.

Against this backdrop, Ruiz notes that terminologies such as "model minority," "middle minority," "forever foreigner," and "honorary white" have shaped Asian communities in North America in negative ways. However, he admits that such stereotypes have also provided the platform for resistance and development of new identities and strategies for transformation. Noticeable in his essay is the avoidance of the hyphen in his description of identities, e.g. "Asian American" vis-à-vis "Asian-American." Whether this is a political posture, the audience is challenged to discern its implication. He points to the development in the character of Asian American theologies. The first generation Asian American theologies, he notes, emerged as articulations grounded on struggles for social justice and liberation from institutional and structural racism and discrimination, in the midst of concerns on integration, autonomy, and the re-invention of the Asian Christian identity. In contrast, the ranks of second generation Asian American theologies have highlighted interdisciplinary methods, and pay attention to culture, ethnicity, gender, economy and interfaith and interreligious dialog. This is a consequence of Asian North American theologians becoming wider and diverse in terms of constituencies, fields of discipline, ecclesial families, political and moral commitments and accountabilities. This phenomenon points to the reality that one could not divorce the "local" from the "global"; they are, as Ruiz notes, "co-constitutive." He further notes that the search for home, where home is not limited to geography but is defined as "identities," is crucial in charting the future of Asian and Asian American Christianity.

It is based on this definition that Ruiz made a baffling statement: that "the many waves of Asian migrations and immigrations to the U.S., in particular, is nothing more than the return of the colonized to their homeland." After all, Asian Christian's identity is usually inherited from, and aligned with the missionary group that inhabited one's homeland. Thus, he argues that the "point is not to return to the old contestation about the American imperial and colonial project."

Accreditation is a process of appraising the standard of theological education according to the needs and contexts of the church communities. Yet, Ruiz recognizes that these institutions tend to be disconnected from these historic communities (the churches). He asks: What are the conditions under which an authentically transformative Christianity or religious identity and practice can be articulated? What is the role of accredited graduate theological education in this articulation? What, in the current practice of our learning, teaching, and research, needs to be revisited in order to begin to address the larger questions of what Asian American Christianity ought to look like at the end of the mid-century? Subsequently, he outlines a three-fold challenges brought about by the above "multi-stranded" diversities, namely: how to understand the diverse locations and practices, how may one link these diversities, and how to negotiate the connections between plurality, the relations under uneven, asymmetrical change in institutions. These, to Ruiz, are crucial issues that affect the teaching-learning processes, considering that access to power and privilege and the formation of the whole person are well within the sphere of theological education.

## "THEOPOLITICS OF (RE)INSCRIPTION"

In response to Lester J. Ruiz, karl james evasco-villarmea of Silliman University wrote an essay "This Is My Body": The Theopolitics of (Re)Inscription. Now a doctoral student at Chicago Theological Seminary, villarmea (who, for whatever political reason prefers his name to be written all in small letters), hails Ruiz's essay as speaking to his location in an existential sense. For him, body talk is in a way also a God-talk, and that it is inscribed at the very core of Christianity as articulated in its christological formulation. Implicit in villarmea's view is the image of Jesus as a racialized and gendered person, Jesus being a Jew and male. This male person was the embodiment of the violated divine, vulnerable and whose body was "subjected to constraint and power" and was buried. He sees the challenge of recovering the body at a time when it is regarded merely as a means to glorify capital. Highlighting the connection of divinity and materiality in the body, villarmea argues that breaking such nexus will yield a catastrophe leading to death. He understands Ruiz to be calling for an ontological-epistemological position that demands political and ethical task of reconfiguring "body politic" such as theological education. However, villarmea is not convinced of its necessity to be "framed ecclesiastically."

Bringing home the implications of the matter, villarmea turns our gaze towards a "window" that may be useful for Silliman University's faculty. He notes that Ruiz's article raises crucial and critical pedagogical questions for educators located in a country that is economically propped up by diaspora—the migrant workers. He asks fellow Filipino educators, especially those at Silliman: how do we produce knowledge? What is the basis of such production and reproduction? And to what (or whom) does this serve? These questions are not simply rhetorical and theoretical; instead, they point to the status and existence of the body in light of the Philippine government's promotion of vocational education to export bodies as overseas workers.

An institution's response, such as Silliman's, will reveal its commitment to the foundational faith-tradition upon which it is supposed to stand. Does Silliman education enable students to see and live the messianic mission (the via, veritas, vita) of Jesus? Does it seek explicitly to contribute to the fundamental transformation of the social order? Does it bring out knowledge that welcomes without condition? Does it cultivate commitment in students to serve the least among us? Or, is Silliman education girded only towards serving the (neo)liberal state and work for the global capitalist market? These questions do not make us go back to the timeworn ideological debate, villarmea opines. Instead, these provocative inquiries make us think about what it means to create a more humane society, and it enables us to open up our human vista that we may propel our country towards a more democratic society.

## GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AND FOR DIASPORA

From a white male who married a Filipina, Dennis P. McCann of Agnes

Scott College in Decatur, Georgia finds Ruiz's article important for people who have "risked becoming strangers in a strange land." In his response to Lester J. Ruiz's article entitled "Graduate Theological Education in and for a (Racialized and Gendered) Diaspora," McCann sees the essay as an assessment of diverse experiences of Filipinos who become "members of a globalized and globalizing Diaspora community."

McCann traces the history of the term Diaspora back to the biblical studies, where the Jewish diaspora is regarded as vehicle for the spread of Christianity around the Mediterranean, beginning especially with Paul's missionary journeys. Ruiz's "anti-essentialist" approach to Diaspora has roots in Jesus' "refusal to retreat into lofty abstraction," he notes. Christian churches are in reality Diaspora communities that need to understand the meaning of being Diaspora, and this is implicit in Ruiz' discourse on graduate theological education.

Challenged by Ruiz's admission of his social status, McCann acknowledges his being a privileged American male "bonded by marriage to the fate of the Filipino people and their beloved islands." Ruiz awakened the subversive memory of his Irish Catholic roots, and thus he resonates with Ruiz's effort to theologize through the eyes of Filipino Diaspora. He sees a parallel in the situation that drove the Irish to become Diaspora two centuries ago with that of the Filipino situation today. There was lack of economic and social opportunity for advancement, and sense of oppression at "the hands of colonial and neocolonial masters." Or, perhaps it was yielding to the call for adventure, or both.

However, McCann is wary that the complexity of Diaspora experience is not fully acknowledged, for the postmodern language highlights only the notions of "estrangement" and the "turbulence" brought about by the dispersal and dislocations from original locations. Although Ruiz sees "estrangement" as not only about victimization but also an opening towards a new door for moral agency and responsibility, McCann wants to go beyond Ruiz. He finds that Ruiz did not take into account the sense that "estrangement" also "begins at home." McCann asks many questions about the conditions at home that drives people to become Diaspora. Informed by his own interviews of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, McCann argues that a "truly critical reassessment of their (racialized and gendered) Diaspora experiences will not be complete until the social and economic injustices by which some Filipinos prosper by oppressing their neighbors is fully addressed." McCann proffers that

Ruiz misses to address these concerns effectively because of his refusal to view Diaspora in "outmoded binary forms of analysis." Yet, a streak of hope McCann finds in Ruiz's work. It is about the religio-moral response to Diaspora event: hospitality. In this vein, McCann cites the example of Bethune House and the Mission for Migrant Workers that welcome not only Filipino domestic helpers but also women from other countries and of various faith and religious traditions. Here, Diaspora space is "joyfully and generously shared," among a "new kind of religious community in the Diaspora, one that is ecumenical and interfaith from the ground up." He observes that it has become a "harbinger of hope," so that it could effectively mobilize political movements among Hong Kong Diaspora. Filipina migrant workers even become more religious in Hong Kong. McCann wonders what happens to the new "Subjectivity" when these Filipinas come home. What will their Diaspora experience mean for the churches of the Philippines and their role in the nation's public life?

McCann thinks it may be easier for Ruiz to advocate for a (racialized and gendered) Diaspora consciousness in the U.S.A. than getting a "respectful hearing" for such proposals from the churches in the Philippines. He thinks the transformation of graduate theological education in the Philippines needs given top priority, rather than the Asian-American context. He notes a general lack of interest in religious traditions other than one's own in the discourse of Ruiz: he is too focused on his ATS constituency that he has neglected the presence of Roman Catholic theological education. He believes one could not afford to relegate to the margins possibilities for ecumenical and interfaith collaboration in the struggles for social justice and human authenticity. He believes, though, that Ruiz agrees with him on this matter.

## IS INTEGRAL LIBERATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION POSSIBLE?

Mark Lewis Taylor, professor of Theology and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary asks: "Integral Liberation in U.S. theological Education: Is it Possible?" Being immersed also in contemporary theory, Taylor commended Ruiz for his matrix of theory (or should I say, theories) in his advocacy for racial and gender justice in North American institutions, particularly theological education. He notes that concerns for justice and liberation are usually done with "a hermeneutics of outrage and denunciation," without the benefit of theoretical mediation. Taylor works on the thesis that theological education in the U.S. is "still far from what it can and should be when it comes to both teaching and practicing racial and gender justice," and this is definitely related with the "pervasive neocolonial and imperial posture of Christian religion in the U.S." However, radical advocacy for justice and liberation in theological institutions demands cautious reflections for it not to fall into the pit of naïve progressivism and Left-posturing.

Taylor's response to Ruiz is set in three points. He stresses on the issue of the constructed character of race to show that it still props up the male subject-position in US theological education, and that race is still at the core of US imperial formation. He puts forth the notion of "integral liberation" as his way of characterizing the "authentic and transformative Christian faith." This is his response to Ruiz's key question: what is an "authentically transformative Christianity?" Then, he discusses his view of what US theological education needs to become.

Having experienced difficulty in teaching the view that racism is *a construct*, Taylor thinks that Howard Winant's definition of racism is helpful; that it is "*the routinized outcome of practices that create or reproduce hierarchical social structures based on essentialized racial categories*."[1] While U.S. higher education in theology often likes to see itself as champion of academic freedom, in reality it is still stuck as controlled spaces when it comes to the issues of gender and race.

Theological education is ordered by the ideals of the "canons of scholarship" and by particular interpretations of those ideals that come with entitlements and privileges. Taylor directs our attention to the figures from the ATS compilation concerning race and gender in theological education. Across the board, white males are still the dominant group among students and faculty. The women are still below fifty percent. Yet, at the faculty level, Taylor notes that the "disparities of gender and racial/ethnic profiles" are more strongly noticed, especially among the tenured. There are few women, and white males still dominate in faculty and top administrative levels. Taylor points that the rhetoric of "diversity" in theological education is "severely limited" when empowerment for the marginalized is excluded. Considering the number of whites in theological education "*together with and compounded by* their holding greater numbers of the power-holding positions, US higher education still has a long way off from what it should be." Furthermore, theological education is only one of the US academic institutions that fails to challenge the US hegemony, and even gives face and justification for such hegemony.

Taylor rightly demurred Ruiz's view not to revisit the "old contestation about the American imperial and colonial project" precisely because the US imperial and colonial project continues to reconstitute and re-invent itself. Protesting such project also continues to be necessary and relevant. Taylor asserts that racialized and gendered constructs have serious political and economic consequences.

The questions Ruiz asks presupposes a clear view of what an "authentically transformative Christianity" means. Instead, Taylor prefers the concept of "integral "liberation," one that was developed by Third World theologian, Gustavo Gutièrrez. This concept articulates a wholistic approach to community survival in the struggle for social liberation of the exploited groups around the world. To Taylor, this term names the flourishing and differentiated event of liberation, the event that is the goal of all struggles; visioning and commitment are made. Integral liberation is also "reconciliatory liberation," and thus the world "reconciliatory" should be taken as qualifier of liberation that must also be kept fluid even as it is open and aware of the various types of liberation that people need. Integral to liberation is the pursuit of justice that is qualified by love. Taylor takes this as the "hallmark of Christian being in the world." A stress on racial and gender justice is informed by Taylor's reading of the biblical narratives in a "counter-imperial frame." This reminds the reader that the early Jesus movement emerged with teachings on life and spirit in the context of Roman imperial power and formation. Yet, the Euro-American scholars have marginalized and de-politicized these teachings. Retrieval of the counter-imperial faith is necessary for the church to be "paradoxically, faithful to the way of the cross and the rising of Jesus." Taylor rightly stressed that this counter-imperial faith thrived usually in marginalized and oppressed Christian communities.

Taylor suggests five areas of theological education in the U.S. needing attention towards transformation:

1. There is a need to end the hegemony of European and U.S. white and male subject-positions in US theological education.
2. The issue of the US imperial and US colonial—both as past legacy and present structuring reality—needs to be taken more seriously than they are at present in theological education.

3. The gospel of liberation should be taught in our seminaries, and elsewhere, as a complex phenomenon, one that demands the best of theoretical analysis, as well as outrage over injustice and exclusion.
4. Growing out of liberation thought's necessary complexity, our discourses about the US imperial in a gospel of liberation should move beyond traditional Left language, which focuses largely on issues of powerful US military brinkmanship, nationalism or transnational class dynamics, and often less on how constructs of race, class and gender also constitute and strengthen the US imperial.
5. To conclude with practical comments on the institutional enforcement of all this, the agencies that accredit theological institutions in North America need to more vigorously withhold accreditation and impose citations on especially the most powerful schools.

Yet, Taylor asks: who will dare to utter these words, and seek to implement them? Who among us will support such an implementation? Ruiz have boldly analyzed and brought before us the issues of racial and gender injustice especially in theological education. For him, failing to do so is tantamount to being "ashamed of the gospel of liberation."

## ENDNOTE

[1] Howard Winant, *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 126.

# Recovering the "Body Politic": Racialized and Gendered Diaspora in Accredited Graduate Theological Education[1]

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, Ph.D.

"What has WTO got to do with your being a domestic helper?" Almost indignantly she replies: "Don't you know that I am a product of this WTO? I never dreamed I would end up a domestic helper in Hong Kong. I had to leave my family because the salary I earned back home would not allow me and my family to live decently. I've been here for more than six years now. I want to return home but I cannot. No job awaits me there... Each time I try to start saving (part of my salary), the price of oil at home rises. I am stuck. I am a stock…."

Turning to a migrant advocate, she said, *"Di ba, Ate? Para akong toilet paper sa tindahan? Kung mabili ka, okay. Kung hindi, diyan ka lang. At pag nabili ka naman, pagkagamit sa iyo, tapon ka na lang. Hindi ka naman kinukupkop.* [Is it not true, Big Sister that I am like a roll of toilet paper in a store? If I am not sold, I remain on the shelf; if someone buys me, I get used up and thrown away afterwards. I am not cared for…]"

**Cynthia Caridad R. Abdon**
*The GATS and Migrant Workers' Rights:*
*Impacts on and Alternatives from Women*
Panel presentation at the
Ecumenical Women's Forum on Life-Promoting Trade
12-14 December 2005
Hong Kong

"I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them from their sleep. Perhaps, it would invent them sometimes—all the better… Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I'd like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms."

**Michel Foucault**
"The Masked Philosopher"
Interview conducted on 6-7 April 1980 by Christian Delacampagne,
reprinted in *Michel Foucault, Ethics Subjectivity and Truth:*
*Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume I*, edited by Paul Rabinow
(New York, NY: The New Press, 1997)
p. 323.

## MY AGENDA

What I hope to achieve in this essay is at least three things: first, to create a map, not about the disciplinary fields in which "race" and "power" are often formally located, but a map that identifies those elements which, while not directly about "race" and power, may be critical to their description and evaluation; second, to offer some interpretive metaphors that might allow improvisation in how "race" and power especially at their intersections can be "re-thought" for the purpose of fundamental change[2]; and, third, to enter into that ongoing, vital conversation among the readers of this journal about how the signifying *practices* of "race" and "power" help (de) form accredited graduate theological education[3] in the US.

