"BUGABUG ANG DAGAT"

The Local Life of a Fishing Community in the Philippines

by
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A thesis submitted to Cardiff University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Nelson Nava Turgo 2010

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DEDICATION

For my parents

Dominador Ibalan Turgo

and

Clarita Perez Nava

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Summary

This thesis is an ethnographic study of a fishing community in the Philippines in the context of a dwindling fisheries resource and in relation to the community's contemporary social and political structures, values and local issues. It considers the everyday life of the fishing community; the realms of power; gender and economic relations; and how these relations are played out among and between fishers and their wives, fish vendors, dealers and brokers as the community experiences dramatic changes in the local economy. While the study avers a very local orientation, it takes cognizance of the community's enrollment in a bigger polity: national and global economic and political spaces. Thus, the study focuses upon what local life means and exemplifies in the epoch of globalization and how local practices are instantiated amidst talk of a fast globalizing world. It highlights the enduring importance of the local linked in this case to the people in the fishing community's relative immobility and marginal position in the sphere of the Philippine economy in particular and the global economy in general.

The thesis has eight chapters divided into three parts. The first part, chapters 1, 2 and 3, introduces the study, explains its ethnographic and theoretical import, states its significance as a piece of scholarly research and connects it with the wider literature on fishing studies, maritime anthropology, and the sociology of globalization. The second part, chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, deals with the Philippine economy and describes the fishing community studied. Furthermore, it discusses the different ways in which fishers and their wives 'make do' in the face of dwindling catches, the changes and continuities in the community's economic roles, gender dynamics and power relations in the household and highly localized market practices in fish trading where among other factors, intimate actual and fictive relations in the community affect how fish is traded and sold among community members. The third part, chapter 8, concludes the thesis and summarizes the key arguments laid out in the second part of the study. It calls the reader's attention to the many geographies of globalization such as how some lives remain local and yet not isolated from extra-local developments, and how in this community everyday life is given material shape that is more local than global.

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Figure 3.0 Map of Quezon Province and the Different Bodies of Water Surrounding Quezon Including Lamon Bay

Picture 1.0
A commercial fishing boat unloading boxes of fish at the community quay

Chapter One

Of Fish and Men

1.1 Introduction

This thesis looks at everyday life in a fishing community in the context of dwindling fish stocks and concomitant economic difficulties for families relying on fishing and its associated trades (collectively referred to in the study as a fisheries crisis). It focuses on the continuing power of the local in relation to global developments and how the local as a mode of living manifests in the community's power, gender and economic relations. It takes into consideration "how ordinary social actors perceive and experience globalization from 'below' rather than relying solely or mainly on academic theorizing which tends to overstate the impact of globalization on most people's lives" (Kennedy 2010, p. 7).

The people mentioned in this study are by all means economically marginalized and the community studied is primarily a small-scale fishing community (see chapter 4). Small-scale fishing refers to using small craft and simple gear (though not necessarily simple techniques) of relatively low capital intensity. Fishing operations are skill-intensive and fishers fish close to the community in relatively near-shore waters in single day/night operations. Most of their boats are non-mechanized, and if some use on-board motors, they are few and their lives are as hard as other members of the community. Furthermore, being a small-scale fishing community, it is also, compared with other sections of society, relatively socially and economically disadvantaged with low employment mobility out of fishing (Kurien 1998, p. 3). The community is one of the numerous fishing communities dotting the coastline of Lamon Bay and has a population of 708 individuals. People in the community, at the time of fieldwork, were just getting by; many men who used to be fishers had turned to selling fish to support the household while women, on the other hand, juggled work and home. The fisheries crisis, as what this study suggests, has changed the life of the people in the community in varying ways.

While this community is poor and marginal, it is not isolated though. The fishing community which is the subject of this study is very much a part of the world. While people in the community have been affected and are continuously being affected by extra-local developments, the everyday moments of living described here are largely executed on their own terms. Invoking Beynon in a different time, context and place, I claim that the portrait of the people of this study

> is painted in their own words and the dynamism of the story is taken from their actions. For I have been concerned not to write about these men as if they were the mechanical products of economic and technological forces. I have attempted to show how such forces limit and constraint people's lives, yet how in the very constraint they reveal the seeds of an alternative. (Beynon 1973, p. 14)

In the succeeding sections of this chapter, I explain the context of the fisheries crisis in the community in relation to existing data about the state of fisheries in the Philippines. However, this will not take up a big chunk of my discussion, since my aim is only to provide the requisite context from within which the fisheries crisis in the community can be understood. I also explain briefly this study's take on globalization and concomitantly, why the 'local' and 'margins' are important concepts in the study. The local as deployed in this study is taken to mean "our physical/bodily but also social emplacement in the locality we inhabit at any one time and the latter's particularities, and the experience of everyday life through a round of multiple, repeated and sometimes trivial practices involving family, work leisure and much else besides – some undertaken reflexively and others without much thought [...]" (Kennedy 2010, p. 7). Margins or marginality on the other hand incorporates a geographical dimension, though, as the study will show, it also implies immobility and lack of opportunities for people in the community studied (I take this up further in chapter 3).

The fieldwork on which this thesis is based was carried out in a fishing community in Lamon Bay in the Philippines between July 2008 and January 2009. Prior to that, in March 2008, I visited the community for a one-month pre-fieldwork re-familiarization stay. While the data used for this study are a product of my six-month intensive fieldwork, my engagement with the fishing community goes a long way back. I grew up in a place not far from the fishing community, and with a fisherman for a father, my intimacy with, and knowledge of, the community and its people hence provided a

robust grounding and context for my 'formal fieldwork'. For six months, I observed the unfolding of the community's everyday life, conversed with local inhabitants and joined some of their activities, like selling fish on the street, looking after 'sari-sari' stores[1] in the absence of their owners, attending special occasions like birthdays and wedding parties, and on some occasions, lending money to hard-up informants.[2] I am a Filipino by nationality and, as a native of the place, my fieldwork is a homecoming on my part. Thus, my fieldwork could also be called 'homework' (Giron 2009; Kenny 2000) or fieldwork done by ethnographers in their own localities.

This is an ethnographic study not of fishing but of a fishing community. I highlight this aspect of my study to signify the means by which it is thematically structured. But while fishing is not directly addressed through a chapter solely devoted to it, both as a way of life and as a means of economic production, its presence looms loud and clear. It must be clear, then, as it will be in the remaining chapters, that what I am aiming to describe, and what this thesis is all about, is the life on shore of people in the community.

The fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay has had a great impact on the everyday life of the community. Lamon Bay, one of the top ten major fishing grounds in the Philippines, is over-exploited. While it ranked as the fifth highest commercial fishing ground in the Philippines in 1995, with a total production of 55, 252 metric tons (mt) comprising 6% of

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[1] *Sari-sari* stores are small to medium stores that sell all kinds of goods, from food and fuel to grocery items and medicine (*sari-sari* means variety in English, a little of everything). Items are sold apiece and in small quantities. They are an ubiquitous feature of most Philippine communities, primarily in rural areas. In the west, they could be likened to convenience stores, although on a much smaller scale. However, in the Philippines they do not just function as retailers of goods, they are also a place where people in the community meet and gossip. Thus, they are imbued with both economic and social significance.

[2] As a personal policy, I declined lending money to people in the community. But in some rare instances, I lent money to a few (out of pity and at the same time, to gain their trust and re-establish myself as a community member) on the condition that they would return it before the termination of my fieldwork and that they would never tell anyone about it. Six people must have borrowed money from me, with my aunt taking away the highest amount, 2,000.00 Php (Philippine peso). Sadly, no one returned the money. Before I left, one of the debtors told me that the money he owed me would be my Christmas gift to him, instead. That must be the thinking of the other debtors, too, including my aunt. All in all, I must have 'lent' 6,500.00 Php to them. My subject position must have been framed as a *balikbayan* (someone who returns home for a visit after some years of living or working overseas) in the minds of my informants, so that they did not pay me back. I deal with the concept of being a *balikbayan* in the next chapter.

the total national harvest, a study by Campos, Pantoja, Manalili and Bravo (2003) revealed that since 1985 its fish catch has been declining at a rate of 13.5% per annum, which is more than twice the national average of 5.4% (see also Alino undated). People in the community, on the other hand, date the fisheries crisis to the late 1990s, when according to them commercial fishers started to 'lord it' over Lamon Bay. The sad state of Lamon Bay mirrors in many ways the state of Philippine fisheries (Alino undated; Javier 2003; Pomeroy and Pido 1995; Pomeroy and Williams 1994). Vincent, Meeuwig, Pajaro and Perante (2007) date the decline in Philippine fisheries from the beginning of the 1970s (see also Smith 1979).[3] A study conducted by the Philippine Environmental Governance 2 Project (EcoGov2) in 2007 stated that the annual rent dissipation from overfishing in the Philippines was estimated at around US $130 million for demersal fisheries and around US $290 million for small pelagics. Reasons abound for Philippine fishing grounds becoming unproductive. Corruption is rampant in national and local agencies tasked to manage Philippine maritime resources, as mentioned by Eder (2005) in his study of a fishing community in the southern Philippines. National laws protecting fishing grounds are poorly implemented (Guieb 2009). The mesh sizes of nets are often smaller than the mesh sizes allowed by national regulation. There is a high level of by-catch and incidental catch of small-size/juvenile fish. Harmful fishing gear such as push nets, stow nets, and fixed nets are still commonly used in some places. Destructive fishing techniques, such as explosives, electricity and poison have not been phased out (Eder 2005; Salayo, Garces, Pido, Viswanathan, Pomeroy, Ahmed, Siason, Send and Masae 2008; Sumalde and Pedroso 2001). However, the most prevalent fisheries' concern is the condition that is referred to as 'Malthusian overfishing'. This condition is

[3] At the macro-national economic scale, securing marine resources is vital to the Philippines' interest. The Philippines was the twelfth largest fish producer in the world until the early 80s. The fishing industry contributes 2.3% and 3.7% of total GDP, at current and constant prices, respectively (BFAR 2009). Fish is the major source of animal protein in the Filipino diet, constituting 12% of total annual food intake. Employment in the fisheries sector in 2007 was reported at 1,124,098, accounting for approximately 5.7% of the country's labor force (Siason et al. undated, p. 4). In 1998, the total fish production from commercial fisheries was 941,000 metric tones (mt), comprising 35% of the total national commercial catch. Municipal fisheries represented 34% of the total national municipal fish catch. Fisheries provide more than 60% of the edible protein in the country (Campos, Pantoja, Manalili and Bravo 2003, p. 2).

often related to an increasing density of the fishers' population[4] and leads to the use of more efficient but destructive fishing practices, such as blast fishing (Alino undated).

The fisheries crisis nonetheless is a symptom of a bigger transformation taking place beyond the community. While the fisheries crisis could be the most tangible and oft-cited reason why life has changed and is changing in the community, globalization and attendant socio-economic processes taking place beyond its boundaries are the unpronounced albeit powerful forces that instantiate the changes in the everyday life of the community. The study then suggests that the fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay, and its impact upon the community and its people, could be read as an instance of globalization – it is the way in which the fishing community is impacted by global developments.

1.2 Some Preliminaries on Globalization

Globalization, in this study, is understood as "a process (or a set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power" (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999, p. 16). It is also about "time-space distanciation" (Giddens 1990, 1996, 2002) where global capitalism links locales into global circuits of exchange, so that everyday life in previously remote villages becomes intimately affected by fluctuations of world prices and supply change, and decisions made by corporate planners hundreds or thousands of miles away (Giddens 1990; Ray 2007). It is a life-changing global phenomenon, which has been going on since the 1600s, the beginning of European expansionism overseas (Waters 1995), creating a network society (Castells 2000), entailing time-space compression (Harvey 1989) and producing deterritorialized spaces (Scholte 2005).[5] My understanding of globalization, and contemporary globalization specifically, is further informed by Woods' contention

[4] It is estimated that 59% of the Philippines' population lives in the coastal area. It is where 70% of the 1,525 municipalities, including 10 of the largest cities, are located (Javier 2003, p. 23).
[5] I will not present an extended discussion here of globalization. I refer the reader to chapter 3 for a more wide-ranging discussion of the topic. Some excellent works on globalization can also be consulted, like Giddens (1996; 2002), Harvey (1989), Held and McGrew (2007), and Scholte (2005), among others.

that globalization is a "dynamic and multifaceted process of integration and interaction that enrolls localities into networks of interconnectivity organized at the global scale and facilitating the global circulation of people, commodities, ideas and representations" (Woods 2007, p. 487).[6] There is a caveat here though: if globalization enrolls places into the global economic circuit, thereby representing the inclusion of peoples and places in what Appadurai (1996) calls global cultural flows, globalization also entails exclusionary practices.

It is in this context that globalization does not take place in all locations of the world at the same depth and speed. It is a set of multiple processes with diverse effects on everyday life in different parts of the world (Ray 2007). Some places are more globalized than others. Different people in different places are implicated in time-space compression (Harvey 1989) in different ways. As Gregory explains, for some, global processes "undoubtedly present new opportunities and demand larger responsibilities, reveal wider horizons and enhance geographical imaginations; but for others they impose additional burdens and raise higher barriers, create further distinctions and diminish individual capacities" (1994, p. 414). Furthermore, the differentiated effects of globalization are not without their own set of tensions:

> They are a world characterized on the one hand by complexity and potential disorder, but on the other hand very clear and consistent directions in the geography of power; and the continuance of geographical diversity but one formed, not so much out of a home-grown uniqueness, as out of the specificity of positioning within the globalized space of flows. (Massey 1994, p. 161)

The fishing community, this study argues, is a territorial and socio-spatial expression of the dynamics and complexities of globalization and multi-scalar processes taking place worldwide. It is a place which is transformed, and being transformed, by forces beyond its boundaries, and yet local forces, by virtue of the community's marginal importance in global processes, are more pronounced and aggressive in constituting and fashioning the kind of life being led by its inhabitants. Local forces here mean local traditions, practices,

[6] My argument about globalization, then, echoing the position taken by Woods (2007), is that of a transformationalist, "holding that cultural, economic and political dimensions of globalization do not move at the same pace, and within these broad dimensions, unevenness and complexity reign" (Woods 2007, p. 487). For a thorough discussion on approaches to globalization, see Held and McGrew (2007), Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton (1999) and Scholte (2005).

values and structures which, while not beyond the grasp and transformative powers of other forces, are bestowed with a measured degree of autonomy to articulate and insinuate themselves into the community's daily life processes. Concomitantly, people react to developments around them based on the ground they stand on because "people do not live in the globe, they live in homes, in neighborhoods and communities and they react to crises within their own local logics" (Davis 2000, p. 345).

The community's locality and marginality are the threads that suture together the three substantive issues (power, gender and economic relations) that this thesis addresses (see chapters 5, 6 and 7). In gearing towards the explication of how socio-geographical marginality is stamped on specific locations like the fishing community that this research has explored, some of the general questions considered include: How does globalization affect people's ways of life? In what ways do people react to forces coming from beyond the boundaries of their community? Is local living, if anything, still possible in the epoch of globalization?

1.3 Ethnography and the Study's Contribution to Knowledge

Mindful of how ethnographic authority has become a subject of hermeneutics of suspicion in these days of de-centred self and reflexive modernity (Clifford 1983, 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1999), I reiterate nonetheless that this is an ethnographic study, which means I have been to the place I am describing to you now. What I will tell you through this thesis comes from my experience of being there and living the life of the people in that community (see chapter 4). My assertion evokes a Malinowskian presence in the field, "squatting by the campfire; looking, listening, and questioning, recording and interpreting [...]" (Clifford 1988, p. 28). I am the purveyor of truth in the text. But the truth about the community which I will share with you is my truth, a truth that is a "localized, situated, partial, special, little, ephemeral reality [...]" (Dumont 1992, p. 2).

In doing ethnography, I am cognizant of the fact that, as Strathern argues, though it matters that the ethnographic moment is a moment of engagement, "it is a moment of immersement that is simultaneously total and partial, a totalizing activity which is not the

only activity in which the person is engaged" (1999, p. 1). Other activities take place before, during and after every fieldwork. I was somewhere else when other things which had a bearing on the gathering of my data and their interpretation happened in the community. In addition, some things which transpired while I was there surely eluded my grasp. Thus, this study, although already written and henceforth 'complete' is in fact a fraction of what actually transpired. I did my fieldwork, wrote this up and you, in turn, read this and 're-write' what I wrote in the process. Reading is a form of re-writing and in thus asserting, I invoke the contingency of doing ethnography and the incomplete nature of fieldwork. Fieldwork is a social encounter in which ethnographic reality offers itself - whether it is taken without asking makes no difference in the present context – in quite contingent ways (Dumont 1992, p. 3). It is "not a vain attempt at literal translation, in which we take over the mantle of an-other's being, conceived of as somehow commensurate with our own. It is a historically situated mode of understanding historically situated contexts, each with its own, perhaps radically different, kinds of subjects and subjectivities, objects and objectives" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992, pp. 9-10).

Dumont (1992) describes well my fieldwork experience in the community. According to him, fieldwork experience is a "prolonged hermeneutic and maieutic trauma caused by a social and cultural environment where hardly anything makes sense, where little (rather than nothing) can be assumed, where the obvious seems odd, where almost all that has been taken thus for granted (including previous fieldwork experiences) can be instantly scrapped, where meaning is essentially elusive, and where sometimes the most minute differences become meaningful, its most radical aspect resides in its persistent hints of incoherence" (1992, p. 6-7). I now bring all this to my research in the hope that I can do justice to so many voices which simultaneously wanted to be heard and to my own voice, both as an insider and an outsider, making sense of it all.

In terms of locating my thesis in disciplinary terms, my research straddles two fields, sociology and anthropology. Although it is a self-conscious sociological study of a fishing community, I am also aware that the epistemologies of anthropology, its field methods and insights, have influenced the research. Being conscious of my work as strategically positioned between two disciplines, my study could be another manifestation

of what Geertz (1980; 1993) calls the blurring of genres, when knowledge fields orientated towards different and distinctive methods and theoretical paradigms meet and get co-opted by each other's epistemic parabola. I further assert that my research is specifically situated at the intersection of conversations in the area of the sociology/anthropology of globalization, on the one hand, and conversations in rural/maritime sociology/anthropology, on the other. Methodologically, this study enacts what Abu-Lughod calls an ethnography of the particular, a form of writing against culture which essays the fact that "effects of extralocal and long-term processes are only manifested locally and specifically, produced in the actions of individuals living their particular lives, inscribed in their bodies and in their words" (1991b, p. 474). In saying so, I do not, however, echoing Abu-Lughod words, "privilege micro over macro-processes" (1991b, p 474). This study while very much rooted in the everyday life of fishers, fish vendors, fish traders and fish brokers is also cognizant of social and economic processes taking place outside the boundaries of the community. Theoretically, this study engages with the epistemological complexities of globalization, and the discursive, conflictual yet mutually sustaining analytics of the local and margins as they affect, structure and elaborate on the dynamics of contemporary life.

The ways in which I try to elaborate in the data chapter of this thesis (chapters 5, 6 and 7) the fraught relationship and tension-filled connection between the local and the global needs to be commented upon. As the thesis evinces, this study focuses on the local without losing sight of the global. In taking account of the local, the thesis looks and tries to connect into one coherent assemblage and expression of local life the power, gender and economic relations in the community. Through them, a dynamic local life is assembled in the context of global developments taking place beyond the community. I recognize and admit to the necessary and beautiful struggle that the assemblage entails in finding logic in and connectivity among the three life themes in the community. By all measures, each could stand as a legitimate thesis topic on its own, and thus, their coming together looks like a surfeit of ethnographic data, which could have been further trimmed down for a much more detailed rendition of local life in the fishing community studied. I recognize that danger, and the struggle is much evident as I try to find connections and continuities between and among the three themes taken up. Nonetheless, this study still

believes that power, gender and economic relations in all their ethnographic import, as it were, are worth putting together: they better capture the plural character of our present world and the heterogeneity and vivacity of local life as it is lived on the ground. Concentrating on just one theme, say gender, will attenuate the thesis' point about how the global does not abolish the local and the many geographies of globalization.

A corollary of this concern is the thesis obligation to bring theory and data together, and with this, an additional list could be made: micro and macro, general and particular, emic and etic, the 'native's' local knowledge and the ethnographer's global perspective, etc. The point here is that while the study claims to be essaying a local life, its very production and 'textualization' is anything but local. Putting it simply, the way local life in a fishing community is depicted would not appear local as it is defined here for the people studied. If they get to read this thesis, they would not easily recognize themselves and their ways, framed as they are in the discourse of the academe. As Kennedy explains:

> The way in which ordinary people perceive and experience everyday life, including globalizing forces, is likely to be very different from the views held by scholars and other informed observers whose job is to record and interpret social life from a broader, objective and 'outsider' perspective. Certainly, it is highly problematic to assume that the great majority of people, many with little or no education, share even a small part of the knowledge available to epistemic communities [...] - concerning how globalization impacts on our lives. (Kennedy 2010, p. 10)

In essence, the production and reproduction of their everyday lives are not their own but have been filtered through my mind's eye. It is therefore my field of vision which evinces the local; and this is by all measures also extra-local in terms of the analytic import that I brought to the field. By way of an example, Scott's (1985) depiction of a Malay village would surely make its 'subjects' totally bemused upon discovering how their lives were depicted in the study. It is their local life, but not quite. For an ethnographer therefore, there lies the necessary and beautiful struggle to address and admit to the complex situatedness of 'experience-near' (what an informant naturally and effortlessly uses to define what he or his fellows see and experience) and 'experience distant' (what a specialist employs to forward his scientific, philosophical, or practical aims) (Geertz 1993). Confinement to 'experience-near' concepts leaves an ethnographer

awash in immediacies, as well as entangled in the vernacular. Confinement to 'experience-distant' ones leaves him stranded in abstractions and smothered in jargons (1993, p. 57). Thus, as Geertz asks: "how in each case, ought one to deploy them so as to produce an interpretation of the way a people lives which is neither imprisoned within their mental horizons, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch, nor systematically deaf to the distinctive tonalities of their existence, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a geometre" (1993, p. 57). The task, then, of understanding and depicting local life is a tricky affair. One has to attend to the demand of 'experience-near' and 'experience-distant' and by extension, to be both local and global. Too sweeping generalization (and in conjunction too much theorization) is as tragic as drowning in data and particularity. The tracking back and forth of the local and the global, the particular and the general, and the morphing of theory (of the observer) and data (as presented by participants) need to be attended to. Geertz' injunction is clear:

> To grasp concepts that, for another people, are "experience-near," and to do so well enough to place them in illuminating connection with experience-distant concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life, is clearly a task at least as delicate, if a bit less magical, as putting oneself into someone else's skin. The trick is not to get yourself into some inner correspondence of spirit with your informants. (Geertz 1993, p. 58)

The assemblages therefore of local life cited here were produced as much by the people in Sta. Filomena as by myself. Nonetheless, it is not a tension-free exercise of the hermeneutic self and other. This textual co-production, the fusion of data and theory, the presentation of life not as it is, but as what it is to the observer is always a fraught exercise of one's critical imagination, since, as Geertz argues, "the ethnographer does not, and, [...],largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he perceives, and that uncertainly enough, is what they perceive 'with' – or 'by means of,' or 'through'...or whatever the word should be" (1993, p. 58). The rhythm of the thesis from general assertions (chapters 1, 2 and 3) to particularities (chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) and back to generalities (chapter 8) attempts to delineate what Geertz calls "a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view" (1993, p. 69). It is in

this regard that the thesis tries to exemplify what Geertz demands of a good fit between 'experience-near' and 'experience-distant':

> one oscillates restlessly between the sort of exotic minutiae that make even the best ethnographies a trial to read and the sort of sweeping characterizations that make all but the most pedestrian of them somewhat implausible. Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole that motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one another. (Geertz 1993, p. 69)

Furthermore, as the thesis presents the unfolding of local lives, it recognizes the struggle it makes in finding connections between and among the themes presented and the global context they find themselves in (and the feeling of disjuncture at some point of the reader trying to figure out, say, how power relations make a seamless connection with gender and economic relations). The admission is not a testament to the weakness of the thesis, but a recognition of how fraught, fractured and complex everyday local life has become, how slippery and yet firm the relationship between the local and the global could be, and how ethnography as methodology is replete with this struggle and tension in constituting everyday life both from and about the views and reckoning of the participants (of the study) and the observer alike, and the interface between local knowledge and global perspective.

1.4 The Structure of The Study

The thesis has eight chapters grouped into three parts. They flow from the expositional/conceptual/theoretical (first part, chapters 1, 2 and 3) to the descriptive/analytic (second part, chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) and then to summative/analytic/theoretical (third part, chapter 8). The grouping is highly tenuous, a convenient schema which does not signify an epistemic territoriality of any sort, but rather points towards an iterative movement of ideas, the descriptive and analytic exposition and elaboration that this study tries to enact.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 belong to the first part. In these chapters I try to locate my study in the cornucopia of discourses concerning globalization and its attendant processes

and complexities. The first chapter fulfills the requisite demands for an academic study such as this one. In this chapter, I make the preliminary clearing of grounds by explaining the aims and the direction that the study will take. I also place the research in the bigger context of the sociology of globalization and make a claim about its contribution to the production of knowledge in this particular field. The second chapter is, generally, about research methods and, specifically, about my fieldwork experience and some critical issues that surround ethnography, primarily those issues pertaining to my being both an insider and an outsider and the production and reproduction of subjectivities in the field. I also discuss ethical issues that characterize a study like mine, before providing a brief overview of what to expect in the remaining chapters. The third chapter explains the theoretical underpinning of the study and elaborates on other studies, both empirical and theoretical, that echo the concerns of the thesis.

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 belong to the second part. These chapters highlight life processes in the fishing community as they happen on the ground, in a localized space, in a particular place at a particular time. Chapter 4 explains the economic polity of the Philippines in the context of global developments which has a bearing on the fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay and the community itself. I then go on to describe the community, its people, their livelihood, their struggle and issues affecting their lives. It is a mélange of images, a succession of descriptive vignettes that capture the rough edges of the community and its uncertain future as its people negotiate their fate individually and collectively. The point of this chapter is to appropriate the fractal nature of the community and the contesting voices that define its connection and relevance to other places in the world. Chapter 5 deals with how the people in the community have been surviving the fisheries crisis and the imponderabilia of life that it creates. It is about ways of surviving the fisheries crisis and how power is negotiated in the community, who owns it and in what ways and circumstances power is appropriated, subverted and negotiated by members of the community. In this chapter, I show how the community survives through ways that put to the test how each member de-sacralizes and re-affirms his/her membership in the community by acting out forms of 'making do', directed not at other people from other places but at the very people that they encounter everyday. On the other hand, how socio-economic relations and gender identities are re-formed and re-

negotiated in everyday life in the light of the economic re-structuring in the community is the thrust of chapter 6. Here, I explain how fishers and their wives perform their daily lives in a much re-cast world of work, where men sell fish and women work for the upkeep of the family. Such radical departure from the normative order of things in the community is a fraught reality that constantly threatens to disrupt life in a place where things are changed and changing. Changes in economic roles impinge on how roles in the household are played out which in turn impact on the gender politics in the community at large. Local capitalist practices in fish transaction in the community are discussed in chapter 7. This deals with how fishers, fish vendors and fish dealers situate their market relations in the context of community life and how this community life impinges on capitalist ethos to create a local capitalism that is both personal and impersonal, profit-driven and at the same time not immune to the chicaneries of its members. This chapter presents how personal relations and the web of kinship are important in further localizing market practices.

The last chapter, chapter 8, constitutes the third and last part of the thesis. Here, it is explained how the fishing community and the matrix of its transformations could be read as an idiom by which the global and the local hold a dialogic relationship. In highlighting the importance and power of the local, the thesis pursues a discourse that typifies how we grasp the world around us through a more localised experiencing of events – that is, it is still a possibility that lives are lived more locally than globally. The study refers to this juncture and the socio-economic geography that it creates as a territorial and socio-spatial expression of locality and marginality in the epoch of globalization.

Regarding the profusion of footnotes in some chapters of the study, the thesis incorporates them to further contextualize and 'texturize' some of the information provided herewith. They are not meant to introduce new ideas and concepts but to elaborate further on key terms and arguments which, if incorporated in the main text, could clutter the structure of the study.

Picture 2.0
A fish stall in the community

Chapter Two

Doing It My Way: Some Words on Methods

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the methodology employed in the study. Specifically, it will talk about ethnography and some of the issues surrounding its deployment in the field. My experiences while doing fieldwork will also be taken up and issues pertaining to research ethics will be discussed. But before they are commented upon, how the present research came into being and took its present form will be addressed.

Institutionally, this thesis was shaped by the research thrust of Cardiff University's Seafarers International Research Center (SIRC). As a fellow of the centre, I was expected to do research on maritime studies, that is, among others, how seafarers conduct their lives offshore and onshore and issues pertaining to their training, family life, and use of technology on board ships (see, for example, Bhattacharya 2009; Gekara 2008; Tang 2008). Growing up in a fishing community and having fisherman for a father, I took up a different route. Instead of training my analytic eye on the state of human affairs on board tankers, cargo vessels and passenger ships, I opted to study a fishing community - the fishing community where my family came from - a single sited-ethnography, "the path of self-limitation rather than the path of expansion" (Candea 2007, p. 168). Furthermore, having obtained a creative writing degree for my undergraduate diploma in the Philippines, I was also interested in the interface between literature and the social sciences and how the blurring of genres, particularly the cultural and linguistic turn in the social sciences, is reshaping research methodologies and the ways in which ethnographic texts are produced (see, for example, Banks and Banks 1998; Benson 1993; Clifford 1988; Daniel and Peck 1996; Denzin 1997; Marcus 1980; Marcus and Cushman 1982; Marcus and Fischer 1999; Turner 1993; Wolf 1992). This led me to write an autoethnography for my progress review as I was preparing for my upgrade to PhD on my second year at Cardiff (see Turgo 2007). Autoethnography is an

autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural and socio-political. Usually written in first-person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of forms – short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays, journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language (Ellis and Bochner 2000, p. 739). It synthesizes both a postmodern ethnography, in which the realist conventions and objective observer position of standard ethnography have been called into question, and a postmodern autobiography, in which the notion of the coherent, individual self has been similarly called into question (Reed-Danahay 1997, p. 2). An autoethnography was the closest thing that I could do to give vent to my literary side and at the same time fashion my text within the discourse of the social sciences. I was of course informed of the internal debate concerning the deployment of autoethnography within the social sciences (see, for example, Holt 2003) and the criticism by Atkinson (1997) ("having the potential to romanticize the self"), Bruner (1993) ("egotistical"), Sparkes (2000) ("introspective and individualized") and Walford (2004) ("more akin to therapy than social science research"). In my progress review, I made it clear, to counter the criticisms cited above, that my autoethnography was more on the analytic side as defined by Anderson (2006b) and exemplified by the works of Kondo (1990), Murphy (1991) and Wacquant (2007) rather than the evocative strand being practiced by the likes of Ellis and Bochner (2002), Evans (2007), Jago (2006) and Ronai (1995), among others. When my upgrade to PhD was finally granted and I had to finalize the structure of my thesis, I was decided to incorporate an autoethnography. But as every researcher knows, research plans are not inscribed in stone. What the research site holds for the researcher is beyond his control. While pre-fieldwork themes and ideas are very helpful in identifying research concerns in the field, they do not largely determine the eventual shape and outcome, in many possible ways, of the final research text. Though I had some ready-made research themes and questions for probing, some weeks in the community "went by with a constant sense of incompleteness and arbitrariness, the

obsessive feeling of missing out, of vagueness and unjustifiable indeterminacy, of never being in the right place at the right time" (Candea 2007, p. 174). My big research question prior to doing fieldwork was the effect of globalization on the lives of people in my fishing community. I had been away from my community for most of my adult life and I was imagining a profound impact of globalization on fishermen, fishing and its associated trades. I was thinking that the people in the community were indeed 'going global'. How global it was and in what ways were the issues I planned to address in my research. My preliminary research questions were evolving around issues of globalization and fishing and how global forces were shaping and reshaping the lives of the people in the community as they were being manifested in their fishing practices. My methodology then was decidedly ethnography and my research methods were primarily, but not limited to, participant observation and interview. Since my research was about fishermen and fishing, the bulk of my research life would be spent going on board small fishing boats. But things did not happen the way I wanted them to be. Some weeks into my research work, onboard a small fishing boat, I realized that there was not much for me to discover about fishing and the difficulties of life of fishers off shore and the competition posed by commercial fishing vessels. Their life on shore, it seemed to me, was more interesting than their life off shore. At the same time, 'being a fisher' did not suit me well. For some two weeks that I was on board a small fishing boat, I was always seasick and had to be attended to by my fisher-companion (which greatly reduced his time to fish). But my problem did not end there. Most of the time on shore, right after every fishing trip, I felt sick and exhausted that I did not have the strength nor the gusto to go out and mingle with the people in the community. So, after much contemplation, I decided to stay on shore for some weeks straight and observe if I could be able to gather some interesting themes about life in the community, if not, I told myself, I would write to my supervisors and state the predicament at hand. As my study shows, I stayed on shore for the rest of my stay in the community and decided to forgo my initial research plan. The reasons are strategic as much as personal. First, I realized that life on shore of people in the community was far richer and more complex than I thought. Also, as I was looking for 'globalizing trends' in fishing in the community (which I was not able to pursue as I shifted to doing fieldwork on shore), I soon discovered that life in the community

appeared to me to be very local and this diverged from my initial research hypothesis that because of globalization, regardless of place-specific particularities of communities worldwide, life in any community, primarily in the fishing community that I studied, would be very global in many ways. In my everyday interaction with the people in the community, I was proved otherwise. On the other hand, my shift to doing research on shore was also influenced by some personal considerations. As I was going out on a small fishing boat, I always felt particularly afraid of my safety. For example, in one incident, due to an unforeseen bad weather, our boat almost capsized. It was the scariest moment of my life. But the most compelling personal reason for me was my mother who was clearly affected by my fieldwork off shore. She was very concerned of my safety that she could not sleep whenever I went fishing. She experienced hypertension and in one instance, had to be brought to a local hospital for medication. Coupled with all the reasons cited earlier, I finally decided that doing fieldwork on shore was a much better choice. Having identified the three salient themes of my research (power, gender and economic relations), I also decided to forgo with my initial plan to incorporate an autoethnography. While I believed then as I still believe now that autoethnographies are a potent medium of discourse in enacting a dialogue between the self, other people and the events (past and present) in the field, its inclusion in the study would mean a re-shaping of my themes and the over-all argument of my thesis (How do I figure in explicitly in the webs of relations cited in my study? How do I blend my voice comfortably with those of the people in the community as they conduct their daily activities? How does my own narrative as a returning native construct a local subjectivity vis a vis my purported 'global background'?).

The emergence of my research themes was not a one-day affair, as it were. It was a product of my intense engagement with the field. Some research concerns fell on my lap fortuitously while witnessing some local happenings (like the tactics of 'making do', see chapter 5) while others were pursued relentlessly through follow-up interviews and persistent (but hopefully not intrusive) participation in the everyday life of people in the community (chapters 6 and 7). As I was collecting data, I was also analyzing them, positioning each of them within the two 'big' words which I felt to be recurring concepts in my study: the local and margins. Once the three dominant themes were chosen over

other emergent themes to constitute what I call 'manifestations of local living in the epoch of globalization', I set out to investigate more of them until I felt that I reached a point of theoretical saturation. Among the three themes in the study, I identified sub-themes which further clarified and strengthened the remit of my chosen themes vis-à-vis the overall research concern of the study which is how local life could be experienced even in the midst of a fast globalizing world.

Due to the unavailability of information about the educational, demographic and economic profile of the community, I made a survey of the people asking about my research participants' educational attainment, income and other personal information. Most of this information will be featured in chapter 4.

2.2 The Politics/text of the Ethnographic Field

Being an ethnographic study, my research methods "are grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular setting" (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland and Lofland 2001, p. 4). I endeavored to come up with a description of the routine, daily lives of a group of people, with the aim of understanding the predictable patterns of thought and behaviour of the group (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont 1999; Bryman 2001, 2004; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Zaman 2008). Ethnography is a method that allows us to come into contact with daily life and, through this contact, to obtain information directly through observation of the process being investigated (Carbo 2008, p. 471). On the other hand, Strathern claims that ethnographers, "set themselves the task not just of comprehending the effect that certain practices and artifacts have in people's lives, but of re-creating some of those effects in the context of writing about them" (1999, p. 5). My gathering of data was facilitated largely by participant observation, being an observing participant, and conducting formal and informal interviews. Though primarily ethnographic by way of research methods, I also employed archival research and made use of government documents, newspaper articles and the internet in looking for ways to explain the changes in the lives of fishers and their families.

The bulk of my data came from my field notes and recorded conversations with my

informants in formal and informal settings. 'Formal' setting means scheduled interviews conducted in the house of informants, while 'informal' setting points to recorded conversations in public places like eateries, 'sari-sari' stores, around the edges of the volleyball court, derelict boats on the shore and fish brokerages (see chapters 4 and 7). Field notes were generated while hanging out with my informants or anyone in the community, observing the daily unfolding of events. Conversations in informal settings were quite helpful in answering or expanding some issues which were not answered directly in formal interviews. Formal interviews have their shortcomings, which made informal conversations very important in any fieldwork research. Hall (2003) in his study of youth homelessness in Britain spoke about this.

> Conducting interviews gave me something to do whilst I worked at developing the relationships that I hoped to build my fieldwork around; it also made a certain sort of sense to the residents at the hostel, who were beginning to wonder what I was doing just hanging around all day. But, encouraging as it was to transcribe the tapes and see the sheets of 'data' produced, I was never all that happy with these interviews and eventually stopped doing them altogether. I did not seem to be able to find questions that asked what it was that I really wanted to know; and the answers I got did not always 'ring true'. (Hall 2003, p. 11)

In recording informal conversations, I was guided by two principles: first, that conversations to be recorded should involve people I had already interviewed and who were therefore already informed of the nature of my research and had been forewarned of my plan to record conversations; and second, prior to recording them, I should show them my recorder and when no one said no, I would click it on and tuck it safely in my pocket. Such practice went on in my informal conversations with my informants, so that in some cases, when some words were said which an informant felt to be of relevance to my research, he would tell me to switch on my recorder or would ask me whether I had brought my recorder with me. It came to pass that all conversations I joined in were thought to be recorded which is not the case, of course. On some rare occasions, involving some community gossips,[7] I would be asked by some informants to delete or leave untranscribed some remarks they made about someone. I would relent by taking it down in my notes. The sort of data considered in this study is, of course, my own choice,

[7] Community gossiping that pertained to marital infidelities, primarily if the people involved were named, were usually requested to be deleted or remain untranscribed (if recorded). Other than that, all talk was deemed to be transcribable.

though I should say that my respondents were given, as it should be, the ultimate chance to determine what information should NOT be printed. Although many, if not all of them, were more than willing to be referred to in this study by their real names, I chose to give them aliases. I also altered some of their biographical information to further maintain their anonymity, although I should add that this has not in any way affected, altered nor sacrificed the quality of data presented and interpreted herein.

The language being used in the community is 'Tagalog',[8] and being a native, my grasp of the language is excellent, regardless of my years of absence from the community. This served me well in my research. Language has always been an important issue in doing fieldwork, going back to the pioneering ethnographic/anthropological studies by Evans-Pritchard (1940), Leach (1954), Malinowski (1922; 1967), Mead (1949), Rosaldo (1980) and Scott (1985), among others. Being a study of the everyday life of the fishing community, my fluency in the language helped me identify some contentious everyday details in community life which I suppose a non-native would have found hard to determine. However, I do not claim that being a fluent speaker of 'Tagalog' meant possessing an unrivalled epistemic privilege in the field (see, for example, Mannay 2010). I am cognizant of the pitfalls and the usual cultural and linguistic 'blindness' that a native researcher has and commits while in the field. But the task at hand, I think, is not to wallow and despair in the unfortunate givens of being a native researcher, but to minimize them and take due vigor in harnessing the advantages.

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[8] *Tagalog* is the language spoken by the people of an ethnolinguistic group of the same name and is the most dominant and most spoken language in the Philippines. The national language Filipino is based on Tagalog, which compels critics of the language to claim that the national language is in fact Tagalog with a new name. This is not the case, of course, since *Filipino* has incorporated in its lexicon other words and phrases from other local and foreign languages being spoken in the Philippines. Thus, in the Philippines, it is common to hear someone speak in a mixture of *Filipino* and some English words. It should also be noted that there is not one but many varieties of *Tagalog*. In the community that I studied, many of the *Tagalog* words are not spoken and understood in other places; and accents differ, too. Thus, when I returned for my fieldwork, I casually reverted to the community's way of speaking *Tagalog* and made use of my expansive knowledge of the language's vast arsenal of local idioms. That, I think, endeared me well to the people in the community, who were quick to point out my still perfect *Udung* (name of the town) *Tagalog*. Excerpts of interviews used in this study have been translated from *Tagalog* to English and were edited for clarity. Careful editing was undertaken so as not to misinterpret and sacrifice the intent of the respondent.

In my six months of stay, I lived with my mother in our house where my older brother also stayed together with his family. However, in my first two weeks in the community (after I finally decided to forgo my fieldwork off shore), to facilitate a better view of life of the people, I stayed in another house, close to the shore; but the arrangement was not suitable for me. First, because I wanted to live in a typical fisherman's house, I had to share the sleeping space (there was no bed but a sleeping mat for everyone) with the rest of the family, all six of them, in a room which also served as a reception area in the morning and afternoon and dining area at meal time. Second, on my third day of stay in their house, I lost my backpack which contained clothes and my wallet. Luckily, I left my valuables in my mother's house. The culprit was a neighbour. My backpack was returned, but not the money.[9] Third, since the house had no toilet, I had to go to our house to take a bath and relieve myself everyday. Fourth, on my seventh night, I was bitten by a centipede while sleeping so that the following day I developed a high fever which ran for a week. It was then that I decided to move into our house which was some 30-minutes walk from the community. By transferring to our house, I sacrificed some aspects of my stay, which limited my data gathering activities, but made my stay more convenient. To compensate for my failure to live in a fisherman's house, I made it a point to be in the community at 6 am and to leave at 8 pm. On some other nights, I would return to the community at 9 pm, after dinner, to catch up on talk in some 'sari-sari' stores which did not close until midnight.

When I went back home for my fieldwork, it was an easy re-integration into my community, despite having been away for many years and having accomplished a small measure of career advancement and people having been wary of my presence at the beginning of my stay. At times they were aloof, brought about, I think, by my acquisition of what Bourdieu (1989) calls symbolic and cultural capital. To put it simply, by the time of re-joining the community I possessed some degree of social standing. Although not

[9] The culprit was a neighbor who was known in the community to have perpetrated a string of petty crimes in the past. He tried selling my backpack to a resident in another community, who, knowing his background, asked around and soon found out that it was mine. The parents of the culprit returned my backpack, but the money was already gone and so were the clothes. I was advised to file charges in the *barangay* office (the local office tasked to manage the affairs of the community) but I did not pursue the case, since I thought that it would just create unnecessary complication in my life and that of the family of the culprit.

rich, I had achieved what most people in the community could only dream about. While I was one of them, I was also different from all of them, having finished a degree at the Philippines' national university (University of the Philippines) and having been educated abroad. It is in this context that, while I felt most welcome in the community and had earned the confidence of my informants, there were times when I felt that they were too accommodating, their kindness contrived and their generosity with their time a submission to a superior and unfree expression of their will. While I truly benefited from this show of effusive warmth and cooperation on the part of my informants, it also felt most unnatural. Throughout my stay in the community, I never felt that I was their equal. It must have been me or their way of treating me. One example would be their manner of addressing me in our everyday conversation. While some would address me by my nickname 'Boyet', most people, either younger, my age or older than me would call me 'sir',[10] despite my repeated protests. This, I think furthered my feeling that I was in the eyes of my informants not an equal, however much I tried to communicate my intentions that I be treated as such. To say the least, while I was at home, I never felt at home.

A typical day for me would be arriving in the community at 6 am. I would have breakfast in one of the numerous make-shift eateries where most of the fish vendors and traders congregate to drink coffee or eat a generous portion of 'arroz caldo', a local porridge, white waiting for boats to land or fish traders to arrive with their boxes of fish. From 6-8 am, I would go from one eatery to another, buying small portions of rice cakes to eat while conversing with the people and asking questions about the latest landings or price of fish, or anything that caught my fancy. Our conversations were for most of the time non-directed and touched on any topic. When an issue or idea was worth pursuing in depth, I would take it up with my informants at a time when they were not in a hurry, usually in the afternoon, from 1-2 pm or in the evening, from 8-11 pm. My breakfast conversation would sometimes be interrupted by the announcement of boat landings. I

[10] Being addressed as 'sir' in the Philippines does not mean having been knighted, of course, as is the case in the UK. The address 'sir' in the Philippines is usually reserved for people of high social status, like government officials or people who are in the teaching profession. Since for a time, prior to leaving for the UK, I was a municipal councilor (representing the youth sector), people in the community preferred to address me as 'sir', and when I protested, they cited the reason I mentioned earlier. During my stay in the community, I was never successful in weaning them away from calling me as such.

would then rush to the shore together with other people and observe the negotiations between fishers and fish vendors. But that would not consume much of my time in the morning since, because of the fisheries crisis, boat arrivals were greatly reduced compared to previous years. At 8 am, fish stalls would litter the main street. I would then spend most of my time with most of the fish vendors, going from one fish stall to another, and sometimes helping out with selling fish. On many occasions, I would be asked to stand in for the stall owner if she/he had some errands to do and no one was available to look after her/his stall. In those instances, I would be the butt of jokes in the community, with fish vendors telling potential buyers not to buy from me since I demand payment in dollars.[11] At 11 am, when most stalls had already sold most of their fish, I would spend my time until 12 noon in any of the countless 'sari-sari' stores in the community. Here, I would listen to conversations of people, mostly men and out-of-school youth, who congregate in stores before mealtime to exchange gossip or just to kill time (most women were at home cooking meals). When not doing interviews, from 12 noon until 3 pm, I would be in our house, having lunch, jotting down and organizing notes, and having a nap before resuming my 'homework' at 3 pm. The hours I spent in our house were 'dead hours' in the community, since at that time most people were indoors, either having lunch, watching noon time shows on television, or simply taking a nap. The community would spring back to life at 3 pm when men start playing volleyball on the beach while waiting for fish traders and brokers to open their shops. It was also the time when fish stalls would start to resume their business. From 3-4 pm, I would either play volleyball or chat with people watching the game. From 4-7 pm, I would again spend most of my time going from one fish stall to another, killing time in 'sari-sari' stores or joining redundant fishers in their conversations in derelict or abandoned boats anchored on the shore. At 8 pm I would call it a day and head towards home.

My life in the community looked quite structured, and it was for most of my stay. Variations took place once I started joining fish vendors selling fish in neighbouring

[11] As much as I kept telling people in the community that the money in the UK is called pounds, they never got the gist of it and insisted on referring to the UK currency as dollars. This is small wonder, since I noticed that in most places in the Philippines, people referred to the money coming from abroad as dollars, in this case, the dollar being the *de facto* representation of all currencies from the many countries of the world.

towns and communities two months after I started my fieldwork. This activity would take place twice a day. I would leave the community at either 8 am or 9 am together with another fish vendor and return at 1 pm only to leave again between 3-4 pm and return home at 8 pm. I sold fish for a month, four days a week. Another divergence from my usual routine would be spending my time in fish brokerages. I would be there from 7-10 am, the busiest time in the day, and would go back again from 3-5 pm. From 5-7 pm, I would visit the town market and observe transactions. I would do this three times a week, while the remaining days were spent in the community. Other activities that would bring me away from the community would be a twice-a-month visit to Manila to do archival research and when I got sick. Formal interviews with my informants were done at night, from 8 pm until midnight. On some occasions, interviews were done in the afternoon after lunch, from 1-3 pm, depending on the availability and request of interviewees. I never imposed myself on my informants with regard to time. I always saw to it that it was them who would decide when and where the interview would take place.[12]

Being a male researcher was both an advantage and a disadvantage on my part, though I should say largely beneficial. Since a good number of my informants were men - fishers, fish vendors and fish dealers - often I wondered whether if I had been a woman, their responses and treatment of me would have been the same, and whether I would have asked the same questions and been as forthright with my inquiries and as bold with my follow-up questions. It was also because fishers and male fish vendors would most often than not crack jokes replete with sexual images (see also Acheson 1981; Busby 2000; Cole 1991). This led me to realize how gendered doing research was (Addison and McGee 1999; Coffey 1999; Pilcher and Coffey 1996).

It is a different case though when I was with the women informants. With them, I was a silent spectator and sometimes, an unwilling voyeur. A good example is in order. One time as I was seated among women fish vendors killing time in a 'sari-sari' store, Lerma,[13] a fish vendor of my age and whose husband was a grade school classmate of

[12] I let my informants decide the time of their interviews after I found out that some of them had skipped selling fish just to accommodate me.

[13] After the conversation, when Lerma left the store, one of the women present told me that Lerma was known in the community to be very vocal and explicit about her sex life and that most men would avoid being with her in a group, since aside from being too sexual, she was also fond

mine, walked in and not paying any attention to my presence started explaining why she had a quarrel with her husband some days ago. Apparently, she was asked by her husband to perform oral sex which she refused. Other details of their sex lives were soon revealed to the delight and often amused laughter of other women present. From time to time, some women would acknowledge my presence ("Oh Boyet is here, are you not ashamed that he would know your secret!") which made me feel even more uncomfortable. It must have been the longest, most awkward and awful period of my life. I wanted to leave, but prior to Lerma's arrival, the owner of the store asked me to stay in and look after her store while she was away. Hearing what I heard and being forced to find amusement in unsolicited bedroom tales involving familiar people while I was with women made me realize that being a male researcher had its own disadvantages. Such talk, I felt, did not violate my person as much as it exposed a very private life to public scrutiny and made me a party to voyeurism, which I did not, by any account, relish and found discomforting.

Among women, unlike with men, I was not an active participant in their conversations, constrained as I was with my paltry knowledge of their most talked about issues, such as movie star gossip, women's health care, and cosmetics. Also, some incidents were difficult to handle involving women interviewees. One good example would be Sisa, who in the middle of my interview broke down and confided to me that she was a battered wife. She showed me her bruised legs and thighs. She asked me what to do. I could not say anything or offer any solution, not even comforting words to assuage her fears. I wanted to hug her and make her feel that I felt her pain. But being a man (and we were alone in her house during my interview) influenced my reactions to her revelation.[14] I only managed to tell her that she should inform her immediate family about her situation to sort things out for her.[15]

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of groping men in public as a sort of joke. Too bad, I did not know it beforehand, having never been informed by anyone, and so had to endure the embarrassment of listening to her lurid stories.

[14] I was tempted to hug her, seeing her so vulnerable and in such pain, but I was restrained from doing so by the thought of what would happen if someone arrived unannounced and saw us in that compromising position; what would he or she think?

[15] Sisa's case was particularly tricky for me since her husband was one of my most trusted informants. Also, in the course of my research, a number of people, without me asking them, told

I was most comfortable with people of my age. I could ask questions and would not appear stupid. Also with them, it was easier to impress upon them the discrepancies in their answers to what they were doing in the community. One example would be Lucas, who told me that he had never incurred any debt from any of the fish dealers in the community. Later on, I found out that he was heavily in debt with one of the fish dealers and when I spoke about my discovery in one of our conversations, he just told me that I was really doing my research well.[16] Among older men, there was always the social protocol hanging over me that I should defer to their authority and always treat their words at face value. If I found gaps and contradictions in their information and what other people told me, I could not muster the courage to ask them about my findings. Also, in their presence, much like being with women in a group, I could not join their conversation, which was always replete with images of the past, or life at sea or some technical aspects of boat-making. I was reduced to asking questions rather than participating as an active interlocutor. While from time to time, I would offer my opinion about certain issues, I would nonetheless feel that my observations were not good enough and my knowledge of issues circumscribed by my age, with their take on issues too strong for me to contest.[17]

It never occurred to me to do covert research for a number of reasons. First, while I agree with Calvey (2008) that covert research makes for a robust methodology, I believe, like Zaman (2008), that in the context of my study, anything that I would

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me that Sisa was known in the community as a 'player', meaning, she flirted among men, and it was rumored that her oldest child was in fact a product of her illicit affair with another man.

[16] I found out in the course of my research that most people in the community did not want to divulge the truth about the nature and extent of their indebtedness. Most people would tell me that they just owed some amount, just like any ordinary household in the community, however, someone else and further research would tell me that this 'some amount' was considerable, in fact. This led me to the discovery of some interesting ways in which people in the community have been surviving during the fisheries' crisis. I deal with this extensively in chapter 5.

[17] My hesitance to play an active part in their conversation must have been due to the way I was brought up by my parents, and being in the community again forced me to relive my childhood years. During my formative years in the community, I was told not to join conversations involving old people, since to do so would mean lack of respect. When my parents were talking with people of their age or older than them, we were asked to keep quiet in a corner and to only speak if queried. We have a saying in the community that goes like this: *'ang bata ay hindi dapat naririnig, sila ay nakikita'* (children should be seen and not heard or children should only speak when spoken to). This practice is still alive in the community. During my interviews, children were told to sit and be quiet and never to intervene.

accomplish by covert research, I could also do by being open with my intentions in the field. Second, practising covert research would be impractical, since I would be staying in the community for an extended period. This might have created suspicion that I was up to something, which I have consequently had to explain to everyone. Possible reasons were aplenty, yet complicated. I did not want to make my field life unnecessarily complex when fieldwork itself is already a conflictual affair. In telling people that I was in the community to do research, it helped me prepare them psychologically for some of my questions which could have sounded mundane, and yet in the context of what I was up to, they would understand why I was asking them.[18] I also found out in the course of my stay in the community that revealing my real intention was quite helpful, since most of my informants told me that it gave them pride that I had chosen the community as my research locale when I could have chosen other places instead.

2.3 The/ir Ethnographic I/Eye: On Being Both an Insider and an Outsider

At the beginning of this chapter, I made a claim about my fieldwork being a homecoming of sorts, a 'homework', since I was born and grew up in the community that I studied. I would like to elaborate further on this aspect of my fieldwork and explain why being an insider has its own challenges and pitfalls.

Much has been written about doing fieldwork at home (Coleman and Collins 2006; Jackson 1987; Kondo 1990; Narayan 1993), either by students from developing economies returning from their years of study in some American or European universities (Abu-Lughod 1986; Al-Makhamreh 2008; Guevarra 2006; Lederman 2006; Mandiyanike 2009; Roopnaraine 2001, pp. 3-7; Subedi 2006; Zaman 2008), or by students, whether from developing or developed economies, studying in their own countries and doing research in their hometowns (Modan 2007; Sauders 2001). Kondo (1990) calls herself a

[18] Since I grew up in the community and my father was a fisherman himself, asking questions like *"Bakit po mahirap na ngayon ang pangingisda sa atin?"* (why is fishing difficult nowadays?) would sound such a naïve query coming from me, if I was not enacting my fieldwork subjectivity as a researcher. During my initial interviews, people would answer *"Alam mo na ang sagot, tagarito ka"* (you know the answer already; you are from here) to my questions. But by telling them that as a researcher, I needed to know their own view of things, I made them talk about their own opinions on issues pertaining to life in the community.

conceptual anomaly when she went to Japan for her fieldwork, while Abu-Lughod calls "people (doing fieldwork in their native land) whose national and cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage" (1991b, p. 466) halfies.

Doing fieldwork at home, or what Hannerz (2006) calls "fieldwork without malaria pills"[19] is not as easy as it seems. For the person doing it at home, Ginkel reminds us that, "he faces the difficulty of how to get out of his culture while his colleagues working in a foreign culture struggle to get in" (1994, p. 12). Further difficulties stem from the word home. Mandiyanike (2009) views home as a place of warmth, caring, safety, sanctuary and indeed the central locus of emotional well-being. But in countries where peace and order is in disarray, home could mean danger and harm. For some students going back home to do fieldwork, doing research signifies a continuation of a project long started before (see, for example, Roopnaraine 1996). As for me, I did my fieldwork at home for two reasons. First, knowing how our community has been changed and is changing due to external developments, I was curious about how globalization is changing the people's ways of life and why, later on in my research, my community has retained a very local quality of life. Second, for practical reasons, I was rather running out of time and money to do research in other places, and doing it at home provided an attractive ready answer to my dilemma.

I went to the community with two pronounced subjectivities: a native of the place and a student of sociology from a foreign university studying a very familiar setting. While I was a native of the place, in some other ways, I was also an outsider. The history of myself, as a returning native, would have an impact on the way I collected data in the field. When I say history of myself, I do not just mean my biography and how I presented myself to the people in the community, but how they read and interpreted me in the field in the context of other issues and developments redolent in the community. Guevarra's observation rings true when she says that:

> researchers inherently occupy tenuous positions because of the power that participants possess in defining their access and participation in their communities.

[19] This is a rather unfortunate ethnocentric phrasing by Hannerz which posits among other things that 'regular' fieldwork is conducted in places where malaria is always a possibility. Clearly, in saying thus, he had places in Africa and Asia in mind. Though I found Hannerz' take misguided, I nonetheless chose his definition among others to signify the many ways in which practitioners in the field view doing fieldwork at home.

> That is, participants are not simply passive recipients of a researcher's claim of authority and intellectual agenda but are active agents who can redefine the contours of the research, outline and restrict the researcher's role, or even steer the project in a different direction. (Guevarra 2006, p. 527)

My informants did not re-shape the thrust of my research, but they affected the ways I gathered data in the field. While I was busy figuring out the emerging themes of my research and trying to construct some tentative subjectivities and categories for the people I had the chance of interviewing and observing in the community, my identity was also simultaneously under construction in different levels and phases. As I was constructing the field, so the field was constructing me in return (see, for example, Venkatesh 2002). During my stay in the community, if Riessman (2005) was a gynecologist to her informants in India instead of a field researcher, I was to many of the people a possible source of money, a ticket to employment in the municipal government and abroad, a financier of my aunt's losing venture in fish trading, a source of scholarship in college, an undercover campaign strategist for a local politician, a reliable source of information in the then on-going recall elections in the town and a most willing victim of anyone's enterprising spirit (during my stay, I was asked to buy all kinds of things that people in the community sold). Explaining my subject position as a researcher to the people in the community was both exhausting and frustrating. In this case, the observation made by Hannerz (1992) when he did his fieldwork in Nigeria resonates with the experience I had in the community.

> During my stays in Kafanchan, I have often found myself somewhat irritated and embarrassed as various townspeople have seen me as a possible resource in implausible schemes for going abroad, or getting into some lucrative import-export business. (Hannerz 1992, p. 232)

I now turn to discussing two distinct examples of my varied subjectivities in the field:[20] my being a 'balikbayan' (someone who returns home for a visit after some years of working or living abroad) and an ally of a local politician.

'Balikbayan' is a cultural label for Filipinos who have settled elsewhere and

[20] Among other things, people thought that I was also working for a relief agency, an overseas recruitment company (among fishers and their families), an undercover agent for the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) (among owners of fish brokerages).

returned to the Philippines temporarily for a visit or vacation (balik = 'return' and bayan = 'town' or 'nation'); typically, it connotes a privileged class status (Guevarra 2006, p. 527-528). The term has an implicit socio-economic connotation. Being "balikbayan" means being financially well-off and therefore being able to provide money and material things to family members, relatives, friends, neighbours and all others who might ask for help. The construction of the term 'balikbayan' with socio-economic significance is embedded in the Philippine national political economy discourse, where what keeps the country's economy afloat is the remittance of its overseas workers. An ordinary office worker in the Philippines for example receives around 8,000.00 Php (96 GBP)[21] a month, whereas working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong means earning triple that amount. In 2008, $16.4 billion was sent home by Filipinos working abroad (ABS-CBN 2009). In the Philippines therefore, as in many poor Southeast Asian countries where exporting labour overseas has become a national strategy for survival (Tadiar 2003; Tan 2005), working abroad means acquiring a good life (see also Gardner 1995). It is in this context that my returning home was viewed as a homecoming of a 'well-off native'.[22] I was away for a number of years, living in a foreign country and, therefore, I must have already saved a good sum of money. My subjectivity in the field as a 'balikbayan' though is contentious, since I had never worked abroad and had never been awash with cash. I was therefore a bogus 'balikbayan'. But as much as I protested, I was constructed as such by the people in the community, and I had no hold over the re/production of my identity in the field.

In so many ways, Hannerz' (1992) concept of the Nigerian 'been-tos' parallels the local term 'balikbayan' in terms of values ascribed to them, although there are some differences. More than the cultural and symbolic capital that are attached to the 'been-tos,' it is the financial capital that any 'balikbayan' accumulates that is of utmost importance in the Philippines. In fact, some 'balikbayan' are derided for their affected cosmopolitan elan, the very character of being a 'been-to'. For many people in the Philippines, the 'balikbayan' who exhibits local values is more respectable and likeable

[21] At the time of my fieldwork, the exchange rate was 1GBP=83 Php.