However, I want to accomplish these tasks with the recognition that the intellectual production, reproduction, and representation, in which I am engaged, despite their aspirations towards transformation, are still the discourse of a privileged Asian male in the US. As Foucault reminds us, because *all* intellectual work is a passage through privilege, it is fraught with both dangers and possibilities: dangers, because we are a species marked, not only by reason, or by freedom, but also by error; possibilities because the history of thought, read as a critical philosophy appreciative of "fallibility," can become a "history of trials, an open-ended history of multiple visions and revisions, some more enduring than others."[4]

Therefore, the need for self-critical accountability, which begins with the acknowledgement of location and positionality, not to mention maneuver, is a spiritual, methodological, and political necessity. It helps to [1] frame the production and reproduction of knowledge as a passage to transformation—the creation of the fundamentally new which is also fundamentally better in the context of conflict and collaboration, continuity and change, and the creation of justice[5]; and [2] define the appropriate roles that producers and reproducers of this kind of knowledge can play in society, particularly in the context of those for whom and for what purpose knowledge is produced[6]. As Foucault notes:

> The work of an intellectual is not to shape the other's political will; it is, through the analysis that he carries out in his field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb peoples' mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions and on the basis of this re-problematization… to participate in the formation of a political will (in which he has his role as a citizen to play).[7]

## FOCUSING THE CONVERSATION

One way to focus the conversation about the *practices* of "race" and power is to ask the question, "What might be learned about the *practices* of "race" and power by re-locating them in the context of the "pursuit of the body politic" especially under conditions of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora?"[8]

Are there grounds, in fact, to transpose the question of "race" and power to questions of "the body"? In an intentionally textured, highly nuanced essay entitled "Navigating the Topology of Race," Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, affirms Kwame Anthony Appiah's relentless and uncompromising challenge to the "uncritical use of biological and essential conceptions of race as premises of antiracist struggles" and acknowledges that "the term 'race' may be so historically and socially overdetermined that it is beyond rehabilitation."[9] At the same time, she is convinced, along with Ronald Takaki, that racial experience is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from ethnic experience; and that, therefore, Kwame Appiah's preference for "ethnicity" or "cultural identity" to refer to the structures and processes of "race," fails

> to account for the centrality of race in the histories of oppressed groups… and underestimates the degree to which traditional notions of race have shaped, and continue to shape, the societies in which we live (p. 443)

In this context, Chong-Soon Lee concludes not only that "race as ethnicity may actually hinder our ability to resist entrenched forms of racism,"[10] but that "race" as a creature irreducible to "ethnicity" is needed in order to understand, for example, that colonialism, say in Africa, as an expression of imperialism, is both about racial domination and cultural oppression. For this reason, Kwame Appiah's abandonment of "race" in favor of "ethnicity" or "culture" may be both flawed and premature.

More important, drawing on the work of Michael Omi and Howard A. Winant which deploys the term "racialization" to signify "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group," thereby underscoring the "contingent and changing nature of race and racism while recognizing its pervasive and systematic effect on our history," Chong-Soon Lee argues that there can be no homogenous or unitary notion of "race" and that its meaning will, of necessity, arise not only out of its multistranded contexts but also will have multiple accounts: biological, social, cultural, essential, and political.[11]

This abbreviated, admittedly oversimplified, summary of Chong-Soon Lee's narrative about the nature of "race" and ethnicity or cultural identity is interesting for several reasons. First, it clearly describes the fundamental divide between the proponents of "race as social construction" and the proponents of "race as biology" that continues to cast its long, if epistemologically-flawed shadow on present-day discourses on "race." Second, and probably more directly relevant to the agenda of this essay, it suggests that the discussion on "race" cannot be extricated from socio-historical and physicalist considerations of "the body" precisely because such "ontological differences" rely on racialized physical and morphological traits. Third, it points to ongoing discussions, say in the work of Omi and Winant that the very notion of "race" not only continues to change over time, but also that "race" may be more productively understood by its effects rather than its definitions.[12]

## The Pursuit of the "Body Politic": Root Metaphor for Interpreting the Practices of "Race" and Power

In fact, what this discussion does suggest that at the center of particular discourses on "race," especially in the US, one finds not only a notion of "the body," but also a particular interpretation of that body which shapes the very practices of "race" to which it is attached. Here, we are dealing not only with "the body" as an epistemic paradigm, but also with what Aristotle called praxis, i.e., a practical activity that addresses specific problems which arise in particular situations. Until we find our way through to the root metaphor of that "body" that informs our notions of "race," it will be almost impossible to deal comprehensively and adequately with the problems of "race" and power.[13] Perhaps, more important, because this "body" is a "practical activity," it cannot be anything other than a "political body." And because the question of "race" and power, noted earlier, is articulated at the contested interstices of personal, political, historical, and sacred life, it essentially and strategically becomes a political struggle to rediscover or re-constitute, if not re-assert, the importance of the "body politic," much in the same way that some women have articulated their struggles around questions of "their bodies" in political life."[14]

## What Can We Learn About "The Body" From These Struggles?

In the first place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different ways of producing and reproducing knowledge (epistemology), affirming the connections among situated knowledge, partial perspectives, and subjugated and insurrectionary knowledge and agents of knowledge. Such struggles have consistently focused, among other things, on the necessity, if not desirability, of rethinking the relationship between reason and desire and the construction of conceptual models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relationship between them.[15] On face value, this may be a straightforward, even simplistic, if not obvious, statement about the nature of knowledge—and the bodies that produce and reproduce them. However, when one understands that these claims are set in the context of the historical pretensions about the universality of (masculinist) reason as opposed to say, feminist desire, and of the reality that the latter is associated with subordinate groups—particularly women—and deployed to discount and silence those realities deemed to be incongruous with (masculinist) reason, then one begins to realize how these new epistemologies actually explode patriarchal myths about knowledge in political life[16] and assert that bodies are constituted by both reason and desire, matter, and spirit.

In the second place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different modes of being (ontology), insisting, not only that thinking, feeling, and acting are *relational* practices, but also that bodies are more than (passive) biological objects; that they are, in fact, "volatile bodies" that can be re-figured and re-inscribed, and that move through and beyond the conventional divide—not unlike the divide on "race" noted earlier in this essay—of gender as socially-constructed, on the one hand, and of sex as biologically-given, on the other hand, to "our bodies ourselves." Elisabeth Grosz already suggested over a decade ago, that the "male (or female) body can no longer be regarded as a fixed, concrete substance, a pre-cultural given. It has a determinate form only by being socially inscribed."[17] As a socio-historical 'object', she continues,

> the body can no longer be confined to biological determinants, to an immanent 'factitious', or unchanging social status. It is a political object par excellence; its forms, capacities, behaviours, gestures, movements, potential are primary objects of political contestation. As a political object, the body is not inert or fixed. It is pliable and plastic material, which is capable of being formed and organized.[18]

Thus, as an "inscribed surface of events,"[19] the body as both palimpsest and apparatus becomes malleable and alterable, its surface inscribed with racialized and gendered meanings, appropriate behaviors, expectations, and standards or norms, for example, of femininity, ethnicity, and "race." The "body politic," then, as a site of politics, is not only about "who gets what, when, where, and how" (politics as distribution) but also that the "what, when, where, and how" are inscribed—written on, embodied in—our very bodies (politics as inscription).

The example of Latin and ballroom dancing is another illustration of what I understand by the "body." Dancers know that the dance floor, and I would say, the ceiling, are constitutive elements of the dance, along with the beat of the music (to which most dance) and the melody of the music (to which the best of the best dance). Latin dancing, and its characteristic "Cuban motion" is achieved by one pressing from the waist down *into the floor*—actually, one of the reasons for the sensuous, earthy intensities of Latin movement. In contrast, the gliding, soaring, almost ethereal, movement of the ballroom waltz or foxtrot, is accomplished, in part, by stretching one's body toward the ceiling. Both floor and ceiling are, in this sense, constitutive of the dance, in the same manner that heaven and earth are constitutive of human life. To put the matter rather starkly, ceiling and floor are part of the dancers' bodies.

In the third place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different forms of "consciousness" (subjectivity), not only acknowledging that consciousness arises out of concrete and sensuous reality but also that subjectivity itself is performative, i.e., it exists only when it is exercised or put into action—hence, its relational character; and that spirituality (or matters of spirit) are always and already *embodied* experience. If it is true that human beings are more than *logos* but also *eros, pathos*, and the *daimon*, then consciousness and the structure of subjectivity that accompanies it would have to include touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, eating. Theoretically put, consciousness, subjectivity, and, *spirituality*, refuse, on the one hand, the temptation of a disembodied transcendence, and, on the other hand, reject their articulation as a totalized immanence. To say that "spirituality" is about "touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, eating" is to acknowledge, not only the inadequacies of the received traditions of "spirituality," but to affirm that this "spirituality" is about a peoples' concrete and sensuous *experience* of self, other, and, for the religiously inclined, of God. "Babette's Feast" may very well be the metaphor for such spirituality.[20]

In the fourth place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different *empowering* practices (politics), recognizing not only the importance of self-definition and self-valuation, or of the significance of self-reliance and autonomy, but also the necessity of transformation and transgression, and of finding shared safe places and clear voices in the midst of difference, particularly where the asymmetries of power are mediated through structures and processes that legitimize or naturalize some differences and not others.[21]

In fact, what contemporary feminist and womanist struggles have contributed to our understanding of the "body politic" is a mode of discourse that interprets, describes, and evaluates the complex and interdependent relationships among theory, history, and struggle, focusing on the intricate and intimate connections between systemic and personal relationships, and the directionalities of power. In developing her political analytic, for example, Dorothy Smith introduces the concept of "relations of ruling" where forms of knowledge and organized practices and institutions, as well as questions of consciousness, experience, and agency, are continuously fore grounded. Rather than positing a simple relation, say between colonizer and colonized, capitalist and worker, male and female, this perspective posits "multiple intersections of structures of power and emphasizes the process or form of ruling, not the frozen embodiment of it."[22]

Feminist and womanist struggles, in their insistence on a thoroughly relational and intersectional understanding of knowledge, being, subjectivity, and politics, have demonstrated that such notions as “race,” gender, class, nationality, and sexuality—formative elements of the “body politic”—are not only “simultaneously subjective, structural and about social positioning and everyday practices,” but are re-inscriptions of the very meaning and substance of the “body politic” itself.[23] Thus, it may be desirable, if not wise, not only to insist on but to follow, the migrations of “race” and power from their origins hinted above into their intersections with other elements in order to arrive at a more adequate understanding of their effects.

## RE-ORIENTING THE *PRACTICES* OF “RACE” AND POWER

### Diaspora and Estrangement: Contexts for the *Practices* of “Race” and Power

The *practices* of “race” and power have not always been associated with the realities of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora. However, with the exponential growth of processes of profound structural transformation that have gained some level of autonomy at the global level and which sustain—often with displacement and dislocating effects—the movements and flows of capital, people, goods, information, and ideas and images, the concept of Diaspora, Avta Brah and Ann Phoenix observed, has been “increasingly used in analyzing the mobility of peoples, commodities, capital and cultures in the context of globalization and transnationalism.”[24] In fact, Brah’s *Cartographies of Diaspora*, explored at great length and with care as early as 1996 the intersectionalities of “race,” gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, generation, and nationalism including both productive and coercive forms of power across multiple spatial and temporal locations and positionalities.[25]

While deeply appreciative of Brah’s and Phoenix’s epistemic and strategic challenge to the more conventional analytics of globalization and transnationalism, and while I recognize the necessity for an intersectional (some would say “interstitial”) approach to socio-political interpretation, description, and evaluation, I take an additional, though certainly not incompatible, methodological step, one which Brah and Phoenix may not wish to take. Not unlike the notion of the "body politic," (racialized and gendered) Diaspora is not only an epistemic paradigm; it is also a particular "way of being"—a set of (religio-moral) practices, which has consequences both for the analysis of "race" and power, and for its transformation. As I will suggest in this essay, a full appreciation of intersectionality—including an insistence on the importance of concrete, sensuous *essentially* "strategic bodies"—embodied in the Stranger(s), which (racialized and gendered) Diaspora, global capital, or empire produces and reproduces[26], provides both a context and condition for the possible transformation of the *practices* of "race" and power.

In his analysis of modern international politics and global capitalism, Michael Dillon notes:

> Our age is one in which…the very activities of their own states—combined regimes of sovereignty and governmentality—together with the global capitalism of states and the environmental degradation of many populous regions of the planet have made many millions of people r*adically endangered strangers in their own homes as well as criminalized or anathemized strangers in the places to which they have been forced to flee.* The modern age's response to the strangeness of others, indeed, the scale of its politically instrumental, deliberate, juridical, and governmental manufacture of estrangement, necessarily calls into question, therefore, its very ethical and political foundations and accomplishments—particularly those of the state and of the international state system.[27] [Emphasis mine]

In the Philippine context, for example, this estrangement is clearly demonstrated by the migration of Filipinos, today approaching over ten million, to other parts of the planet—a condition shared by many peoples in almost every region of the world.[28] Such estrangement, however, is not limited to those "outside" the homeland. The experience of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora reverberates from both "above" and "below" the conventionally drawn geopolitical, geo-strategic, and territorial boundaries of individuals, peoples, nations, states, and regions. The reasons for migration (and immigration), the forms that they take, and the conditions under which they occur, are many.[29] Yet, such movements of peoples are generally characterized by dispersal, displacement, and dislocation from particular origins and locations. Perhaps, the most innovative metaphor deployed to comprehend the reality of estrangement has been that of turbulence, suggesting by its use not mere motion, activity, or movement, but disruptive, unpredictable, volatile speed.[30]

To speak of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora today is to speak of a specific human condition that is producing new forms of belonging and identity not to mention novel understandings of contemporary politics and culture. Diaspora evokes and provokes images of "borderlands," "border crossings," invasions, and estrangements; of co-optations, negotiated settlements, and uncompromising refusals; of logocentrisms and hybridities.[31] It reveals global de-territorializing trajectories as well as local re-territorializing surges or insurgencies, especially under the conditions of an imploding transnational capital.[32] Diaspora underscores existing political, economic, cultural and psychological/psychic contradictions and antagonisms, at the same time that it intensifies their racialized and gendered uneven and asymmetrical structures and processes.[33]

The other side of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora, which arguably has been largely under-theorized, is its "subjective" effects on individuals, peoples and institutions: the normalization of the ideology of unlimited "permanent" change, the cultivation of cultures of mobility and improvisation, the re-inscription of codes and symbols of dispersal, displacement, and dislocation (e.g., money, maps, information technologies, on-line and distance education), on peoples' hearts, minds, and bodies, and, the seemingly endless invention and re-invention of unfulfilled desires for "home"—multiple homes, to be sure, but homes, nonetheless—often accompanied by the inevitable yearnings for the innocent safety, security, and rest, of an idyllic Garden of Eden.

Brah and Phoenix capture the complex terrain of the experience of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora when they deploy the term "diaspora space":

> The intersection of these three terms [referring to the concept of "diaspora" alongside Gloria Anzaldua's "border" and the feminist concept of "politics of home"] is understood through the concept of 'diaspora space', which covers the entanglements of genealogies of dispersal with those of 'staying put'. The term 'homing desire' is used to think through the question of home and belonging; and, both power and time are viewed as multidimensional processes. Importantly, the concept of 'diaspora space' embraces the intersection of 'difference' in its variable forms, placing emphasis upon emotional and psychic dynamics as much as socio-economic, political and cultural differences. *Difference is thus conceptualised as social relation; experience; subjectivity; and, identity…the analytical focus is upon varying and variable subjectivities, identities, and the specific meanings attached to 'differences.'*[34] [Emphasis mine]

What might (racialized and gendered) Diaspora as the context for the question of "race" and power mean for their interpretation, description, and evaluation?

First, it raises a critical question about the nature of the social totality of which we are a part. Not unlike the metaphor of the "body politic," (racialized and gendered) Diaspora not only has forced the negotiation and re-negotiation of political, epistemological, and academic/disciplinary boundaries especially in terms of their long held correspondence among nation, culture, identity and place[35], but in the re-articulation and re-conceptualization of the notions of space, time, and place that emerges as a result of dispersal, displacement and dislocation; it has also enabled us to uncover their racialized and gendered character. Thus, Richard Thompson Ford has persuasively argued, for example, that "racial segregation" in the US is created and perpetuated by "racially identified space" and that the latter "results from public policy and legal sanctions…rather than from the unfortunate… consequences of purely private or individual choices."[36]

In a different though not unrelated context, Foucault may be interpreted as underscoring the racialization of space—or, the spatialization of "race" when he observes that

> a whole history remains to be written of spaces—which would at the same time be the history of powers (both these terms are in the plural)—from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat… passing via economic and political installations.[37]

Second, (racialized and gendered) Diaspora also raises a question not only about subjecthood but also about subjectivity. This is the question of "the Subject": not only who the subject is but also what being a subject entails and how it is simultaneously constructed or constituted by the discourses in which it is embedded.[38] Both the plurality and contingency of subjects and subjectivities pre-supposed by a "Diaspora" fundamentally challenge all ahistoric or essentialist construals of "the Subject" and direct us not only to the question "What is to be done?" but also to the questions of "who we are, what we hope for, and where we go?"—in short, "What does it mean to be a people under the conditions of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora?" And while the questions of the subject and of subjectivities remind us of the importance of agency and human action, they are now (re) set or "re-installed" within a much deeper, broader, and wider intersectionality and relationality. In this context, both "race" and power are not only the effects of human action; they are also entanglements of structure, process, and agency.

Third, the reality of (racialized and gendered) "Diaspora" provides an organizing metaphor for situating the *practices* of "race" and power at the intersections of self, other, and world. Of no small methodological significance, locating these practices within the interstices of a peoples' cultural practices—defined broadly as those concrete, sensuous realities embodied in rhetorical forms, gestures, procedures, modes, shapes, genres of everyday life: discursive formations and/or strategies, if you will, which are radically contingent arenas of imagination, strategy, and creative maneuver[39]—not only challenges the narrow confines of conventional understandings of "race" and power but also locates and positions "concrete" human beings within a peoples' pluralistic, and therefore, always and already contradictory, antagonistic and agonistic histories, allowing, thereby for an appreciation of their stories, songs, poetry, arts; their personal and political struggles; and their economic and cultural institutions. Another way of stating the point is to suggest that (racialized and gendered) Diaspora ruptures the pretensions of modernity's voracious appetite for an intellectual idealism articulated alongside a possessive individualism as the foundation for human thought and action, and (re) positions them in their appropriate historical "places."[40] It recuperates both human beings and human action, and affirms not only their generative positions in the ecology of life: as creatures of the past who transform their present in the name of the future but also locates them in the wider context of what Friedrich Nietzsche called the "grammatical fictions" created by discursive formations and strategies.[41]

(Racialized and gendered) Diaspora as both an epistemic paradigm and an organizing practice is always accompanied by estrangement. That is to say, dispersal, displacement, and dislocation almost always create the Stranger—the Other—which/who in my view poses essentially a religio-moral challenge.[42] In fact, the event of Diaspora announces the existence of the racialized and gendered Other who invites a religio-moral response, namely, hospitality. As a creature of both modernity postmodernity,[43] (racialized and gendered) Diaspora radicalizes the experience of the Stranger or of Otherness in our time; and the existence of the Stranger in our midst raises for us the problems, prospects, and possibilities of fundamentally new and better forms of knowledge and being. Strangeness, not to mention marginalization, it seems, is the condition of possibility for community. It is its constitutive outside. At the same time, if the Stranger is the constitutive *outside*, then, its constitutive *inside* is hospitality, by which I mean, the inclusion of the Stranger into a community not originally his or her own, and which "arrives at the borders, in the initial surprise of contact with an other, a stranger, a foreigner."[44] Indeed, in the Biblical tradition, the existence of the Stranger is always accompanied by the challenge of hospitality towards the Stranger. *Who* the Stranger is, is the socio-analytical question occasioned by the stranger's existence; *how* we treat the stranger in our midst [hospitality] is the ethical demand which is not caused by the Stranger, only motivated by the encounter.

To be sure there are temptations of repetition that lie at the heart of hospitality. In fact, both the Stranger and the giver of hospitality are not immune to the desire or temptation for "sameness" or uniformity, even as the long experience of the condition of strangeness and hospitality often breeds certain fetishes for such strangeness and hospitality, not to mention desires for the exotic. Moreover, hospitality does not always aspire towards genuine compassion, i.e., unconditional plenitude or regard. In other words, hospitality itself, when implicated in the perpetuation of power and privilege always casts its long shadow on the struggle for a "genuine" hospitality that seeks to offer both the Stranger and the giver of hospitality the opportunity to live well together in the context of their shared differences. Indeed, the very structure of hospitality often must posit the existence of strangers "in need of hospitality" dictating, therefore the legitimation of structures and processes that exclude before they include. Such exclusionary logics of, for example, "race," gender, class, migrate on to the structures of "hospitality" without being overcome or transformed. Put differently, one must be open to the possibility that strangeness and hospitality [i.e., "Diaspora"] are necessary though insufficient conditions for the creation and nurture of radically inclusive communities that are often hoped for by those who are in Diaspora.

## RACIALIZED AND GENDERED MIGRATION: AN ASIAN AND ASIAN-NORTH AMERICAN EXAMPLE

The burden of this entire essay has been to insist that "we should stop thinking of race 'as an essence, as something fixed, concrete and objective...' [and] instead think of 'race as an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed [through their inscription and re-inscription on the 'body politic'] by political struggle…." Such a burden requires a move from "race" to "racialization," and therefore, refusing the temptation to construe power as some kind of capacity external to the latter, insisting, instead, that it is always and already an inextricable-part of the "racial assemblage" as both productive (i.e., it produces an effect) and coercive (i.e., it is incarcerative).[45] Interpreting, describing, and evaluating the signifying practices of "race" and power, then, must yield to strategies informed by the realities of diversity and the normative/aspirational demands of radical inclusion.

While my desire is to attempt some kind of articulation of what these strategies might be, that will have to be undertaken another day. Instead, I wish to conclude this essay with an example of how Asian and Asian-North American accredited graduate theological education looks like when it is drawn on the canvas of racialized and gendered diaspora.[46]

## What's in a Name? —Dilemmas and *Aporias*[47]

Among the many dilemmas and *aporias* raised in the vast literature of Asian and Asian-North American communities, theologies, and leaderships, one in particular invites attention because around it clusters several key issues with which I am concerned in this essay.[48]

Timothy Tseng observes that the terms "Asian American" or "Asian and Pacific Islander American" are used to identify "East Asians," "Central Asians," "Southeast Asians," and "Pacific Islander peoples." In fact, these names are ciphers for communities with vast and complex diversities of distinct, though interrelated, cultural, political, and economic realities that are often contested, competitive, and incommensurable—and implicated in the capitalist, racialized, and gendered circuits of power, capital, labor, and knowledge. And while these linguistic devices have become part of the identities of the Asian and Asian-North American in their struggles for racial justice since at least the 1960s, still they are creatures of colonialism and neo-colonialism against which their liberative and transformative potentials have often been interpreted and negotiated. These linguistic devices are part of larger discursive and strategic formations that embody actual "relations of ruling." The point, of course, is not only that language is not innocent, nor that who speaks and whose language is spoken shapes the political agenda, but rather, that language is simultaneously productive, performative, and coercive.

The weight of these linguistic devices cannot be underestimated. They are, for example, associated with the sexualized racial and gendered stereotypes like "the model minority," or the "middle minority," or the "forever foreigner," or the "honorary white"[49] that have historically shaped Asian and Asian North American communities in perverse ways. At the same time these very devices have set the stage for developing new and culturally appropriate identities and strategies for transformation. Taken as a "social totality," they are what Rita Nakashima Brock calls a "palimpsest with multiple traces written over a single surface."[50] The final report of the ATS-Wabash Center-sponsored project, "Developing Teaching Materials and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Asian and Asian American/ Canadian Women's Theologies in North America" completed in 1999 by a group of Asian and Asian American women scholars is illustrative of Brock's methodological insight. In its self-organized, self- directed structure and process the report addressed "as a single surface" the problems of teaching and learning in accredited graduate theological education, giving full play to the multiple locations and positionalities of the project team, while offering a set of shared recommendations on how to overcome the problems they identified.

Happily, these (stereotypical) names are not only "limit situations" that regulate Asian and Asian-North American identities and practice; they provide clues to their wider diversities. In the context of the implicit challenges posed by the demographics noted elsewhere in this essay, it is helpful to be reminded, as Jonathan Tan does, that the multi-stranded character of Asian American theologies has a generational element. "The first-generation Asian American theologians," he points out, "grounded their theologies on the issues of social justice and liberation from all forms of institutional and structural racism and discrimination" (p. 93). Issues of assimilation, integration, and autonomy loomed large, as well as concerns for "Asian Christian identity" in relation to both sides of the Pacific within a largely church-based and mediated movement arising mainly out of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean contexts in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second generation Asian American theologians include among its ranks a much wider, more diverse group of Asians and Asian North Americans reaching into multiple and overlapping constituencies, disciplinary fields, ecclesial families, and political and religio-moral commitments. Influenced, to some extent, by the rise of the cultural studies movement of the 1980s and 1990s,[51] it is not surprising that second generation Asian American theologians are more intentionally interdisciplinary in their approaches, and they focus, in addition to issues of reconciliation and community transformation, on the relations between faith, the bible, and evangelism, on the one hand, and ethnicity, culture, and economy, as well as interfaith/inter-religious dialogue, on the other hand. Moreover, while not oblivious to the call to engage with the claims of a Pacific and global world, second generation Asian Americans have a clear substantive, methodological, and political/institutional commitment to their particular locations and positionalities that sees the "local" and the "global" as co-constitutive.

This commitment is shaped by the subtle interplay between a post-Newtonian, post-Kantian understanding of space, time and place characteristic of postmodern postcolonial thought, and the deep experiential rootedness in ancestral traditions and counter traditions tied to land, body, even food. It is not surprising that one of the dilemmas running through Asian and Asian-North American academic and intellectual discourses on identity and practice is how one positions one's self vis-à-vis the temptation not only of essentializing and homogenizing what it means to be "Asian," but of locating one's self in the certainty of claims made by the so-called "native informant."[52] This temptation is rendered more complex by the geopolitical and geostrategic legacy of colonialism that limits "Asian" mainly to its Pacific and Indian Ocean Rim, despite the historical reality that Asia runs through southern Russia to the Caspian Sea.[53] Thus, it is methodologically and spiritually refreshing to be reminded not only that "Asian American" is a polymorphic, multivalent palimpsest, but also that it is a "socio-historical object" whose forms, capacities, behaviors, gestures, movements, and potentials ought not to be limited to biological determinants or unchanging social statuses.

## Where is Home?

The dilemma about one's name, associated with one's generational and methodological location, is also a question about one's "home" within the larger ecology of the social totality that is constantly being (re) interpreted. In fact, Asian and Asian-North American communities, theologies, and leaderships are deeply rooted in religio-moral communities shaped not only by specific generational and disciplinary interests, but also by ecclesial commitments. Of the three ecclesial families within the Association of Theological Schools (Evangelical, Mainline, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox), the fastest growing is the evangelical community, followed by the mainline community, with the Roman Catholic/Orthodox community weighing in as a small third.

With the majority of Asian and Asian-North American students being shaped by their evangelical heritage, and being taught by faculty who largely self-identify with a largely "liberal" (some would say postmodern, postcolonial) Asian Christianity, but who are embedded in communities and institutions that may have to address a less than hospitable cultural ethos, the challenge of finding religious, intellectual, and spiritual homes (read "identities") that are responsive and accountable to a multicultural society looms large. For most Asian American theologians serving under the flag of evangelicalism (however understood), the main task is to discover what it means to be "resolutely and vigorously" Asian, American, and Evangelical all at once. For Amos Yong, this means building one's identity and practice on the historically mediated tenets of evangelicalism as they are appropriated within particular Asian American contexts.[54]

The institutional side of finding a home is equally important. This is the question of the future of Asian and Asian-American Christianity which itself is changing. The dilemma may be put polemically in this way: one could conceivably argue that Asian and Asian North American Christianity cannot be extricated from its historical, and therefore colonial past; that Christian identities in the US and Canada, despite the long century between the time the first missionaries "Christianized" Asians in their homelands to the time Asian American Christianity planted itself in North America, still holds sway, and that the many waves of Asian migrations and immigrations to the US, in particular, is nothing more than the return of the colonized to their homeland. Indeed, one may observe that an Asian's inherited Christian identity was often aligned with whichever missionary group had occupied one's homeland.

The point is not to return to the old contestation about the American imperial and colonial project. That is a discussion for another day. The point is a slightly different one, namely, given one's Christian inheritance, what are the conditions under which an authentically transformative Christianity or religious identity and practice can be articulated, and what is the role of accredited graduate theological education in this articulation especially given its tendency to be disconnected from the historic communities (e.g., the churches) that give rise to the need for accredited graduate theological education in the first place? And should the question be answered, however provisionally that it is to the churches that accredited graduate theological education needs to be attentive, if not accountable, then, one will also have to ask what in the current practice of our learning, teaching and research needs to be revisited, at the very least, in order to begin to address the larger questions of what Asian American Christianity ought to look like at mid-century's end.

The challenge of these multi-stranded diversities is at least threefold: how one understands such diverse locations and practices, whether or not one can or ought to link these diversities, and how one negotiates the linkages especially since what is at stake is not only their plurality but their inextricable, mutually- challenging and enhancing relations, under conditions not only of change but of uneven, asymmetrical change. Such asymmetries particularly in institutional resources that affect learning, teaching, and research, as well as access to power and privilege can no longer be addressed as if they were external to accredited graduate theological education in North America, let alone to the formation of personal, political, historical, and sacred being.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## ENDNOTES

[1] This is a slightly revised version of my essay that appears as "Recovering the Body Politic: When 'Race' and Power Migrate" in Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives—Regional Surveys—Ecumenical Trends* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010). Permission to reprint granted by Regnum.

[2] While there may be disagreement on the substantive, methodological, and institutional definitions of "race" and power, I believe there can be agreement that their multistranded locations and positionalities are necessarily articulated in the interstices of a people's political, economic, and cultural life and work. See, for example, Cornel West, "A Genealogy of Modern Racism," in Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 47-65; Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1983); Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology* (Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 2009).

While it is true that the question of "race" in the United States is articulated in terms of the ideology of "white supremacy" and "white power and privilege," from a global perspective, it is not reducible to it. See, for example, Nadia Kim, *Imperial Citizens: Koreans and Race from Seoul to LA* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University

Press, 2008); Eileen O'Brien, *The Racial Middle: Latinos and Asian Americans Living Beyond the Racial Divide* (New York: NY: New York University Press, 2008).

[3] Situated in the context of a post-positivist, post-empiricist, poststructuralist tradition, I deploy the term "practice" much in the same way Michel Foucault used the term *dispositif*—"a resolutely heterogeneous assemblage, containing discourses, institutions, architectural buildings (*managements architecturaux*), reglementary decisions, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions… said as well as non-said (*du dit aussi bien que du non-dit*)..."—to signify the delightful and frustrating entanglements between "theory" (speculative reason), and "praxis" (practical reason), and their interplay with the personal, the political, the historical, and the sacred—in the service of transformation. See Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh" in *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed., Colin Gordon (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 194-228.

Additionally, Giorgio Agamben's notion of "apparatus," by which he means, "a kind of formation… that at a given historical moment has as its major function the response to an urgency…always located in a power relation… and appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge" [he uses the example of the "mobile phone"] provides a richly textured and constructively suggestive description of how one might understand "practice." Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 2-3. Both Foucault and Agamben signal my methodological preference for "thinking about" the question of "race" and power within a wider polymorphic discursive formation, the resulting ambivalence of which allows for a more inclusive analysis, and therefore, their possible transformation.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology, Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 2*, ed. James D. Faubion, (New York, NY: The New Press, 1998), p. 476. Of the act of criticism, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes, "… a caution, a vigilance, a persistent taking of distance always out of step with total involvement, a desire for permanent parabasis is all that responsible academic criticism can aspire to. Any bigger claim within the academic enclosure is a trick." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 362.

[5] Manfred Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, Political, Historical and Sacred in Theory and Practice*, ed., David Abalos (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2009).

[6] The question of "the purpose of knowledge" is of fundamental importance to any aspiration for transformation. In the theologies of liberation, this notion is expressed methodologically in terms of the "preferential option of the poor" which gets modified over the years as "the epistemic *privilege* of the marginalized" or the "hermeneutical *significance* of the excluded." With recognition of the importance of location and positionality, and therefore, the profound challenges to the notion of "the poor," I believe we are called again to think more critically and creatively about the "for what and for whom?" of knowledge. Here, the task of the intellectual ought not to be extricated from its entanglements with "political struggle in the name of the victim." Jacques Derrida notes in "Passages—from Traumatism to Promise," that "one of the meanings of what is called a victim (a victim of anything or anyone whatsoever) is

precisely to be erased in its meaning as victim. The absolute victim is a victim who cannot even protest. One cannot even identify the victim *as* victim. He or she cannot even present himself or herself as such. He or she is totally excluded or covered over by language, annihilated by history, a victim one cannot identify... But there is also the unreadability that stems from the violence of foreclosure, exclusion, all of history being a conflictual field of forces in which it is a matter of making unreadable, excluding, of positing by excluding, of imposing a dominant force by excluding, that is to say, not only by marginalizing, by setting aside the victims, but also by doing so in such a way that no trace remains of the victims, so that no one can testify to the fact that they are victims or so that they cannot even testify to it themselves. … To name and to cause the name to disappear is not necessarily contradictory. Hence the extreme danger and the extreme difficulty there are in talking about the effacement of names, Sometimes the effacement of the name is the best safeguard, sometimes it is the worst "victimization." …Cinders… is a trope that comes to take the place of everything that disappears without leaving an identifiable trace. The difference between the trace "cinder" and other traces is that the body of which cinders is the trace has totally disappeared; it has totally lost its contours, its form, its colors, its natural termination. Non-identifiable. And forgetting itself is forgotten." Jacques Derrida, *Points…: Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elizabeth Weber (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 387-391.

[7] Michel Foucault, "The Concern for Truth," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, ed. L. D. Kritzman (New York, NY: Routledge, 1988), p. 265.

[8] The linguistic device "(racialized and gendered) Diaspora," however awkward, is intentionally deployed in this essay to signal that "Diaspora" cannot only be understood apart from "race" and "gender" but also that it cannot be understood as a fixed, objective, essence. Moreover, this cipher cannot be extricated from its entanglements with the demographic realities of "race in the US." 2008 US population projections by race/ethnicity provided by the US Census Bureau gives a rather dramatic perspective of "race in the US." With 2010 as the baseline, the White population of 201 million is expected to reach 215 million by 2050; African Americans will grow from 40 to 59 million; Asians from 16 to 38 million; and Hispanics from 50 to 133 million. This means that by 2050, the 2010 population projected at 312 million will reach approximately 452 million. By mid-century, Whites will be 48 percent of the population, African Americans, 13 percent, Asians, 8 percent, Hispanics, 30 percent, and Others including American Indian and Alaska Native, 2 percent.