[22] I was of course not the only one from the community who had the luck to go overseas. At the time of my fieldwork, three were working overseas. But I was the only one in recent memory who had the privilege to study abroad, not just in the community, but in the town as a whole, which furthered my prestige in the community even more.

than someone who shows off and puts on airs. This is most evident for a 'balikbayan' who instead of talking in the vernacular would use English when conversing with the locals. Thus, during my stay, people in the community kept on telling me that I was such an exemplary 'balikbayan', since I did not use English when talking to them. Apparently, they already encountered some 'balikbayan' before who bragged about their social status by peppering their sentences with English words when talking with them.

Giron (2009) in her article about doing research at home explained how her being a native made it easy for her to obtain contacts with victims of kidnapping in Guatemala. The same thing could be said about my research, but there is a caveat. I was not just a native researcher, as I already stated; I was also a 'balikbayan.' This proved to be a contentious socio-economic affiliation, which I had to manage well while in the field. My imposed subjectivity as a 'balikbayan' provided me with a lot of perks, and in so many ways, introduced me to an array of disadvantages. One of these, among many, is the assumption that since I was a 'balikbayan', I could provide my informants with some emergency cash, since I had some money to spare, if not a lot. I was caught in a bind. My continued disavowal and downplaying of my being a 'balikbayan' was met with protest and recriminations. One of my informants told me that I was just playing coy so that I would be free from the usual requests for assistance. In a way, without being forward, he was telling me that I was being unfair to them and, in fact, was violating a Filipino cultural norm which says that all 'balikbayan' belong to a privileged lot and should therefore be generous to the needy. Sensing that the people were not liking my constant dismissal of their categorizing me as a 'balikbayan', I politely surrendered to their construction of me as a 'balikbayan' since I did not want to alienate my informants.

In the course of my being a 'balikbayan', I was expected to buy things for and from my informants like snacks, floor mats, fish they sold at market price rather than its pre-market valuation and lend people money to pay for medical bills, pawned items, electricity and water bills, the transport fare to the city to attend a relative's wedding, buy rice, pay tuition fees and much more. As I mentioned earlier, I lent money to some on the condition that no one would talk about it. But being a small community, there was no way that my lending money would not become widely known. The money I lent was not really a big amount but when people got wind of my kindness (and vulnerability), they

soon started inviting me to their birthday and baptismal parties, weddings and victory balls for winning basketball teams and the coronation of beauty queens, requesting that I donate bottles of beer, some roasted pigs, trophies and medals and cash for the baby's planned educational trust fund. The people must have thought that aside from me being a 'balikbayan', I was also needing their help in my research, and I was therefore very vulnerable. The balance of power was in their favour. But aside from that, being tagged as a 'balikbayan' was also a great advantage to me. Because I was a 'balikbayan', and people tended to congregate around me, asking me all sorts of questions about living in the UK and the experience of traveling on a plane, it helped me get acquainted with a lot of people in a very short period of time. I was always welcome in all informal conversations.[23] My gathering of data had never been so easy. But it was also in those conversations that I got wind of my other subjectivity in the field, like going home not really to do research but to help a politician-friend unseat the incumbent mayor.

Prior to my stint in the UK and while working in Manila, I informally served as a speech writer and information officer to a local politician who at that time was the town mayor. When I returned home for fieldwork, it so happened that there was a call to unseat the incumbent mayor and the group calling for him to be ousted was supported by this politician-friend who ran in a different position in the last elections and unfortunately lost. He was planning a political comeback and saw an opening. When I arrived in the Philippines, I was of course asked to help him with his press releases and statements. I did not want to meddle in local affairs, which could have a disastrous effect on my fieldwork.[24] I politely declined and told him that it would constitute a violation of my

[23] In those informal conversations, I learned to spread out my time, spending not too many hours with any particular group, but rather, hopping from one group to another. Aside from the fact that it helped me to widen my net and diversify my sources of information, I also noticed that people in the community had a way of assuming that my prolonged stay in one group meant a favouritism of sorts. Thus, in one incident, since I stayed in a group of men rather inordinately long, because I found the topic of their conversation very interesting, another group in a nearby store told me that I was not paying attention to them and therefore assumed that I favoured the other people over them. That made me realize that I was constantly being observed in the community and therefore had to divide my time evenly among my informants.

[24] Even before embarking on my fieldwork, I had already been amply informed of the tension being created in the community because of the domestic political rivalry. I was advised by some well-meaning friends to excuse myself from being involved in it because a good number of people in the community were working for the incumbent mayor. They thought that if I involved myself, I would alienate many people in the community.

fellowship contract.[25] I thought that it would end with that. But during my fieldwork, a number of people refused to be interviewed and in fact ignored me, and on some occasions they made vague references to my being an agent of the devil. They were of course referring to my politician-friend being the devil and me as his agent! But I was so detached from their conception of me that I thought they were referring to my subject position as a native scholar trying to squeeze the community for information and knowledge for consumption by the West. I was, I think, too involved in my readings about postcolonialism, the role of the native intellectual and my own epistemological guilt about the benefit of my research to the community that I failed to read the writings on the wall. It was too obvious that I was high up there, on cloud nine, contemplating Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak and my failure to be an organic intellectual. I only got to know about my compromised subject position when a rather irate woman confronted me and asked me whose side I was on and how much money I received for working for the 'devil'. It was only then that I realized that all along I had been seen in that particular light by some people in the community. Three rather large families which were into money lending and fish brokering refused to be interviewed, citing various reasons. The reason was of course very obvious, since the woman who confronted me was the matriarch of the families mentioned. They were visibly affected by my presence, since if the elections pushed through and the incumbent mayor got unseated, five of their family members would lose their jobs in the municipal government.[26] In some ways, my presence was a threat to their economic survival. I was also told some days before leaving the field that my movement was under surveillance by the incumbent mayor by virtue of the reports coming from his people living in the community. These constructions of myself in the field - my multifarious identities - both limited and enriched my gathering of data in more ways than one. I read them as a product of my own struggle to 'textualize' the community, as it too tried to 'textualize' me.

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[25] My SIRC-Nippon Foundation Fellowship grant had no explicit regulation on this whatsoever, but I thought that it would make a good excuse, nonetheless.

[26] As it turned out, the recall elections did not happen. While the Commission on Elections in Manila found the initiative to be valid, lack of money from the commission's budget derailed the implementation of the elections until it was finally scrapped due to constitutional prohibitions of holding an election a year before the national elections.

2.4 Ethics in Fieldwork[27]

If Clifford (1988) claims that ethnography is, from beginning to end, enmeshed in writing, fieldwork has taught me that ethnography is, from beginning to end, enmeshed in field dilemma. One of these is the need to balance the ethnographic itch to collect as much data as possible and the importance of recognizing and valuing "mutual respect, dignity and connectedness between researcher and researched, and between researchers and communities in which they live and work" (Ellis 2007, p. 4). I entered the field cognizant of the fact that "the practice of research involves relationships, knowledge creation and exclusion, and usually the construction of privilege" (Lincoln and Cannella 2009, p. 275). In what will follow, I will talk about what Guillemin and Gillam (2004) call ethics in practice - the everyday ethical concerns in the field.

For field research to be ethical, research subjects must consent to their participation in full understanding of the potential risks and benefits (Wood 2006, p. 379). In addition, as argued by Benatar and Fleischer, "researchers should be educated about the social, economic and political milieu that frames the context in which research is being undertaken" (2007, p. 622). In the context of my research, being a native of the place, I was to a certain extent quite well informed of the social and economic history of the community. That proved to be an advantage on my part, since I did not have to do extra work in getting to know the place. Thus, to some extent, I was already familiar with the local dynamics in the community. Also, my topic was not sensitive enough to endanger the lives of my informants, thus, it was not difficult for me to recruit interviewees and get my informants' consent to visit their houses and spend time with them for most of my stay in the community. Risk to life was non-existent in relation to the nature of my research agenda, since I was not looking into illegal activities in the community, like drug dealing (which was not unusual in the community I was told) and illegal fishing. What I dealt with particularly and made explicit to my informants was the assurance that their commentaries on other people's lives would remain confidential and I

[27] My research protocols and questions for this study were approved by the ethics committee of the Cardiff School of Social Sciences some months before I embarked on my fieldwork. Filipino translations were made for some documents with regard to obtaining consent and explaining the aims of my research.

would never divulge them to anyone at any time or under any circumstance. Gossiping is a way of life in the community as much as in any other place in the world (Vleet 2003). I was told that gossip had ruined friendships and resulted in physical skirmishes among the people in the community, which made me more wary about keeping to myself news and observations given to me in confidence. Because I was known to have talked and interviewed most people in the community, I was always bombarded with questions about what other people told me about someone. When asked, I would usually answer that there was really nothing important to share with them. People may have grown tired of my repetitious and formulaic retort, as they soon stopped questioning me.

During my initial formal interviews, I showed my informants the consent form and asked them to sign it after explaining the rationale behind such requirement in any fieldwork research that involved human elements (AAA 1998; BSA 2002). I was met with suspicion not much unlike the attitude shown by Kerala women towards Riessman (2005) when she asked her informants to sign her consent form. In succeeding interviews, the same reactions were extended to me by other informants which made me decide to do away with it. Unlike Woods (2006) who intentionally scrapped the signing of consent forms because doing so would comprise a risk to her participants, I dispensed with it for a very practical reason: my informants were not comfortable signing documents. For them, signing their names made them feel even more vulnerable, since it was like signing a legal contract. In most likelihood, for many of my informants, signing the consent form appeared an obtrusive measure which should be done away with (see also Page 2000). Riessman also argues that "the act of signing a form carries meanings in post-colonial settings that are different than the protective intent embedded in western discourse" (2005, p. 478). Failing to compel my informants to sign consent forms, I saw to it that every interview session was started by explaining "what the research is about, who is financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be disseminated" (BSA 2002, p. 3).[28] I also explained to them that it was their right not to answer any question which they thought was not to their liking or would constitute a violation of their privacy. Also, in lieu of written consent, I obtained their verbal consent which I voice recorded prior to

[28] I should say that this exercise was also fraught with difficulties, and at times, I thought, gave many of my interviews a very formal air, which was not conducive to my intent.

every interview.

I made it clear in the course of my research that I would not pay anyone for interviews made, that I was not part of any funding agency or institution and that I was a student working on a postgraduate degree at a UK university. This is very important since as my 'balikbayan' status endowed me with a 'mythical purse', I was expected to provide some tokens to my informants. That would have been fine if I was only to interview a few, but since I was to interview many people in the community, such a gesture would have been a drain on my finances. The only benefit that the community and my interviewees would get, I told them, was in the form of some articles about the community which I would publish in the future (Wood 2006), and maybe a book, if I were lucky enough. Through these publications, the community might attract the attention of funding agencies, both national and international, which might provide assistance in terms of livelihood. But this eventuality I told them was not my call and it could be that nothing really beneficial for them would come out of my research. However, the prospect of gaining nothing from my research did not deter my informants from sharing their time with me.

I tried very hard to clarify my intent and make the research process dialogic by constantly telling my informants that I was doing research, and that in accordance with ethical conventions, they were always free to question my motives, methods of inquiry and withdraw if they thought that my research no longer interested them. But this kind of methodology employed by Renold, Holland, Ross and Hillman (2008) in researching children in care, met with no success. It was very hard for me to empower my informants. My methods of research – interviewing and observing them selling fish, transacting business with customers and sometimes arguing with their neighbours - were seen not as tools for gathering data, but as an ordinary case of someone being a witness to community dynamics.

My last concern during my fieldwork was really how to express my gratitude to my informants for generously sharing their time with me and for putting up with my presence almost everyday for six months. Having someone to listen to their stories was enough for some and a privilege. They never asked for anything in return. They were in fact very proud that I chose them as interviewees and spent time listening to their stories.

For these people, all that I could give was my unqualified attention during interviews and my enthusiasm for their ideas (see also Wood 2006). For some, they intimated that I give them something in return. As mentioned earlier, I lent money to some hard-up informants, but this was very limited. To be of help to other people who were in need, I volunteered myself to accompany sick informants to the town health centre and negotiated a generous supply of medicine for them. On at least three occasions, I bought medicine for my informants using my own money. In some cases, I gave gifts or 'pasalubong'[29] to some of my informants after a trip from the city. Also, I helped with the assignments of my informants' children whenever possible and gave them pens and writing pads. When a relative from the US arrived and asked me to look for a place where she could give away a bagful of chocolates to children, I introduced her to the community. Before going back to Cardiff, I also started a fund-raising activity among my friends and I used the money I got to buy chiffon cakes,[30] which I distributed to some 86 people in the community on December 24. But more than the material things and assistance I extended to the people I studied, I learned more than anything else, while doing research, that all research (at least for me) should be done "from a relational standpoint and (we researchers should) think deeply about what we owe the people whose lives we want to put in our studies" (see also Ellis 2007; Ellis, Bochner, Denzin, Lincoln, Morse, Pelias and Richardson 2008, p. 272).

During my fieldwork, I really did not encounter any "ethically important moment" (Guillemin and Gillam 2006) in the field (see also Ferdinand, Pearson, Rowe and Worthington 2007), aside from the case of Sisa who told me that she was a battered wife. While people in the community were highly critical of local government officials and commercial boat owners, I never heard anyone planning to do anything to harm these

[29] It is expected of someone who has just arrived from a trip either from the city or most especially overseas to bring something to people at home from the place he has visited. On one of my numerous trips to Manila, I brought a box of dough-nuts to my informants. Many were very thankful for my gesture and some even said that it was their first time to have tasted them. When I returned to Cardiff, the first thing that I did was to send postcards to some of my informants. When I returned for a short visit last June, my informants were quick to show me the postcards, and some even have them framed together with other family pictures. I was deeply touched by their gesture.

[30] Chiffon cake is a popular cake in the town and among the poor, it is only on special occasions like Christmas that they get to buy this. Although it is not really very expensive (a cake cost 145.00 Php each in 2008), people thought buying one would be a luxury even on festive occasions, when they could buy a kilo of meat or some grocery items instead.

people. They were generous with their expletives, but other than that, they never thought of breaking any laws to make their case clear to the authorities.

As customary, I changed all the names of my interviewees and the name of the community where I undertook my study. While my informants were quick to tell me that they would not mind seeing their real names in print, I decided that anonymizing them would be better. I hope to share the findings of my research with the community in the near future through a popular article in a local magazine or maybe, if it is possible, a presentation in the community itself.[31]

[31] Given some of the 'delicate' data/findings I talk about in this thesis, I do not think that I will be able to deliver a comprehensive presentation about my research in the community. I might as well just talk about some 'safe' chapters like, for instance, chapter 5, which I think is less controversial compared to others.

Picture 3.0
Two fishers fixing a boat

Chapter Three

The Local, Glocalization and the Margins: Some Key Concepts of the Study

3.1 Introduction

This chapter has two sections: the theoretical standpoint of the study and a review of the related literature. In the first section, I elaborate on the fundamental concepts that run through and frame this study: the local, glocalization and the margins. But prior to that, I first delineate what I mean by globalization. Although this study is not about globalization *per se*, I believe that I would not be able to effectively take account of my key concepts without first offering a definition of the term. My intention here though is not to come up with a new definition, nor to set forth a new way of conceptualizing globalization. I have a more modest aim. The goal here is more of a contextual than theoretical exercise: I offer my take on globalization to contextualize the study and explain the key concepts which underpin it. Having said that, my goal in this section is to establish the intersections of these conceptual domains (local, glocalization and margins) in order to set a theoretical trajectory that will frame some key moments of everyday life in a fishing community in the epoch of globalization. The framework that I offer is not so much to advance the debate on the global-local nexus, but rather to explain why a descriptive accounting of local life in a marginalized setting matters in understanding the many geographies of living in contemporary times, and why, to invoke Lefebvre's words, "no space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local" (1991, p. 86). In the second section, I attempt to further contextualize the study, both in relation to theory and to empirical data, by citing works that in theme and substance echo some of the concerns of this research. This section also provides the background to how the study contributes to the understanding of lives, people and places – precarious lives, people in the margins, and economically-deprived communities.

3.2 Local Life in the Epoch of Glocalization: The Many Geographies of Globalization

3.2.1 Globalization

As previously mentioned, while this study is not about globalization *per se*, and is, in fact, quite the opposite, a study of a community which I frame as 'very local' in many ways, a definition of globalization is in order. I contend that unavoidably and imminently, a study of any local community in the throes of changing continuity and continuing change is incomplete without first grappling with, and laying out, its notion of what globalization is, both as a theoretical concept and as a reality on the ground. While any binary opposite looks suspect, it is inevitable that any idea of the local has to have a face-off with its perceived opposite, the global, or in this study, globalization. Furthermore, in current scholarship on globalization, at least in how social, political and cultural lives are played out in our everyday life, an additional key term has to be addressed also: glocalization. Thus, I have here a triad of concepts which are interlinked – globalization, the local and glocalization.

Any attempt to define the term globalization is a fraught exercise. It has in the words of an anthropologist produced a "global babble" (Abu-Lughod 1991a). Academics have different ways of capturing the complexity of the term. A literary/cultural theorist like Jameson (1998) would view globalization differently ("untotalizable totality") from say, a geographer like Harvey (1989) ("time-space compression") or an urban scholar like Castells (2000) ("network society"). Although convergences abound, differences are also aplenty. In this study, rather than formulate a new definition or resolve conflicting presentations by rival theorists of globalization (say hyperglobalizers vs. skeptics vs. transformationalists),[32] the focus is on a set of definitions established by some academics. It is important to recognize however that there are other possible definitions aside from

[32] For a concise yet thorough accounting of rival standpoints concerning globalization, I refer the reader to Held and McGrew (2007), Scholte (2005), and Buroway's (2000) short but scathing criticism of how Harvey (1989), Giddens (2002) and Castells (2000) arrived at their definition of globalization in his afterword in the book collection "Global Ethnography: forces, connections, and imaginations in a postmodern world".

these and that no singular accounting of the term will capture globalization's unabashed complexity and dynamics.

There is an unspoken general consensus among theoreticians of globalization that globalization is something about an increase in interconnectedness among and between societies/communities/regions/countries in different parts of the world (Giddens 1996; Harvey 1989; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999; Scholte 2005). This increased interconnectedness could be in the form of political, cultural, technological and economic relations amongst peoples and places. Others point to the notion of planetary consciousness (Robertson 1992), the sudden awareness amongst all that we live and share the resources of a single planet. The idea of interconnectedness is of import in this study.

According to Giddens, globalization is about "time-space distanciation" (1990; 1996; 2002), where global capitalism links locales into global circuits of exchange so that everyday life in previously remote villages becomes intimately affected by fluctuations of world prices and supply change, and decisions made by corporate planners hundreds or thousands of miles away. Held and McGrew (2007) offer the same view. According to them, "globalization denotes the intensification of worldwide social relations and interactions such that events acquire very localized impacts and vice versa" (Held and McGrew 2007, p. 2). They further argue that (here they are worth quoting in full for their succinct and comprehensive take on the concept) it can be understood as a historical process characterized by:

> a stretching of social, political and economic activities across political frontiers so that events, decisions and activities in one region of the world come to have significance for individuals and communities in distant regions of the globe [...];
>
> the intensification, or the growing magnitude, of interconnectedness, in almost every sphere of social existence [...] and;
>
> this growing extensity, intensity and velocity of global interconnections is associated with a deepening enmeshment of the local and global in so far as local events may come to have profound global consequences and global events can have serious local consequences, creating a growing collective awareness or consciousness of the world as a shared social space, that is globality or globalism. (Held and McGrew 2007, pp. 2-3)

Explicit in the definitions above is how peoples and places are, wittingly or unwittingly, drawn into inevitable close relations with peoples and places that are by all measures

alien to them. For example, Held and McGrew further observe that "even very local developments, from unemployment to ethnic conflict, may be traced to distant conditions or actions" (2007, p. 3). And interconnectedness comes with a price. The close relations and intimate interactions of places and peoples with other places and people greatly affect all, directly or indirectly, for better or for worse. This in effect tells us about the ways in which globalization creates differentiated geographies and experiences of them by people. It can mean progress for some, and for others, the production of uneven geographical development (of which the fishing community clearly provides us with a good example) (Harvey 2006). Globalization therefore is perceived, received, experienced and acted upon differently by different people in different places. This is so because as Escobar explains, "people continue to construct some sort of boundaries around their places, however permeable, and to be grounded in local socio-natural practices, no matter how changing and hybridized those grounds and practices might turn out to be" (2001, p. 147). While global flows command much of our contemporary life, "each participant remains grounded in their own specific situation and place with its own parameters, demands and distinctiveness" (Kennedy 2010, p. 145). The place-specific desiderata of our lifeworld impinge on the ways in which globalization works on people and in places. It is now worth considering the local and explaining its epistemological salience vis-à-vis globalization.

3.2.2 On the Local

There are several ways to view the local: first, as a discourse opposed to modernity; and second, in recent times, that which is in opposition to the global. I am not going to rehearse here the history and complexity of modernity, but for the limited purpose of my discussion and in the context of its perceived oppositional quality to the local, a hypothetical binary divide could be erected between the two. Thus, if modernity as a way and essence of life can mean progress, dynamism, movement, energy, innovation and rationality, its anti-thesis may perhaps be found in the local, which may be taken to signify stasis, backwardness, lethargy, tradition and decay. With industrialization and economic progress looming large in the 19th and the 20th century, and with globalization

and the global taking the centre stage of much academic discourse, the local has been sidelined to a certain extent.

The idea of the local, though, as Dissanayake and Wilson (1996) contend, has never disappeared over all these years, but rather has been suppressed or, at best, marginalized in various ideologies of modernity. Thus, they comment that among other discourses of recent time,

> modernist teleology has gone the farthest of all in stamping upon the local its derogatory image: as enclaves of backwardness left out of progress, as the realm of rural stagnation against the dynamism of the urban, industrial civilization of capitalism, as the realm of particularistic culture against universal scientific rationality. (Dissanayake and Wilson 1996, p. 23)

Thus, if modernity and its followers have erected an unpalatable image of the local, the discourse of globalization can be seen to have given it a new lease of life and bestowed on it an oppositional redemptive image, that which is familiar, embedded, place-based, personal, life-giving, re-assuring as a force, and benevolent. In effect, globalization through its monolithic power to imprint its presence on all aspects of contemporary life and modify them according to a single unitary image propels the resurgence of the local. Thus, as Cvetkovich and Kellner observe,

> the proliferation of difference and the shift to more local discourses and practices define the contemporary scene and theory and politics should shift from the level of globalization and its often totalizing and reductive macrotheories to focus on the local, the specific, the particular, the heterogenous, and the microlevel of everyday experience. (Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997, p. 1)

It is in this sense that the local, as Robertson explains, is sometimes cast as "a form of resistance to the hegemonically global" (2003, p. 36). The global assumes a behemoth presence, obscuring or in fact erasing what is local. In the local-global dual optics, "the latter somehow exists 'out there', separate, external and hegemonic in shaping the local's destiny and character" (Kennedy 2010, p. 142). The place gives in to space, and the familiar is taken over by what is impersonal, the concrete by what is abstract. Where global could mean everywhere, and therefore nowhere, the local is thought of as place-specific, territorially-bound, knowable and imaginable and a highly personal enclave of familiar faces, practices, rituals and sites. It is generally associated with the notion of a particular bounded space with its set of close-knit relationships based upon strong kinship

ties and length of residence (Featherstone 1996, p. 47). The global is usually mapped onto space, capital, history and agency while the local is usually mapped onto place, labor and tradition (McKay and Brady 2005). The local of contemporary life becomes anything that is not global. If the global is faceless and cold, the local points to that which is familiar and personal. If the local means living in place, the global is about floating in an impersonal space.

Having said that, though the presence and experience of globalization in our everyday life is overwhelming in many different ways, the local does not fade from view. It surrounds and envelops us, filling our lives with huge volumes of details, information, attachments, pressures, expectations and demands, patterns, routines, responsibilities, pleasures, desires but also familiar routes and spatial-social niches (Kennedy 2010, p. 7). Thus, being local is when, for example, a Swedish couple "having returned from a month-long trip overseas immediately treated themselves to a large glass of cold milk each" (Hannerz 1996, p. 26). While everyone could have a large glass of cold milk, when it has become a part of one's life, is shared by a particular group of people in a particular geography and has entered the lexicon of rituals of everyday life, it acquires a local gloss. Another variant would be when the British-born children and grandchildren of Pakistani migrants to Britain are made to marry Pakistani nationals by their parents (Charsley 2005). This act, which represents the fulfillment of obligations to kin and enhanced reputation by demonstrating kin group solidarity, could also be read as an expression of a local Pakistani culture. The same could be said, for example, of Maori television show producers in New Zealand who have to ask for a tribal leader's prayers before every script session, rehearsal and filming (Glynn and Tyson 2007).

It is along these lines that, as explained by Appadurai (1995), locality or the sense of the local has to be constantly defended; and for some societies, locality does not and cannot be taken as a given. Rather, some societies seem to assume that locality is ephemeral unless hard and regular work is undertaken to produce and maintain its materiality (Appadurai, 1995, p. 54). Furthermore,

> ceremonies of naming and tonsure, scarification and segregation, circumcision and deprivation are complex social techniques for the inscription of locality onto bodies. Looked at slightly differently, they are always to embody locality as well

> as to locate bodies in socially and spatially defined communities. (Appadurai 1995, p. 53)

In the case of Robertson (2003), in the era of globalization, the local, if reproduced against the threat of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility (Appadurai 1995, p. 215), has to be invented, not much unlike the invention of tradition set out by Hobsbawm and Ranger (2006).

Furthermore, it is necessary to mention what Kennedy (2010) deems to be important analytic considerations between three different but overlapping elements which characterize the local. These are the following:

> One concerns the centripetal pull of place, or the locale we inhabit at any one time, and the accompanying webs of social relations for which it supplies a stage. Second, there are the enveloping minute micro-routines, rhythms, social and other responsibilities which engulf but also form our everyday lives. Then, third, the local is also constituted by the seductive certainties and continuities associated with the primordial cultural affiliations we absorb first in childhood and which continue to surround us through family, ethnic or national life. (Kennedy 2010, p. 138)

The distinctions made by Kennedy (2010) are helpful in guiding us to understand the complexity and robust richness of how the local is constituted and is manifested in everyday life. These three distinctions are said to inhabit and suffuse our everyday dealing with each other and not one element is said to be dominant, though in some respects, one could manifest itself more strongly over the other at any one given point in time.

However, as much as the local remains present in the era of the global, tension as to the feasibility of erecting a fence, as it were, that will divide the global from the local persists. No one is inherently local, since all of us are inevitably connected to and being socialized within the whirlwind of global inter-connectedness. This means that people are not only 'local'; we are all indissolubly linked to both local and extralocal places through what might be called networks – of which as Escobar says "the kula ring and internet networks would be contrasting variations in terms of the ways in which they connect persons and places" (2001, p. 143-144). It is because of this that Robertson (2003) insists that the global is not in and of itself counterposed to the local. Rather, what is often referred to as the local is essentially included within the global (2003). It is also along

such lines that Massey (1993; 1994) calls for a progressive sense of place, where boundaries are open and social actors are continuously engaged in constructing place-ness out of a changing combination of internal differences and the influences reaching them through their entanglements with other places. This, in turn, allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, and which integrates in a positive way the global and the local (1994, pp. 154-155). Furthermore, one consequence of global capitalism, as Dissanayake and Wilson claim, is that "there are no longer any local societies that have not been worked over already by capital and modernity" (1996, p. 37). In a way, to paraphrase Latour (1993), what they are saying is that, we have never been local after all; in which case we might all be called glocal.

3.2.3 On Glocalization

Owing to the varying ways in which globalization is received and experienced by people in different places of the world, for Robertson (1990; 1992; 2003), what is happening nowadays is in fact not globalization, but glocalization (see also Ritzer 2003).[33] The word glocalization derives from the Japanese term *dochakuka*, meaning 'global localization', or, in micro-marketing terms, the tailoring of global products and services to suit particular cultural tastes (Giuilianotti and Robertson 2007, p. 134). In a number of sole and co-authored texts (Giulianotti and Robertson 2004, 2006, 2007; Robertson 1997, 2003), Robertson explains what he means by glocalization. According to him, "globalization has involved the reconstruction of, in a sense, the production of 'home', 'community' and 'locality' (Robertson 1997, p. 30). It is along this logic that what is

[33] In an interesting essay entitled "Rethinking globalization: glocalization/grobalization and something/nothing," Ritzer (2003) offers an interesting take on glocalization and proposes his new-coined term "grobalization". According to him "grobalization" focuses on the imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and other entities and their desire – indeed, their need – to impose themselves on various geographic areas. For Ritzer, grobalization means the proliferation of nothing, while on the other hand, glocalization signals the production of something. Although my study is not about the might of a particular entity trying to impose its hegemony upon a particular geography, but in fact the lasting resilience of the local in the face of globalization, the essay points to the continuing refinement of glocalization as a critical tool in understanding our present condition under globalization.

happening nowadays is more of glocalization rather than globalization, since as Robertson argues

> the concept of globalization has involved the simultaneity and the interpenetration of what are conventionally called the global and the local, - or more abstract vein – the universal and the particular. (Robertson 1997, p. 30)

His formulation is a bold theoretical step in unpacking and effecting a nuance in the forever encompassing word globalization. In Robertson's (1997; 2003) formulation, glocalization is not subsumed under globalization, and in effect the local stands shoulder to shoulder with the global, which in the theoretical framing of globalization, as it were, is the other way around - the global is more visible and powerful than the local. He challenges the notion that globalization processes always endanger the local. Rather, glocalization both highlights how local cultures may critically adapt or resist 'global' phenomena, and reveals the way in which the very creation of localities is a standard component of globalization (Giuilianotti and Robertson 2007, p. 134).

While Robertson's (1997; 2003) notion of glocalization is helpful in understanding how the global and the local meet on the ground and instantiate a particular 'merging' of the universal (global) and the particular (local), such a blanket pronouncement on the interpenetration of the global and the local obscures other possible results of how global forces meet local ones or how lives are lived on the ground far from the global core. The articulation of glocalization just enumerated posits an easy fusion of the global and the local and predicates that globalization makes a tremendous impact on all aspects of contemporary life. It seems to characterize contemporary life as a manifestation of global dominance, as if this could mean the same in all places and be experienced to the same degree by people in different places. Glocalization, as it is formulated nowadays in contemporary studies, unwittingly waters down the production and re-production of differentiated places and the power of local forces and circumstances as factors in characterizing and understanding contemporary life. However, there are other ways of understanding glocalization.