Numbers, of course, do not tell the whole story. But they suggest trajectories that invite thought. If these projections are accurate, even leaving room for variances in the unreported or undocumented US population, what the numbers indicate is that Whites will remain the largest ethnic group in 2050; and while all four groups show an increase in number, with Hispanics being the fastest growing of the group, these increases remain circumscribed by the predominantly White population even though there will be no clear majority. Still, as Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of ATS has recently pointed out this is a demographic sea change which has huge implications not only for accredited graduate theological education, but for polity and economy as well. For a recent discussion on "race" in accredited graduate theological education in the US and Canada, see the special issue on "Race and Ethnicity" of *Theological Education 45*: 1 (2009).

[9] Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, “Navigating the topology of race,” in Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds., *Critical Race Theory* (New York, NY: The New Press, 1995), p. 441.

[10] Chong-Soon Lee writes, “The benefits of substituting the notions of an ethnic or cultural identity for a racial one are many. First, we can move away from the notion that race is a biological attribute possessed only by people of color. Second, we can undermine the racialist premise that moral and intellectual characteristics, like physical traits, are inherited. Third, we can counter the belief that nature, not effort, binds together members of a race. Fourth, we can rebut the idea that the ways in which we act, think, and play are inherited rather than learned. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has instructed us, ‘[o]ne must learn to be ‘black’ in this society, precisely because ‘blackness’ is a socially produced category” (p. 442).

[11] Michael Omi and Howard A. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: NY: Routledge, 1986), p. 68, cited in Chong-Soon Lee, p. 443. See also, Omi and Winant, pp. 21-24.

[12] “We should stop thinking of race,” Chong-Soon Lee writes, “’as an essence, as something fixed, concrete and objective...’ we instead [should] think of ‘race as an unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle…” (p. 443).

[13] For a discussion of the notion of root metaphors, see Gibson Winter, *Liberating Creation: Foundations of Religious Social Ethics* (New York, NY: Crossroads, 1981).

[14] Rose Weitz, ed., *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[15] Allison Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology,” in Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires, eds., *Feminisms* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 190.

[16] Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, eds., *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Springer, 2003); Jane Duran, *Worlds of Knowing: Global Feminist Epistemologies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001).

[17] Elisabeth Grosz, “Notes towards a corporeal feminism,” *Australian Feminist Studies 5* (1987): 2; See also, Elisabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006);

[18] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, Ibid.

[19] Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York, NY: Random House, 1984), p. 83.

[20] See Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen), *Babette’s Feast and Other Anecdotes of Destiny*

(New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1988). Cf. "Babette's Feast" (New York, NY: Orion Home Video, 1988, 1989). See also Rubem Alves, *Poet Warrior Prophet* (London: SCM, 1990).

[21] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), pp. 273-290. More recently, see, Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004).

[22] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in Chandra T. Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 14. Mohanty writes, "… third world women's writings on feminism have consistently focused on [1] the idea of the simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality and the grounding of feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism; [2] the crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily lives and survival struggles; [3] the significance of memory and writing in the creation of oppositional agency; and [4] the differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to third world women's organizations and communities. In addition, they have insisted on the complex interrelationships between feminist, antiracist, and nationalist struggles… "Cartographies of Struggle," p. 10. See also, Avta Brah and Ann Phoenix, "Ain't I a Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality" *Journal of International Women's Studies 5*:3 (2004): 75-86.

[23] My notion of "inscription" has its origins in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977).

[24] Brah and Phoenix, p. 83.

[25] "We regard the concept of 'intersectionality'," Brah and Phoenix write, "as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis [*sic*] of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts," p. 76.

[26] (Racialized and gendered) Diaspora is certainly no stranger to global capital and empire. The academic literature on this is extensive. See for example, Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (London, UK: Verso, 2003), David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), Gopal Balakrishnan and Stanley Aronowitz, eds., *Debating Empire* (London, UK: Verso, 2003), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000)); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2004). See generally Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean, eds., *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004). See especially Ernesto Laclau, "Can Immanence Explain Empire?" in Passavant and Dean, *Empire's New Clothes*, pp, 21-30. Cf. Mark Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right: Post 9/11 Powers in American Empire* (Philadelphia, PA: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), Sharon Welch, *After Empire: The Art and Ethos of Enduring Peace* (Philadelphia, PA: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2004).

In this context, Charles Amjad-Ali and I have suggested elsewhere that every empire, whatever their *raison d'etre*, is fundamentally an articulation of racialized and gendered power. Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, "White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands, 1899," with its binary beknighted natives and do-gooder colonizing Westerners, is a classic example of racialized and gendered power. Though a British colonialist, Kipling urged the US to pursue its colonial and imperial project, while justifying the effort as a great contribution to the colonized peoples of the Philippines. See, Charles Amjad Ali and Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, "Betrayed by a Kiss: Evangelicals and US Empire," in Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, eds., *Evangelicals and Empire: Christian Alternatives to the Political Status Quo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), pp. 54-66.

It is also interesting to note that the direction, say of migrant labor—whether documented or undocumented—moves from "the global south" to the "global north," and that the "victims" of global capital (not to mention the Indo-China War and the three Gulf Wars) are largely peoples of color are enough to illustrate the racialized and gendered character of global capital and empire. See footnotes 28 and 29.

Moreover, Richard Slotkin has documented the mythology of "moral regeneration through violence" that runs through US history. See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Tulsa, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

[27] Michael Dillon, "Sovereignty and Governmentality: From the Problematics of the 'New World Order' to the Ethical Problematic of the World Order." *Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance 20*, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 323-368.

[28] The racialized and gendered character of migration is evident throughout the following documentary examples: International Migrants Alliance, 2008 *Founding Assembly Documents* (Hong Kong: International Migrants Alliance, 2008). See also, Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2002); Grace Chang, *Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Southend Press, 2000); Migrant Forum in Asia, http://www.mfasia.org/ (accessed February 22, 2010).

[29] (Racialized and gendered) Diaspora has many faces. See for example, on internally displaced peoples, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004D404D/%28httpPages%29/CC32D8C34EF93C88802570F800517610 (accessed February 24, 2010); on child trafficking, UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_exploitation.html (accessed February 24, 2010); on women, http://www.unifem.org/worldwide/ (accessed February 24, 2010); Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Daniel Rothenberg, *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farm Workers Today* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Additionally, useful demographic information concerning migration, may be found in, for example, International Organization for Migration, http://www.iom.int/jahia/jsp/index.jsp (accessed February 21, 2010); UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm (accessed February 22, 2010; International Labor Organization, http://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm (accessed February 23, 2010); International Migrant Stock. http://esa.un.org/

migration/ (accessed February 23, 2010).

[30] Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000), pp. 3-21.

[31] Gloria Anzaldua, *La frontera/Borderlands* (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 1999). See also, Marwan M. Kraidy, *Hybridity, Or The Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005).

[32] Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). Cf. R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[33] Gayatri C. Spivak and Judith Butler, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging* (Salt Lake City, UT: Seagull Books, 2007). Cf. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1993).

[34] Brah and Phoenix, “Ain’t I a Woman?”, p. 83.

[35] Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class* (London, UK: Verso, 1991). Cf. Epiphanio San Juan, *In the Wake of Terror: Class, Race, Nation, Ethnicity in the Postmodern World* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007).

[36] Richard Thompson Ford, “The Boundaries of Race: Political Geography in Legal Analysis,” in Crenshaw, Gotanda, et al, *Critical Race Theory*, pp. 449-465. “Segregation is the missing link in prior attempts to understand the plight of the urban poor. As long as blacks continue to be segregated in American cities, the United States cannot be called a race-blind society.” Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p.3.

[37] Michel Foucault, “The Eye of Power” in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 146-149.

[38] Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jan-Luc Nancy, eds., *Who Comes After the Subject?* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishers, 1991).

[39] Michael Ryan, *Politics and Culture: Working Hypotheses for a Post Revolutionary Society* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). See also, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, “Margins and (Cutting-)Edges: On the (Il)Legitimacy and Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and (Post)Colonialism,” in Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia, eds. *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2005), 114-65; Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-Lan, Seung Ai Yang, eds., *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women’s Religion and Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

[40] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1962).

[41] I believe it would be a misunderstanding of Foucault's dispositif or Agamben's "apparatus" if they were to be interpreted as repudiating the validity of "individual and collective" human action. Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981). See also, Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another,* trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[42] Emmanuel Levinas. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1969. My own notion of "the Other," particularly with reference to the dialogical "face-to-face" resonates with Levinas' notion of exteriority. See, Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, "Diaspora, empire, resistance: peace and the subaltern as rupture(s) and repetition(s)" in Shin Chiba and Thomas J. Schoenbaum, eds. *Peace Movements and Pacifism After September 11* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2008), pp. 49-76.

[43] The modern-postmodern divide is a profoundly contested one. By placing them in proximity, as I do in this essay, I want to suggest that these structures of meaning are best understood in both their continuities and discontinuities of method, cultural form, and political practice. Thus, I understand modernity and postmodernity less as periodizations and more as "conditions," "sensibilities," and "practices." My own orientation, sensibility, and location are probably more congenial with the theory and practice of postcoloniality than with modernity or postmodernity. See, for example, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995). See also, Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[44] This I take to be the philosophical significance of Jacques Derrida's January 1996 Paris lectures on "Foreigner Question" and "Step of Hospitality/No Hospitality," published in Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans., Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000). For the political significance of the "stranger" see Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[45] Here I understand power in the way Foucault understood the notion of "governmentality," by which he meant, "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security… the tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand, in formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of savoirs…" [the structural similarities between "racialization" and "power-as-governmentality" should be obvious here]. Michel Foucault, "On Governmentality" in Graham Burchell,

Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 102-103.

[46] This final section of the essay is adapted from a previously published essay, "What Do We Do with the Diversity that We Already Are? The Asian and Asian North American in Accredited Graduate Theological Education" by Lester Edwin J. Ruiz and Eleazar S. Fernandez in *Theological Education 45*: 1 (2009): 41-58.

[47] As David Campbell notes, "An aporia is an undecidable and ungrounded political space, were no path is 'clear and given' where no 'certain knowledge opens up the way in advance,' where no 'decision is already made.'" See, "The deterritorialization of responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and ethics after the end of philosophy," *Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance 19*:4 (1994): 475. It's what we might find at the center of our historic biblical faith.

[48] Partly, in the interest of brevity, and largely because of my limited capacity to be exhaustive, this section is intended primarily to be illustrative of what I consider productive guideposts for understanding and negotiating the rituals of Asian and Asian-North American in the context of accredited graduate theological education. In effect, it is an exercise in selective cartography or mapping.

[49] Jonathan Tan, *Asian American Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 36-56.

[50] Cited in Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Review of *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion and Theology*," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, (2007), p. 4.

[51] Political and intellectual movements in the 1980s and 1990s are complex, often contradictory. Still the legacies of critical theory and hermeneutics, as well as feminist, womanist, and queer theory, and their myriad delineations along post-structuralist, post-positivist, post-modern, and post-colonial lines have shaped, for good or ill, the work of Asian American scholars, academics, and public intellectuals.

[52] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, fn. 3.

[53] If "Asian" were to be fully "extended" methodologically and spiritually to correspond with this wider geography of "Asia," then, a (re) articulation would be required in our understanding of who Asian Americans are. This will mean, for example, that Islam will become a much larger part of Asian and Asian-North American self-understanding and practice—a sea change of huge proportions.

[54] Amos Yong, "The Future of Asian Pentecostal Theology: An Asian American Assessment," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 10*:1 (2007): 22-41. The challenge of Asian American evangelicalism is particularly strong in Chinese and Korean Christianity with the exponential growth they have experienced in the past ten to 20 years.

# “This Is My Body”: The Theopolitics of (Re)Inscription

karl james evasco villarmea

I have the happy opportunity to exchange ideas with Dr. Lester Ruiz for the last several months already over Facebook threads and emails. I am pleased to continue it here! Although this paper is a more traditional way of exchanging ideas, it is certainly no less significant as it signifies multiple and different ways of being today, that is, to express and experience the other that makes one, importantly, think. So I must *first* manifest my gesture of appreciation for this opportunity to respond to this paper (of the other in the context of others) however provisional and gestural it is.

In this theoretically-nuanced article, Ruiz demonstrates the significance to re-think the conditions, or say, foundation (to philosophically inclined readers: ontology; and, to more sociologically and anthropologically inclined readers: heritage or tradition), upon which we construe race and gender of the body, and the (experience of) diaspora. Although one could say as well that the overall purpose of this paper is to suggest an epistemological frame for social transformation, and more particularly, ways in which such frame could help “(de)form accredited graduate theological education in the US.” Having received masteral degrees and now a PhD student in the US, I find this kind of project not only a theoretical but also, and to a large extent, an existential one. I will share a couple and brief accounts in this regard if only to point at and heighten important issues.

To talk/think about the body is to talk/think about the divine/divinity. This is not only a core theme in feminist and womanist theologies. It is inscribed as well in the very heart of Christianity—God became man, fully *human* and fully divine, crucified and raised from the dead. It is a racialized (Jew) and sexualized (male/man) and violated (crucified) divine, indeed a vulnerable divine, precisely because, it takes and assumes and presents itself in a body, subject to constraint and power. In Christian theology, what happens to the divine happens to the body and what happens to the body happens to the divine.

In modern Western Christian history, this body, however, is mostly and unfortunately buried. The results are rampant and obvious: racism, (hetero)sexism, and violence against the body. Recovering this body (the trace and mark of this divinity body) hence is urgent and important much so in a time when bodies are (dis/re)placed and sourced out for labor in order to produce and reproduce goods for global consumption; or theologically put, in a gnostic time when the body is only a means for a higher good (capital/surplus). What is emphasized here is not morality per se but rather the relationality and the connection of the materiality and the divinity of the body. Because when we sever the nexus of the material and the divine, the result is catastrophic. Life is diminished and death flourished. (It might be noteworthy to point out here as an example that more teen suicides are committed because Christians devalue their body and their sexualities).

If what Ruiz suggests in this article is to take up this ontological-epistemological position, then what lies before us—should we heed his call—is a political and ethical task of reconfiguring our "body politic" (his particular example, of course, is theological education of ATS). While I agree with what this might mean, I am not sure, however, if this has to be primarily and necessarily framed ecclesiastically.

I am tempted to discuss further some implications of this matter—as Ruiz clearly emphasizes—to theological education and to offer my own reflections on ritual/ization in public life as a way to respond to such task. However, there is another "window" that might be more useful for us—educators at Silliman especially—to view and think about.

Although this is a site-particular paper, this article nonetheless suggests ways in which educational practices and assumptions in the Philippines could be reconsidered. It raises critical and important pedagogical questions for educators who prepare and educate and nurture future generations of professionals and workers—more so for a country economically supported by diaspora.

As educators in a country that exports workers and professionals, how do we produce knowledge? What is the basis of such production and reproduction? And to what (or whom) does this serve? These are not simply rhetorico-theoretical questions, but as Ruiz points out, these have something to do with the status and the physicality of the existence of the body—or, indeed to the flourishing of human life. Moreover, the discussion of this subject matter should prove relevant as the Philippine Government today seeks to promote vocational education and technical skills training among most Filipinos.

In an institution like Silliman, these questions are much more relevant and important. For what is at stake in its response could signify (if not reinscribe) the kind of commitment it has to its faith-tradition upon which it is built. Several questions we could ask here in relation to Silliman and its mission and vision: does Silliman education enable the messianic mission (the via, veritas, vita) of Jesus? Or more specifically, does its education aim to contribute to the fundamental transformation of the social order? Does it enable knowledge that welcomes without condition? Does it enable commitment to serve the least among us? Or does its education only serve the liberal state? If not, the global capitalist market?

As I see it, this will not throw us back to the old ideological debate. Rather it could provoke us to think about what it means to create a more humane society and enable us to open up our human vista that could help us navigate our country toward a more democratic society.

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# Graduate Theological Education in and for a (Racialized and Gendered) Diaspora

Dennis P. McCann

Dr. Ruiz's essay is meant to invite us all into a new conversation about the Filipino Diaspora as it struggles to achieve a certain level of critical clarity about its varied experiences. As ambitious and demanding as that conversation is likely to be, he also hopes to steer our reflections toward their implications for transforming graduate theological education in the USA. Having some idea of Dr. Ruiz's work over the years, I am not surprised by his agenda; however, I was somewhat perplexed by the idea that all this considerable effort in postmodernist deconstruction should still be geared primarily toward transforming theology in the USA. I would have imagined that the readers of the *Silliman Journal* would be more interested in a reassessment of theological education in the Philippines. But, then again, Dr. Ruiz may be onto something important for all of us, and not just for Filipinos who've risked becoming strangers in a strange land.

The argument sketched in Dr. Ruiz's essay is complex. At first, readers may find it disjointed, as if there are three or four very challenging points addressed, but with few clues on how to put them all together in a coherent synthesis. But a second or even a third reading may help us to understand the main thread running through them, which is an assessment of the varied experiences of Filipinos as members of a globalized and globalizing Diaspora community. Dr. Ruiz means to challenge our preconceived notions about Diaspora experience, whatever they may be, by outlining an alternative narrative in which race, gender, and the asymmetries of power that these signify are now to be located in the foreground of the conversation. The new narrative is meant to be transformative. A new "body politic" will emerge from consciousness-raising about the actual bodies in and through which we share our Diaspora experiences.

For many of us—particularly those readers who have been either the beneficiaries or the victims of a graduate theological education—the term, "Diaspora," first emerges in Biblical studies, as we learn of the significance of the dispersion, both coerced and voluntary, of the Jewish communities in the Hellenistic world after the collapse of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Historians regard this Jewish diaspora as an indispensable condition for the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean, starting with the missionary journeys of Paul the Apostle. The underlying metaphor of dispersion, however, was used earlier in Jesus' Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20, Matthew 13:1-23, and Luke 8:1-15) to prepare his disciples for the mixed results that their preaching might yield, among diverse peoples with varying personal agenda and dispositions. Though Dr. Ruiz doesn't belabor the point, his anti-essentialist approach to understanding the Diaspora seems ultimately rooted in Jesus' own refusal to retreat into lofty abstraction. At some level, then, being or becoming members of a Diaspora community is an inevitable part of following the Way of Jesus. The Christian churches—all of them and not just those served primarily by Dr. Ruiz's ATS—are Diaspora communities, and therefore stand in need of recovering a realistic understanding of what it means to be a Diaspora. This is left unsaid in Dr. Ruiz's essay, but surely it is implicit in his concluding section on graduate theological education.

Dr. Ruiz's own focus is on Diaspora in a historically embodied sense, namely, the experiences of Filipino men and women as they struggle to live in and through, and in spite of the processes of globalization. Challenged as I am by Dr. Ruiz's self-acknowledged status as "a privileged Asian male in the US," I must confess to being a privileged American male, though one bonded by marriage to the fate of the Filipino people and their beloved islands. By what right should I be saying anything about Dr. Ruiz's analysis of Diaspora experience? Well, for one thing, I felt personally challenged by what he had to say. He awakened once more the subversive memory of my Irish Catholic ancestors.

After all, Filipinos are not the only people to have ever experienced the ambiguous reality of Diaspora. For the past 200 years or more, the Irish, themselves another island race, have been both coerced and volunteered for emigration to distant shores, and largely for the same reasons that drive Filipinos to work overseas today—lack of opportunity to advance socially and economically at home, coupled at times, with a sense of oppression at the hands of colonial and neocolonial masters, or a taste for adventure, or both. There was a time in Ireland—the romanticized homeland of our folksongs and dreams—when there seemed to be no one about but the very, very young, and the very, very old. Virtually everyone else were either abroad working or preparing to go abroad for work. Sounds familiar?

The subversive memory of my Irish ancestors, then, makes me quite sympathetic to Dr. Ruiz's attempt to focus our theological reflections through the lens of Filipino Diaspora experiences, but it also makes me a bit leery. Has he fully acknowledged the complexity of those experiences? The postmodernist theory he uses to structure his account of Diaspora experience, for example, quite predictably emphasizes "estrangement," understood as the "turbulence" produced by "dispersal, displacement, and dislocation from particular origins and locations."

To be sure, Dr. Ruiz—following the indicators provided by his postmodernist analyses of race, gender, and power—understands "estrangement" as a construct bearing "images of 'borderlands,' 'border crossings,' invasions, and estrangements; of co-optations, negotiated settlements, and uncompromising refusals; of logocentrisms and hybridities. It reveals global de-territorializing trajectories as well as local re-territorializing surges or insurgencies, especially under the conditions of an imploding transnational capital." Over and above its objective characteristics, he also notes "its 'subjective' effects on individuals, peoples and institutions: the normalization of the ideology of unlimited "permanent" change, the cultivation of cultures of mobility and improvisation, the re-inscription of codes and symbols of dispersal, displacement, and dislocation (e.g., money, maps, information technologies, on-line and distance education), on peoples' hearts, minds, and bodies, and, the seemingly endless invention and re-invention of unfulfilled desires for 'home'—multiple homes, to be sure, but homes, nonetheless—often accompanied by the inevitable yearnings for the innocent safety, security, and rest, of an idyllic Garden of Eden."

The chief advantage, in Dr. Ruiz's view, of introducing this postmodernist mapping of race, gender and power into our reflections on Diaspora experiences is that "estrangement" is not to be considered simply as a token of victimization—though clearly there is more than enough of that operative in the lives of people struggling to survive under the often unfavorable terms of economic globalization. Instead, "estrangement" should also be understood as opening up a new path toward moral agency and responsibility. In Dr. Ruiz's view, "estrangement" makes it possible for those experiencing themselves as part of the Filipino Diaspora not only to question "'What is to be done?' but also to [ask] 'who we are, what we hope for, and where we go?'—in short, 'What does it mean to be a people under the conditions of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora?'" Once these basic ethical questions are raised, it becomes possible to inquire into the religious and theological significance of Filipino diaspora existence today.

All this is to the good, in my view, and I applaud Dr. Ruiz for taking our conversation in that direction. But I hope we can go further. While some very important trajectories stand revealed in Dr. Ruiz's discussion of "estrangement," we should also consider what gets obscured by it. What I find missing is a sense that "estrangement" begins at home. Granted, those who go abroad often discover they have bitten off more than they can chew. But why did they have to go in the first place? They came of age in a society that either had little use for them or was unwilling or unable to compensate their labors and talents in ways that would allow them to live with human dignity. Nor were their motives in going abroad always and inevitably focused on making more money. How many Filipinas now working abroad, for example, have had to leave because they've crashed against glass-ceilings and other obstacles perpetuated by local elites? For how many was their motive as much to preserve their own self-respect as it was to change the socio-economic status of their families?

My own series of interviews with Filipina women living in Bethune House in Hong Kong, under the auspices of the Mission for Migrant Workers, suggests that on average, such women are better educated and more resourceful than those they left behind. Why was there no room for them or their talents at home? At what ultimate price to their families, loved ones, and neighbors, as well as to the overall development of the Philippines, comes their reluctant decision to try to better themselves abroad? A truly critical reassessment of their (racialized and gendered) Diaspora experiences will not be complete until the social and economic injustices by which some Filipinos prosper by oppressing their neighbors is fully addressed.

Dr. Ruiz's agenda, because of his refusal to conceive of the Diaspora situation in outmoded binary forms of analysis—including the conventional paradigms of master/slave, oppressor/oppressed—carries the promise of enabling us to address these concerns more effectively. One can only hope that his theoretical reflections will inspire empirical research in psychology and the social sciences as we seek to understand what all is really going on in and through the processes of globalization.

There is reason to hope, and not surprisingly—at least not to those of us who understand the importance of critical theological reflection—it may be found in the religious implications of living in the Diaspora. As Dr. Ruiz observes:

> the event of Diaspora announces the existence of the racialized and gendered Other who invites a religio-moral response, namely, hospitality. As a creature of both modernity [and] postmodernity, (racialized and gendered) Diaspora radicalizes the experience of the Stranger or of Otherness in our time…. Strangeness, not to mention marginalization, it seems, is the condition of possibility for community…. Indeed, in the Biblical tradition, the existence of the Stranger is always accompanied by the challenge of hospitality towards the Stranger. *Who* the Stranger is, is the socio-analytical question occasioned by the stranger's existence; *how* we treat the stranger in our midst [hospitality] is the ethical demand which is not caused by the Stranger, only motivated by the encounter.

What Dr. Ruiz is affirming should be obvious to anyone who has sojourned among the Filipinas laboring in the Hong Kong Diaspora. The work of Cynthia Abdon-Tellez is rightly honored at the beginning of Dr. Ruiz's essay. For over 25 years, the Mission for Migrant Workers has provided counseling and other support services, including political organization and legal aid, to Filipinas and Indonesians serving as "foreign domestic helpers" in Hong Kong. It is no accident that this Mission, as well as the shelter it sponsors at Bethune House, is established in Christian churches, at the Anglican Cathedral of St. John and the Kowloon Union Church. But this Mission, it turns out, is rather unique in Hong Kong, in that it is open to people of all religions or no religions at all, and has never been focused on serving the needs of Filipinas to the exclusion of women from other countries. Bethune House, as far as I can tell, is the only religiously inspired community in Hong Kong in which Diaspora space is joyfully and generously shared among Christians, Catholics, and Muslims. My point is that the hospitality urged by Dr. Ruiz is actually creating a new kind of religious community in the Diaspora, one that is ecumenical and interfaith from the ground up.

No wonder that such a community has also become the most effective vehicle for political mobilization in the Hong Kong Diaspora. One of the persistent weaknesses of the churches in Hong Kong is their failure to reach out to one another in some form of ecumenical coalition, to work together on common problems that they and their constituencies face in a city increasingly dominated by an oligarchy constituted by commercial wealth and its privileged access to government power—regardless of the government's official status in the People's Republic of China. By serving the needs of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora communities from the Philippines and Indonesia, the Mission is a harbinger of the hope that Dr. Ruiz rightly places in a reconstructed Biblical ethics of hospitality.

At the same time, however, the Mission is merely the tip of the iceberg of what's happening religiously in Hong Kong. Dr. Ruiz's analysis may help us to understand how and why, with his helpful emphasis on transformations in "Subjectivity." Anyone who goes to church regularly in Hong Kong, attending either Catholic or Protestant services or both, as my wife and I do, cannot help but notice that many of the churches would be nearly empty. Save for the Filipinos who've come to worship there. Indeed, the Diaspora experience seems to involve, among other things, an intensification of religious devotion, a strengthening of religious identities that enable Filipinas to survive whatever outrages they must endure on a daily basis in their domestic employment. Based on the initial interviews I've done at Bethune House, I have the impression that my informants have become more religious while working in Hong Kong than they may have been at home, where going to church was more of a convention, an inherited family tradition. In short, as Dr. Ruiz's remarks suggest, their religious identities, or the role of religion in their Filipino cultural identities, are being transformed.

One can only wonder what will happen when the Filipinas eventually return home. Will they forget all about the experiences they've had in the Diaspora, or will they seek to build upon the new "Subjectivity" that they've acquired through the experience of living in new forms of Christian solidarity? We need to be thinking about what their Diaspora experience will eventually mean for the churches of the Philippines and their role in the nation's public life.

Now at last you may understand my initial perplexity over Dr. Ruiz's desire to apply what he's thinking about the (racialized and gendered) Diaspora to graduate theological education in the USA. What he has to say about this is typically insightful and responsive to the struggles of Asian-American Christians to exercise leadership in the seminaries and divinity schools in that country. They deserve all the respect and support that we can give them. ]But I am reminded of one of the hard sayings of Jesus, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22; Luke 9:60). While the processes of globalization—which go on inside as well as outside the churches—make it all the more important to empower Asian-American leaders in and for graduate theological education in the USA, one must also hope that the first priority would be upon the transformation of graduate theological education in the Philippines itself. My hunch is that it may be easier to advocate a (racialized and gendered) Diaspora consciousness in the institutions served by Dr. Ruiz's ATS, than it would be to get a respectful hearing for such innovative (and prophetically disturbing) proposals among the churches in the Philippines.

One of the great obstacles to learning from the Diaspora experiences at home is the general lack of interest in anyone's religious tradition other than one's own. Alas, even Dr. Ruiz seems remarkably indifferent to the legacy of Roman Catholicism in either the USA or the Philippines. His tacit narrative on the religious history of the Philippines is unwittingly exposed in this comment on the challenge of finding a religious "home" in the Diaspora. Consider this passage:

This is the question of the future of Asian and Asian-American Christianity which itself is changing. The dilemma may be put polemically in this way: one could conceivably argue that Asian and Asian North American Christianity cannot be extricated from its historical, and therefore colonial past; that Christian identities in the US and Canada, despite the long century between the time the first missionaries "Christianized" Asians in their homelands to the time Asian American Christianity planted itself in North America, still holds sway, and that the many waves of Asian migrations and immigrations to the US, in particular, is nothing more than the return of the colonized to their homeland. Indeed, one may observe that an Asian's inherited Christian identity was often aligned with whichever missionary group had occupied one's homeland.

Where to begin? While it is understandable, and all too common among Filipino Protestants to assume that these islands were never evangelized until the arrival of Protestant missionaries slightly more than a century ago, such a narrative completely distorts the religious history of the Philippines. Worse yet, if taken as the last word, it ensures that the kind of ecumenical and interfaith collaboration actually emerging at the grassroots level in the Diaspora—as exhibited in the Mission for Migrant Workers—may never successfully be transplanted to the homeland. I don't believe that Dr. Ruiz actually meant to dismiss the legacy of over 400 years of Spanish Catholicism and its impact on the basic religious and cultural identity of the Filipino people. I've quoted him at length to show that his thinking was focused instead on the institutions that form the bulk of his ATS constituency, which are overwhelmingly Protestant. Nevertheless, there's a larger world of graduate theological education in which the continued presence of Catholic institutions is massive, both quantitatively and qualitatively. If we are serious in allowing (racialized and gendered) Diaspora experiences to renew and inform our struggles for social justice and human authenticity, we can ill afford to ignore whatever opportunities there may be for an outreach and collaboration that is genuinely ecumenical and interfaith. I imagine that Dr. Ruiz and I are in deep agreement on this point.

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# Integral Liberation in U.S. Theological Education: Is It Possible?

Mark Lewis Taylor

It is a delight to offer this informal response to Dr. Ruiz's informed and challenging essay, "Recovering the 'Body Politic'." His years of teaching and ministry—from Princeton Theological Seminary, to the faculty and administration at New York Theological Seminary, and now to a directorship at the Association of Theological Schools in the US and Canada—make him an important voice. This all becomes even more significant when one notes, as in his essay, how committed Ruiz is to justice in constructing knowledge and empowerment in the US theological education. This is not an easy road. Many in US theological education will admit that there are problems in achieving racial and gender justice in our institutions, but they work with little sense of urgency on the matter, believing that "progress is being made." Ruiz, while acknowledging this progress to a certain degree, raises more fundamental and radical questions. I join him in that kind of concern, and will seek to respond in that vein myself. In short, I begin with an assumption, which I hope to argue throughout, that U.S. theological education is still far from what it can and should be when it comes to both teaching and practicing racial and gender justice (which are not unconnected from the still pervasive neocolonial and imperial posture of Christian religion in the U.S.[1]).

First, let me commend Dr. Ruiz's paper for its acumen in contemporary theory. Ruiz's work puts on display the truth that vigorous advocacy for justice in theological education need not disparage theory—even theory coming out of European settings. Ruiz also works theoretically, though, across what Walter Mignolo terms "the colonial difference," taking a helpful decolonizing, postcolonial—I would say, "counter-colonial"—approach to theoretical treatment of political issues today. I have not the space here to engage in discussion with him on the many figures that I, too, value, which he invokes here: Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Luc Nancy, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Susan Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, and many more! I applaud this matrix of theory because all too often, at least in US circles, our concerns with liberation and justice are worked out with a hermeneutics of outrage and denunciation, which, however justifiable and important (indeed!), often go without a necessary theoretical mediation. Radical advocacy of justice and liberation in theological institutions will require careful thinking if it is to be saved from naive progressivism and mere Left-posturing.

In my response here, I will limit myself to commenting on just three points bearing on Ruiz's important essay. First, I want to simply underscore the issue of race, the constructed character of which Ruiz especially emphasizes. Here, I will show how the constructs of race and gender/sex are still shoring up a largely white and male subject-position in US theological education and how this, in turn, is also intrinsic to US imperial formation. My second and third points are responses to two key questions that Ruiz raises toward the end of his paper: [a] What is an "authentically transformative Christianity?" and [b] What role might accredited theological education play within such a transformative Christianity? Thus, my second section treats the notion of "integral liberation" as my way of saying what "authentic and transformative Christian faith" is. The third and final section returns to what I see is US theological education needing to become in light of all this.

## THE CONSTRUCT OF RACE

Ruiz writes, "the burden of this entire essay has been to insist, "we should stop thinking of race 'as an essence, as something fixed, concrete and objective. . ." [and] instead think of 'race as an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meaning constantly being transformed . . . by political struggle….". I underscore the importance of making a case for that insistence, as Ruiz does in his essay. Over my 25 years of teaching in US theological education, I find it continually important to challenge the construct of "race," i.e. to teach that it is a construct, not a given descriptor of human biology or being. Indeed, it is true, that as a construct, it has had, and continues to have, many social and political consequences. It may be a construct, an illusory one; but it is also hurtful, divisive, vicious. Racism begins with a construct of race, the invention of the idea that color of skin, physiognomy and human physical features can be used to assign worth and dignity to human groups, such that a hierarchy of humans can be developed. Racism is the structural functioning of this vicious construct, and it has a powerful function even when we individual whites proclaim our pure intentions. Omi and Winant's definition of "racism" is a helpful one for summing up the way the construct is used: "racism is the *routinized outcome of practices that create or reproduce hierarchical social structures based on essentialized racial categories*."[2] Racism is not just personal prejudice; more importantly it is the routinized outcome of these structural practices. Racial marking and its constructs are now so deeply etched into white communities, in the US, Europe and elsewhere, that whites (and others, too) often are unconscious of the constructed character of race, and hence of their own racialized assumptions about humanity and knowledge.