McDowell (1996) in an interesting essay shows how glocalization or what she calls global localism can help us to recognize "the unevenness of the disruptive impact of interconnected global capitalism on particular localities, knowledges and place-based

identities" (Duncan 1996, p. 6). In effecting a kind of glocalization that recognizes the differentiated powers and reach of global forces in places of the world, we are forced to see and experience how locality thrives in places where globalization is perceived to have reigned. McDowell's (1996) extrapolation on why global localism matters in understanding places and their differentiated textures in the era of globalization is worth quoting in full.

> Clearly, depending on their position in the social structure, people are differentially located in space, with differential abilities and opportunities to overcome what geographers refer to as the frictional effects of distance. While we are all affected by the radical transformation of local and global relations [...] by the power of multinational capital and global telecommunications, there are radical inequalities in the spatial spread of individuals' lives. For some, the network of points or skein referred to by Foucault is a tightly constrained local pattern, the skein, with its wonderful wooly metaphor, is a trap, whereas for others the interstices of the network are separated by enormous distance and the connections are paths to greater freedom." (McDowell 1996, p. 31)

McDowell's (1996) take on global localism strengthens the argument that it is possible to highlight the exuberance of locally generated practices in spite of the perceived overwhelming presence and power of global forces in understanding peoples' lives in places far from global/globalized places/spaces. It is in this context that, while global forces bear upon the local, the local is almost always provided with a rich space of context-generative articulation in its reproduction (Appadurai 1995; 1996) by contrast with the context-producing artifacts of global institutions and the nation-state.

Glocalization therefore, could mean something else, taking into consideration the role played by local forces in constituting the everyday experience. Glocalization could signify the articulation of a 'place-specific' particularity, a pertinent locality amidst what is perceived to be a global condition of existence. Thus, in the continuum of global to local, the local could to a certain degree dominate. This could be the case since in places far from global/globalized places/spaces what transpires is not the obliteration of the local and its attendant practices, but the articulation of its salience in adapting to, transforming and contesting the forces that are so keen on colonizing it. This formulation of glocalization puts a break on the easy equation that when the global and the local meet, a process of hybridization takes place, thus creating an entity called glocal materiality. Hybridity could be one among many results of this meeting, but then again, the term

'meeting' is contentious, since by formulating an eventual outcome called the glocal, an idea is being posited that when the two forces clash, they clash on the same footing, with an outcome that merges on equal terms. I would invoke caution in this formulation. I would qualify rather that when the two converge, it could be that, aside from the glocal possibility, two more faces are possible: first, where the global dominates; and second, where the local instantiates. The resultant materiality of such a clash could well be the enunciation of a continuing differentiated and situated evolving mode of life that is either globally or locally accentuated. If locally accentuated, local practices, then, while taking place not in isolation from other external developments, enjoy a certain degree of structural exuberance. Thus, a more 'local' life could thrive in places far from the global core - in the margins - which are now worth considering.

3.2.4 On Margins

The term 'margins' conveys the sense of a place away from the global core (see Grant and Short 2002). These are places and people less involved in life processes beyond their boundaries/communities, unable to participate gainfully in the local (and global) economy, and who experience relative immobility which is not of their own choosing. Places which are far from the core of globalizing experiences, or are not integral to the functioning of global processes, are rendered marginal and therefore are not fully anchored to the axioms of globalization. Margins are produced territorially and socially as a result of global forces interacting with those on the ground. Not everyone is able to partake of what globalization has to offer. Some reap the fruits of their involvement in global processes, while others find their lives unchanged or perhaps more miserable than before. The term margins or marginality means of course much more than this. Other definitions might point to a normative and stereotypical presentation of the term, which among other things equates the margins or marginality to, as Perlman explains, "being shiftless, dangerous ne'er-do-well, usually associated with the underworld of crime, violence, drugs, and prostitution" (1976, pp. 91-92). Clearly, while poor and struggling, the fishing community featured in this study does not fall under the rubric of this kind of marginality.

There are several points to be made about being marginal or the state of marginality. For example, Perlman (1976), in her study of favelas (squatter settlements) in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, provides us with an exhaustive account of the many ways in which marginality can be construed. Of most relevance here is her list of five ways in which marginality is conceived. Thus, for Perlman (1976), marginality comes in the form of 1. location in squatter settlements; 2. underclass in the economic-occupational structure 3. migrants, newcomers, or different subcultures 4. racial or ethnic minorities and 5. deviants. Of the five attributes, numbers 1, 2 and 3 could be said, to varying degrees, to characterize the fishing community and its people which are the subject of this study. Their place by all measures could be considered a squatter settlement (and therefore lacking the necessities of decent living); most, if not all, of the people are generally employed in the most precarious and least financially rewarding jobs. As a fishing community, within the town itself, they constitute a subculture which is disparaged by most people living in the 'poblacion' (town centre).[34] However, it needs to be said, as explained by Perlman (1976), that in these classifications, there could be no concept of marginality without some basic notion of equality and, as expected, a standard of norms by which others will be measured. Marginality is obviously a question of degree rather than absolutes, and it is apparent that a person could be marginal in some senses, or with regard to certain spheres of life and certain institutions, while being quite well integrated in other respects (1976, p. 129). Clearly, the marginality of the members of the

[34] When I was in grade school, I helped a classmate, a daughter of one of our school's principals, obtain sand from the shore for a classroom project. Some days later, she invited me for some refreshments in her place. Her mother was there and was quick to thank me for helping her daughter. Later on, I was served a chiffon cake and a glass of iced tea. When I was busy eating my share, her mother came up to me and asked me in her most solicitous voice if I liked what I was eating. I said yes. She then told me she was expecting my answer, since people from our place, meaning the fishing community, were not used to eating cakes. We prefer, she said, ordinary bread, since we did not have the taste for it. Many years later, when I visited my local high school I was welcomed warmly by my former teachers who were excited enough to hear about my experiences as an overseas postgraduate student. When I talked about my research topic, they were quite surprised to know that I was doing research about and in fact spending most of my time in a fishing community (apparently, they had already forgotten that I was a son of a fisherman). One of my former teachers in fact asked me if the people there were really foul-smelling and predisposed to endless *lambanog* (local wine) drinking, some of the usual stereotypes about fishing community dwellers which I had got used to hearing during my formative years in my hometown.

fishing community under consideration is a product of their comparison with other community members who in some ways are better off than them.

Furthermore, to be far from the global core means to be distant from central places, their functions and markets (Lindkvist and Antelo 2007). Clearly, distance is about time (to travel), as well as miles from places that function importantly in global or national affairs. When a place is far from, say, industrial complexes or cities, and therefore hidden or obscured from the view of government planners, it is most likely to represent a low priority in terms of investment in infrastructure and social services. Alternatively, when places do not have much to offer in terms of resources and people's skills for the further advancement of central places and important markets, they might also be rendered marginal. Distance is just one aspect of marginality. A place's function and market also impact upon notions of centrality and marginality. Lindkvist and Antelo for example assert that "the development of central places might have negative secondary effects for other localities by draining labor (or resources) from them, making them backwash areas (2007, p. 372). However, being away from the core or 'places of opportunities' does not preclude marginal places from having institutions, actors and companies which might address some of the challenges posed by their interaction and lopsided relationship with the core. If this is the case, the effects of marginality may be mitigated, but this is not inevitable. The margins, as a particular geography and an extension of a way of life, are therefore to be found everywhere, though avowedly differentiated from one place to another, depending on their relations to other places and their enrolment and attachment to bigger agglomerations of strategically located communities.

In addition, in understanding the salience of the margins in evincing a differentiated geography in the era of globalization, the mobility of people, or the lack of, has to be considered.[35] While mobility has always been a part of human history (the

[35] Buscher and Urry (2009) speak about five interdependent 'mobilities' that produce social life. They are: 1. the corporeal travel of people for work. Leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and scape, organized in terms of contrasting time-space modalities (from daily commuting to once-in-a-lifetime exile); 2. the physical movement of objects to producers, consumers and retailers, the sending and receiving of presents and souvenirs, as well as the assembly and (re)configuration of people, objects, and spaces as part of dwelling and place-making; 3. The imaginative travel effected through talk, but also the images of places and peoples appearing on and moving across

European conquest of the New World could well be a good example of it), it is only in the contemporary period that it has been given much scholarly attention as a critical concept (see, for example, Buscher and Urry 2009; Sheller and Urry 2006). Mobility in today's world is important in the making and unmaking of people and places (see also Mills 2005), since as pointed out by Sampson (2003) in her study of seafarers, "such movements have wrought change not only in the places (villages, towns, countries) which people have chosen to leave, but also in those places where they have resettled" (Sampson 2003, p. 257). In her study of a seafaring community in the Philippines, Acejo (2009) shows how the income of seafarers, one of the most mobile labor groups in the Philippines, has changed the landscape of their communities. Houses were built not in the likeness of local design, but modelled on houses from other countries which their owners happened to have visited. Furthermore, because they are well traveled, seafarers tend to have a more cosmopolitan outlook on life compared to shore-based workers (Sampson 2005).

In recent times, mobility has become more pronounced as a result of the developments and advancements in transportation and communication technologies. For instance, Sheller and Urry write that "internationally, there are over 700 million legal passenger arrivals each year with a predicted 1 billion by 2010; there are 4 million air passengers each day; 31 million refugees are displaced from their homes; and there is one car for every 8.6 people" (2006, p. 207). These numbers are staggering and daunting, and the mobility of people is one of the significant features making the present epoch different from the past. However, the figures are misleading. They do not tell the whole picture. While the physical movement of people in recent time has been really dramatic and unprecedented, there are nevertheless people who remain in their localities and are largely immobile. Furthermore, mobility may not equate with opportunity, but could also result from oppression, possible danger and displacement. Thus, mobility is a resource to

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multiple print and visual media; 4. Virtual travel, often in real time, that enables presence and action at a distance, transcending geographical and social distance; and 5. Communicative travel through person-to-person contact via embodied conduct, messages, texts, letters, telegraph, telephone, fax, and mobile.

which not everyone has an equal relationship, and mobility and fixity figure differently depending on national spaces and historical periods (2006, p. 211).

The performance of mobility among people is uneven. Some people are in a position to be highly mobile in a variety of ways, while others are restricted to just one or two kinds of mobility or none at all (see Buscher and Urry's [2009] kinds of mobility). Not everyone has full-time work which necessitates constant movement, whilst some places suffer from an absence of infrastructure which makes imaginative, virtual and communicative travel possible. Places that lack the accoutrements of modern technologies like communication and imaging systems further limit not just the physical but also 'mental travel' of people. It is of no surprise, therefore, as Kennedy observes "that many, and probably most, social actors remain locked into the horizons shaped by the sphere of the local with its immediate, familiar, near-at-hand and pressing responsibilities and even though the latter is increasingly criss-crossed by globalizing forces" (2010, p. 11). It is also the case that nearness or living in the midst of mobility-enabling structures does not automatically translate into mobility. On the other hand, some places are more equipped than others to induce mobility among their inhabitants. People living in cities and places with adequate transport services are more mobile than other people who live in far-flung areas where transport services are inadequate, if not non-existent. Furthermore, there are new places and technologies that enhance the mobility of some peoples and places and heighten the immobility of others (Sheller and Urry 2006). The formalization of passport use and visa requirements (Neumayer 2006) as prerequisites to international travel clearly limits the volume of people crossing borders between countries. In airports, well-defined immigration policies and high-tech surveillance and fraud-detection technology prevent the mobility of would-be illegal immigrants, human smugglers and drug traffickers. In the US, the construction of dams in the 1950s greatly affected the movement of American tribes as they enacted their traditional fish hunting exercises (Jones 2005). In the fishing industry, the enactment of the United Nations Law of the Sea (UNLOS) in 1977 constrained the movement of many fishing people in the world (Gupta 2007; Lindkvist and Antelo 2007).

It is in this sense that mobility/immobility is part of the constitution of marginality. Our failure to move from one place to another and partake of what other

places have to offer limits our interaction with other people and in a sense constrains our ability to inject external knowledge into our everyday life. The lack of exposure to other people's affairs erects boundaries to the ways in which we apprehend and confront issues of everyday import. Blocked movements provide the context in which the margins are constituted far from the centre where people are more exposed to the swirling dynamics of other places and peoples. It is also the case, however, that forced mobility may be disastrous to one's ability to survive and thrive.

The marginality of places might produce subjectivities which are relatively unexposed to outside ideas, although this is not always the case. Such strategic isolation, though not absolute, can in so many ways affect the consumption of material things and the experience of everyday life. It is in this sense that marginality can also take the form of economic dislocation and structures of feeling. It is also in this context that marginal places could be said to exist in the epoch of globalization.

3.3 Fishing Communities, Power, Gender and Economic Relations: Echoing Some Words to the Shore

It is worth rehearsing some of the views within the literature which pertain to fishing communities to contextualize the importance of my research on the one hand, and the issues dealt with in this study such as power, gender and economic relations on the other. With regard to the latter, the places to be invoked may well be non-fishing communities, and yet the issues tackled find resonance with the fishing community under consideration. In going over some relevant literature, the purpose is to clear the ground, as it were, and provide an introduction to what will follow in the more substantive chapters of this thesis.

3.3.1 On Fishing Communities

The fishing community which provides the basis for this study is a small-scale fishing community. The definition of small-scale here is of course problematic, since as Kurien (1998) explains, different countries have their own ways of categorizing fishing activities. Be that as it may, while differences among fishing communities exist, there are

a number of similar attributes which may be ascribed to small-scale fishing communities, regardless of geographical specificities. Kurien lists the following:

> 1. use of small craft and simple gear (though not necessarily simple techniques) of relatively low capital intensity
> 2. the fishing operations are skill-intensive;
> operators have an intuitive understanding of the coastal aquatic milieu and the fishery resources in it
> 3. the knowledge and skills are passed down from generation to generation
> 4. incumbents largely work as share-workers or owner-operators of their fishing units
> 5. marked by a decentralized and scattered settlement pattern
> 6. fish close to their home communities in relatively near-shore waters in single day/night operations
> 7. integrally linked to locally oriented hinterland market networks
> 8. considerable financial dependence on middlemen and those who buy their harvest
> 9. household enterprise undertaken in pursuit of a livelihood leading to a culturally conditioned way of life
> 10. compared with other sections of society, relatively socially and economically disadvantaged with low employment mobility out of fishing (Kurien 1998, p. 3)

If the list provided above shows a rich characterization of fishing communities and fishing as a trade, quite intriguingly, published ethnographies about them pale in comparison with low/highland communities or any land-based occupation studies. In 1957, for example, writing from and about England, Horobin (1957) lamented the fact that there were very few studies of fishing and that industrial sociologists had confined their attention to more 'basic' industries, notably coal-mining and steel. This gap, according to him, could be attributed to the fact that "by comparison with other industries, fishing occupies only a minor part of the (British) economy" (1957, p. 34). But things have changed since then. While in some countries, the fishing industry constitutes a small portion of the national economy, in other countries, it plays a major role (see, for example, Arnason, Hannesson and Schrank 2000; Pretes and Gibson 2008; Rodman 1987). Furthermore, while in terms of global output it may not be as significant as other industries, the fishing industry and its associated trades have contributed a great deal to global trade. In 2008, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) figures show that global capture fisheries production was valued at $91.2 billion.

> Fisheries and aquaculture, directly or indirectly, play an essential role in the livelihoods of millions of people around the world. In 2006, an estimated

> 43.5 million people were directly engaged, part time or full time, in primary production of fish either in capture from the wild or in aquaculture, and a further four million people were engaged on an occasional basis (2.5 million of these in India). In the last three decades, employment in the primary fisheries and aquaculture sector has grown faster than the world's population and employment in traditional agriculture. Eighty- six percent of fishers and fish farmers worldwide live in Asia, with China having the greatest numbers (8.1 million fishers and 4.5 million fish farmers). (FAO 2009, p. 34)

In addition to what Horobin (1957) observed, some 37 years later, Volkman, conducting research on fishing communities on the southwest coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia, wrote that:

> images of Southeast Asia are still largely oriented toward the land: rice-farming peasants, forest-dwelling foragers, the rich and the poor of Southeast Asia's growing, sprawling cities. With a few notable exceptions, the fishing peoples of Southeast Asia – relatively poor and marginalized in contemporary nation-states – remain curiously absent in the anthropological and historical literature. (Volkman 1994, p. 567)

Horobin (1957) and Volkman's (1994) concerns might have been partially addressed in recent times with the development of a robust literature on fishing in many academic disciplines. For instance, a number of journals including a focus on fishing have come out, like the journal 'Marine Policy'. However, while the lack of scholarly studies on fishing has to this degree been remedied, studies on fishing communities continue to suffer neglect. Veloro comments:

> I have always been impressed, as an anthropologist, to see that in most all national contexts, there exists more information on the types of fish species, their reproductive mechanisms, their migration and fragility, the types and lengths of boats, and types and sizes of fishing gear, the range of capital assets and the volume and value of the catches than there is information on the people using the gear and catching the fish. (Veloro 1994, p. 133)

In the Philippine context, two realities confront researchers of fishing communities. Firstly, maritime ethnography in the Philippines is a young and poor relative to upland and even lowland ethnographies, which is ironic for an archipelagic country (Ushijima and Zayas 1994, p. xvii).[36] Secondly, what has been published about fishing communities

[36] There is a very significant literature on upland and lowland ethnographies in the Philippines, mostly by foreign academics, and a good example is Rosaldo's (1980) study about the head-hunting tribe the Ilonggots of the northern Philippines.

in the Philippines is largely anthropological in nature, dwelling on fishing communities' material culture, fishing practices, and indigenous knowledge concerning marine conservation. Five of the most well-known fishing community studies in the Philippines represent these dominant themes. Dumont (1991) writes about a succession of events in a Philippine fishing community in the course of his stay, commenting widely on language, folk beliefs, political alliances, community ties and local history; Ushijima and Zayas' (1994) edited collection looks into the fishing practices and the material culture of fishing communities in the Visayas; Mangahas (2000), on the other hand, talks about the dual concept of managing luck and negotiating change in two fishing communities in the northern and southern Philippines; Nimmo (2001) writes about fishing traditions of Sama Dilaut, a sea-dwelling people in the southernmost part of the Philippines, while Guieb (2009) tackles the concept of local ecological knowledge in bettering the ways in which communities manage marine resources. Of the five, Dumont (1991), Guieb (2009) and Mangahas (2000) are the most analytic, rather than descriptive, moving away from the approach employed by Nimmo (2001)[37] and Ushijima and Zayas (1994), though the latter's approach is understandable in the context of their pioneering study of fishing communities in the areas of their research. The five studies appear as a pittance indeed if they are viewed in the context of the Philippines' innumerable fishing communities spread across its 7,107 islands. The paucity then of studies of Philippine fishing communities poses an opportunity, a challenge and a problem to would-be researchers who have to cast their net wider and look for other places in other countries, irrespective of economic and cultural divides, to understand and contextualize the dynamics of life in fishing communities in the Philippines.

Since the 1990s, there has been a resurgence of interest in fishing and fishing communities as topics of research. Topics vary widely and are spread out across disciplines. Some research focuses upon gender and race, some on material culture and some ranges from economics to resource management studies. Within these works lie two important strands. The first considers the challenges and problems being confronted by fishing communities everywhere. This is particularly of interest here as it provides a

[37] Nimmo's study was undertaken in the 1970s and was published only in 2001 by the Ateneo de Manila University Press in the Philippines.

backdrop to the kind of life (and prospects of life which lie ahead) being led nowadays by people relying on fishing and its ancillary tasks. It thereby contextualizes the emergent themes of this study, namely, power, gender and economic relations in fishing communities, which constitute the second strand.

Several ideas have been discussed in relation to the threats and challenges to the continued existence and quality of life of fishing communities around the world. One of these is the conflicted role of the nation-state in managing natural resources. This is paradoxical in so many ways, since the very function of the nation-state is to see to it that laws are properly implemented to secure the renewable exploitation of its natural wealth. But as explained by Young, "economic growth takes precedence over environmental protection which then impels most governments to turn a blind eye on resource over-exploitation and untenable economic practices" (2001, p. 283). In Mexico, for example, the national government has acted as a benefactor to fishing communities by allocating collective access rights to key resources, and as an extractor of economic surplus from small-scale producers to satisfy national economic priorities (2001). This dual role, explains Young (2001), has brought about unintended adverse consequences in the form of community impoverishment, environmental degradation, and conflicts over local resources. The same findings were echoed by Guieb (2009) in his study of fishing communities in Bohol, Philippines. According to him, the laws created by the national government in allocating sea resources favoured the local elite who maintain fishing fleets. In the fishing communities that he studied, most small-scale fishers complained of restricted fishing in rich fishing grounds, since they were now 'owned' by rich and politically influential local families. Along the same vein, though in a different mold, fishing communities were driven to precipitous decline by the large subsidies provided by national governments to large-scale fishing companies to intensify their fishing efforts through fleet modernization. Hamilton, for example, explained how in the Faroe Islands in Norway, "the subsidized overinvestment in fish catching and processing capacity both allowed and economically compelled the depletion of local resources" (2007, p. 2959). In the Philippines, on the other hand, government credit programs and a drive for modernization in fisheries led to overcapacity and the unsustainable exploitation of the country's major fishing grounds (Batongbakal 2006; Pomeroy and Pido 1995).

Recent changes in global climactic conditions have visibly affected the lives of people in fishing communities as well (FAO 2009). While others attribute the fast depleting sea resources to over exploitation, some studies point to changes in weather patterns and climate and ocean variations (Hamilton 2007; Stobutzki, Silvestre, Talib, Krongprom, Supongpan, Khemakorn, Armada and Garces 2006). The collapse of stocks of Northwest Atlantic cod during the last third of the 20th century brought many fishing communities in Canada and Scandinavia to their knees (see, for example, Davis and Gerrard 2000; Neis 2000; Skaptadottir 2000). Newfoundland's cod crisis, for example, reportedly cost 40,000 people their jobs (Hamilton 2007). While as said, over exploitation was mentioned as one of the many reasons, global climate change was also thought to have contributed to the species' sudden decline. It has to be mentioned also that fishing communities are the most vulnerable sector of society when typhoons come. Recent events in the Philippines, India and some low-lying South Pacific island nations attest to this.

In most fishing communities, "low-tech fishers residing in peripheral communities with weak market access compete with much more technologically sophisticated craft for a declining number of fish" (Chapman, Jackson-Smith and Petrzelka 2008, p. 313). Furthermore, the incursion of commercial fishers in small-scale fishers' fishing grounds posed not just unfair competition, but also aggravated the rapid decline of fisheries' stocks in fishing areas only earmarked for subsistence fishing. McGoodwin (1991) notes that many small-scale fishers now find themselves increasingly losing competitive struggles with industrialized fishers from urban ports in their own country, or with fishers who have come from distant lands. On the other hand, Taylor and Leonard speak about how "technological advancements [...] increase the geographical distribution and intensity of fishing, and the resulting fishing activity has frequently outpaced the natural production of fish biomass. As a result, many regions of the world are now experiencing the consequences of commercial overfishing, such as fish stock depletion, [and] socioeconomic hardship in fishing communities" (2007, p. 291). In Vietnam for example, Pomeroy, Nguyen and Thong (2009) report that large fishing boats of 200-450 hp operating in inshore waters at a depth of 15-25m are very common, affecting the coastal resources negatively. The same thing could be said in the Philippines,

which has been documented extensively by separate studies made by Guieb (2009), Mangahas (2000; 1993), and Ushijima and Zayas (1994).

Failure of institutional and communal regulations and agreements with regard to marine management and exploitation are also often invoked with regard to the continued despoliation of most fishing grounds in the world (Chernela 2005; Freire and Garcia-Allut 2000; Gutberlet, Seixas, The and Carolsfeld 2007; Hanich and Tsamenyi 2009; Sall 2007; Taylor, Schechter and Wolfson 2007). In many developing economies, for example, failures in marine management are widely reported (Al-Oufi, McLean and Palfreman 2000; Jimenez-Badillo 2008; Kuperan and Abdullah 1994; Kurien 1998; Sultana and Thompson 2007). In Vietnam, Pomeroy, Nguyen and Thong report that "there were no output controls or stock specific management measures. There was no zoning of waters for different fishery users, resulting in a rising number of conflicts" (2009, p. 423). In the Pacific Islands region, for example, Hanich and Tsamenyi (2009) talk about extensive mismanagement and corruption in the areas of fishery licensing, access agreements and monitoring and inspection. Eder (2005) and Guieb (2009) present the same findings of corruption in their studies of fishing communities in the Philippines, although what they documented was primarily at the local government level.

Even among fishers, threats to fishing are created internally and by fishers themselves. The use of cyanide and blast fishing by fishers, among others, is well documented. Their deployment in most fishing communities as ways to increase the volume of fish landed is one of the prime contributory factors to the destruction of fishing grounds and the eventual depletion of sea resources (Campos, Pantoja, Manalili and Bravo 2003; Guieb 2009; Guzman 2004; Pomeroy, Nguyen and Thong 2009; Smith, Pauly and Mines 1983). As observed by Pomeroy, Nguyen and Thong with decreased earnings, "the competition for resources is unavoidable and intensifying – between small- and large-scale fisheries, between fleets, between fishing vessels" (2009, p. 421), and this competition encourages the use of illegal and unsustainable means to earn more from a diminishing resource. Thus, with increased competition and unregulated fishing, fishing grounds are exploited to the maximum, furthering the destruction of marine habitats.

The threats and challenges to the viability and continued existence of fishing communities are extensive and I have only presented some of them here. Others could

come in the form of investment in tourism projects, which then restricts the movement and access of fishers in rich fishing grounds and the dumping of pollutants by industries into bodies of water. It is also important to focus on some concepts which I deem to be important in understanding the dynamics and complexities of contemporary everyday life in the fishing community under consideration. They are specifically addressed because they are the dominant themes that emerged during my fieldwork. Specifically, they include issues concerning power, gender and economic relations.

3.3.2 On Power, Gender and Economic Relations

Generally, power relations in fishing communities are very much based upon ethnicity, gender and economics (Busby 2000; Cole 1991; Firth 1966). In relation to gender, it is in the sexual division of labor and, by extension, household management, where power dynamics are mostly played out. Men go fishing while women sell catches and manage households. In this well-demarcated assignment of roles, power is generally held by men in relation to decisions that matter in the family. Along the lines of economic relations, it is the relationship between boat owners and fish workers, and in recent times, among boat owners, fish workers and middle persons who buy the catch or provide capital where power makes its presence felt. For example, in his pioneering study of Malay fishing communities, Firth (1966) shows how fish workers contest the power of boat owners to dictate the terms of their working relations by deserting them for other boat owners. Other than that, however, power relations among inhabitants of fishing communities are largely unexplored. The complexities and intricacies of daily struggle among and between fishers, fish vendors and other members of fishing communities are largely under-researched.

The fishing community under consideration could be characterized as powerless (although not in absolute terms), in a number of ways. Economically, most, if not all, people in the community are not part of the formal economy and to a high degree, their sources of income are volatile, precarious and unreliable (see chapters 4, 6 and 7). Politically, they do not have good leverage with local government compared with other communities. Being unorganized, they do not have any formal network to tap into in

order to air their grievances with regard to the poor conditions they experience or the lack of support from the local authorities. However, being a powerless community does not mean being powerless in the absolute. Among community members, divisions exist and hierarchies predominate which in turn affect the ways in which daily life is negotiated by the community. Thus, divisions and hierarchies could be in the form of age, gender, membership of a web of kinship, access to credit, ownership of material possessions, and more. Here, even if the fishing community is conceived of as a 'powerless community', still, power struggles and their myriad manifestations take place in the everyday life of the people of the community. This particular aspect of fishing communities is not well explored and it is in lowland farming communities and urban spaces that power relations are particularly well mapped out. It is with reference to these that I will try to work out the ways in which power is allocated and distributed in the fishing community studied.

Of particular interest here is the ethnographic work done by Scott (1985) in a peasant community in Malaysia. In this study, he talks about power in the form of an everyday indirect contestation between land owners and tillers. He further refined his arguments with a series of essays collected in a book in 1990. Scott (1985; 1990) offers what he calls the everyday forms of resistance, where instead of the revolution of the multitude, we have the ordinary weapons of the relatively powerless groups:

> foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage [...]. These Brechtian forms of struggle have certain features in common. They require little or no coordination or planning; they often represent a form of individual self-help; and they typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms. (Scott 1985, p. 29)

Scott (1990) questions studies on power relations, primarily by neo-marxists, since they paint the powerless as readily lulled into acquiescence, accepting their fate without protestation and contestation. He argues that studies on domination and resistance pay too much attention to peasant rebellions. And if and when revolutions occur,

> they are few and far between. The vast majority are crushed unceremoniously. When, more rarely, they do succeed, it is a melancholy fact that the consequences are seldom what the peasantry had in mind. Whatever else revolutions may achieve [...] they also typically bring into being a vaster and more dominant state apparatus that is capable of battening itself on its peasant subjects even more effectively that its predecessors. (Scott 1985, p. xvi)

According to Scott (1990), in instances where there exist pronounced asymmetrical power relations, dominated groups deploy two kinds of transcript as a means to survive and contest the prevailing order. Public transcripts refer to "forms of discourse and bodily positions through which subordinated groups express themselves openly before members of a dominant class, race, or ethnic group" (1990, p. 2). In private spaces, the weak and the powerless, in the absence of the people in power, speak their truth. This speaking the truth to power (Foucault 1977) without being heard and therefore free from dire consequences is "articulated in private spaces and expresses both an alternative explanation for the way society is currently organized and blueprints for arranging society in a fairer way" (Howe 1998, pp. 531-532). Scott (1990) refers to this script as a hidden or private transcript. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public script (1990, p. 5, 136-182).

Following Scott (1985; 1990), Constable (1997) points to the importance of looking at the public spaces as providing the medium of subversion for private transcripts. Filipina maids in Hong Kong make use of public spaces to enact their own private transcript. In public plazas where they congregate every Sunday, they exhibit public displays of loud uninhibited behaviour which Constable (1997) takes to be an expression of quiet resistance and freedom from the restrictions of the workplace. At 'home', they are meek and subservient to their employers, but in the company of their fellow domestics in public gatherings, far from the confines of the private quarters of their employers, they talk about them behind their backs and poke fun at them. Groves and Chang, both professors in a university in Hong Kong, relate how a Filipina domestic "made a habit of gossiping about her employers in front of her (Chang) and placing her in compromising positions by talking about which faculty were the most slovenly, who insisted on their bed sheets being ironed, and who had streaks in their underwear" (1999, pp. 252-253). Brody (2006), on the other hand, shows how women cleaners in Bangkok would often go to the slum community for breaks to eat native food from their province. She claims that this act (going to the slum and eating local food) to be a means of defiance where cleaners struggled to be "re-humanized in a space where they were

known as people with lives, relationships, and personalities" (2006, p. 552), different from shopping malls where they were treated as part of a faceless workforce.