The power of racial constructs, and the way it undergirds a cross-generational political culture of whiteness, is still evident in U.S. higher education. U.S. higher education in theology often likes to see itself as championing academic freedom. With respect to gender and race, however, our institutions are all too often, still, controlled spaces. They are controlled not only by ideals and standards of excellence, the famous "canons of scholarship," but also by certain *understandings of* those standards and styles of upholding them. The most powerful understandings and styles of these standards and their application have been those that historically circulated among groups that long have had control over the more powerful institutions of theological education. In the history of the US, these most powerful groups have largely been of various European and US extraction and are white (and male, as we shall see), with all the entitlements and privileges that scholars know, or should know, attached thereto.[3]

It might be helpful to look at some numbers. I am relying on figures compiled by the American Theological Society (ATS) on race and gender in theological education, and I'll work "upward," from U.S. M.Div. programs, to the doctoral programs, and then to full-time faculty. The statistics here I have gathered quickly and no doubt they need to be worked further, interpreted from various angles. I am open to counter readings and interpretations. Nevertheless, I am sure they have a force that we need to reflect upon.

**Consider, first, U.S. M.Div. students.** Out of the 31,128 total M.Div. students enrolled in Fall of 2009 in the US, a full 63 percent of them are white, 16 percent are African-American, six percent Asian-American, three to four percent US Hispanics, and less than one percent Native American. All these students of color, as a group, now make up 27 percent of all US M.Divs.[4] Regarding women as a group, they constitute 42 percent of all M.Div. students.

**At the Ph.D. level in all US theological schools of the ATS**, a Fall 2009 headcount shows that 56 percent of all doctoral students are white, with African-Americans down to five percent, Asian-Americans six percent, US Hispanics three percent, and again Native Americans less than 1 percent. Here the representatives of minoritized groups represent only 15 percent of doctoral students, this percentage being significantly lower than minoritized members representation in the M.Div. pool (where, recall, they made up 27 percent of the whole group). Women as a group, though, remain at the level of 42 percent of all Ph.D. students.

It is at **the faculty level**, where the disparities of gender and racial/ethnic profiles in theological education are more strongly marked. In 2009 of **all the tenured professors in the ATS schools of the US**, a full 84 percent of them were whites, seven percent of all tenured faculty were African-American, five percent Asian-American, and three percent US Hispanic-Latino/a. In other words, only 15 percent of tenured faculty in the U.S. are from racial/ethnic groups. Only 25 percent, one quarter, among all tenured faculty members, are women.

If one looks at just **the full professors** across U.S. theological schools, then whites edge up to an even higher percentage, 87 percent of all full professors. African-Americans are six percent, Asian-Americans and US Hispanics-Latino/as at three percent. Total racial/ethnic representation among full professors goes down to 12 percent; the percentage of women goes down to 21 percent.

US theological educators are often quick to point out that these figures reflect an improved situation of "diversity" in theological education. Since trends developing in the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. theological education is a less white and less male place, they say. That is true, in terms of sheer numbers, but two points should motivate us to be slow in celebrating the present situation. First, while there has been a change in numbers, the control of power in theological education is still firmly in white educators' hands. The positions of full professors and tenured professors, and of top administrators—this being where institutional power is largely lodged—still remain held by those who can invoke white privilege, its cultural tradition(s), and economic power. This is why the rhetoric of championing "diversity" in theological education, while necessary, is severely limited if it does not also talk about "empowerment" for groups traditionally repressed and excluded from influence in Christian churches and institutions of the global order.

Second, we should also be slow to congratulate US theological education for its "diversity" because changes in the demographics of theological education still fall so far short of the demographic change in US society. Only the change in women entrants to seminaries, now, around 45-50 percent of all entrants, comes close to reflecting the society-wide proportion of women to men (yet, of course, women moving into positions of pastoral and educational power is another matter). Especially in terms of the legacy of race and racism, we have a long way to go. Most striking, perhaps, is that even though the US demographic features over 15 percent Latinos/as and Hispanics, these constitute only 3-4 percent of students in M.Div. and doctoral programs of US theological education, and only about three percent of faculty. (Today, in the US, there are 45.5 million Hispanics, making up 15.1 percent of the US population of 301 million.[5])

African Americans, while constituting 12-14 percent of the US population, do better than other groups of color, being nearly 16 percent of all US M.Div. students, but in doctoral programs and the ranks of faculty, they rarely rise above six percent.

The total number of students in theological education who are "of color" (Asian-, African-, Latino/a, Native American and others) remains about one quarter of those in US theological education. Again, against the backdrop of recent population changes in the U.S., this is disappointing. The total number of all non-white groups in the U.S., previously called "minorities," is approaching the 50 percent mark of the US population. It is expected to exceed that level by 2042.[6] The remaining greater numbers of whites in theological education, *together with and compounded by* their holding even greater numbers of the power-holding positions, leave US higher education a long way off from what it should be.

Moreover, this kind of racialization and gender distortion of the theological academy's "body politic" only serves to reinforce the US American imperial and (neo-)colonial project. Here, I might register a slight demurral with Ruiz's argument when he says toward the end of his paper that "the point is not to return to the old contestation about the American imperial and colonial project." True, if he means we should not return to the "old contestation"; but because the US American imperial and colonial project continues to reconstitute itself anew, our contesting that project is still very much in order. Indeed, I would read Ruiz's contestation of the racialized and gendered body politic as an important way to contest the US imperial and colonial project. That work is very explicitly going on in cultural studies and critical theory. One need only recall Ann McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race and Sex in the Colonial Contest*, Rashid Khalidi's *Resurrecting Empire: America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, and many other sources. As these and other texts show, the racialized and gendered "body politic" in the US, as manifested in US theological education, is a constitutive part of a transnational imperial project within which the US is a key player. In this way, racialized and gendered constructs are heavy with political and economic consequences. Theological education is just one of the academic regimes that in the US often fails to challenge the US colonial/imperial and also often actually gives expression to it and justifies it.[7]

## TOWARD "INTEGRAL LIBERATION"

From what basis can we challenge such a distorted and destructive body politic? And how might US theological education be different if it took this task seriously? Ruiz himself leads us to ask these kinds of questions toward the end of his essay when he asks, ". . . what are the conditions under which an authentically transformative Christianity or religious identity and practice can be articulated, and what is the role of accredited graduate theological education . . .?"

These questions presuppose that we know what an "authentically transformative Christianity or religious identity" looks like. Indeed, what is it? And how might it relate to the problems of racialized and gendered difference in contemporary US theological education?

Consider, in this section, just the question of an "authentically transformative Christianity (ATC)." A fully adequate exploration of such a notion would take us far beyond the scope of this essay, and I have set forth my understanding of Christian existence in previous works.[8] Here let me use the phrase "integral liberation" to name what authentically transformative Christianity" is in my understanding. "Integral liberation," especially as developed in post-Vatican-II liberation theology by Gustavo Gutiérrez, has a number of rich connotations. The phrase did not originate simply in Gutiérrez's books where it, indeed, makes an important appearance in his *Theology of Liberation*. More importantly, though, it gives expression to aspirations and practices already forming in historical practice of Christian communities. Especially those interested in social justice issues often formed community groups and organizations to seek *una comunidad integral* ("an integral community"), a wholistic approach to group and individual survival under usually extreme situations of struggle, exclusion, and repression. This struggle for integral community and social liberation occurs among disenfranchised groups throughout the world. Gutiérrez broadens "integral liberation" even further to name the kind of presence and action that God through Jesus Christ is said to be doing in the world. To say that this doing is one of "integral liberation" is to say that there is underway, an act of gratuitousness in history pressing for a liberation, but one that also seeks new unity. The liberation sought is one that must not be limited to the personal vs. the social, the political vs. the spiritual, or thought only in terms of one vector of oppression, say, racism, class exploitation, gender injustice, and so on. Rather, "integral liberation" names a fully flowering and differentiated event of liberation. Of course, such an event is given, fully, nowhere in history, but that is the event for which and toward which struggle, dreaming, and devotion are made.

In my work, I have expressed the ideal of "integral liberation" in the phrase "reconciliatory liberation," seeking to preserve the special concerns with radically inclusive love and restoration of all humanity and creation (that's the "reconciliatory" part), as integral to an event of transformation that brings new and freeing structures of political, social, cultural and personal emancipation (that's the "liberation" part). "Liberation" is the aim and goal of ATC, but the "reconciliatory" qualifier keeps that notion of liberation open, fluid, ever mindful of the various types of liberation needed, and aware of the different peoples and groups who suffer its lack. In other words, it keeps the pursuit of justice, however primary, always qualified by love. This I take to be the hallmark of Christian being in the world, this drive for liberation and justice, but always as qualified by a radically-inclusive love. The tension of such an existence comes to its most radical form in the call to love the enemy—even the enemy of liberation. The challenge is to find a way to be militant for liberation but qualify that militancy with love. Usually that means some kind of movement toward non-violent direct action and civil disobedience as one tactic or strategy of confrontation.[9]

It may be asked, why so strong an emphasis on “liberation,” on insisting that political and structural matters—like those of racial and gender injustice that Ruiz treats in his essay—are so crucial to Christian existence? My primary source material for deriving such a view of ATC comes from a reading of biblical narratives in a counter-imperial frame.[10] The early Jesus movement developed its teachings on life and spirit in the context of Roman imperial power and formation. Centuries of Christianity, in both Protestantism and Catholicism, especially with the imperial establishment of Constantine, usually set this counter-imperial faith in Jesus at the margins of official “orthodox” Christianity. Often, the fact that Christians would be vigorously counter-imperial was completely ignored. Western scholars in the production of theological knowledge in the power centers of Europe and the US have so de-politicized biblical interpretation and theology that many Christian theologians in the US and Europe would see a counter-imperial faith in Jesus as unthinkable.[11] Yet, precisely that kind of faith, and the spirit of integral liberation at work in it, has never been without their witnesses. Yes, it has been marginalized in the history of the Christian European West. Yes, counter-imperial faith has often had to go outside of the church, into other para-ecclesial and community movements in order to be, paradoxically, faithful to the way of the cross and the rising of Jesus. Nevertheless, it has also often thrived in marginalized and oppressed Christian communities. Counter-imperial faith has not only been part of communities which, in the twentieth century, embraced “liberation theology” throughout World South communities, but it can also be seen as at work among the poor who were first repressed and cast abroad from the shores of Europe with the rise of the proto-capitalist and capitalist classes. The Diggers and Levellers are exemplary of such groups. The writings in this proto-capitalist epoch, by the English preacher, Gerrard Winstanley, gave expression to this liberatory blend of the political *and* the spiritual.[12] Better said, it is not so much that the political and the spiritual are two interests that need to be blended, but that within the spiritual there is an inseparable bond of the psychic and the social, the personal and the political. This inseparable and integral blend is “spirit,” and it marks “spiritual” practice and “spirituality.”

## TOWARD ADEQUATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

So this integral liberation, this kind of reconciliatory liberation, is what I would take authentically transformative Christianity to be? Now, what might it mean for contemporary US theological education. It would be preposterous to think that I could even begin to answer this question, with any fullness, in this concluding section. But in light of the themes broached by Ruiz's essay, and my response to it, let me highlight five spheres of transformative need.

*First, there is a need to end the hegemony of European and U.S. white and male subject-positions in US theological education*. I am both white and male, so I am aware of some of the costs and complications involved here. I am not saying there is no role in integral liberation for those of us who are constructed as white, who are from European, entitled nations, and hence can lay claim, disproportionately, to numerous patterns of entitlement. But the hegemony, which I have already shown to be present in US theological education, needs to be envisioned as ending. And the end of that hegemony needs to be brought into being. With a church whose vitality and strength is in the World South, and whose vibrant churches, even in the US, are from the many different cultures and communities throughout the world, the US theological institutions' being mired in patterns of exclusion of those groups and of continuing to reinforce white power structures, is inexcusable, intolerable, unjust.

What needs to happen in this area of transformative need? We need what is all too rarely performed: the proactive planning for full and varied representation of under-represented groups in ways that make likely the achievement of equality of empowerment US theological institutions—for students, faculty, and administrators. Such proactive planning should not be seen as only done "for the sake of" presently minoritized groups (e.g. Latinos/as, Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Arab-Americans, indigenous nations' peoples and more). *The empowerment is for those groups, yes, **but also**, especially, for the strengthening of the entire life of any theological institution*. The efforts for empowerment of traditionally excluded groups are, in fact, ways to enliven the poly-cultural and multi-perspectival lineaments that strengthen the entire institution's teaching, research, and common life.

Achieving something like this would mean making sure that there is not just a token scholar of color, or a token woman of any background, in each of the Departments of a theological institution. There would, instead, be careful planning toward numeric density of representation among women faculty and among faculty of color who represent the major minoritized constituencies in the US. Women and scholars of color would be included at the ranks of both the tenured and untenured, and also, among the tenured, they would be present at the levels of both associate and full professor. (Unfortunately, it is a standard pattern of theological education that *if and when* it diversifies, it does so largely at the positions and ranks of least power for influencing the whole institution.[13]) Moreover, undertaking all that I have mentioned in this paragraph requires maintaining an environment that is hospitable and equally empowering for all groups, students, faculty, administrators, staff, especially traditionally minoritized members in those sectors of institutional life. My own faculty has a special challenge because, barring unforeseen circumstances, our 9-plus member Theology Department, traditionally a very important one at my protestant theological institution, will by next year be staffed by all white tenured scholars.

In pressing for all these changes, I have also learned that one needs to proactively guard the gains in diverse empowerment that have already been made in our institutions. All too often, when planning to improve "diversity," by struggling for new hires or more diverse recruitment strategies, institutions seem to retrench somewhere else in their system, letting previously recruited scholars and students of color go or be neglected. Previous gains are lost as new ones are attained. The result, then, is another case of "change" that keeps the old imbalance of power in place.

I know that this transformative need, as I have articulated it here is demanding, but nothing less will be able to counter the insidious powers of racialized and gendered constructs as they work their way throughout our pedagogies, our doctrinal discussions, our church leadership theories and our spiritualities and moral practice. It will not do to seek only ever smarter or nicer white people (which often seems to be the reigning assumption).

*Second, the issue of the US imperial and US colonial—both as past legacy and present structuring reality—needs to be taken more seriously than they are at present in theological education*. Imperial and colonial formations need to be seen not just as "political history," which they are, but also as features of the present fallen condition of humanity, of sin ("institutionalized violence," "institutionalized sin"), so that they can be seen as the antithesis of the grace that comes through Christ. This would be to set imperial and colonial formations as problematic for the heart of Christian existence. Examples of Christian faith taking the problem of US coloniality to heart can be found in the recent Accra Confession. It is especially evident in the Manila statement, "An Ecumenical Faith Stance against Global Empire for a Liberated Earth Community."[14]

This means teaching the gospel of liberation, seriously. By seriously, I mean refusing to be satisfied with teaching the liberation theologians of the world in North American theology courses as if they were but one controversial, isolated option. They are often included in the episteme of North American theological academies as "local" or "contextual" kinds of theology, while "real" or "classical" theology is largely European and white male theology (though not named as such!). Unfortunately, this is still the dominant approach. I am not calling here for a simple reduction of the gospel to some narrow political agenda. I am calling for a positioning of the oppression/liberation distinction at the heart of the gospel of integral liberation, and in a way that is not afraid to name the devastating consequences of the US imperial and the need to find ways free from it. That will require a new form of pedagogy and thematic content for North American theological education.

*Third, the gospel of liberation should be taught in our seminaries, and elsewhere, as a complex phenomenon, one that thus demands the best of theoretical analysis, as well as outrage over injustice and exclusion.* Without theory, as I stressed before, the gospel of liberation loses its cogency and force. The gospel of liberation is not a homogeneous gospel; it emerges differently in different contexts, and it is always having to take account of the ways oppression masks itself, morphs into ever new forms, assembling class, race, sex, gender, language and national ideology for ever-new complex means of exploitation. This all calls for a new collaboration between theologians and ethicists in theological institutions with university studies; also this required rigorous public reflection wherever it occurs.