However, the explications of Scott (1985; 1990) and others, though quite helpful and particularly informative about the nature and manifestations of power in contemporary society, have elided one crucial point: the expression of power, domination and resistance within the same social group. It is not always the case that people in the same group share the same thoughts and ideology with regard to their position in the equation of power. Power differentials, however small and seemingly irrelevant, exist within groups. As Ortner argues, "there is never a single, unitary, subordinate, if only in the simple sense that subaltern groups are internally divided by age, gender, status, and other forms of difference and that occupants of differing subject positions will have different, even opposed, but still legitimate perspectives on the situation" (1995, p. 175). A particular class or group always harbors contestation from within. Thus, members of the same community could be at each other's throats, creating powers where there are none and exercising them over their own kin, friends, co-workers and neighbours.

For the purpose of this study, it is of interest to know how people in fishing communities make sense of power in their everyday lives, primarily at times when fishery resources are fast dwindling and economic difficulties are a common feature of life. How is power made manifest and concretized through the life practices of people in fishing communities? How is power deployed by, contested and allocated amongst fishing community members? What do people resist in the absence of an identifiable hegemonic identity, institution or group of people in the community that purportedly oppresses them? The theoretical standpoint made by Scott (1985; 1990) and his elision of addressing power relations among members of the same group is worth looking into as we endeavour to understand the coping mechanisms of fishing communities as they experience a crisis of resources in many parts of the world.

In most fishing communities, specifically in the Philippines, gender relations are mapped out with a clear sexual division of labor: men fish while women sell catches and manage households. This delineation of duty is founded on the belief that men are more suited to work in the harsh environment of the sea than women, and women on the other

hand are well socialized into looking after the household. In many cases, the prolonged sojourn of men at sea creates a community that is women-centred, and when this happens, men find it discomforting that women have usurped their traditional roles as decision-makers (see also Thomas and Bailey 2006).[38] While some fishing communities exist, where power-sharing between men and women is more egalitarian than others, or even in some cases weighted in favour of the women (Cole 1991), most fishing communities adhere to the traditional power divide where men preside over the family, since they earn the money and support the household.

Contemporary transformations in the economic sphere of most fishing communities have, however, made an impact on existing gender relations and some of these are a consequence of rent dissipation among fishers due to smaller catches and the entry of women into waged work. Among men and women in different countries, the effects of local economic re-structuring vary. Women in an Icelandic fishing community, for example, launched a handicraft centre and involved themselves in tourism when fisheries in their area suffered from diminished returns. Men, on the other hand, struggled to maintain their grip in a livelihood that has become more and more controlled by regulatory regimes (Skaptadottir 2000). The introduction of big commercial fishing boats in Iceland therefore had a negative impact on the income of the fishers, but not on the women. On the other hand, in the case of Goan women fish vendors, Rubinoff claims that when their income increased because of the "expanded catch of fish and shrimp due to mechanized fishing and improved fisheries technology, as well as rising prices for seafood in response to export demand" (1999, p. 631), they were accorded greater freedom and importance in the household. Small-scale fishers on the other hand were sidelined and felt helpless because of the competition posed by commercial fishers, which, as stated, greatly benefited women.

It is in this context that the present study is well positioned to probe further into the landscape of changes in gender relations in fishing communities. While convergences in terms of altered gender relations in fishing communities could be established to a certain extent, differences also exist. It is therefore highly relevant to find out how the

[38] Apparently, this has also been noted amongst families of seafarers working in oil tankers and cargo vessels. See for example the study done by Thomas and Bailey (2006).

effects of economic restructuring vary in different places and are acted out in the context of the place's history and existing gender dynamics. How do men and women's individual biographies and local institutions structure their ways of responding to the economic changes around them? In what ways, and how, did economic restructuring affect gender relations and household roles in specific communities with specific local dynamics and structures? Are there differentiated experiences of the impact on gender dynamics in fishing communities? These are some of the questions which are worth looking into in the fishing community under consideration, as its people live an everyday life that is more contested than before.

Published literature on economic practices in fishing communities is particularly focused on, firstly, sharing and profit-taking arrangements between boat owners and fish workers and between fishers and capital providers, and secondly, on how fishing communities are particularly characterized by the plurality of work among their inhabitants. In his seminal work on fishing communities in Malaysia, Firth (1966) explains how the economic arrangement between Malay fishers and Chinese capitalists works advantageously for the latter and compels the former to an almost perpetual chain of bondage and indebtedness. On the other hand, in her study of fishing communities in Davao, Philippines, Mangahas (2004) explains how fishers make use of future catch as a way to extract advance payment from petty capitalists who in turn take advantage of the former by lowering the price of catch when it is finally delivered to them. While these exploitative relations are very much resented by fishers, they also recognize that they have very few choices in relation to a livelihood which is characterized by uncertainties. Other studies point to the necessity of income diversification in fishing communities as a way to ameliorate poor living conditions. In addition, others talk about how labour practices in fishing communities constitute an alternative to mainstream capitalism. In a wide-ranging discussion on the economics of fishing, Martin (2005; 2007) provides an impetus for understanding the different kinds of market dynamics which fishing communities employ. He observes that it is only in fishing that no well-defined salary scheme is instituted among workers, which in effect defies the logic of waged work characterizing contemporary labour arrangement. Other than that, how market relations

and economic practices in fishing communities are embedded in particular community values and close-knit social relations remains largely unstudied.

To derive insights into the ways in which social relations and community values might structure fish trading, incursions into other community studies that speak about economic practices have been made. In her study of entrepreneurs in Mexico, for example, Vidas (2008) shows how Tupperware agents make use of tight-knit community relations to popularize the use of Tupperware products in their area. Selling commodities takes the form of inviting neighbours and friends for a bingo game where prizes are Tupperware items, or neighbourhood get-together parties where the seller demonstrates the use of the product. Transactions are also channeled through social networks and day-to-day, face-to-face interaction. Selling Tupperware in the village, explains Vidas (2008), is culturally embedded in the close-knit system of relations in the community. In another instance of a localized, place-based capitalism, Metzo (2001) shows how people in a rural region in south central Siberia exploited the formal market economy while adapting new resources for commodity and non-commodity transaction alongside continued bartering and use of informal networks. To survive the neoliberal reforms implemented by the central government in Moscow, people in this region furthered their bartering skills and the "manipulation of complex personal networks became a common strategy at all levels of society" (2001, p. 550).

As shown above, market relations and capitalist practices take place in, and are played out in accordance with, some place-based particularities. Fishing communities in this context are particularly interesting when considering how social relations and community values play a role in re-constituting market transactions. How do close-knit social relations in fishing communities affect market practices? In what ways do community values make an incursion into capitalist relations as they are performed day to day by people in the community, specifically fish vendors and fish brokers? These are just some of the questions which are of relevance to understanding how market practices are locally enacted by people in the fishing community studied.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter, a conceptual framework has been offered within which the major arguments of the study are anchored. A review of some studies relevant to the themes in the study has also been offered to lay down the ground work for further elaboration of key issues in succeeding chapters. A case has been made for how the concepts of local, glocalization and margins are key to the understanding of the many geographies of globalization. The intent of this framework is not about creating a theoretical standpoint from which a contribution to the debate of globalization is staged. It is not about marking the lineaments of engagement where the global and the local constantly meet; and lastly, it is not about explaining how globalization roosts in a local place and how traces of globalization are marked and named. The aim is more modest than that. The intention is to lay down the groundwork for a descriptive account of a local place undergoing some real changes in lifeways: specifically in the realms of power, gender and economic relations, in the epoch of globalization. It is now worth turning to a descriptive account of the Philippine economy and an introduction to the fishing community under scrutiny.

Picture 4.0
Two fishers launching their boat to the sea for a day of fishing

Chapter Four

Economy and Community

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses two things: first, a brief look at Philippine economic polity, its global connectedness and by extension, the industrialization of CALABARZON[39] which this study implicates, among other national events, with the fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay and second, a descriptive history of the fishing community where the fieldwork for this study was conducted. Finding connections between the global and the local scales is not the primary purpose here. That would entail a much more detailed presentation of data and rigorous excavation of events leading to the fisheries crisis. If connections are cited and established nonetheless, it is my way of asserting that the fishing community I studied is very much part of the outside world. However, I do not subscribe to the view that the discursive terrain of economic globalization of the Philippines is the only valid point of departure in understanding the unfolding of everyday life in the community and its context of transformation. This is not the intention of this part of the chapter. Other forms of globalization clearly play a part in re-constituting Philippine society at large, but for the time being and in the context of my study, I focus on the historical description of the Philippine economy and its being a part of global developments.

Generally, this chapter aims to introduce the reader to the fishing community within the context of the globalizing national economy of the Philippines. Specifically, my aims here are twofold: first, to provide a descriptive terrain of the Philippine economic polity and its global connections from which everyday moments in community life – power, gender and economic relations - can be situated, and second, to sketch out a descriptive rendering of life in the community. This chapter, while discussing the Philippine economy in the context of global economic transformations, does not aver that

[39] CALABARZON is an acronym for Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon, five fast industrializing contiguous provinces next to Manila, the capital city.

as a result the fishing community is consequently global in many aspects. On the contrary, while other places decidedly go global, the fishing community, though affected by happenings outside of it, is still local in many ways. The point of this chapter, then, is to provide a macro context for what are decidedly dynamic moments and exciting contemporary turns of events in the Philippines and to contextualize the changes taking place in the community. In essence, this chapter is predominantly descriptive rather than analytic and largely informative rather than argumentative.

The first section does not presume to provide an exhaustive history of the Philippine economy in the context of global economic re-structuring. What this section is all about is providing a possible context, among many, of what has happened and is happening out there, beyond the boundaries of the fishing community. The second section deals with the community itself. In this, I will write specifically about the following: a short history of the place, the people, demography, the socio-economic structure of fishing and fish trading, livelihood strategies, the decline of fishing as young people in the community leave for the city to work, and the poor living conditions of people relying on fishing and associated trades. This section shows the ground-level reality of life as it unfolds in a fishing community in the era of globalization.

4.2 The Country

The Philippines was 'discovered' by Ferdinand Margellan, a Portuguese explorer, in 1521. Prior to the coming of the Spaniards to the Philippines and its official annexation to Spain in 1561, the Philippines (which at that time was not called in its present name) had already been trading for centuries with its neighboring kingdoms like Siam (now Thailand) and China (Corpuz 2005). The Philippines joined European international trade in 1573 with the inauguration of the galleon trade that linked Manila and Spain via Acapulco in Mexico[40] (Constantino 1977; Corpuz 2005, p. 446; Legarda 1999; Wolf

[40] The Manila galleons were Spanish trading ships that sailed once or twice per year across the Pacific Ocean between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco in New Spain (now Mexico). Service was inaugurated in 1565 and continued into the early 19th century. The galleon carried spices transshipped from the Spice Islands to the south and porcelain, ivory, lacquerware and processed silk cloth from China and Southeast Asia, to be sold in European markets. Until Japan

1997, p. 153). For some 300 years, the galleon trade supplied Manila with products from Spain and other European countries that found their way to the houses of Spanish officials and local elites that harbored European elan and a Castilian outlook on life (Agoncillo 1973; see also Gamalinda 2000; Mojares 1983).[41] In turn, the Philippines gave Spain a taste of its local products like abaca hemp, sugar molasses, shells, pearls, jewelry and porcelain from China and Siam (Corpuz 1999). The galleon trade ceased to operate at the beginning of the 19th century and what transpired afterwards was the eventual opening of the Philippine market to world trade, with the arrival of foreign commercial ships to Philippine ports in 1834. By the time Spain ceded the Philippines to the US in 1898, the Philippines was a robust commercial colonial post in the Far East that facilitated the coming and goings of products from China and neighbouring territories and kingdoms to the rest of the world. With the US as the new colonial master up until Philippine independence in 1945, the country was trading robustly with the world. It enjoyed preferential treatment in the US market as a colony and afterwards a commonwealth (Zaide 1983). In turn, the Philippines was inundated with American products like steel, machineries, and household items like soap, toothpaste and canned goods.

Post-war Philippine economy was a mixed bag of experiments that saw the birth of some Philippine local production lines under the banner of import substitution and the Filipino First Policy of Pres. Carlos Quirino. Astutely developing its local industries and at the same time opening up further to the outside world, by the end of the 1960s, the Philippines was a roaring economic miracle in Asia, second only to Japan in terms of economic output (Aldaba 2005). But being exposed to global economic developments had its own price, too. The oil crisis of the 1970s exacerbated the Philippines' precarious foreign exchange savings and its over-reliance on imported oil products (Yap 1998b). In the 1970s and right before 1986, the Philippines' industrial output was at its lowest in

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closed its doors in 1638, there was some trade with Japan as well. The cargoes were transported by land across Mexico to the port of Veracruz, where they were loaded onto the Spanish treasure fleet bound for Spain. See, for example, Legarda (1999) for an incisive historic account of the galleon trade in the Philippines.

[41] The novel *My Sad Republic* by Eric Gamalinda (2000), which won a 1998 Philippine Centennial Literary Prize, provides a picturesque account of wealthy Filipinos living in sprawling houses adorned with furniture and silverware imported from Spain, France and Italy. Their import was facilitated by the galleon trade. See also Mojares (1983).

decades, unemployment was high and foreign debt skyrocketed (Sicat 2006). This represented for many Filipino economists the lost years of the Philippines, the period when its neighbouring countries like Singapore and Malaysia were starting to lay the ground work for their industrialization (Diokno 2008; Dios 2008).

During the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986), the Philippines opened up vigorously to international trade and, at the same time, came under the tutelage of the IMF-World Bank. Through the sponsorship of the IMF-World Bank, a liberalized trade regime was implemented. Among many government trade initiatives, in 1981, for example, major trade reforms were implemented, the most notable of which were the elements of the 1981-85 Tariff Reform Program (TRP). This would have been accompanied by an import liberalization scheme if not for the Balance-of-Payments (BOP) crisis which erupted in the latter half of 1983 (Medalla 1990; Yap 1998a). Trade reform has, in fact, been a recurring theme in the Philippines, first in the early 1960s and then in the 1980s. The first attempt at trade reform was brief and incomplete: exchange controls were lifted but eventually reimposed while tariffs and nontariff policies remained restrictive. The second attempt covered tariff, nontariff and complementary tax reforms; there was, however, no immediate provision for relaxing exchange controls (Tan 1994, p. 9). As social and economic unrest grew towards the end of the 1970s and the 1980s, the direct intervention of the IMF-World Bank in running the Philippine economy became essential to secure funds for the faltering local economy (Mercado-Aldaba 1994). As coffers drained and foreign direct investment dwindled, the Marcos government undertook some radical economic reforms beginning in the late 1970s. These included an aborted import liberalization plan, Batas Pambansa (BP) 391 in 1983 reforming the Omnibus Investment Code, and various export promotion schemes, aside from the export incentives contained in BP 391 (Medalla 1990, p. 5). Furthermore, ownership of companies in the Philippines was partly denationalized, with foreigners given the chance to secure up to 49% of ownership rights to factories and establishments. The reforms were aimed at improving efficiency and resource allocation, and attaining global competitiveness and sustained economic growth (Medalla 1990 cited in Austria 2000, p. 1). A neo-liberal economic regime became the guiding principle in running the local economy. In those years when the IMF-World Bank virtually controlled the Philippine

economy, the Philippines paralleled the experience of other South American countries like Brazil, Argentina and Chile which had to sell government-owned and controlled corporations to private investors at ridiculously low prices (Bello 2001). During the Marcos years, which ended in 1986, the Philippine economy's openness to international commerce paved the way for an increase in foreign direct investment and the opening of the first export processing zone in Bataan in 1972 to cater to the global market (McKay 2004). It was also during the incumbency of Marcos that the Philippines started sending its workers abroad. By 2008, some 8 million Filipinos work overseas, sending home around $US 16.4 billion in remittances, one of the highest in the world (Manchanda 2010). In this instance, the Philippines' connectivity to the world was not just instantiated by its commercial and financial links with major multinational corporations but was also made possible by its deployment of Filipinos overseas to work as seafarers in major shipping companies in the world; domestic helpers in Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Kuwait; and home carers and nursing assistants in Italy, Britain and Canada, among others.

Marcos' liberalist take on the Philippine economy was continued by his successors. The Philippines' global trade links were intensified. When Corazon Aquino took over in 1986, further reforms had been undertaken. For example, all export taxes (except for logs) were removed. Many more items were liberalized. Three Executive Orders (EOs) and a Republic Act (Tariff Bill) were enacted effecting tariff changes. A new Omnibus Investment Code was passed (EO226) in 1987 (Medalla 1990). In June 1991, R.A 7042 or Foreign Investment Act (FIA) became law. This considerably liberalized the existing regulations by allowing foreign equity participation up to 100 percent in all areas not specified in the Foreign Investment Negative List (FINL). The value of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country increased from an annual average of US$18 million during the period 1987-1992 to US$1,460 million during the period 1993-1998 (Austria 2000). When Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada took over the presidency, in 1992 and 1998 respectively, they continued opening up the Philippines to global commerce. In the waning years of the Ramos presidency, the Philippines hosted the APEC leaders' summit, dubbed by the local press as the coming out party of the Philippines onto the world stage. Their years in power saw the sale of government-owned corporations like Philippine

Airlines, Petron, the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS). In 1996, Republic Act (RA) 7721 was passed into law which liberalized the entry of foreign banks into the country. The increased presence of foreign banks has induced more competition in the banking industry, encouraging domestic banks to improve services and products, globalize their operations and build capitalization (Austria 2000). The Philippine nation-state had by taking some big steps, retreated from engaging directly in doing business, and allowed the private sector to determine the policy discourse on the national economy with very minimal intervention, that is, except for where necessary (Bello 2001).

If the Aquino presidency was known to have rebuilt the confidence of foreign investors in the Philippine economy (Mercado-Aldaba 1994), the Ramos years, on the other hand, saw an intensified embedding of the Philippine economy into the global economy. The Philippine capital account was liberalized during his time. The financial sector was likewise liberalized in 1994, when 10 foreign banks, in addition to the existing four, were allowed to operate in the domestic market (Yap 1998a). Aside from the Philippines joining the WTO in 1996, the Ramos presidency also orchestrated the deregulation of the Philippine petroleum industry, which marked the end of the intervention of the Philippine government in setting the price of crude oil in the domestic market. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with foreign governments had also been penned to facilitate the lowering of tariffs on major Philippine products that are exported and for foreign goods to penetrate the local market. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who took over from Estrada continued what had been left off by her predecessors. Trained as an economist, enticing foreign direct investment was one of the major economic policy tools of her administration. During the 2000-2003 period, a total of US$5.16 billion worth of investment was registered in the Philippines (Aldaba 2005, p. 11). Aldaba (2005) argues that an increase and a host of changes in FDI flows and structure may be explained by the substantial FDI liberalization process implemented over the past decades, which accelerated in the early nineties with the legislation of the Foreign Investment Act (FIA).

As the foregoing discussion shows, the contemporary Philippines, just like many countries in the world, is very much engaged with and an active player in global trade,

commerce and finance. But the effects of this connectedness to the world vary from one place to another. While some places in the Philippines are very much a part of the globalizing world and benefit from it, others are not or are affected adversely by this connection, like the fishing community studied.

Nonetheless, it is of more profound relevance to this study that from the Marcos years until the present (with Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as president), globalization in the Philippines has taken on a more direct physical manifestation through the creation of numerous vast industrial complexes and export processing zones all over the country. Export processing zones are government-earmarked places in the Philippines where foreign investors put up their factories to manufacture goods not for local consumption but for global trade.[42] In return for their investment, they are given generous incentives like tax breaks and duty-free importation of machines and raw materials. Several national and local government agencies intervene directly to assure a hassle-free production regime for these foreign locators. In these vast industrial complexes, labour unions are suppressed and the policing of workers is done by private security agencies employed by foreign manufacturers (Klein 2005). These economic zones manufacture goods for international brands like Adidas, Nike, Gap, JC Penney, IBM, Texas Instrument and a host of other global brands. There are now 195 operating economic zones in the Philippines, which are broken down as follows: 2 agro-industrial economic zones, 118 IT parks/centres, 64 manufacturing economic zones, 2 medical tourism parks and centres and nine tourism economic zones (PEZA 2009). In 1996, to underline their importance in the Philippine economy, a government agency called the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) was created to oversee the running of economic zones in the country. The region which hosts the largest number of economic zones is CALABARZON.[43]

CALABARZON is the acronym referring to five provinces south and east of Metro Manila, namely: (1) Cavite; (2) Laguna; (3) Batangas; (4) Rizal; and (5) Quezon. The fishing community under study is in Quezon province. This group of provinces is

[42] Investments in the country's economic zones rose by a dramatic 101 percent to hit P74.056 billion for the whole of 2000 from P36.819 billion in 1999, due partly to the surge in investments in information technology (IT) enterprises (PEZA 2009).

[43] Currently, there are 17 regions in the Philippines, the National Capital Region (Metro Manila) and CALABARZON being the most populous and prosperous.

among the growth centres selected as major areas for industrialization in the Philippines. CALABARZON, aside from being close to Metro Manila, is considered the country's top investment region. Investments pumped into the region soared to a record high of P122.6 billion in 1997 from P22.6 billion in 1992 (PEZA 2009). The area's annual growth rate boasted an average of 250 percent from 1992 to 1997 with a total of P383 billion (Edralin 2002, p. 32). As of August 2000, public and private economic zones located in CALABARZON and registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) totaled 517 firms with an aggregate average employment of 177,933. The total employment in the CALABARZON region grew by another 3.2 percent (119,000) as of April 2006, reinforced by almost a one percentage point (26,000) decline in unemployment (PEZA 2009).[44]

One town which eventually became a city in 2000 had gained much from the robust investment climate in the region – Sta. Rosa, Laguna. I will now cite Sta. Rosa's unprecedented economic growth briefly to highlight how the presence of economic zones in the city has changed many places and social landscapes in the Philippines, and by extension, what the second part of this chapter will show: how some other parts of CALABARZON, like the fishing community under study, are affected by extra-local developments.

Until a few years ago, Santa Rosa, Laguna, was a sleepy town, a provincial backwater, compared to Calamba, the provincial capital. In the early 1990s, advantaged by its proximity to Manila and a major expressway, economic zones started sprouting in the city. Considered the Investment Hub of South Luzon, it hosts four PEZA-registered industrial estates that provide employment to 86,940 people (DOLE 2009) and contributes almost one billion dollars to Philippine earnings (Nazareno 2009). More

[44] The current employment level in the region stands at 3.856 million, the second highest nationwide, surpassed only by Metro Manila, which remains the largest region in terms of employment, with the employed population reaching 4.132 million as of April 2006. In 2005, CALABARZON's employed population reached 3.810 million, representing a growth of 3.9 percent year-on-year compared to 3.665 million in 2004 (NSO 2009). In 2004, employment in the region also grew by 3.21 percent from 3.551 million in 2003 (DOLE 2009). The 176,993 individuals successfully placed in jobs in industries throughout CALABARZON comprised more than two-thirds of a total 227,451 registered applicants, which was the best performance registered among the country's regions in 2008. The 3.2 percent growth raised the total employment level in the CALABARZON region to 3.856 million in April 2006 from 3.737 million in April 2005 (NSO 2009).

recently it has also become famous for being the site of Enchanted Kingdom, the Philippine counterpart to Disneyland, as well as several upscale housing developments. Other major industries like Ford Motor Company has a plant there. Santa Rosa is also the location for the largest plant of the Coca-cola Company in the Philippines. Hailed as CALABARZON's most admirable city because of its rapid growth in so short a time, the city continued to enjoy this enviable status, as it reached the one billion mark in revenue collection in 2008 or a total of 1,066,672,325.15 Php (Nazareno 2009). Santa Rosa is now among the next wave of cities of the Philippines and is ranked among the top 10 cities by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in terms of trade investment. A city of 266,943 people, its population is increasing, as more and more migrants are flocking into the city in search of employment and residency. Sta. Rosa has indeed come a long way and prides itself for its world-class social services to its people like care for the elderly, educational facilities, and subsidized health care system, among others. But beyond the confines of Sta. Rosa and in many parts of CALABARZON, other things are shaping up.

As more workers were needed for factories, people from the provinces, in the throes of poverty and hoping for a better life, came in droves and worked for industrial estates and economic zones. The presence of a massive number of workers increased the demands for more houses and services in major industrial cities and towns like Sta. Rosa. This, in turn, created a need for more workers to service the needs of other workers. In the outlying areas, towns and cities were affected by these developments with more demand for their agricultural products to meet the needs of the burgeoning population in localities where industrial complexes are located. Cities and towns in CALABARZON saw their geographies altered dramatically with the pouring in of investment in their industrial zones. Exclusive enclaves for the working expatriates, rich locals and Manila residents dotted their landscapes like the 1,600-hectare Nuvali of Ayala Land, the 1000-hectare project of Eton City, and the 300-hectare Greenfield City. Private universities were put up to cater to the educational needs of their ever-increasing population. Agricultural lands were converted to residential areas to accommodate the burgeoning local economy and the arrival of workers from all over the country. One agricultural

product which experienced a dramatic increase in demand in CALABARZON in relation to, and as an effect of, the fast industrialization of Sta. Rosa and its environs was fish.[45]

Near these vast industrial complexes are the ports of Atimonan, Real, Batangas and Lucena, where most fishing vessels dock to unload their catch. Fish from other coastal towns are also brought in to these large ports to be sold to buyers as far away as Manila and other cities up north. According to the reports of the administrators of Lucena and Atimonan port complexes, the demand for fish has outstripped supply since the late 1990s. While the increase in the local population of many areas could well explain this, one port administrator was quick to point out the effects of the fast industrialization of many towns and cities near these fish ports:

> In the 1980s when I started working for the (Dalahican Fish) port, our supply was just right to meet the demand. At that time, we sold some 200 boxes of fish at most. Now the demand for fish is just too great. We sell some 1,500 to 2,000 boxes of fish everyday and the demand is just insatiable. I just noticed that when all these factories began operating in many towns and cities close to Lucena, we had a sudden surge in demand. (Interview 2008)

Fishing communities in Lamon Bay are affected by the fast industrialization of towns and cities around it. Towns encircling this body of water are near these vast industrial complexes. Atimonan (another coastal town in Quezon), for example, is characterized by robust fish trading, eclipsing that of Udung, and it could well rank next to Lucena in terms of fish being unloaded and traded everyday. The same could be said about the towns of Real and Infanta, which are geographically contiguous. The fast depletion of Lamon Bay's resources, then, could well be a part of these changes in the demography of population in surrounding areas and the economic developments taking place in towns and cities that host these industrial complexes. As more and more workers were needed in factories, more pressure on Lamon Bay and other bodies of water was perhaps inevitable. In fact, capture marine fisheries in the CALABARZON area including Lamon Bay could not keep pace with demand and were increasingly supplemented and/or replaced by farmed fish. Today the aqua culture industry has gained prominence and

[45] This echoes the findings made by Chernela (2005) in her study of a fishing community in Brazil. According to her "the growth of Manaus placed increasing pressure on local fisheries to meet the demands of its burgeoning population. Adjacent waters were quickly overfished, as commercial fleets ventured ever farther from Manaus in pursuit of fishing grounds" (2005, p. 621).

supplies the bulk of the fish protein that fishing communities have failed to deliver. In 2005, for example, Philippine aquaculture production reached 1,895,847 metric tons, a big increase compared to a mere 96,461 metric tons in 1970 (BFAR 2009).

The increase in the number of big boats plying the waters of Lamon Bay was a part and a result of these economic transformations in the Philippine economy. In 1994, there were only 2,356 small boats and 1,201 commercial boats in Lamon Bay. In 2008, the number of small boats increased to a modest 2,908, while commercial boats rose to 4,318 (Abuyan 2008). Small-scale fishing has remained communal in orientation and has not been able to take stock of changes in the constitution of demands for fish through the years. Increase in demand brought in more investment in big fishing boats. With more fishing boats exploiting a limited resource, and with regulatory regimes ineffective in implementing rules of equitable and balanced resource use, declining catches seem likely and small-scale fishers' lives seem destined to change.

4.3 And the Community

4.3.1 What's in a Name?

Sta. Filomena (not the real name of the place) is Udung's (not the real name of the town) biggest and best known fishing community. It is one of Banaag's 12 districts spread out over some 769 hectares of residential land (Santayana 2008). Banaag, on the other hand, is one of Udung's 40 'barangays'[46]. Sta. Filomena is a coastal community of 145 households in Lamon Bay in Quezon province (Santayana 2008). The area may have been inhabited as early as the beginning of the 18th century.[47] Some parts of the

[46] *Barangay*, also known by its former Spanish adopted name, the barrio, is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward. *Barangays* are further subdivided into smaller areas called puroks. A *sitio* is a territorial enclave inside a *barangay*, especially in rural areas. Municipalities and cities are composed of barangays. These are led by *barangay* chairmen, who are helped in their administrative duties by elective seven-member bodies called *Sangguniang Barangay*, with the *barangay* chairman serving as presiding officer.

[47] In the book *Kasaysayan ng* _____ (History of _____) by _____, which was published in 1945, she listed that as early as 1754, there was already a community in _____ called Banaag. As to when Sta. Filomena began to be a fishing community, it cannot be determined, although a

community used to be marshland, and by the end of the 1940s, Sta. Filomena had become a thriving fishing community.[48] With marshlands reclaimed for houses to be built and with the arrival of economic migrants from other parts of the country, more and more houses were erected along the shoreline.

The geography of the fishing community starts where a narrow concrete bridge, connecting it to other districts of the town, ends. Most of the houses are concentrated on a narrow strip of paved land that runs alongside the beach. The narrow street that separates the community from the shore is the main artery that connects Sta. Filomena to the rest of the town and most possibly, to the world. The main street is the life of the community. When any mail arrives, the postman asks people in this street for the whereabouts of the addressee. People in Sta. Filomena all have the same address: Sta. Filomena, Barangay Banaag, Udung, Quezon, Philippines. This address is shared by all households in the community. The only distinguishing mark is the name of the recipient. People of this fishing community meet each other on this street. It is where small fortunes are made and fist fights are staged. If the community is a theatre (Goffman 1971) where everyone plays his role, the street is the main stage, while private quarters are the backstage. The street goes straight to a long sand dune before it ends in a group of hamlets that verge on a river. In turn, the river runs to the sea. This narrow strip of paved land is unnamed and the inhabitants have no name for it. They never bothered to name it. Something which has always been familiar needs no naming. It's in their head. It's where their everyday lives are played out. To name it is superfluous. What's in a name? But it had to be named, since all things in this world need proper identification to distinguish it

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83 year-old informant told me that his father was himself a fisher, and so his father's father. That would make Sta. Filomena an old fishing settlement, although it has been classed as a fishing community very recently by the town, and therefore represents a curious case. It could be that it was only in the beginning of the 20th century that the community became distinctively a place for fishers to settle in. Nor could anyone in the community tell me when its name became the official name of the community. The oldest informant told me that when he was a kid the place was already called Sta. Filomena. The standard response, then, was *matagal ng masyado* (a long time ago).

[48] Since no existing literature on the area exists, my dating is primarily based on the statement of my oldest informant who was born in 1925. He told me that during the Second World War, Japanese forces landed on the beach and drove many families living in the community into the mountains. He was then in his early 20s and was fishing with some friends when the invading Japanese forces arrived. At that time, he told me, the community was already supplying the town with fish.

from others. Naming postulates existence (Charmaz 2006). The municipal government calls it Villaverde Street, named after a famous local political clan.[49] The place does not exist in the municipal geography though, because there is no place on the town map called Sta. Filomena. A fisherman explained it by saying, "we're poor, that explains why you can't find our place on the map".

Sta. Filomena's geography is complex. It used to be simple, an old resident explained. There were only a few houses before, and that must have been between the 60s and late 70s. The street was not a street yet, just a narrow strip of land that was strewn with rocks and Lamon Bay's material castaways. But people from other places soon started to settle there and claimed a piece of the land for themselves. People from as far as Visayas and Mindanao[50] came to raise their families there. These people were also fishers in the places they came from, and soon Sta. Filomena expanded until it encompassed a complex array of labyrinthine enclaves of reclaimed lands that rose from pools of sea water and islands of towering grasses and palm fronds. Sta. Filomena is bursting at the seams. It plays host to a profusion of small alleys and improvised wooden bridges that connect one group of houses to another. It is a community of unexpected twists and turns. Many houses were built parallel to the long shoreline while some houses sprang from reclaimed marshland so that when the high tide comes, they look like rickety boats floating on turgid waters. Sta. Filomena in a sense will remind us of colonias along the US-Mexican border, "generally lacking running water, adequate sewage system, paved streets, health facilities, and police protection. Houses and lots are frequently irregular and cannot meet urban zoning standards" (Campbell and Heyman 2007, p. 9).

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[49] When the street was named Villaverde Street in the official registry of the town in 1994, the mayor was Silvestre Villaverde, a member of the ruling political clan in town. While it is self-serving, no one contested its naming since the street is part of Barangay Banaag, where most members of the Villaverde family live. Their naming of the street after themselves is not unusual, though. All over the Philippines, it is the customary practice of most politicians to name a street or a building in their own name.

[50] The Philippines is geographically divided into three major island groups and they are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Among the three, Luzon is the most important, politically and economically. The capital city, Manila, is in Luzon, and major commercial hubs are also there. Chronic poverty is widespread in the Visayas and Mindanao, which is further aggravated by the on-going conflict between the national government and the secessionist Islamic group, Moro-Islamic Liberation Front. This and other reasons caused the large outbound migration of the islands' inhabitants to Luzon.

The fishing community also serves as a reference point for one's domicile, since many places within the area are quite new and need further naming. Some people living next to Sta. Filomena call their place either 'Isla Puneta' (Island of the Damned) or 'Pook Maligaya' (Place of Bliss), and yet when they are asked, they claim that they live in Sta. Filomena. According to them, that makes it easy for other people to visualize their place, since their place is very much like Sta. Filomena itself, and the people they associate themselves with are mostly from the community. Sta. Filomena, then, is also a figurative marker that speaks of other places and marks their contiguity with it. Since Sta. Filomena has in recent memory become associated with poverty, in a way, it becomes a living trope to people's runaway world (Giddens 2002) – a world of helplessness and uncertainties.[51] When someone who is not living in Sta. Filomena but right next to it is asked where he or she lives, the answer could be: "sa may Sta. Filomena". Almost in Sta. Filomena.

When I did my fieldwork, I never thought that fixing Sta. Filomena's exact geographical location and coordinates would be a tricky affair. My familiarity with the place obscures the need to know it further. When people know the place like the palm of their hand, they never attempt to know its boundaries, its limits, its edges, its beginnings and ends. It is enough that they know where to look for someone in the place when the need arises. That is the case with me. Sta. Filomena is both an imagined (Anderson 2006a) and a knowable community (Hau 2000; Williams 1965). Since Sta. Filomena's boundaries verge on and overlap with other communities and 'barangay', people call themselves "from Sta. Filomena" if they are asked and yet vote in other barangays, since their houses can be found in adjoining barangays. Thus, Sta. Filomena is both a geography of one's habitation and at the same time a social affiliation of someone who feels strongly for the place and traces her roots back there. Sta. Filomena is a socio-political cartography as much as it is a cognitive imaginary.

Lands in Sta. Filomena are all untitled and classified as public lands. Some claim though that they belong to a local political family. The local land registry on the other

[51] Old residents in the community would speak of a carefree life in their youth; their lives, though not as good as those of other people living in the town centre, were much better off than today. Young people, on the other hand, primarily those who were born in the late 1980s onwards, have always seen life in the community as difficult. The old people's take on a good life in the past is an alien concept, a fiction for them.

hand does not have any record of the ownership of lands in Sta. Filomena. Tenancy in a lot or as built accommodation changes hands through what the people in the community refer to as 'rights'. Thus, someone or a family could sell his/its 'rights' to a lot or a house, but not the lot itself. In terms of their right to tenancy, no one knows who owns the land and no one in the community, I was told, made an effort to formalise his ownership of any piece of land by filing a petition before a local government agency. If and when someone comes in and claims ownership to most lands in Sta. Filomena, it will be mayhem indeed. But as things go, rent-free living in Sta. Filomena, which is a feature of most rural and urban resettlements for the poor (see, for example, Portes, Castells and Benton 1989), helps the people save some money which they can use to address some pressing daily needs.

4.3.2 The People of Sta. Filomena

At the time of my fieldwork, Sta. Filomena had a population of around 708 inhabitants. Many claimed to have roots in the town and called themselves 'taal na tiga-Udung' (natives of Udung). They were contrasting themselves, of course, to new arrivals who had come from as far as Mindanao in the south and Ilocos in the north. But there is no distinct ethnolinguistic grouping that divides a group of people from one another. While many would have no problem claiming that they are Bisaya or Ilocano (two of the Philippines' major ethnolinguistic groups), this does not create any tension or division among the people in the community. During my fieldwork, I did not encounter any pronounced ethnolinguistic row among the inhabitants. If there were reports of mischief in the community, there was never any reference to the culprit as being a Bisaya or Ilocano. As it was, during my stay, by contrast with other communities in the Philippines where ethnolinguistic tensions would erupt from time to time, people in the community saw each other as Sta. Filomena residents ('tiga-Sta. Filomena') and not along ethnolinguistic lines. Newcomers to the community also did not come on their own, but came to live in the area by virtue of their marriage with old-time residents' sons or daughters. This must have watered down whatever trace of ethnic distinction people erected among themselves. Many of them met in cities or in other towns where they

worked together and eventually decided to settle down in Sta. Filomena. The fishing community, quite unlike other fishing communities in the Philippines such as that studied by Eder (2005), was at the time of my fieldwork pretty much undivided by locational origins, its members at peace with one another and not fraught with ethnolinguistic tensions. Thus, while the community was a multi-ethnic settlement, there was never any talk of other people from other places depriving the locals of job opportunities.

Sources of income in the community were varied. The people were into fishing, money lending, selling fish, small-town lottery bet collecting, minding sari-sari stores, and selling food.[52] The figures were inconclusive, however, since some families were involved in a number of productive activities like fishing, selling fish and minding stores altogether. The average household annual income did not exceed 100,000.00 Php (1,204 GBP) which is much lower than the national average at 147,000.00 Php. Generally, owing to widespread poverty, educational attainment was low, although functional literacy was high. Among the participants interviewed for the study, less than 1% reached college, 9% finished high school, 20% reached high school, 40% finished grade school and 27% reached grade school, and 3% never went to school at all. Women had a better educational profile than men, though. Some 23% of women finished high school, while among men it was just 15%.[53] This educational profile of fishers from the community of course took its toll on them, as chapter 5 will show, in terms of their competitiveness in the labour market. Life expectancy in the Philippines is 64 years for men and 71 years for women (NSO 2009). There were no data available that were specific to Sta. Filomena itself.

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[52] Six households are employed by the municipal government, but all of them are political appointees. Their positions are, therefore, precarious. Any change in leadership means the possibility of losing their job, since their tenure in office is temporary and they serve at the pleasure of the municipal mayor. 34 households gain their income from fishing. 7 households do so from money lending, but I was told that there were more than this in the community. I only counted those people whose main source of income was lending money. There must be a whole lot more who also lend money on the side. 45 households sell fish for a living; 7 households work as small-town lottery bet collectors; 8 households mind sari-sari stores; and 5 households sell food, however, this number is highly tentative as it fluctuates from time to time. During my fieldwork, I counted five families who derived their income mainly from selling cooked food. By the time I left for Cardiff, there were already eight, owing to the perceived good income that food selling provides.

[53] As it turned out, no educational profile of the community existed and the survey I made, I was told by barangay officials, is the first in the history of Sta. Filomena.

In the absence of official data on household occupations and income in the area, I conducted a small survey. By this means I determined that there were approximately 96 fishermen in Sta. Filomena, but the number is inconclusive. Some people I talked with said however that there could be more. Others thought that there could be less. How I defined being a fisherman is crucial here. I defined a fisherman as a person who makes a living out of fishing, whether full-time or part-time. If I were to limit my definition to people who fished full-time, the number would be greatly reduced. The average age for fishermen was 37. The youngest fisherman I met, albeit not full-time, was 7 years old,[54] and the oldest was 80. Out of the 55 fishermen I met and had conversations with, only 23 claimed that they fished full-time. The rest, 32 fishermen, dabbled in construction work or in any other manual job if there was availability on the market. Of the 70 men and women who sold fish, 43 said that they were doing it full-time, and most of them (25) were women. The rest, 27, also did carpentry and occasional construction work. They were all men.

Among fishermen aged 50 and above, many claimed to have started fishing when they were very young, some even when they were seven years old. They never thought of doing any other work aside from fishing, they told me. The younger fishers, 40 years old and below, were thrown into fishing due to lack of opportunities, low level of education and the influence of their families and peers. Compared to the older fishermen, most of them had work experience other than fishing and would from time to time leave fishing for other kinds of work. In Sta. Filomena, only three households were known to have either a son or daughter working abroad, while 20 families had immediate family members working in Manila and other cities like Lucena.[55]

[54] There were some 13 child-fishers in the community at the time of my fieldwork. But they were not full-time fishers. They usually accompanied their fathers at sea for a short period of time and when the weather was particularly fine. They went out fishing during weekends so that fishing would not interfere with their schooling. Among the child-fishers, there were 5 girls and 8 boys.

[55] Eight were factory workers, seven were domestic helpers, and five were construction workers.

4.3.3 Fishing and Other Trades

All fishers in Sta. Filomena were small-scale fishers. Small-scale fishers refer to people whose boats are not mechanized, or in some Asian countries generally, and the Philippines specifically, with a gross tonnage of less than three tons (Government 1998; Kurien 1998, 2003; Stobutzki, Silvestre and Garces 2006). They are also characterized as "typically coastal and differ markedly in structure and function from large-scale, offshore fisheries" (Vincent, Meeuwig, Pajaro and Perante 2007, p. 207). Small-scale fishing includes highly individualized fishing operations like cast nets and handlines, operating a regime of gillnets and longlines, and the labour-intensive purse-seine and shore-based, beach-seining operations. It also includes both non-motorized and motorized vessels and utilizes a lot of gear, including gillnet, trammel hook and line, trap, small push-net and seine nets (Stobutzki; Silvestre and Garces 2006). In the Philippines, they are also called municipal fishers, a supposedly privileged group of fishers which, by virtue of their small-scale operations, is allotted the exclusive use of the seaward boundary running along a line 15 kilometers from the shoreline. In this area, they are the sole users. Boats bigger than three tons must fish beyond this zone.

Fishers in Sta. Filomena can be classified into two groups: those who own boats, whether with or without outboard motors ('de makina' or 'sagwanan') and those who rent their labour to boat owners ('nakikisakay'), commonly known as fish workers.[56] Those who run motorized boats earn more than those who make use of non-mechanized boats. The explanation is simple: mechanized boats can reach remote fishing grounds, while those which are non-mechanized cannot. Rich fishing grounds usually take some five hours of travel from the shore. Non-mechanized boats cannot venture far because of their size. The farther they travel, the bigger the waves, and small boats are untenable in this

[56] This local distinction very much echoes the findings of Busby (2000) in her study of a fishing community in Kerala, India. In this fishing community, she identified two local groups, the ones using *kattumaram* (which in Sta. Filomena is called *sagwanan*/non-mechanized) and plywood boats (mechanized boats in Sta. Filomena). In Sta. Filomena though, unlike in Kerala, fishers using *sagwanan* do not see men using mechanized boats as 'not real fishermen'. Among fishers in Sta. Filomena, there is no particular cultural meaning to using either of the two boats. It's only a matter of having the capital to purchase a boat with an engine (see, for example, Busby [2000, pp. 49-50]).

kind of environment. These non-mechanized boats are also referred to as canoes in other literature on fishing (see also Robben 1994).

At the time of my research, there were 52 boats in Sta. Filomena. However, not all the boats were owned by fishers. Seven boats were owned by former fishers who had retired and derived their income from 'employing' fish workers on their boats. They financed fishing trips. They were fishers who had saved some money and invested in boats. They maintained a pool of fish workers who were either relatives or neighbours. What Yano (1994) observed about fishers in Panay in the Visayas could also be said in Sta. Filomena. According to him, "fishermen (in Panay) continue to hold onto their 'crude' methods of fishing which are well adapted to natural and ecological conditions" (Yano 1994, p. 3). He observed that "instead of being wiped out by the new technology, traditional fishery has become more diversified; traditional fishing methods have been consolidated and transformed as the fisherfolk, in their continuing struggle for survival, made room for innovations" (Yano 1994, p. 4). Fishers in Sta. Filomena employed a variety of techniques in fishing. The most commonly practised were the following: 'tiw-tiw', 'sakag', 'kitang', 'pamilpil', 'turol' and 'sapyaw'.[57]

Aside from fishers, Sta. Filomena was also known for its fish vendors and fish traders. It used to be that fish selling and trading were subsidiary work to fishing. But with the fisheries crisis, these two forms of economic labour bred a pool of workers on their own. Many fishers had turned to marketing fish to make ends meet. Thus, during my fieldwork, most if not all male fish vendors used to be fishers or had dabbled in fishing (I will discuss male fish vendors and their life in the community in greater length

[57] *Tiw-tiw* - a kind of hook and line with bird feather attached to the hook. It is said to attract a kind of squid called *patundot*; *sakag* - a kind of trawl pushed by a fisher in the shallow water near the shore, combing the seabed for small shrimps called *alamang*; *kitang* - a kind of hook and line which has some 1,000 hooks attached to the line. It is usually used by mechanized fishing boats in remote fishing grounds; *pamilpil* - before a hook and line is thrown into the sea, the water is hit several times by paddle-shaped wood meant to create a particular sound which is said to attract a particular kind of fish called *lamarang*; *turol* - a net is thrown and pulled against the seafloor in the middle of the sea. The aim is to catch all kinds of demersal fish, or fish living in the bottom of the sea. It is outlawed since it destroys coral reefs. Only a few fishers in the community do this kind of fishing; *sapyaw* - a kind of fishing that employs three to four people. A net is thrown into a fish cage supervised by a lead fisher. Down in the bottom of the fish cage, a fisher makes some moves to direct the caged fish, usually called *galunggong* (a local variety of mackerel) towards the net. It is done in the months of June to October.

in chapter 6). While some persisted in fishing, they were relatively few and they did not do it regularly. Many of them went fishing once or twice a week. A handful did it everyday, but they were mostly fishers who utilized non-motorized boats. Their expenses were very minimal, which allowed them to fish on a regular basis. Their only costs were food and fish bait. Sometimes, fish bait could be had for free from fish vendors. Such bait was usually left-over fish which no one wanted to buy. On the other hand, those who were using motorized boats spent a great deal on fuel. This prevented them from fishing regularly. Thus, while the conditions of fishing were bad, many fishers, young and old, sold fish everyday, while on some days they went fishing. Some devoted much of their time to fish selling, since by comparison in terms of regularity of income, they were earning much better than the fishers under present conditions.[58]

There were two kinds of fish vendors in Sta. Filomena, those who had stalls in the market and plied their trade there (they will be called market fish vendors throughout the study) and those who sold fish on the street, either by setting up their own stall in front of their house or by selling on foot.[59] They are referred to as mobile fish vendors in the study. They were mostly men in their late 20s, 30s and 40s. The old men's tendency was to stick it out with fishing. Reasons vary, although a number of generalizations could be made. Old men did not need to support any big family, since their children were all either married or already working. Some did but they were relatively few. They were also assisted financially by their children. This gave them the luxury to go fishing, even if it did not pay well nowadays. Old men also told me that even if they wanted to market fish, they were no match for the younger ones. Since fish selling requires too much walking, their old age prevented them from doing so. In addition, for many old fishers, their attachment to fishing goes beyond economic considerations. For them, fishing is more than earning money; it's about enjoying the trade that they are most familiar with (see

[58] Again, this categorization is tenuous since some fishers dabbled in fish selling and some fish vendors also did in fishing. But there emerged a sizeable number of men (and women) who were engaged in selling fish alone. The fisheries crisis had therefore formalized the emergence of this group of people in the community.

[59] In Sta. Filomena, fish vendors are known as *magririgaton*. The word used to be solely associated with women, but with men joining this trade, it assumes a more gender-free meaning, although men prefer to be called *maglalako ng isda* rather than *magririgaton*. It would seem that the word still evokes tones of femininity which men fish vendors find unpalatable.

also Busby 2000). Fishing gives them satisfaction and fulfillment.[60] Young fishers, on the other hand, had families to feed or in case of the unmarried had a number of expenses to pay for, like contributing to household expenses and buying some necessities, like a new pair of jeans, a mobile phone, shoes or some trips to the city with friends.

Selling fish on foot, which was what mobile fish vendors did, was physically exhausting. One got up very early in the morning, around 5 am, to either wait for boats to land their catch, or as was the usual case, wait for the deliveries of fish in fish brokerages. Usually, mobile fish vendors took two trips, one in the morning, from 8 am -12 noon and another one in the afternoon, from 3 pm-7 pm. The length of time spent selling depended on the route they took. If one decided to sell fish in remote villages, which could provide a good return because fish was priced higher, fish vendors usually got home at 9 pm. But fish vendors who sold their fish in far-flung villages and towns did it in twos. On one of the many trips that I joined,[61] I was with four men and we sold fish in a remote mountainous community. We first took a bus and then walked all the way from the highway to the community. It was raining then and the road was slippery. It was an ordeal. It took us an hour to reach the settlement and when we got there, we had to wait for customers since many of them were still in the fields working their farms. At 12 noon we were done selling fish, and what we had was some money, a heavy sack of rice and a variety of vegetables, since many of the people opted to pay in kind. When we got home, the rice and vegetables were divided among the four (I opted to forgo my portion). The four sold their extra rice to the neighbourhood, and when cash was already available to them, they then paid their dues to the fish broker. No fish brokers accepted rice as payment. On other trips that I joined, some of my companions made it clear to buyers that they would not accept payment in kind. Others could not resist accepting rice, however, since some buyers were short of cash. The income of mobile fish vendors varied, although if two trips were made in a day and some 30 kilos of fish were sold, a fish vendor could make 250.00 Php at the least. Men fish vendors could earn this amount in a

[60] This is so true judging from my personal experience. Some months after my father was diagnosed with lung cancer, and returning to our town after some weeks of medical consultation in Manila, although very much forbidden by his doctors to go fishing again, the first thing that my father did upon returning home was to go fishing. When my mother protested, my father cut her short: "Bar me from fishing and I will die sooner!"

[61] I did not sell fish in the community, but rather in far-flung areas where no one knew me.

day, while women fish vendors generally did not since they only sold an average of 20 kilos of fish per day.

All market fish vendors from the community were women. They used to sell fish on the street and their husbands were former fishers, or were, in fact, still active in fishing. They owned the best houses in the community and some could afford to send their children to college. Their number was small, however. There were only eight of them in the community. They could earn as much as 1,000.00 Php per day, although they could also lose as much on a bad day, and when sales were dismal, they could only earn enough to cover their everyday expenses. The income of market fish vendors varied. Some market fish vendors were crowd-drawers and had a huge capitalization compared to others. On average, market fish vendors earned not less than 400.00 Php a day, although their expenses were also considerable. They paid a slew of local taxes (a license to sell fish in the market cost 5,000.00 Php per annum) and market expenses like ice, labourers (people who unload fish from local transportation called tricycles) and transportation (bringing fish from the fish brokerage to the town market). While it could be said that they were a lot better off than other people in the community, they could not be considered to belong to the middle class, as conventionally defined. At most, they occupied the highest position in the lower class.[62] While they earned more than others, their economic position was precarious and many mobile fish vendors used to be market fish vendors. Such demotion in productive capability was brought about by a host of reasons, one of which was disastrous fish bidding results that caused them huge losses.[63]

There were seven fish dealers in Sta. Filomena, four were men and three were women. In many ways, they were also fish vendors. Their only difference from mobile

[62] It is a curious case that many people in the community are ambivalent about the prospect of being able to sell fish in the town market. According to the people that I interviewed, while having a stall in the market means a decent regular income, it also means much danger and uncertainty. When one becomes a market fish vendor, they say, one becomes a risk-taker in fish auctions and a lavish spender, as if the productive position necessitates the manufacturing of such personal attributes. They would sum up the situation as *maganda pero nakakatakot din* (it looks nice but is also unsettling).

[63] While there are many examples of such cases in the community, one particularly poignant case is Petra. Prior to my fieldwork, she was said to be one of the most successful market fish vendors in the community. But disastrous market transactions wiped out her savings. She became indebted to many fish brokerages and money lenders. At the time of my fieldwork, she was a mobile fish vendor. She lost her stall in the market and she only frequented one fish brokerage. She still owed a vast sum of money to other fish brokerages.

fish vendors is that they had a bigger capital, which allowed them to buy fish in boxes which they, in turn, re-sell to mobile fish vendors. Unlike fish brokers though, they did not buy fish from commercial fishers. They sourced their fish from either fish brokers in the community or a nearby fish port. All of them were, prior to dealing in fish, either in fishing or selling fish on the street. They had a capital of 5,000.00 Php-30,000.00 Php. Once they got their boxes of fish, they distributed them to mobile fish vendors in the community. For every kilo of fish, they made a profit of 5.00 Php. In a day, they could sell as many as four boxes of fish and earn 800.00 Php after expenses. This kind of windfall did not happen everyday, however. Sometimes, there was no fish to sell and they would earn nothing.

4.3.4 They Fish No More

There was a paucity and dwindling number of young people who went into fishing. In Sta. Filomena, out of 97 fishers, only five were under 30, and most of them were fishing on a part-time basis. Old fishers tend to be nostalgic, in this respect. According to them, when they were still young, everyone wanted to be a fisherman and landing one's first catch was an initiation of sort into the fishing community. Once one knew how to read signs ('pananda') in the sky for the changes in boat direction and weather, feel for the right sea current to follow and identify rich fishing grounds, one became a true fisherman. Young people in Sta. Filomena were drifting away from fishing. An old man said:

> Young men here are more interested to play volleyball and talk about the latest news about boxing[64] than knowing the sea. When we were young, we would listen to the conversations of old men about fishing. We wanted to learn from them. But you can't blame them, you see. There's nothing about the sea anymore. Young people have better future doing other things. (Interview 2008)

Marcus was 21 years old and sold fish. He was single and went into selling fish while waiting for news about his prospective employment in the city. According to him, he never considered fishing as a profession, since it was too tiring a job and very dangerous.

[64] During my fieldwork, it was the height of the media frenzy about the boxing fight between Manny Pacquiao, a local boxing hero who has since won the fight and assumed an almost mythical status, and Oscar dela Hoya, a Mexican boxing champion.

Stories of fishers failing to return home abound in the community. A classmate of mine in primary school, for example, joined a fishing trip in the late 1990s and fell off the boat by accident. He lost his balance while walking on the edge of the boat. His compatriot failed to rescue him. His body was never found. I only got to know his story when I did my fieldwork. Another informant spoke of battling high waves, as high as a church belfry, which caused their boat to capsize. He and his co-fisher survived by swimming endlessly until they reached the nearest shore. They never fished, they told me, for several months after the incident due to trauma. All fishers that I interviewed had their own share of horror stories about fishing, primarily when they lost track of their routes and got lost due to unforeseen bad weather. When fishers were not battling angry waves or bad weather, the extremely cold temperature at sea was unnerving.

Writing in 1981, Acheson explains:

> The sea is a dangerous and alien environment, and one in which man is poorly equipped to survive. It is a realm that man enters only with the support of artificial devices (i.e., boats, canoes, platforms, scuba gear, or other technologies), and then only when weather and sea conditions allow. The constant threat of storm, accident, or mechanical failure makes fishing at sea very dangerous occupation anywhere in the world. (Acheson 1981, p. 277)

The descriptive assessment of fishing as an occupation made by Ota and Just (2008) clearly captures the sentiments of young people in Sta. Filomena. According to them:

> Fishing is hard work, and it is often cold and wet work. Many young aspirants to a fishing career are eventually put off by the prospects of going out to sea day after day (or night after night) in rough and windy weather, especially when their hard work does not always pay off. (Ota and Just 2008, p. 306)

Fishers in their early 20s and 30s considered fishing to be the last economic resort and all of them thought that they would soon do other things when opportunities arrived. A number of reasons are available, but among these are the expanding opportunities in other places, primarily in the city, where work in factories and malls is readily available for young people who are enticed by the prospect of the more enjoyable and exciting life that city living offers. Cities near the community are therefore magnets to such young people who have found fishing economically unreliable, difficult and unpalatable.

Many young men were awed by the stories of friends and relatives who lived in the city and had returned for a short vacation. During my fieldwork, I met Christian. He

was in his mid-20s and a high school graduate. His father was a fisherman and his mother was running a small store in the community. He was the 'bida' (star) of most conversations among his friends. In one of the drinking sessions I joined, he was showing his friends his new watch and shoes, which according to him he bought with his salary from work. He was working as a baggage man in a department store in Manila. The work was tiring, he said, but good enough to buy some things which he said would be impossible if he were a fisherman or even a fish vendor. He was telling his friends to go with him when he went back to the city and he would help them to find a job there. The city, he said, offers so many opportunities. "Here," he said, "you will grow old without anything, not even seeing other places and experiencing what it's like getting on an escalator." When I was about to end my fieldwork, three of his friends went to the city with Christian. Two of them were fish vendors, while the last one was a fisherman of my age.[65]

The growth in the formal economic sectors of manufacturing and services in the Philippines for the past 20 years paved the way for the opening up of venues for more people to find employment in urban areas. Sta. Filomena is not isolated from the developments in the centre. As more and more people from Sta. Filomena leave for the city and return bringing with them stories about their lives and the enjoyable life the city offers, the more fishing will become marginalized in the minds of young people. Young people are lured in by the freedom offered by cities, primarily Manila, and the perception of their peers that working in the city means a better life. This echoes the assertion made by Brody in her study of women janitors in Bangkok wherein, "many young people continue to migrate to the city because, in doing so, they can translate their experiences and earnings in to forms of social capital [...]. In the eyes of their contemporaries back

[65] In primary school, when my classmates spoke about their parents and their sources of income, I could only wish that my father was doing other things aside from fishing. In our textbooks, doctors, lawyers and businessmen were the epitome of a successful life. Fishing had never been an awesome job. It was only romanticized as a decent job, but never desirable enough to make us want to become fishers in the future. Years of free public education must have precipitated this unspoken disdain for fishing as a source of income. We were intending to study hard to become successful, that is, to become accountants, lawyers, doctors, nurses and teachers. Fishing became the domain of the unsuccessful, the unlettered, the uncredentialed sector of society. My generation may have been the first generation to disavow the economic possibility of fishing.

home they are seen to have 'succeeded'" (2006, p. 539). The formal economy and the glitter of the city continue to lure people away from fishing.

4.3.5 Limited Opportunities

While Sta. Filomena was known to be a fishing community, the town to which it belonged was primarily an agricultural town. Out of Udung's 40 barangays, seven comprised the town proper and the remaining 33 were scattered in either the mountainous parts or plains of the town. Thus, aside from fishing, the people from Udung derived their income mostly from farming, coconut harvesting, and handicraft making. The biggest employer in town, however, was the national government, which employed some 1,546 teachers and personnel for both primary and high schools; the local municipal government, which had around 395 employees; and a coal-fired power plant, which had some 134 employees (Santayana 2008). There were no factories or big shopping malls in Udung, and one had to travel to the neighbouring city of Lucena to find employment in such industries. Udung therefore was a typical Philippine municipality, which had a mixed economy but was heavily reliant on agriculture for most of its people's economic sustenance.

Employment in the formal sector of the economy was hard to come by in Sta. Filomena and most probably in Udung. There were no factories in town and big commercial establishments were non-existent. While Udung was an agricultural town, there were no big plantations that employed large numbers of workers, unlike in some Philippine municipalities that maintained vast sugar and tobacco plantations. Udung's topography was mountainous and its agricultural lands were mostly planted with rice and coconut trees. Rice fields were usually small in size, and with private lands being sold to the national government for distribution to landless farmers under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of past and present Philippine governments, land owners that maintained farm workers were very few indeed.

Joining the formal sector of the economy required workers to have at least finished high school and in many cases, at least two years in college, if not a college degree. As mentioned, people in Sta. Filomena, fishers primarily, had low educational

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attainment and this further exacerbated their already poor chance of being employed in some waged work in neighbouring towns and cities. While a few had had the chance of working in the city and abroad, many were simply marginalized and unable to compete in the formal labour sector due to their poor qualifications. Employment in the municipal government was also difficult, since appointment was not just determined by qualifications, but also by one's political affiliation, and Sta. Filomena was primarily allied with the past administration which waged a bitter electoral fight with the incumbent mayor. This excluded many of its inhabitants from being employed in the local government. Finding work in the coal-fired power plant was of course another impossibility, since the work there was highly technical and menial services were primarily facilitated through sub-contracting schemes. In the city and neighbouring towns which had been undergoing dramatic changes due to their proximity to industrial complexes, construction work and allied services were also hard to penetrate because of the sheer number of people looking for work. With no employment available to them, fishers who were made redundant by the fisheries crisis had no choice but to seek alternative livelihoods in the informal sector in the community. The same thing could be said for women. With men out of work or earning a pittance from fishing, some sought survival in the formal sector of the economy while the majority undertook alternative forms of income generation. Thus, with most people in the community not working in the formal economy, the informal economy provided the ways and means to survive.