*Fourth, and growing out of liberation thought's necessary complexity, our discourses about the US imperial in a gospel of liberation should move beyond traditional Left language, which focuses largely on issues of powerful US military brinkmanship, nationalism or transnational class dynamics, and often less on how constructs of race, class and gender also constitute and strengthen the US imperial.* The traditionally Left issues are crucial and should not be neglected. I would surely not call for any diminution of our critique of US militarist, nationalist and economic exploitation, since those critiques, too, are often neglected. But it is time to bring, more rigorously and emphatically than heretofore, gender/sexuality and white racism into relation with those issues so intrinsic to the US imperial. I can give one example of what I mean from the fine way the Manila statement on US empire addresses the issue of sexual and gender injustice:

> Patriarchy and empire are inextricably interwoven. Today we see, in addition to the complex oppression of women through the ideology and practice of imperial patriarchy, the vicious use of rape and violence against women as a military tactics of domination. . . Such brutal military aggression against women and girls is one of the signs of a deep and pervasive system of domination that extends to all dimensions of human life. The gender ideology of patriarchy is pivotal in all domination hierarchies in human society and in the communities of all living beings.[15]

Other connectors between patriarchal ideology and imperial practice would include the ways nations that are subject to colonial and imperial forces have been feminized as a whole, its men taken as less than "manly" by Western constructs, its women often hypersexualized and used for colonizers' own ends. As McClintock has shown, eloquently and rigorously, the very lands and cultures of the colonized have been viewed as "female" and hence—according to colonizers' imaginaries—coloniz*able*, in need of control and domination. Women have been, as she notes, "the boundary markers of empire."[16] This reinforces the ways empires mark out peoples for colonization, adding the powers of gendered and sexualized fantasy to the racist imaginary, enabling both race and sex/gender to make stronger the ideologies and practices of the US imperial."[17]

*Fifth, and to conclude with practical comments on the institutional enforcement of all this, the agencies that accredit theological institutions in North America need to more vigorously withhold accreditation and impose citations on especially the most powerful schools.* At present the well-meaning and knowledgeable accreditors have a power vis-à-vis the larger theological institutions in the US, which is similar to the limited powers of the UN vis-à-vis the United States. It is a power to lament, advise, and counsel, but rarely a power to really sanction and transform fundamentally abusive practices. This is especially the case if we recall figures I gave above about the racial/ethnic and gendered make up of powerful faculty positions in US theological schools. Accreditors do address the issues of racial and gender disparities, even withholding accreditation or imposing citations, but usually when dealing with the smaller, less powerful North American schools. Also, the powerful schools do receive citations from time to time, but to my knowledge, this happens mainly for failings of a more general, often vaguer sort: deficient "assessment processes," "communication dynamics," "faculty governance," and so on. To be honest, I am not quite sure about the reasons for this limited power of accreditors when it comes to challenging the powerful schools for failing to address racial and gender injustice in the make up of their faculty and student constituencies. Is it a failure of will by accreditors? Is it due to large financial resources that the bigger schools give to the accrediting agencies? Are the accreditors, as evaluators of North American theological institutions, themselves paid—directly or indirectly—by the ones they are evaluating? Again, I am not sure. But whatever the reason, I am still waiting for some accrediting body to say to the powerful theological academies of North America, something like the following:

> *Look, everyone ... international society shows a US imperial formation that has scarred badly the global body politic. U.S. military brinkmanship, its support of a transnational elite classes, continuing protection of white, male cultural values and Euroamerican subject-positions—this all, must be named, reflected upon, and resisted. From this perspective, the present constitution of faculties in the U.S., where tenured faculty remain 85 percent white and only 25 percent women, with institutional interests still leaning more toward Europe and less toward those of the poorer World South—all this, as well, is unconscionable. The South and its constituencies are* within the U.S.*, and it is time that their voices, their leaders and their theologies be made central to theological training in the U.S. The need to change from the present structure has been evident to many throughout the world for too long.*
>
> *Therefore, we as accreditors, in good conscience, can no longer deem your schools to be worthy of accreditation. They are fundamentally lacking in showing the structure necessary for teaching and training ministers in the present age. There needs to be a fundamental "changing of the subject"—of the subject-positions of those doing the teaching and curricular building, and of the subject-matter that so often ignores the racialized and gendered U.S. imperial ideology and practice.*

I will end my commentary on this final transformative need by simply asking: who will dare to utter words like these, and seek to implement them? Who among us will support such an implementation? In the spirit of the gospel of liberation that still graces the lives of many communities, in spite of brutal failures and seemingly intransigent structures, I can work in hope for powers of change to grow in all of us toward an emancipatory future—even for US theological education.

We are all in Professor Ruiz's debt for having the courage and complexity of analysis to keep the issues of racial and gender injustice at the centers of our attention. Failing to do so risks creating an institutional network of theological schools that seem ashamed of the gospel of liberation. Against the specter of such a failure, Ruiz's essay, however, is yet another sign of the historical unfolding of a gospel of liberation, as another specter that haunts our troubled present, as those long excluded by the racialized and gendered US imperial dare, still, to weigh-in with new power and new life for all.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## ENDNOTES

[1] See Mark Lewis Taylor, *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and U.S. Empire* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

[2] Howard Winant, *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 126.

[3] On the critical study of whites and "whiteness," see Richard Delgado and Jean Stefanic, *Critical White Studies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 199), and Zeus Leonardo, *Race, Whiteness and Education* (NY: Routledge, 2009).

[4] The numbers do not add up to 100 percent because I am leaving out the percentages of international students, and an "unreported" category that has its own percentage. I am deriving these percentages of women and racial/ethnic groups at ATS schools, and those that follow, by using my calculator on data gathered by the ATS in its "2009/2010 Annual Data Tables," at http://www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/AnnualDataTables/2009-10AnnualDataTables.pdf. You are invited to check my figuring of these percentages.

[5] US Census Bureau Press Release, "An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury, press release of August 14, 2008. For the entire release, http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb08-123.html .

[6] Ibid.

[7] I have analyzed the role of Christian religious life in justifying US imperial power in an earlier book, *Religion, Politics and the Christian Right.*

[8] *The Executed God, and Religion, Politics and the Christian Right, and Remembering Esperanza*.

[9] The notion of "reconciliatory emancipation" or "reconciliatory liberation," is developed in *Remembering Esperanza*, 175-93. On the approach to nonviolent direct action, through Christian dramatic action as part of the "way of the cross," see Taylor, *The Executed God*, 99-126

[10] Mark Lewis Taylor, "Spirit," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, eds. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (New York and London: Blackwell, 2004), 377- 92.

[11] On this "de-politicization" in biblical and theological scholarship, see Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 1-14.

[12] On the Diggers, Levellers and Winstanley's writings, see Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 80-99.

[13] On difficulties faced by faculty of minoritized groups in transitioning from non-tenured to tenured ranks, see *Diversity in Theological Education – A Folio, Association of Theological Schools*, especially its section, "How Racial/Ethnic Faculty often Experience Rank, Promotion and Tenure Decisions in ATS Institutions." Available at http://www.ats.edu/Resources/Documents/DiversityFolio.pdf .

[14] For this statement, see "Empire," special issue of *Reformed World*, *56* (4), December 2006, pages 433-50.

[15] "An Ecumenical Faith Stance against Global Empire for a Liberated Earth Community," 437-438.

[16] McClintock, 30-37.

[17] In addition to McClintock on both race and sex in imperial formation, on racism's role in colonization, see Jürgen Oesterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Pub., 2000), 108

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# NOTES

# The Catalogue of Small Things

Compiled Responses From

Rowena Tiempo Torrevillas
J. Neil C. Garcia

By

Ian Rosales Casocot

First we begin with "Bonsai," perhaps the best known and most-loved poem by the National Artist for Literature Edith Lopez Tiempo:

All that I love
I fold over once
And once again
And keep in a box
Or a slit in a hollow post
Or in my shoe.

All that I love?
Why, yes, but for the moment—
And for all time, both.
Something that folds and keeps easy,
Son's note or Dad's one gaudy tie,
A roto picture of a beauty queen,
A blue Indian shawl, even
A money bill.

It's utter sublimation,
A feat, this heart's control
Moment to moment
To scale all love down
To a cupped hand's size,

Till seashells are broken pieces

From God's own bright teeth,
And life and love are real
Things you can run and
Breathless hand over
To the merest child.

*Dr. Tiempo's daughter, the poet Rowena Tiempo Torrevillas writes me today:*

I just spent the afternoon with a scholar from De La Salle University [Bam Pe] who's doing a biography of Mom and needed to interview her and me, as a part of her research. So I guess I'm still in that family-history groove even as I write this.

I glanced with interest at your exegesis of Mom's "Bonsai"—which has turned out to be her best-known poem because of its emotional accessibility. As you, and other readers, have perhaps noted about Mom's work, much of her poetry—especially the earlier stuff—tended to be dense and cerebral. Among her poems in the first volume, "Tracks of Babylon," my personal favorite—and that of the committee that chose her to be the first Elisabeth Luce Moore Distinguished Asian Professor—was a poem whose lyricism was quite distinct from the other weightily intellected poems in that volume. I'm referring to "Mid-Morning for Sheba," which, if you and your students are not familiar with it, is well worth looking up and learning.

Following are some personal references embedded in the imagery of "Bonsai." It's absolutely not necessary to know "what Mom meant" when she chose those objects as signifiers of "all [I] love." Objects, really, that had meaning for her as mementoes of family joy and pain. (I note that in the analysis you quote from Myrna, there is some speculation about the personal importance of those objects.) Well, here is the background, straight from one who was right there when the poem was written:

... "[S]on's note" refers to a letter full of anger and resentment that my brother had written to my parents; when he was being chastised for some misdeed he had committed, Don set fire to my father's books and wrote a letter to "the man in the red car" ... meaning Dad, who was identified with the red Ford Falcon that was our family sedan for years. As far as I know, that's the only letter my brother ever wrote our parents, growing up or after he'd left home.

... "Dad's one gaudy tie" is a necktie in loud colors that some of Dad's students had given him as a birthday present (and which Mom apparently had mixed feelings about; Dad never wore it).

... The "Indian shawl" was a gift brought to Mom from India, in blue-and-gold embroidery, by their old teacher from Iowa, Paul Engle, when he was on a Rockefeller tour of Asia and he stopped by Dumaguete to visit the Writers' Workshop across the world, which his students Ed and Edith had grown from the Iowa "seed corn" that they're brought to Silliman from the University of Iowa. It was a gift much treasured for its symbolic import, as well as for its inherent value.

... The "roto picture of a young queen" is ... yours truly, a reference to my salad days as Hara sa Lalawigan.

So there you have it, the inside story behind the objects in "Bonsai." And if anyone ever comes upon these facts and finds them useful in the literal understanding of this much-loved poem ... well, the story came from me.

One of my own life's greatest treasures is the time when Mom and I were asked to lecture at Ateneo. (I think it was there where I gave the very first version of "My Parents' Child.") When we were done, they asked her to recite or read a poem, and asked her to do "Bonsai." There was absolute silence in that large lecture hall as she opened the book and read it.

I looked around the fully-packed hall, where some of the students were overflowing into the hallway, sitting on the floor or looking in from the windows. (And this was before she was conferred as National Artist!)

As Mom was reading the poem aloud, all the lips of the audience were moving silently along with the words she was reading. All of them in the audience knew that poem by heart.

*The poet J. Neil C. Garcia writes:*

Poems are strange in that they are intimately intersubjective, especially when they are read across a significant "sweep" of time. Contrary to the evidence, they really do have their own agency as works of art, and this becomes all the clearer when one engages them at different points in one's life: because poems are built as much on absence as on presence, they are never completely exhausted in any one reading. And so, they open up and offer distinct entry-points to one's earnest inquiry, each of them revealing the deep personal space—we might also say, the spiritual distance—that one has traveled since the last visit. We often speak of writers as companion spirits, but I also think it's possible to speak of companion poems, those that accompany us as we plug along our respective paths; those that (as the local proverb counsels) bid us turn around and look back, every now and then, lest we lose not only our way, but also, alas, our very self (because without hindsight there is no memory, and where there is no memory, there is no sameness from one moment to the next; which is to say, there is no identity).

This is one of the few Filipino poems that I can say have accompanied and "stayed" with me through the various and often tortuous periods in my continuing apprenticeship to the written word. The lived moment in the poem, which this annotation now so wonderfully affirms, was what struck me about it, from the very start. Already, then, I wondered what the poem's "antecedent scenario" (Vendler's terminology) might be: what is the experience that prompts this speech (which is the same thing as the poem) into being? In particular, where (at least emotionally speaking) might the speaker be, at the exact moment that she (a mother, a wife, a believer) begins to speak? These questions serve to accentuate the fact that art, while merely an imitation of life, is nonetheless also rooted inexorably in it... up to now, these are the questions I still ask my students to answer for themselves, before they can credibly recite—actually, before they can endeavor to do anything at all to—this poem. Just now, I'm remembering that my interest in the representational power of this text coincided with my fascination with its concise and paradoxical use of imagery, most astonishingly exemplified, to my mind, in the simultaneously mundane and divine metaphor of sea shells as "God's own bright teeth"... needless to say, from the get-go "bonsai" struck me as referring wonderfully to sundry objects and realities in the world (ah, the inventory of loved mementos!) which, like the singular poem that it is, it not only captures in the "best words" arranged in the "best order," but also thereby generously transfigures…

And still, after all these years, the poem keeps giving and giving, conversing with this restless reader and bringing to light not only its own interleaving, latent, and undiscovered meanings, but also, more surprisingly, his own implicit understanding... Given, I suppose, my recent interest in the self-reflexive gestures that constitute all art, when I read this poem nowadays I no longer just see the life that the words encourage me to interiorly, as it were," visualize." I still see the representational content of the poem, true; but I also now see the words that are the poem, I see the poem as a poem, constituted not of any pregiven but of a willed kind of painstakingly fashioned language (just now I'm thinking not only of the careful arrangement of lines and stanzas, but also of the poet's unusual and possibly culturally resonant use of the transitive form of the verb "run," in the poem's last strophe, that itself seemingly runs the poem along to its memorable conclusion), referring to elements within itself, referring to the idea of its own making, referring to "bonsai" not only as an external and aegis-forming reference but also as the very structure that the poem itself mimics (for look at how figuratively vast and yet how small and unassuming the poem is!)—to the bonsai that the poem itself is!

So, yes, nowadays, when I read/teach this poem, the poem is at once the frame as well as the picture that it continues to beautifully show—pointing all at once to life and to the idea of a life. In particular (thanks to my recently acquired knowledge of oriental art) pointing to the aesthetic precept or theory, identifiably Japanese, of wabi-sabi: the "beauty" of the imperfect, the partial, and the fugitive, which is what art/poetry, finally is; which is what we all, finally, are.

*Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas responds:*

Thank you, Neil, for your most thoughtful assessment of the self-reflexive element implicit in the act of writing. I, too, am a believer in the notion of "absence as presence" as a powerful force in writing.

What is poetry, after all, but an expression of the human wish to enact, and give shape to, "all I love"? Like you, I have been more interested of late in the interplay between word and thought, especially in the transaction going on between the individual brain and written language. Here's a poem I wrote, oh maybe a decade ago. I don't write long poems any more, so it's not representative of what I do these days, but here it is. Not counting the compound words, in a hundred words or less ... a bonsai of one of my own life's enduring mysteries:

*The Lost Letter*

I write to find it.
I'd seen it in my newborn
Daughter's eyes,
Like looking into
Deep space, deciphering
The dazzle of the infinite-before-life.

I learn a word, ylem, primordial
Substance all elements derive from.

(Salt, amino acids, water:
Tears.) We shed protein when we weep.

The Ur-song drifts
Around sleep's edges,
Encoded in DNA: that hidden letter,
The body's cryptograph unlocking
Words, which ride through optic currents,
Liquid, electrical, being
Read. Symbol to word,

Loops-and-whorls on fingertips
Are secret maps, ideographs, a lost
Alphabet transcribing
Humanness, as on bark
From the tree
Yggdrasil, where
Our names were
First inscribed.

*J. Neil C. Garcia responds:*

Thanks, Rowena, for this unexpected boon! Life itself is the mystery, and as long as we are inside it, we cannot be expected to fully know what it is. And yet, and yet... There are these "intimations" (Wordsworth's entirely fortunate and enduring term) that glimmer in all the dappled and fugitive shapes that surround us... We have another baby in the family, my sister's newborn, and it's endlessly fascinating to think of "where" she is, just now that she still exists outside language, just now that she still doesn't have the self-consciousness that language bequeaths to (sometimes, I'm inclined to say, inflicts upon) the subject, that precisely "selves" the self in a sentence in which the speaker and the spoken cannot ever fully coincide... As I tell my students, channeling Lacan, the "I" who speaks in our discourse cannot exhaust what we are; cannot make us fully present, despite our well-meant faith that it does (in the first place, unlike the person who inscribes, once written down the inscription cannot quite change, cannot quite die). This makes for a truly humbling "lesson" for any poet (whose claim to the examined life is, after all, nothing if not the "physical" medium that language is)... But then, as this present poem shows, perhaps poets already understand this basic inadequacy—this irremediable gap between sign and reference, between sign and concept, between sign and sign, between sign and sign-maker, which is probably why they choose to write poetry to begin with. Poetry, a "making" in which presence is nothing if not absence (and vice-versa); a willed human act which gestures, again and again, to the silence from which everything first stirred into existence, to the immemorial which underlies the historical, the knowable, the known...

On the other hand, despite registering this possible "disenchantment," there is an act of faith in this poem that I feel links it most vitally to "Bonsai." Mom Edith's famous poem insists upon the power of intelligence to capture, shape, and discipline the makeshift moment, and yet it concludes on the memorable note that human affection is, quite possibly, the only way this "beautiful fugacity" can be undone (or, at the very least, invalidated)... I am referring, here, to the image of a mother—whose consciousness unfolds in interesting and complex and even mythic movements throughout the poem—regarding, simply and lovingly, the eyes of her child.