During my stay, I was impressed by the sheer determination and entrepreneurial vigor of the people in Sta. Filomena. Everyday, when I met them in food stalls in the morning, they would tell me of future job prospects or ways to earn more money or get rich, things which I had already heard many days ago. There was always this hope that the following day would be much better than the present, or that the present would not be as bad as yesterday. What Hart (1988) observed among informal economy workers in the slums of Accra in Ghana rightfully sums up what I perceived in the case of the people in Sta. Filomena. Hart wrote:

> I was impressed by the energy and ingenuity of their efforts to enrich themselves and by the inevitability of long run failure for all but a handful. It seemed as if the economy was being made, unmade and remade from day to day. The central task for everyone was to find a reasonably durable basis for livelihood and even for

> accumulation, a stable core in the chaos of everyday life. That was why even a poorly paid job was valued: it was an island of regularity and predictability in a sea of ephemeral opportunities. I now think of this as the search for economic form, the search for the invariant in the variable, for rules and regularity in a world constituted by flux, emergence, informality. (Hart 1988, p. 167)

Engaging with economic plurality could well serve the ends of the people in Sta. Filomena, to a certain extent. Those who were into varied sources of income enjoyed a modicum of comfort compared to those who limited their productive capabilities to one or two economic endeavours only. But moving into different economic spheres of activities was more easily said than done. Constraints abound, either structural or personal. In Sta. Filomena, most fishers spoke of fishing as not just an economic activity. It was a way of life. Most of them, primarily full-time fishers, went out fishing not just propelled by economic rationality but the simple fact that they just wanted to fish, and the experience of it made them feel fulfilled regardless of its low economic rent. Rational thinking demands that when someone indulges in an economic activity, he wants a maximum remuneration for his time and efforts. But fishing could be a chimera in this capitalist paradigm. Fishers in Sta. Filomena felt that whether they earn money or not from their fishing trips, the mere fact that they went fishing pleased them in itself. In a way, they were properly compensated for their time, not financially but emotionally.

This dovetails with the observation made by Kurien (1998) among fishers in Kerala, India. According to him,

> among many of its practitioners the fishing occupation often confers not only important markers of self-identity and individual pride, but a "satisfaction bonus" as well, which cannot be measured on economic grounds alone. Hence, among small-scale fishers who choose to work at sea year after year, fishing is regarded not merely as a means of ensuring their livelihoods, but as an intrinsically rewarding activity in its own right – as a desirable and meaningful way of spending one's life. (Kurien 1998, p. 5)

He further adds that

> the foregoing factors prompt many fishers to tenaciously adhere to the occupation and to continue fishing even after it has become economically unrewarding – which has perplexed economists and fisheries officials alike. Thus, while economic rationality as it is commonly understood may not explain small-scale fishers' tenacity in the face of diminishing returns, existential rationality perhaps does. (Kurien 1998, p. 6)

4.3.6 Where It Is a Standard to Be Poor

Fishers, fish vendors and fish dealers, the major players in the community, all considered themselves poor. Their economic difficulties would be summed up by their favorite expression "bugabug ang dagat" (the sea is rough), whenever the sea was tempestuous and no one could go out to sea or, if there was storm raging in the area and no one could go out to sell fish. "Bugabug and dagat" became their symbolic expression of all that was difficult in their daily life in the community. Membership in economic groups (fishers, fish vendors and fish dealers) was highly volatile. Fishers who had made it big in succeeding trips could become fish dealers overnight. But disastrous deals could bring them back to fishing, with the wife buying fish in bulk for distribution while the husband went fishing. Being a member of a particular economic group did not automatically mean a better life either. While some could afford life's little luxuries (at least from the perspective of the community) like watching movies in the city, fish dealers did not live a life much different from fish vendors and fishers. There was a perpetual sense of poverty among the inhabitants of the community. The little amount of money saved was always threatened by unplanned expenses. Business was always unpredictable. Eden, a fish dealer, told me that some months before I commenced my fieldwork, they were so broke that they were selling fish on foot. When they saved some money, they ventured into fish distribution. They did so because it paid more than selling fish, although they never discounted the possibility that they might have to go back to selling fish on foot if things went wrong, as in the past. Their life was better off than the others, but that did not make them feel superior over other people in the community. The relative wealth of some families, or temporary accumulation of surplus value, was generally expressed through the purchase of new dresses for children, even without any special occasion, a trip to the provincial capital for some shopping, and for a select few, a down payment for a brand new television set. Busby's (2000) observation of class stratification in a Kerala fishing community resonates with the community that I studied. According to her, while some fishing families were much better off than others, "distinctions do not signal deeper differences in lifestyle: they continue to dress, eat, and marry in the same ways as they have done before, with other members of the village, and (the wealthier members) are not

considered apart from them in any way, merely luckier and richer" (2000, p. 5). A fish vendor summed up excellently the rickety hierarchy in the community:

> We're all poor here, fishers, fish vendors, fish dealers, even those who lend money. My friend lends money to people but he still eats the kind of fish poor people eat. The only difference among us, I think is this: if we fish vendors have 500.00 Php in the pocket others have 700.00 Php and that's not a big difference, is it? (Interview 2008)

Poverty is widespread among fishing communities. Fishers are mostly poor. By poor, as per Philippine government definition in 2007, they are families of five that earn an aggregate amount lower than the poverty threshold income of 6,195.00 Php per month (NSO 2009). In Sta. Filomena, most households did not earn more than 5,000.00 Php a month.

To get a glimpse of how poor fishers are, a peek at their world belongings is in order. A typical fisherman's house in Sta. Filomena was built by local materials: plywood and/or 'pawid' for the walls and corrugated iron sheets and 'pawid' for the roof. Some fishermen who saved enough built concrete houses, while some really poor ones had to contend with houses with walls of reinforced cardboard and plastic sheets. When one entered a typical fisherman's dwelling, one was to be greeted by an expanse of four walls without any provision for private quarters. The kitchen was at the far end of the house and the living room was the entire house. At night, chairs and tables were pushed against the wall while mats were unrolled on the floor. The entire house then became a big bedroom. Fishing gear like nets, hooks and lines were kept in a corner, conspicuous to the eyes of the owners lest they be stolen by other people on the lookout for easy money. Many houses' concession to modernity had been the acquisition of radios and electric fans, though some houses had second hand television sets and DVD players. But these concessions to modernity were easily lost to pawnshops as fast as they were brought from second hand appliance stores.

This economic deprivation of small-scale fishers is seen as almost universal across countries, primarily in developing economies (Bene 2003; McGoodwin 1991). Furthermore, small-scale fishers suffer the greatest deprivations, as they have low social status, poor living conditions and little political influence (Baticados, Agbayani and Gentoral 1998; Bene 2003; Daniels 2002; Hollup 2000; Stobutzki, Silvestre and Garces

2006). Fishers' livelihoods are vulnerable to seasonal weather, climate and oceanographic change, destructive typhoons and tsunamis, pollution, migration and other threats (Hamilton 2007; Pomeroy, Nguyen and Thong 2009; Silva and Yamao 2007; Tewfik, Andrew, Bene and Garces 2008). They frequently compete for resource access with larger-scale fishers and other sectors of the economy (Pomeroy and Williams 1994; Toufique 1997).

4.3.7 The Webs of Relations

On my first day in the field, my mother came with me to introduce me to family friends and relatives in the community. This, she said, would make it easy for me to access informants. When all introductions were made and we were done visiting 'sari-sari' stores, food and fish stalls and many houses in the interior part of the community to meet people, I was amazed by the realization that virtually all people in the community were my kin: actual and fictive. It seemed to me that people in the community had all the tools at their disposal to establish affinity with me when I saw none, and the same with my mother. My mother was so quick to point out to people our close relations with them. Thus, someone was our relative because she was my mother's distant cousin on her mother's side, and another was related to us because he worked with my father as a fish worker some years back and this person's son was my father's baptismal godchild. One even claimed that when I was still a child, she worked as a clothes' washer for my parents, and this made us close enough to be relatives. It could be said that my being a 'balikbayan' might have caused my wholesale affinity with the people in the community. It could have been a tactic to get close to me because they saw me as a source of economic largesse. But as I stayed longer in the community, I realized that it was not just me who was in the enviable position to be related to everyone. All in the community were just like me. We were all related to everyone. Thus, the word 'relative' has become a negotiable and flexible term that does not just pertain to immediate kin but also to friends and neighbours alike.

In the community, there were two ways to be related to anyone, either through actual or fictive kinship. Much had been written about this in a number of studies (see,

for example, Ebtehaj, Lindley and Richards 2006; Goody 1973; Goody 1971) and I will not specifically elaborate on it here. What I will discuss and detail are the ways in which kinship, both actual and fictive, is established among the people in the community.

Actual kinship, as it was defined and practised in the community, dwelt on the concept of consanguinity on the maternal and paternal side and inter-family marriages. In terms of blood relations, those who were related up to the third degree of consanguinity were deemed to be 'relatives'. People who could be relatives and yet, thrice removed already, were also deemed blood relatives, were called 'malayo ng kamag-anak' (distant relatives), underlining the word distant to signal a certain degree of remoteness, although they still enjoyed a measure of closeness, but not as close as the first, second and third-degree relatives. Relations through inter-family marriages also fell under actual kinship, though in limited ways. The immediate family members of the bride, her sisters and brothers and parents were deemed members already of the groom's family and vice versa. The groom's relatives could also become relatives of the bride's family and relatives, but the relations were already not as close. In terms of fictive kinship, this was more elaborate and looked like (at least for me) a free-for-all association, though as explained by my informants, this kind of kinship could sometimes be more important and rewarding than actual kinship. There were many permutations of fictive kinship in the community and this could be gleaned from the ways people addressed each other through words such as 'kuya' (older brother), 'ate' (older sister), 'nini' (younger sister), 'tutuy' (younger brother), 'tiya' (auntie), 'tiyo' (uncle), 'tatay' (father), 'nanay' (mother), 'ina/lola' (grandmother) and 'ama/lolo' (grandfather), all names used by people enjoying actual kinship relations. I will cite some examples of how members of the community constructed me as their kin, although we were not, of course, related by blood. An older man or woman was my 'kuya' or 'ate' because he or she was my mother or father's baptismal child, or my parents served as their wedding sponsors. Someone was also my 'kuya' or 'ate' because his or her parents were my parents' good friends. Or in some cases, just because someone used to work with my father as a fish worker, he became my 'kuya'. A woman, on the other hand, who was my mother's good friend when they were still in high school was my 'tiya'. Someone who washed our clothes when I was still a toddler was also a 'tiya'. An old woman who stood as my mother's baptismal

godmother was my 'ina', while an old man who was my grandfather's neighbour for many years was my 'ama'. Thus, if one wanted to, virtually any way could be found to establish relations with anyone, although intimacy in this case varied from one relation to another. But claims to kinship also depended on everyone's reputation in the community. A down-and-out fish vendor told me that he had so many blood relatives in the community, as his mother belonged to a big family and had married into another big family in the community, and yet no one seemed to care for him and claim him as their own. It could be that, as he told me, he was poor. Another informant who was a local midwife in the community pointed out to me that a first cousin who was now enjoying a better life compared to them was treating them as if they were not blood related. Maybe because, according to her, she was now earning more than them. "But wait when she loses money in her fish dealing business," she told me, "and becomes as poor as us, she will call us relatives again just like when she was as poor as most of us here." In my second week in the community, I met a distant relative who was quick to establish our blood relations. An informant who knew of my distant blood relations with this woman told me that if he were in my shoes, he would downplay my blood relations with her. She was a 'mangungutang' (loves to borrow money), he said. She would just take advantage of me, he further asserted. Several days after our first encounter, true to my informant's prediction, this woman, my 'tiya', came up to me and asked for a loan. I lent her 1,500.00 Php which she never returned. As will be shown in the succeeding chapters, this web of relations in the community plays an important role as to how everyday life is lived among fishers and their families.

4.3.8 Fish Brokerages

With the fisheries crisis, more and more fish vendors were relying on fish brokerages for their fish. There were four fish brokerages in the community and they served as drop off points for fish caught by commercial fishers. When the weather was bad, owners of fish brokerages obtained fish from a big port in Lucena, which they in turn sold to fish vendors in the community.

A typical fish brokerage looked like a warehouse with some furnishings like plastic chairs, which were locally known as monoblock, and a table where fish vendors would huddle together and while away their time by either playing cards (mostly men) or chatting and gossiping (mostly women). The atmosphere was cozy and relaxed. Fish vendors were at ease with one another and dealt with each other in familiar tones. Young fish vendors vacated their seats when old fish vendors arrived. The 'magpapabulong' (fish auctioneer), when not busy with her/his work, would join fish vendors' conversation and in some cases, when the owners were there, they too would throw in some words. There was a covered nook where either the owner or her/his secretary held office. Here, the owner took note of the arrival and departure of fish and kept record of the payment she/he made and received. The owner employed a number of people to keep her/his business going – a 'magpapabulong' and a coterie of manual labourers who did all the dirty and physical jobs like hauling boxes of fish from boats and bringing them to the premises of the fish brokerage, cleaning the place, calling out the 'mamumulong' (fish buyer) in the market, fixing and mending broken furniture, weighing and cleaning fish and all the other things that the owner or the 'magpapabulong' asked them to do.

Fish brokerages in Sta. Filomena were owned by people living in other communities. They bought the catch of fishermen[66] at a price set in two ways, either through a public auction if the catch was big in volume, or by fixing the price of the catch by the 'magpapabulong' if the volume was small. Fish brokerages were known locally as 'kumisyunan'. 'Kumisyunan' came from the English word 'commission', which was understood and used in the area as either percentage or profit out of a job done. Fish brokerages were called 'kumisyunan' because out of the price they paid to the "magdadala" (fisherman or his representative, usually his wife or children), they would deduct 7% of the gross amount. Thus, if the amount of 'magdadala's' catch fetched 10,000.00 Php in the bidding, he would receive 9,300.00 Php only, with 700.00 Php deducted. This was the arrangement because the 'magdadala' was paid right on the spot after the bidding, while the fish brokerage would only get back what they paid to the

[66] In times when there was a great demand for fish and the volume of catch was low, fish brokerages bought fish from Lucena, which they sold in turn for a profit among fish vendors. Again, whether the mode of selling was through public bidding or an outright naming of price as deemed fit by the *magpapabulong* would depend on the demand for fish in town.

'magdadala' a day after the bidding took place. The catch was then passed on to the winning 'mamumulong' on credit. No surcharge was added to it. Whatever was the winning bid was also the final price of the fish. The arrangement between the fish brokerage and the 'mamumulong' was that the latter return the money a day after getting the fish. Thus, if the 'mamumulong' got his fish on a Friday afternoon, he would return the money the following day, Saturday, usually in the evening, around 7 pm, before the market closed. However, mobile fish vendors did not bid for fish. Usually, a box of fish was allotted to them by fish brokers, or they got fish from winning bidders, who most of the time were market fish vendors.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have tried to accomplish two things: first, I provided a brief historical account of the Philippine economy and its connection to global developments; and second, I have offered a general portrayal of Sta. Filomena, including its people, their modes of subsistence, webs of relations, their struggles and the future of fishing. This description is intended to contextualize and introduce the issues that will be addressed in succeeding chapters.

In the first section, I mentioned how the creation of vast industrial complexes in many parts of the Philippines, specifically in the CALABARZON area, made an impact on the socio-economic lives of people living in the region. I cited the example of Sta. Rosa, Laguna to highlight how globalization and its local manifestations created a robust city out of a sleepy town. Concomitantly, the presence of numerous economic zones in the region affected, to some degree, marine production in Lamon Bay, one of CALABARZON's numerous bodies of water. With increased pressure on many fishing grounds, small-scale fishers are losing out to commercial fishers.

For the second section, my aim is to lay the groundwork for a more in-depth and analytic accounting of life changes in the community. The point of this section is to provide readers with a "peopled canvass" of the community. This section will hopefully inform their reading of my attempt via the more substantive chapters to highlight the fishing community's the production of locality in the epoch of globalization. An implicit

argument is made here: some places are more connected to the world, benefit most from and are transformed more by this connection. As globalization creates places of convergence and opportunities, it also creates places which are marginal, less globalised and more localized in terms of everyday life.

In the succeeding chapters, I will try to show how life is lived far from but not left untouched by the forces of globalization. In these chapters, I will speak about the allocation of power and the deployment of tactics of survival among Sta. Filomena's inhabitants, changing socio-economic roles and the sexual division of labour between men and women in the community, and the localized practice of capitalism as exemplified by the day-to-day transactions in fish brokerages. Through these chunks of everyday life taking place in the realms of power, gender and economic relations, I hope to make an analytic description of a community, its people and their lives as they make sense of what is happening to and around them.

Picture 5.0
A woman selling fish on the street

Chapter Five

Everyday Tactics of 'Making Do': Coping with the Fisheries Crisis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into how members of the community deal with the difficulties of everyday life – living in the midst of a fisheries crisis - by a variety of means which are referred to as 'everyday tactics of making do'. The aim here is to examine how social relations among people in Sta. Filomena are played out through the everyday exercise of economic strategies, as part of the everyday contestation for resource allocation and appropriation. Individuals to be considered here are fish vendors, fishers, fish dealers and other men and women in the community who earn a living by doing odd jobs. This chapter therefore is about social relations as much as about power dynamics in the community. The exercise of power or the lack of it takes place in the context of economic strategies and social networks. The reader is therefore alerted to the fact that the notion of power is just one aspect of social networks and economic strategies, and it is not conflated exclusively with economic inequality and resource contestation. Having said that, the focus of this chapter is the notion of power distribution and generation among Sta. Filomena's inhabitants and when power is invoked and dissected here, it is in the context of resource scarcity in the community and social relations among its members.

The first section of this chapter explains its underpinning theoretical presuppositions. This is a recapitulation of what has already been foregrounded in chapter 3. The second section is a rather lengthy one. It is an accounting of the everyday tactics of 'making do' in Sta. Filomena. They range form borrowing a kitchen utensil and not returning it to intentionally failing to honour a financial commitment. All of these practices are symptomatic of economic survival, which underlies the interplay of power contestation and generation among community members. The third section explains the analytic import of the everyday tactics of 'making do' in the light of the fisheries crisis in Sta. Filomena, and the participants' contribution to the understanding of everyday life

under local economic re-structuring. The conclusion makes a case for a rigorous engagement with the articulations of power, domination and resistance that takes into consideration the people's shared geography, societal values and economic troubles. It is only then that a clearer understanding can be brought to bear on how social practices are very much determined by, and take shape, in the context and constitution of, local values and social relations.

5.2 Social Networks and Power Relations

Social relations are also, of course, about power relations, although not exclusively. Social and political organizations, where family is the most basic unit, are replete with power allocation and contestation. Some people 'rule' and others 'obey'. In this two-way traffic, contestation and negotiation also take place. In bigger social agglomerations like the fishing community studied, power relations could be most felt and understood in the ways in which people in the community manoeuvre and out-manoeuvre each other in the allocation and appropriation of scarce resources, in particular. It is therefore in their myriad economic strategies that we will get to understand how power works in a community that is largely understood as 'powerless'.

Contemporary studies about power, domination and resistance point to the binary oppositional logic between the dominant and the subordinate and how the powerful muster all efforts to maintain the status quo and how the powerless make do with the system that both oppresses and at the same time sustains them. For example, Scott (1985; 1990) clearly delineates how power is contested in a peasant community in Malaysia by enacting what he calls public and hidden transcripts. As per Scott's (1985; 1990) logic, there is a dual force at play in society, the powerful and the powerless, which in his study are the landlords and the landless, the rich and the poor, the money lenders/machine owners and the peasants in Sedaka. In his study and theorization of what he calls the everyday forms of resistance, there is, therefore, an identifiable hegemonic centre which radiates power and from which concrete manifestations of dominance can be identified. Thus, for example, Razak, the down-and-out peasant in Sedaka, is placed side by side with Haji Broom, one of the biggest landowners in the village to explain their

subjectivities in the social field of Sedaka and how people react to their social practices. Razak and other poor people in the village feign subservience and submission to the likes of Haji Broom to be able to extract money from them. But in the privacy of their houses or in the absence of these landowners, they criticize them for their stinginess and rapacious appetite for money. Here, the locus of power is centred on a group of people which controls the resources. The landless work for the landlords, borrow money and sell their goods at terms most advantageous to the people in power. Scott (1985) reads Sedaka in Marxist terms: the everyday forms of resistance are an effect of a class struggle between two opposing forces, the 'haves and the haves not'.

A number of studies in recent times have surfaced critiquing and refining Scott's notion of power, domination and resistance (see, for example, Abu-Lughod 1990; Campbell and Hayman 2007; Gal, 1995; Howe 1998; Kulick 1996; Levi 1999). The most relevant to my study is that of Howe (1998), in which he relates how long-term, unemployed Irish married men (in effect belonging to the same group) in a Protestant area of Belfast both resist and embrace a dominant discourse on welfare 'scrounging'. Howe, in critique of Scott (1985; 1990), faults the latter for putting too much emphasis on "dominance and resistance as permanent attributes of fixed groups rather than as shifting features of situations" (1998, p. 533). In addition, Gal (1995) observes that Scott (1990) flattens the great range of power relations evident in the diverse social formations of the historical and ethnographic record into a single opposition between dominant and subordinate.

> This makes it impossible to analyse that common circumstance in which domination and subordination are exercised at every level of a graded hierarchy, so that those who are subordinate in one context may become dominant in another. Moreover, his analysis of social formations as essentially consisting of two antagonistic groups parallels exactly his division of discourses into public and hidden transcripts. But if domination and subordination are relative and contextual, then greater attention needs to be paid to the range and variety of its connected discourses. (Howe 1998, p. 532)

Echoing Ortner's (1995) call, Howe (1998) argues for the need to pay close attention to the divisions and competition amongst the powerless. This chapter is, in part, an answer to their challenge.

A further explanation about the analytic import of public and hidden transcripts is omitted here, since a case for them has already been made in chapter 3. The point here being that while Scott's (1985) formula (domination-resistance/landlords-tenants) is helpful in understanding how power works, he failed to look at power contestation among members of the same group as power differentials do not obviously exist among its members. Thus, this chapter asks: how do we understand the workings of power in a place where there is no hegemonic centre to speak of? What do we make of a place where in a sense people belong to the same class, and while there are some slight variations in their material wealth, the disparity is not great enough to lump a number of people together as occupying a class quite distinct from others? How about in a community of the weak, where the main source of income is not controlled by any identifiable group of people and where, as it were, every member faces the same highly precarious economic conditions? What do we make of contestation in the tactics of 'making do' among the members of a subordinate group themselves? When the poor rob the poor or a fisher's wife takes advantage of a fish vendor, what do we make of it? Where do we locate power? What do people resist, then?

5.3 Everyday Tactics of 'Making Do'

Tactics of 'making do' in Sta. Filomena are primarily about taking advantage of other people or performing acts to advance one's position in order to survive economic difficulties. It is, in the words of one of my informants, "about keeping one's stomach full and the roof safe from leaks." It is primarily in the economic field where people in Sta. Filomena contest and outwit each other. This section is divided into two: the first one refers to a general mode of 'making do', meaning, it is not identified with a set of people or any specific group like fishers or fish vendors. These forms of 'making do' cut across economic groups in the community and the receivers or the 'oppressed' could be anyone in the community. The succeeding sections are about tactics of 'making do' which are deployed by one group of people, say fish vendors, against another such as fish brokers.

5.3.1 "Utang-Kalimutan, Hiram-Pabayaan"[67]

Among the people in Sta. Filomena, petty borrowing characterizes everyday life. Petty in the sense that items being borrowed do not cost much (although some do) and they do not really cause much harm to people extending their assistance, but at the same time the ones who borrow and do so constantly are helped in making ends meet. As Medina explains in her study of Filipino families in rural areas, "borrowing is prevalent among rural community dwellers where people are close to each other and where relations are tight" (1995, p. 34). Thus, it is no wonder that even before I embarked on my fieldwork, my mother reminded me of petty borrowings in the community. Some well-intentioned informants also cautioned me against being too lenient in response to people's requests for assistance, in cash or in kind.[68]

In Sta. Filomena, it is not highly improbable that when one is in a group of people chatting together and if someone has money, he will almost always go home with his pocket empty, his money 'borrowed' by the people he conversed with. This borrowing happens, for example, when a food vendor drops by and asks the people around to try her/his food. People will crowd around him and comment that the food looks delicious. After that, someone will try to reach out for his pocket only to find out that he has no money. The usual statement of the person will be "I forgot to bring money with me". He will then ask someone from the group who has money and if somebody volunteers, the person will then borrow money and promise to pay him back. This of course is just a ruse. Since the money lent is an inconsequential amount (ranging from 5.00 Php-50.00 Php), it will soon be forgotten, unless the person who lent the money makes the effort to remind the borrower that he owes him money. If not, the debt is forgotten which is almost always the case, since to follow-up on a very small amount of money owed signifies one's predisposition to being a miser. The usual reaction of people being asked to pay

[67] Loosely translated as "asking for a loan and intentionally forgetting to pay or borrowing items and intentionally not returning them".

[68] Several days into my fieldwork, some informants and friends were already making personal requests with regard to some of the items I usually brought in the field, like my backpack and camera. They wanted me to leave the items with them as some sort of souvenir from me. Some even dared to borrow them, which I politely refused. They called it in the community *arbor* (obtaining someone's possession for free).

small amounts is that the person is too greedy and has no sense of generosity. Thus, amongst the people in Sta. Filomena, there is this compulsion to let go of money borrowed by someone as long as the amount is insignificant. For people in the community, borrowing is an everyday 'fixture' of life, and I correspondingly read it as a tactic of 'making do'.

In 'sari-sari' stores,[69] the usual meeting place of people in Sta. Filomena, petty borrowing also takes place when someone who tries to buy an item realizes than she has run out of cash (say the item is 20.00 Php and she only has 15.00 Php with her), and tries to pull it off by asking the people around who have money in their pockets. When someone volunteers, the deal is done. The money is lent without any assurance that it will be returned. While not everyone tries this trick and many honour their commitment,[70] the norm of borrowing small amounts from anyone at any particular time when an opportunity arises has become an everyday fixture in the community, so that everyone has a name for the act: 'utang-kalimutan' (literally, debt-forget). In a way, the practice has become a communal doxa. In fact, one day when I ran out of money and tried asking someone to lend me to pay a fish vendor, the person I asked hesitantly pulled out some cash from her wallet and told me: "you are not really from here so I know you will pay me back."

Some borrowing, however, concerned larger amounts of money, and when this happened, follow-up was made and when a commitment was not honoured, this became a topic in the community and, as in other cases, a source of tension. One good example concerns Coritha and Luli whose husbands were both fishers.

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[69] In sari-sari stores in Sta. Filomena, to mitigate the propensity of people to get items on credit, a signage is usually put up right at the spot for everyone to read which says: *Bawal ang utang* (Credit is not Allowed). Others are more creative though. I saw one store with a sign that says: "Credit is good but we need cash." It is written in English. Another store sports a sign that reads: *Bawal ngayon ang utang, puede bukas.* (Credit is not allowed today. Please come back tomorrow.) This sign is, of course, misleading since tomorrow is endless. When someone tries to borrow and invokes what he read the previous day, the owner will point to the permanent sign.

[70] On one of my prolonged stays in many of Sta. Filomena's *sari-sari* stores, I must have lent a lot to so many people ranging from 1.00 Php (for a mother whose son kept on asking her for a coin to buy candy, which the mother said she did not have) to 50.00 Php (for a woman who had to pay for a dress that she made for someone to mend for her). Some of them paid me back while others treated it as if nothing had ever happened and they did not owe me money. I never followed up upon the advice of one of my informants.

I was in a small store having an afternoon talk with the owner, Perla, when Coritha came, wringing her hands in frustration. She was cursing Luli under her breath. Luli's house was just beside the store and Coritha's voice was very loud. Perla asked her to tone down her voice otherwise she might attract the attention of other people, or worse, Luli. But Coritha could not be pacified. She told us that she did not care anymore and by sharing her story with us, she could get back at Luli.

Luli borrowed money from her and promised to repay it a day later. It was already two weeks since she had borrowed money and Coritha said she had not yet been able to press Luli to pay her back. Everyone of course was curious as to how Luli managed to extract money from Coritha when Coritha was known to be so careful with her finances. Apparently, she was going home after a day's work when Luli spotted her. That day, she had been paid 170.00 Php by a customer after a day of washing clothes. She was counting her money when Luli approached her. Since they were neighbours and both were going home, they walked the length of the road together. Luli asked her about her work and Coritha told her that she was happy that she had already received her payment. She had some money to spend towards her children's schooling. Luli told her that she had checked her son's ATM account to know if the money he sent had already arrived (her son worked in a department store in Manila), but the money had not yet been credited. Luli said that she had been looking for ways to buy her grandchild a pack of powdered milk. They had run out of money and they were just feeding her rice broth. Coritha told us that she could sense that the inevitable was coming and it did: Luli asked her if she could borrow her money, promising to return it once the money sent by her son had arrived. Coritha could not say no. The grandchild Luli was talking about was her godchild. In effect, they were kin. With a heavy heart, she pulled out all her money from her pocket and gave it to Luli. Before parting ways, Coritha asked Luli to return the money as soon as possible, since she needed the money for her children's school fees. Three days had passed and not even a word had been heard from Luli. After a week, she went to Luli's house to ask for the return of her money. Luli told her that the money had already arrived but they had had to spend it on her grandchild's medical bills. She was asked to return a week later. When she did and asked Luli to fulfill her promise, Luli was unrepentant and asked Coritha what she could do if she still did not have any money to

repay her. But the tension was later resolved as if nothing had ever happened. Two weeks before I left the field, Coritha told me that Luli had already returned the money and that they were on good terms again. This was proven to me when I saw the two of them sharing a bench together and chatting animatedly to one another.