This vacillation between the acceptance of the "limit" imposed upon us by culture, history, and/or language (a position espoused most vigorously, in the poetic scene at least, by the American language guys) and the considered (and recalcitrant) rejection of it is what has come to characterize, to my mind, the present preoccupation of many poets. This may have something to do with—among other things—the increasingly indispensable role that academic critical theory has come to play in the education and training of many poets who, nowadays, are required to "do theory" alongside their creative work. Time and again, I have had occasion to express my own take on this all-too-real contradiction, most visibly summarized in that strange hybrid entity of the "poet-critic"... Back in 2009, after spelling out the irreconcilable differences between these two positions (at a panel discussion in the Ateneo de Manila), I attempted to articulate my own argued understanding of the issue... I suppose, just now, I can say that I still provisionally believe in the way I originally phrased this uneasy "detente," back then: "I don't think poetry transcends culture; I don't think poetry transcends language; I don't think poetry transcends history. Poetry beautifully encodes the desire for transcendence. This, for me, is good enough."

I ended my "spiel" in that panel discussion with these words. When I said this then, I think I was simply trying to articulate my position regarding the urgent question of freedom in art.... Reading all about theory in our classes—in other words, being also, in a manner of speaking, "critics"—makes us supremely aware of just how "determined" all our actions, thoughts, and even "imaginations" are by all these inexorable social forces that surround and yes, constitute and construct us. And yet, despite this "fatal" knowledge, we who are now effectively "poet-critics" still create works of art, still write our stories and poems... Obviously, knowing what we know, and coming from we come from, we can no longer endorse the old liberal humanist—specifically, romantic—argument that art transcends materiality. However, while it's true that the last one hundred years of merciless social critique has effectively unmasked freedom as an illusion, it has not by the same token made the necessity of this illusion well, less "necessary" in our world. What's left, after a century of being disabused of the idea that we are essentially free? The answer is simple: what remains, despite everything, is the desire for freedom. Poets/artists precisely remain valuable and irreplaceable in our world because they are the only ones who can "embody" this necessary longing most beautifully...

Again, Rowena and Ian: thanks for these poems, these notes, these altogether lovely bonsai moments.

# Additions to the Avifauna of Bantayan Island, Cebu Province, Philippines

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This paper provides details of seven new bird records for the Bantayan Island in the northwestern Cebu province: Great Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*), Red-turtle Dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*), Zebra Dove (*Geopelia striata*), and Eurasian Tree-Sparrow (*Parus elegans*). The latter three species may have arrived most recently via human aided introductions.

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## INTRODUCTION

The most recent survey on the avifauna of small islands off Cebu Island was done by Paguntalan et al. (2004). However, Bantayan Island and its associated islets were not included and no recent account is available to us, except those listed by Kennedy et al. (2000).

Below is a brief account of new bird records for the Bantayan Island based on a short visit to the main island (based in Barangay Ocoy, Sta. Fe on 29-30 April 2011) and the smaller Jilantagaan Island (visited in the morning of 29 April 2011). Observations were done with the aid of binoculars (Bushnell 10×50) and the field guide *Birds of the Philippines* by Kennedy et al. (2000).

## LIST OF NEW BIRD RECORDS

### Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*)

Not listed by Kennedy et al. (2000) for the Bantayan Island but 3-5 birds were seen by AB off Sta. Fe wharf on 30 April 2011.

**Great Crested Tern (*Sterna bergii*)**
A single bird resting on a buoy near the Ocoy Marine Sanctuary was seen by AB on 30 April 2011.

**Red-turtle Dove (*Streptopelia tranquebarica*)**
A pair perching on bare branches of bagalunga tree (*Melia azederach*) within the vicinity of the School of the SEA compound in Ocoy, Sta. Fe was seen by AB on 29-30 April 2011.

**Zebra Dove (*Geopelia striata*)**
Commonly heard in the coconut groves and residential areas of Sta. Fe town.

**Glossy Swiftlet (*Collocalia esculenta*)**
Seen by AB over beach forests and residential areas in Ocoy, Sta. Fe on 29-30 April 2011.

**Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)**
Seen twice by AB near Jilantagaan Island on 29 April 2011.

**Eurasian Tree-Sparrow (*Parus elegans*)**
Common in residential areas and wharf of Sta. Fe.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Restocked Giant Clams (Family Tridacnidae) Enhance Community Structure of a Philippine Coral Reef

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Most coral reefs of the Philippines no longer have the full complement of the seven species of giant clams reported in the past. The largest species, *Tridacna gigas* and *T. derasa*, and the porcelain clam, *Hippopus porcellanus*, do not exist on most reefs. Giant clams on Philippine reefs are few in number and may consist only of three to four species, namely, *T. crocea, T. maxima, T. squamosa*, and *H. hippopus*.

Only three reef sites in the Philippines with large numbers of giant clams are known: Bolinao, Pangasinan (Gomez & Belda 1988), Davao Gulf, and the 5,800 m$^2$ Giant Clam Reserve in Cantaan, Guinsiliban, Camiguin Island, the subject of the present report. Most of the 2,443 clams in the latter reserve as of 2010 were sexually mature, spawning naturally in the reserve.

The three *T. gigas* clams shown in Figure 1 were 7.62 cm when acquired from the Bolinao Laboratory in 2002, and are now sexually mature at about 90+ cm in length.

The Giant Clam Reserve is protected and managed by the Cantaan Centennial Multipurpose Cooperative of Cantaan, Guinsiliban Municipality, Camiguin Island, Philippines. The members of this cooperative consist of local residents. Its membership includes young people active in giant clam conservation (Figure 2).

The restocking of giant clams in the reserve began in 1994. All clams came from many reef sites on the island, except *T. gigas*,

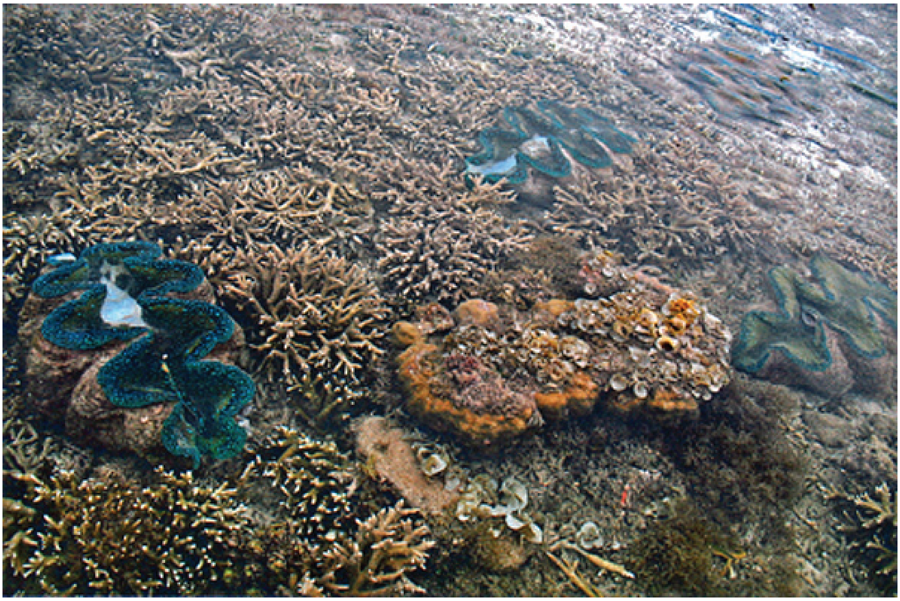

*Figure 1.* **Six-year old *Tridacna gigas* (in 2008) in the Cantaan Giant Clam Reserve, Philippines.**

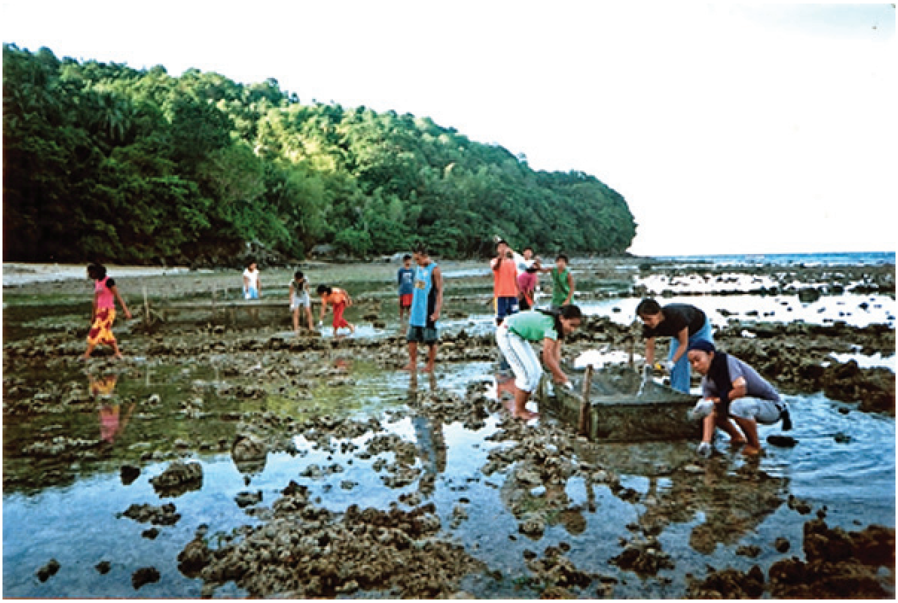

*Figure 2.* **Members of the Cantaan Centennial Multipurpose Cooperative checking their caged juvenile clams in the reserve. Cages protect the juvenile clams from predators.**

which came from Bolinao. All giant clam species reported from the Philippines, except *H. porcellanus*, are now represented in the Cantaan Giant Clam Reserve. The initial broodstock of the reserve consisted of 1,198 individuals belonging to the six species mentioned above. As of August 8, 2008, 445 juveniles of the six species, which were spawned in the reserve, have been added to the clam population. More were spawned later, and 308 *T. crocea* juveniles were exported to Guimputlan Marine Reserve in Dapitan City in 2010.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks to the Foundation for the Philippine Environment and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for their assistance to the project.

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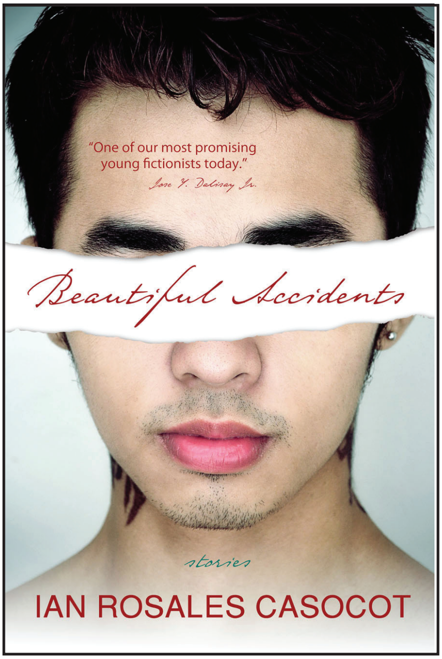

Ian Rosales Casocot

## Beautiful Accidents: Stories

Manila: University of the
Philippines Press, 2011,
185 pages

# Nooks of the Human Heart

Review By Alana Leilani C. Narciso

If the stories in *Beautiful Accidents: Stories* revolved around one unifying theme, then it could be easier for one to proclaim conveniently that it is a collection of love stories or of fantasy and horror, like the writer's other collection, *Heartbreak & Magic* (Anvil, 2011). Then it would also allow one to authoritatively say that in his book, heartbreak does create magic and this magic makes the heartbreak all the more poignant and lasting. But the stories in *Beautiful Accidents*, obstinately refused to be categorized. They are as obstinate perhaps as accidents: like broken pieces refusing to be pieced together, offering neither apology nor excuse for their existence.

Set in Dumaguete, the stories are unapologetically real—as real as the young people playing games, as real as the 19 year old college boy who hustles for sex and love, as real as the two brothers who each in their own private journeys, struggles to make the lies they live real and relevant, as real as the two young men finding themselves, as real as the mother who recedes into darkened rooms, as real as the defeated father whose sons are unable to grieve for him, as real as the passion and love so generously given, yet unrequited.

In "The Name's not Oscar Wilde," "Between the Here and the Now," and "Private Journeys," the unfolding of the plot does not keep the reader's interest up as much as the revelation of their characters does. In these stories, one does not follow a clear plot development. As the stories have proven, the plot is subordinate to the characters themselves as they provide the revelation and unfolding. Their psychological depth offers a landscape of events, dreams, and realizations. Each character is alone in the midst of companionship, unable to surrender altogether to the possibility of bliss; each searching for that elusive happiness.

Attendant to this is the admission of one's own identity that to be fully happy is to be wholly honest of who one is. Indeed the stories ("Private Journeys," "The Name's not Oscar Wilde") seem to run each on parallel structures: we hear two first person accounts. From their consciousness we discover their motivations. Central to these stories is the question of identity and how it is kept hidden. The characters' existence treads on the delicate balance of discovery and revelation. Yet in the end, we see promises of discovery and eventual togetherness.

Youth rages, careless, fun-loving, bold in "Cruising," "The Players," and "Group Study." They play dangerous games in the dark, and like the youth that they are, altogether forget what happens in the dark. Perhaps the college boy is the only one who seems to be scarred from the blatant realization that even a high school kid has the right to his services. In "Group Study," we are taken back to the hilarity of high school—how one envied beautiful, bright classmate could have only possibly slept with the teachers, how the handsomest kid could have deflowered all the girls in class, how a forbidding teacher was once a man, and how, at the slightest provocation, one could pounce on a classmate for an unfavorable remark about a favorite movie star.

In "Pete Sampra's Neck," the character nurses a broken heart and in between the cracks of this heart are how the little details treasured and shared with the beloved become part of the identity of the lover. At the center of this remembering that holds the lover's existence is the persistent truth that the beloved is gone and can never be possessed again. It is in this truth that the character finally realizes that indeed "It is like a little death" every time the beloved is remembered. The whole story climaxed in an accident that figured in front of the lover whose realizations of the finiteness of love and loving are like the very debris from the accident he witnessed.

Nowhere is the indulgent narrator in "The Secret Love and Personal History of Tigulang Liberator of Oriental Negros." In his stead is a character who simply tells the forgotten story of a man and the woman who loved him in sin and secrecy. The longest of the collection, the story ambitiously details the histories of a town and the liberation of the island in an era long forgotten. Perhaps what made the tale limited is the sheer fact that the tale is simply a retelling. Yet again, the writer so lovingly renders the characters that the sheer power of language itself imbues life in them.

Inevitably, from the collection, I have picked favorites: "Old Movies," "The Hero of the Snore Tango," and "Things You Don't know." Coincidentally, they are also the stories that won the writer several Palanca awards. And they are not without weight.

A son grapples with the uncertainty of his identity as there is no father to speak of; his only identity as it seems lies in the fact that he looks exactly like the man who everyone thought was his father. The mother is of no help. She lives in her own world of movies [A reader would get lost in the constant allusion to movies]. They become the metaphor for her existence and the varied events of her life. Fittingly, her life ends like the movies. So we see the son , in the absence of a father and the detachment of the mother, living his own life and forging an identity different yet not exclusively separate from the parents' lives. The story nears its end as the mother (looking like Ali McGraw), dying for the second time—for she is long dead—asks the son for time so she can be the mother he does not have.

This parent-child theme is repeated in "The Hero of the Snore Tango." It is the father this time that fades into oblivion leaving the sons and the wife behind. Yet life, as the writer so well depicted has a way of making us face our ghosts and dead. The father returns and attempts to reach out. This, as the narrator sees, is a futile endeavor. In the end, it takes death for the father to be reconciled to his son as the son dances the tango on his grave hoping that it is "the closure by which we could finally love, with all our heart, our dearly departed."

Like in "Old Movies," the writer uses death, the ultimate barrier that separates us as the very thing that would ultimately bring us together to forgiveness and loving. Quite an irony, yes, but the writer will have it no other way. Death, as the story goes, is the only logical ending that will save, albeit rather late, a parched and wounded heart.

The writer achieves, if I may be so presumptuous as to claim, not only sophistication in language and content—for all his stories are sophisticated down pat—but also a profundity that speaks to everyone in "Things You Don't Know." As families struggle to live—the same way friends face the fact of possibly losing their jobs and take to shopping as a means to refuse to feeling down (“Yeah, Baby...”)—the narrator lives and plans every day despite the imminent breakdown of the family's finances and very possibly of her marriage. The husband lies, she plays pretend, and the little girl insists she is an angel. Yet, it is this very stubborn insistence of the little girl that teaches the mother to forgive and keep faith. It is, in the end, the redemption that the family needs.

There is a suppleness and gentleness in the writer's language as the central character affirms loved ones as “secret treasures...that possess all [we] need to know now in this world. Love, forgiveness, understanding—all the bright little things easily lost in the rush to live.”

On a personal note, it is interesting that the last three stories I have mentioned and the best in the collection, are tales where the writer is nowhere to be found. In fact, “Things You Don’t Know,” which won him first prize in the Palanca, takes on a character devoid of any traces of the Ian that I know. T.S. Elliot, though referring primarily to poetry, might have been right all along: that art is impersonal and the artist's progress lies in self-sacrifice and the “continual extinction of personality.”

Finally, the writer paints a Dumaguete I know yet I do not know. Perhaps it is the power of his prose that transforms the familiar to something strangely new with its nooks of secret sins, discoveries, loss, pleasures, and yes, faiths—the stuff of our existence. And the writer—stubborn as his stories—compels us to look at all these unflinchingly.

## ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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