Borrowing is not just about money though. People also borrow rice, household utensils, condiments, charcoal, brooms, and even dresses. When someone borrows rice, the borrower has the moral obligation to replenish the lender's stock. Some people do, while others do not. But when cooked rice is borrowed, it is a foregone conclusion that it will not be returned. Cooked rice is meant to be shared, since if it stays in the pantry for more than a day, it will be spoiled. The custom of 'pamamahaw' (eating left-over rice and cooked fish/meat from an earlier meal) precipitates this borrowing among neighbours of cooked rice. When someone has more cooked fish/meat for consumption some two hours after a proper meal and it will soon spoil, he will go on a hunt around the neighbourhood for someone who has 'bahaw' (left-over cooked rice). The owed cooked-rice can only be repaid when the lender does the same thing, that is, goes around the neighbourhood asking for any left-over rice. While borrowing cooked rice might not trigger friction among neighbours, other borrowings do. An informant told me that she always ran out of oil, vinegar and soy sauce in her kitchen, since her neighbours, who were usually her relatives, kept on ransacking her pantry when they ran out of those condiments. A woman pointed out to me that she once had a superb collection of porcelain plates and bowls which were all gone now. She remembered lending them to her friends and relatives, but they had not since been returned. Even knives, brooms and other household implements are not free from the borrowing binge in the community. Someone told me that a neighbour had borrowed a nice dress of her daughter's for a school activity and failed to return it. She had seen the dress worn many times already by the borrower's daughter, and because of that she had decided to just give it to her. Thus, when someone borrows a really important utensil, like a can opener, not an hour is passed without the lender sending someone to retrieve it on the pretext that another person needs to borrow it. The span of time is critical here. To prolong one's loan of an item is in a sense allowing it to be kept by the borrower for good.

To counter this practice, a number of measures had been put in place by people in Sta. Filomena. Let me say first, though, that refusal of any request when someone is known to have the item being asked for is a no-no in the community. It would represent a violation of the community's ethos, which expects everyone to provide succor to anyone in need. Thus, to avoid being accused of being stingy, inconsiderate or selfish, people do not say no to any request. Any request is prefaced with a statement to the effect that the request sounds fine only to be told later, after searching one's pocket or letting someone in to see the pantry, that the borrower has to look elsewhere. Thus, among the people who go out to 'sari-sari' stores for a long chat, they keep their pockets empty. When someone drops by to sell something, the buyer asks the seller to come to his house if he likes the item being sold. For household condiments like rice, oil, sugar, coffee, soy sauce, vinegar, salt, pepper and others, they are kept in a special place unnoticed by prospective borrowers. What are left in the open for everyone to see are almost empty bottles and glasses of the same items. In a way, in most houses, what is seen by the naked eye is not what is really owned by the people. They keep their things from the prying eyes of prospective borrowers. The following incident provides a good illustration.

In one of the fishers' houses which I frequented, I chanced upon the wife cooking a sumptuous lunch. Laid out on the table were the ingredients and an assortment of bottles and little boxes. One of their sons worked in Manila and he sent a box of grocery items. As we were having a conversation, someone called out from outside. It was one of her neighbours. Immediately, the fisher's wife collected all the items on the table and hid them in a box right under a small table and covered it with a cloth. She then went out and let the woman in. They had a short chat in my presence. When the woman left, she again brought out the items and used some of them from time to time, adjusting the taste of the meal. Later when I was partaking of the food that she cooked (she asked me to stay and have a taste of what she was cooking), she explained to me that the neighbour who visited her was known for borrowing items which she did not return.

5.3.2 "Pagastos"[71]

In Sta. Filomena, fishers who lack money to finance their fishing trips borrow money from fish vendors.[72] They refer to this money-lending scheme as 'pagastos' or 'pakonsumo'.[73] In this scheme, fish vendors who are mostly market fish vendors[74] lend some amount to fishers on the understanding that, first, whatever is caught will be given to them at the pre-market price,[75] and second, for every kilo of fish caught, the fish vendor will get an extra 5.00 Php on top of the profit that he gets from selling the fish. Thus, for example, if the total amount of fish to be paid to the fisher minus the money owed for some 5 kilos of fish is 300.00 Php, 25.00 Php will be deducted from it which leaves the fisher with only 275.00 Php. At first glance, the fish vendor makes a killing and the fisher is a victim of the scheme. Thus, the fish vendor who dictates the terms of business is the dominant power while the fisher is the subordinate, an unwitting accomplice to his own exploitation. However, this is not at all the case. In the event that no fish are caught or just a few, even if there is an unwritten rule that the money used for the trip must be returned to the fish vendor, it is most unlikely to happen. The fisher in most cases has no money to pay the fish vendor back (or granted that he has, he will feign that he is broke). Thus, any fishing trip financed by a fish vendor is much more of a gamble for the fish vendor than for the fisher. Fishers could only invoke loss of sleep or

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[71] Literally, someone who pays for someone else's expenses.

[72] This is most common among fishers who maintain boats with on-board motors and need a substantial amount of money to pay for a two-day trip to remote fishing grounds. The money given by fish vendors is spent on food, gasoline, and cigarettes among other things. Sometimes, fishers also request an extra amount to be left to their families while they are away.

[73] *Pagastos* and *pakonsumo* literally mean providing the money to be spent on an activity. Although fishers could also borrow money from other people in the community and in certain events, they did, it was very seldom and most fishers interviewed for this study spoke of their kinship, mostly fictive, with the fish vendors that lent them money. So it was not just about the convenience of having someone to rely on for emergency cash, but the kinship bond tying them together that influenced their decision to continue working with the fish vendors.

[74] As explained in chapter 4, market fish vendors are relatively well off compared with ordinary mobile fish vendors. They have more disposable income than the others, which enables them to enter into some financial arrangements with other people in the community.

[75] Market price here pertains to the price of fish before it is sold in the local market. Thus, if the fish is sold at 100.00 Php per kilo in the market, the fish will be bought by the fish vendor from a fisher at 80.00Php, a difference of 20.00 Php, the usual mark-up price agreed upon between fishers and fish vendors.

their labour as their capital, but not in the case of fish vendors: they lose money and often lots of it. In this set-up, how do fishers and fish vendors circumvent the arrangement and earn more from the arrangement that they both entered into?

For fishers, there are a number of ways to do this. Before explaining the forms of 'making do' that they deploy, let me say first that among fishers, there is always the belief that they are being exploited by the arrangement.[76] This unspoken sentiment is prevalent among fishers who rely on fish vendors for their capital. According to them, their fish is valued far below the market price. This is, of course, not true all of the time and it depends on who among the fish vendors in the community a fisher goes to for money. Fish vendors are almost always keen on giving fishers the best price for their fish, since they want to keep their relationship on good terms especially with the competition posed by fish brokerages. In a sense, fish vendors do not want to lose the opportunity of having a steady supply of fish. Nonetheless, this feeling of being cheated for their labour is a recurrent feeling among fishers, and if given the chance, they are sure to do things to earn some extra money to compensate for what they perceive as a lopsided relationship between them and fish vendors.

When a boat lands, the fish vendor is not on the shore to monitor or witness for himself the unloading of fish. Most market fish vendors are, as their designation suggests, in the town market tending their stalls. It is only when fish arrives in their stalls that they know that the fishers who have obtained money from them have returned. In a sense, fish vendors rely on the honesty of fishers. Sending someone on behalf of a fish vendor to monitor the landing of fish is frowned upon. Fishers resent it because they feel as if they are not trusted by the fish vendors. It is, of course, just an excuse to free them from anyone's prying eyes. Making more money takes precedence over honesty, and the absence of fish vendors allows most fishers to not deliver all the fish that they have caught. One fisher, for example, told me that before he lands his boat, he is already

[76] If the fishers considered in this chapter were quite critical of their relationship with fish vendors, the logical question would be: why don't they bring their catch to fish brokerages where they could get better money for their fish? A number of reasons can be offered. First, because of the fisheries crisis, the volume of fish landing has been greatly reduced and fish brokerages, by the nature of their operation, only deal with big volumes of fish landing. Second, fish brokerages do not offer what most market fish vendors provide, that is, ready money for fishers' fishing trips or in many cases, emergency cash for unforeseen household expenses.

making a calculation of how much fish will be delivered to the fish vendor. If the catch is really good, he makes it a point to segregate some nice varieties of fish and sell them to other people. But taking advantage of fish vendors is not done to the hilt. There are limits to the act. They do not overdo it since fish vendors will most likely know that they are being cheated, and they will lose the chance of obtaining a cash advance from them. The first rule is to see to it that the quantity of fish to be given to the fish vendor is good enough to please him. When that condition is met, the extra fish then go to the fishers themselves to be sold to other people, free of the encumbrances of an arrangement made with the fish vendor. To avoid being told off by somebody, right before landing, separate containers are filled with fish, the first one is for the fish vendor that financed the trip, while the other one is for them. However, in cases where the volume of the catch is low and just good enough to pay the owed money, no segregation of fish is undertaken. Fishers do not want to lose the confidence of fish vendors. They do it only when the catch is impressive.

The other form of making do being deployed by fishers against fish vendors is through 'fish surgery'. Fishers call it 'pandodoktor' (being doctored). This is done only to a good sized premium variety of fish, which in some unexplainable circumstances loses one of its eyes. A fish with some damage like the absence of an eye or a damaged fin is usually priced low in the market, even if the overall condition is excellent. Fishers resent this fact and for them, it is another way of ripping them off. Thus, in most cases, when a fish of good quality has lost one or both of its eyes, fishers take out the eyes of lesser valued fish and put them into the eye sockets of the fish. In this way, the quality of the fish is maintained and they get a good price for their catches.

These practices of fishers are, of course, not unknown to fish vendors. In some ways, both of them pretend that they do not cheat each other. For fish vendors, as long as the money is returned to them and they get some income from the transaction, it is fair enough for them. Confrontation is out of the question, since fish vendors are not keen on losing fishers, as much as fishers do not wish to displease fish vendors. But fish dealers are not just quiet recipients of fishers' tactics of 'making do'. They themselves have their own ways of capturing the advantage, and in this case they take advantage of fishers' absence in the market. As expected, fishers are not privy to the pricing dynamics in the

market, nor the orders that fish vendors get everyday from their customers. This is how fish vendors make their case with fishers. When fish arrives in the market, the fish vendor will explain to the fisher the prevailing price of fish in the market and explain to him why it is so. As is always the case, the fish vendor will give the fisher the 'best' available price, but not a price which will lessen his income. The fish vendor will tell the fisher that the price for the fish is 70.00 Php per kilo, since it is sold in the market at Php 90.00. But she/he will not tell the fisher that she/he already has an outstanding order with a customer wherein her/his quoted price is 120.00 Php, nor will she/he tell him that she/he is planning to bring the fish to Lucena City to be sold in an auction in Dalahican Port,[77] where the price could fetch as much as 200.00 Php. Thus, when the fish is brought to the market, the equation of power tilts towards the fish vendor and moves away from the fisher. In this case one might say that geography determines the exercise of power.

5.3.3 Bala-balanse[78]

I was in a store one sunny hot afternoon chatting with Cora when Lemuel came and sat with me on a bench. He was with his ubiquitous blue pail, a plastic container in which he kept his fish to sell around the town. He was waiting for a fish dealer to arrive. I told him that Conrad (a fish dealer) had arrived already and was now distributing fish to vendors. Wasn't he getting fish from him? It took him awhile before answering me. "His price is unaffordable. My customers won't buy it," he said. I told him that Larry, Ryan, Celso (other fish vendors in the community) and some of his friends were there jostling for their share. "Aren't they selling fish on the same route as you?" I asked him. He smiled and with bowed head, as if ducking from other people's glances, told me in an almost inaudible tone that he still owed Conrad some money. He could not pay him since he did not have money yet. He did not have the face to show up and ask for his share. "I feel embarrassed going up to him and asking for my share of fish. I know also that he would

[77] Some fish varieties like *tanguige* and *tambakol* (yellow fin tuna) are usually brought to Lucena City and not sold in the town market (unless there is a glut in supply), where it will fetch a much better price.

[78] *Bala-balanse* in the local language means paying off balances to someone using the money of another without the latter knowing it.

not give it to me," he said. Apparently, the money which was supposed to be used to pay Conrad went to pay for his other expenses. "I used up the money which should have gone to him for the fish I got. I went out with some of my friends and I was forced to buy drinks for them. As the night wore on, I did not notice that I already spent all the money I had, including Conrad's," he explained.

I asked him where he would get the money to pay Conrad then. He said that he was waiting for Rexie (a fish dealer) to arrive. He did not owe money to him and he was sure that he would get fish from him. I told him that I did not understand what he said. But before he could answer, Rexie had arrived and Lemuel sprang from his seat. He joined a crowd swarming around Rexie asking for their share of fish. It was Cora who explained it all. Apparently, Lemuel would get fish from Rexie and the proceeds would not go to Rexie but to Conrad. This would free him from Conrad's list of banned vendors, honor his commitment and he would be in his good graces again. According to her, trust would be restored since he had paid his due and he could get fish again. "But where will Lemuel get the money to be given to Rexie as payment for his fish?" I asked Cora. She was fast with her answer.

> "From Conrad, since if he pays Conrad this evening, he will be able to get fish from him the following day. The proceeds will be given to Rexie since he has a day to return the money to Conrad. Rexie will not know, neither will Conrad."

In cases when Conrad did not have fish for distribution, Lemuel could easily obtain fish from other fish dealers in the community. Cora pointed out that:

> "there are other fish dealers here whom Lemuel could approach and ask to get fish from. He could even go to the market and get fish from fish vendors there. That would not be a problem for him. He just plays with his balances. Getting money from someone to give it to another. That's how they do things here."

"But what if Lemuel cannot find fish to sell tomorrow?" I asked her. "Well, Rexie will ban Lemuel. But that will happen only for a day or two. Lemuel will find ways to pay his debt. People here are experts in balancing debts. If one knows how to do 'bala-balanse', one will survive," she said.

'Bala-balanse' is common among mobile fish vendors in Sta. Filomena. As reported by most of my interviewees, almost all of them had done 'bala-balanse' to cover-up for an unintended loss or a programmed loss, as most cases were, since the

money they were supposed to return to fish dealers would often go on household expenses. Fish vendors are, of course, exploiting a system in the way fish trading is conducted in the community. As I was told, fish would be distributed by fish dealers to mobile fish vendors on credit, hence the expression, 'laway lang ang puhunan' or saliva as capital (see chapter 7). If the fish is given to them in the morning, payment is due the following day, ideally, in the morning, too. This one-day grace period provides mobile fish vendors with the opportunity to make use of the money until the time comes for them to turn over the money to fish dealers. If the fish is given in the morning and is sold two to three hours later, the fish vendor has until the morning of the following day to pay for his fish and therefore has almost a day to use the money for whatever purpose he intends. While others told me that they would usually return the money at once to release them from the temptation of using it for other purposes, others thought that the one-day leeway provided them with an economic tool which they could use if the need arose.

This tactic of 'making do' provides mobile fish vendors with very little disposable income, some 'temporary monetary reserves' to meet unexpected household expenses. Adelaida, a fish vendor, said,

> "I do 'bala-balanse' most of the time. It's unavoidable. We always need money. My husband's income is not enough. My income does not do much to meet our daily needs. I always use up the money intended for payment to the fish dealer. But he does not know that I'm using his money to pay for our needs. Other dealers' fish is always there to be sold and the money to be paid to other fish dealers." (Interview 2008)

As a practice though, for fish dealers, the people who are at the receiving end of this tactic of making do, 'bala-balanse' is unacceptable. For them, doing 'bala-balanse' is an abuse of their trust and kindness. Fish dealers are always anxious that because of 'bala-balanse', temporary credits might not be honoured and they might run out of money to pay for their future transactions. For example, Soledad, a fish dealer, showed me a list of fish vendors in Sta. Filomena who had incurred 'balanse'. The amounts were not big, but if they were summed together, according to Soledad, the amount would be considerable. According to her, 'bala-balanse' robs them of their rightful income from fish trading. Often, she pointed out, because of unpaid balances of many fish vendors, she had to resort to borrowing money from money lenders to finance her business. She lamented the

fact that she was paying cash in Lucena, while in Sta. Filomena, 'saliva' was the only capital of fish vendors. Thus, while 'bala-balanse' is good for most fish vendors, for fish dealers, the practice speaks of imminent indebtedness to money providers and possible financial ruin.

On the other hand, fish dealers get back at fish vendors by jacking up the price of their fish. While this is their right and an imperative in a capitalist transaction that demands high economic rent, by jacking up the price and yet claiming that the fish's price for distribution is almost a give-away, fish vendors are put in a double indebtedness to fish dealers: they are getting the fish on credit and they are given a low price which means that fish dealer's income has been sacrificed. This is of course a charade. It is just a verbal antic on the part of fish dealers to compel fish vendors to return the proceeds on time. This is how it goes. For example, Noynoy, another fish dealer, gets his fish from Lucena for 1,500.00 Php per box. Since no one knows the real price and fish dealers come at different times and distribute different kinds of fish, he can always say to fish vendors that he got the fish for 2,000.00 Php. After a false calculation (he already knows the total volume of the fish), he will tell the fish vendors that he is giving them the fish for 60.00 Php per kilo, and therefore his profit is just in the region of 300.00 Php. In reality, he is making some 800.00 Php per box of fish. But telling the fish vendors the real amount of fish would have them asking for a lower price. By lying, then, the fish dealer pre-empts all the possibilities of negotiation concerning the price of fish and in veiled terms asks fish vendors to appreciate his munificence and share his burden by paying on time. Fish vendors are nonetheless incredulous and will just take their share without saying a word.

5.3.4 "Maliit na Benta, Malaking Kita"[79]

Unlike in the town market, fish vendors along the narrow street in Sta. Filomena are inviting and generous to customers to a fault. Women who have fishermen as husbands sell their husbands' catch on the street in an improvised stall of either a discarded box of wood or a table doubling as dining area. They do not bring their fish to the market to be

[79] The profit is better if the price of the fish is reduced.

sold to vendors for two reasons: the quantity is not good enough to require the intervention of a vendor in the town market and they would earn a lot better if they disposed of the fish themselves. The latter has always been the oft-repeated reason, although my fieldwork in the area suggests otherwise.

Cora's husband is a fisherman and he has been fishing since he was a teenager. He is now in his early 40s and is an artisanal fisherman. He leaves in the morning and returns in mid-afternoon, an appropriate time for his catch to be sold in the rush hour of 5-6 pm, just before sunset. When I was there, barring typhoon or any weather disturbance, he caught an average of 4-5 kilos of second class fish like 'malaway', 'saramulyete', 'talakitok', 'kiput' and 'bisugu'. Their prices, depending on the availability of these fish species in the other stalls, ranged from 60.00 Php to 140.00 Php per kilo. If these were sent to the market and sold to vendors there, a lower price was given, but not low enough to make a big dent in the over-all earnings of the person who had brought the fish. For example, in mid-September, the price of 'kiput' in Sta. Filomena was 70.00 Php per kilo. In the market, vendors bought them from fishermen for 60.00 Php or 65.00 Php per kilo and sold the same for 80.00 Php-90.00 Php per kilo. The difference was only 5.00 Php to 10.00 Php. If a fisherman brought his catch to a market vendor, he would make 300.00 Php for 5 kilos of 'kiput'. If he sold it in Sta. Filomena, he would make 350.00 Php. Thus, selling their catch in Sta. Filomena seemed to make more economic sense. They would earn more by all indications if they sold their fish themselves. But this was not the case based on my findings in the area.

When Cora's husband's boat landed, Cora was approached by a vendor from the market. She wanted to buy her husband's catch for the day. The price offered for a kilo of 'malaway' was 50.00 Php, way below what Cora wanted. She was expecting 70.00 Php per kilo. Cora decided to sell the fish herself. Her husband's total catch was in the region of 8 kilos, a great improvement from his dismal catch of 2 kilos the day before, barely enough to pay for his bait and ice. Cora decided to sell the fish for 70.00 Php per kilo but soon lowered it to 65.00 Php, upon the prompting of her mother-in-law, who informed her that another stall was selling the same fish at a much lower price. She was expecting to earn 520.00 Php in hard cash that day. I was kidding her that she would now become a

millionaire.[80] If she sold the fish to the market vendor, she would only make 400.00 Php. She was looking forward to earning 120.00 Php more by selling the fish herself. The first kilo was bought by a friend, who asked for a discount. He asked for 55.00 Php and Cora said yes, being 'bueno mano'[81] (first buy). The second kilo was bought by a family friend, who asked again for a discount. They agreed on the price of 60.00 Php. More buyers came, many were relatives, neighbours and occasionally, passersby. Relatives, neighbours and friends all asked for a discount. Cora sold the fish at 55.00 Php per kilo. Passersby also asked for discounts, reasoning that Cora was not paying any tax for her stall. Her price must be lower, then, than what the market offered. Cora relented. At around 6 pm when it was getting darker, Cora still had two kilos and she wanted to dispose of them as soon as possible. She had no light in her stall and the fish would not be seen by prospective customers. To attract more buyers, she lowered the price to 45.00 Php. The last half a kilo was sold for 20.00 Php. I noticed also that the manner of weighing fish was always in favour of buyers. When a kilo of fish was bought, there would always be extra grams since it was very difficult to find the right size of fish to fit the weight of fish being bought. Customer would always say "malamig ang kilo, yun namang mainit-init" (A gram is lacking, look for a bigger fish, there you are, more than enough). Based on my field observations, for every kilo sold, a fish vendor loses 10 grams the least.

That night I paid Cora a visit and asked about her earnings. She said she had made 330.00 Php, much lower than what she was expecting and 70.00 Php lower than what she would have got if she had sold the fish to the market vendor. And out of her 330.00 Php sale, 82.50 Php would still have to be collected the next day from her friends next door.

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[80] It has become a standard joke in the community that I was already a millionnaire since I had been living in a rich country for so many years already. To turn the table on them, whenever someone I was talking to mentioned in passing that he or she earned a good sum of money, I would say that he or she was already a millionnaire. People found it amusing given their economic conditions, and I thought that it helped me establish rapport with many of my informants (though I should add that, at first, I was cautious in saying it, since people might construe it as an insult). Joking around was the stuff of everyday life in the community.

[81] A Spanish expression meaning good hand (*buena*=good, *mano*=hand). But in the community, it means first buy. Apparently, for the people in the community, the first buy/customer holds a particular significance. According to them, if the first customer buys without a fuss, the gross receipt will be good. Thus they see to it that the first customer is given all the courtesies and perks he deserves, so that he will not turn his back on them and leave them in the cold.

She could have made 400.00 Php in cold cash had she sold her fish to a market fish vendor. When I told her about my computation, she was a little bit shaken, but made light of it. She reasoned out that she was already expecting it. Her computation always failed her. When I spoke about the generous discounts she gave to her customers as one of the reasons why her gross receipt was lower than expected, she reasoned that she could not turn down her friends' and relatives' requests for a discount since she herself asked for it whenever she bought fish, rice, cooked meals and even clothes from them. She was just returning the favour. "It is also the case that when I ask for a favour, they won't turn me down. It's a matter of give and take," she said.

A look at the constant reduction in the price of fish, in Cora's case, tells us something about the contextual environment that measures the valuation of fish in relation to community dynamics. When Cora gives in to demands of buyers, mostly neighbours, friends and relatives, she practices what Firth calls "exchange by private treaty," (1967, p. 17) a situation in which something like price is arrived at by some negotiated process other than the impersonal forces of supply and demand. In giving in to the request of her buyers to lower her price, Cora spoke of 'awa' (pity), 'di na iba' (we're close) 'hiya' (shame), 'konsiderasyon' (consideration), 'tulong' (assistance), and 'para di madala' (for the buyer to return again and again). Unspoken beliefs in the community which stipulate among others a social practice that prescribes fish valuation not so much determined by market demands, but relational affiliations and communal 'fish-full/peaceful' co-existence situates Cora in what Firth (1967) calls "indebtedness engineering", which blurs the line between commodity exchange and other, more sentimental, trade offs. Thus, as Firth (1967) further explains, in setting the price of fish "despite the presence of broad conventional exchange rates, a complex qualitative calculus exists which permits the qualitative negotiation of personal estimates of value in the light of both short- and long-term individual interest" (1967, p. 78). Cora was thinking that because she sacrificed much of her projected income to the interest of her buyers, she was expecting to make use of it in future transactions and in the manners in which the community sustained and provided for her and her family. The favour she extended cannot be quantified and her gesture of generosity is turned into a priceless commodity which she could valuably put to use in any future dealings in the community.

Furthermore, because Cora was liberal with her price setting and generous to a fault with her discounts, she, unwittingly (or consciously?), enters into the realm of what Mauss (2002) calls the mingling and exchange of qualities between men and things. It made for a network of exchange and obligation, tying people to one another (Hall 2005). So, Cora lowered her price and this act, in turn, nurtured her standing and reputation in the community. One good case which illustrates how Cora made use of her 'favourable reputation' in the community needs to be told.

Cora, being poor, was always in short of cash and she was always knocking on the doors of money lenders to borrow money. Helen was one money lender who was always providing Cora with easy credit. In an interview with Helen, she named the people in the community who owed her money and she was particularly harsh on them if they reneged on their promise to pay in due time. When I asked her if Cora owed her money, she answered in the affirmative. Cora's debt, in fact, had remained unpaid for the past five months. But Cora, said Helen, was a pleasant woman who would give her great discounts in fish. "She's a good woman, very considerate. She knows how to treat people properly (marunong makipagkapwa-tao)," Helen said. Thus, while still owing her money, she never badgered her to pay her back. Helen was much more lenient with Cora. She valued Cora much more than other members of the community. Cora's case was in stark contrast with that of Elma.

Elma was the wife of another fisherman. She was also selling fish on the street, right beside Cora. When the latter ran out of fish, Elma used her stall since she only had a small table and Cora's stall looked better. But unlike Cora, Elma was not known for giving in to customers' requests. Her prices were often fixed and she would only lower her price if it was getting late already and she needed to dispose of some left-over fish. Thus, most of the time, if Cora and Elma sold fish side by side, it was Cora's fish which sold faster. Elma was, of course, cognizant of the comparison people made between the two of them. She knew that she was often described in not-so-pleasant terms compared to Cora. But she was unmoved. According to her, the fish that she was selling were the product of her husband's hard labour and therefore she should see to it that she made the most income out of them. She complained that most of her neighbours who were also her

Picture 5.1
Women killing time in one of the community's numerous 'sari-sari' stores

Picture 5.2
Men fish vendors playing volleyball

Picture 5.3
Women drinking local wine called 'lambanog' to while away time

Picture 5.4
The main street in the community

regular customers were expecting that the price would always be what they wanted and not what she deemed to be the market price. She said:

> "People here wanted to buy fish for a song. If they could do that to Cora, it is different with me. My husband works hard to earn money and could I just sell his catch at a much lower price? You know people here want to take advantage of everyone. I'm different from Cora. She's too giving and kind. I'm practical." (Interview 2008)

Being practical, of course, has repercussions on Elma's membership in the community. I was told that, unlike Cora, Elma often found it difficult to negotiate an extension for payment of her borrowed money. In contrast with Elma, Cora would also be the recipient of most help from the people to whom she gave favours. When her son was rushed to hospital for an emergency treatment, she was able to obtain a loan from one of the money lenders free of interest. Thus, in a way, the word 'practical' here could be applied differently. While for Elma, Cora was not practical since she was literally giving away her husband's catch, practicality assumed a different meaning for Cora, since as my narration of her experiences and the way people treated and perceived her suggests, she was reaping good rewards for her 'impracticality'. In the context of reciprocity, and 'making do' in a community that was in dire straits, Cora was in fact more 'practical' than Elma.

5.4 A Community of the Weak

What do we make of the tactics of 'making do' in Sta. Filomena which I have just enumerated?

In answering this question, some thoughts direct from the mouths of my informants and the people in the community are in order. In one of my conversations with my informants, I made explicit my observation about what I perceived to be an excessive practice of borrowing in the community.[82] They were laughing while I was recounting to

[82] This is a particularly difficult chapter to write. It was only in my third month in the community, after collecting some good data about tactics of 'making do', that I started asking people directly about the excessive practice of borrowing money and household items. When I asked one of my informants, his initial reaction was one of pained embarrassment. For him, it is just a daily event in the community and he asked me if there was anything wrong with it. He was thinking that I

them my experiences and other people's experiences. They themselves, they said, lent to people and at the same time borrowed from others. According to them, the practice is normal, although they readily admitted that some people took advantage of the practice. As one woman fish vendor explained:

> "It's normal here (talagang ganyun dito). The borrowing you mentioned is part of our life in the community. If you don't have the item, your tendency is to look for a person who has it and borrow it." (Interview 2008)

They even mentioned to me a litany of names of people who they said were known in the community to be extremely good at borrowing money or items from people. In my interviews, their sentiment was reiterated by other people, and while many were highly critical of other people not returning what they borrowed, or in the case of money, failing to pay it back, they themselves admitted with a hint of embarrassment that they too borrowed a lot and forgot to return the items. But one thing which many of them failed to account for is this observation: many people borrowed items even if they already had them and they didn't pay at once money owed even if they had the money already, waiting for lenders to follow-up on loans.

Thus, is it just a case of simple borrowing and lending and forgetting to honor one's commitment?

5.4.1 Let There Be Power Where There Is None

In Sta. Filomena, it is difficult to mark out who is dominant and who subordinate. While there exist power differentials between groups, say between fishers and market fish vendors, and fish vendors and fish traders, that does not make certain groups more powerful than others or give them an absolute command over others. In a sense, therefore, as I said before, there is no hegemonic centre in the community, and power is with everyone who musters it at the right time and in the right space. When there is no power, it must be created. Thus, it is not one's economic holdings or control of the means of production that bestows power on someone in the community, but the need to outpower others in order to survive. Power is diffused and cannot be wholly deployed by

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was disparaging the community for its way of life. Other people interviewed voiced the same concern. It was difficult explaining my interest in their practice.

anyone, but just in bits and pieces and little by little. The everyday tactics of 'making do', as part and parcel of how power is created, allocated and contested in the community, is the basis of the community's very own survival. Power is the collective property of the whole system of cooperating actors, of the fields of social relations within which particular actors are located (Scott 2001, p. 9). No one monopolizes power in the community because Sta. Filomena is a community of the weak. No one and no identified group of people could be said to monopolize the resources of the community, and thus, as a result, nor are they arbiters of power. Since there is no power to challenge but the appropriation of temporary advantage over another, the community becomes a democratic space of protest not against an identified individual but against an abstract entity that reifies economic oppression and suspends indefinitely the amelioration of one's economic condition. Their resistance is not pointedly directed at any specific individual or group but at the crippling circumstances they found themselves in. Cunning is one good capital that people in the community have to master in order to survive the demands of everyday life. Cunning as capital, though, should be packaged and utilized in small measured doses. It is a kind of power that should be deployed little by little, not with smug arrogance and resounding blatant violence. Otherwise, their own reservoir of respect and dignity in the community would dissipate, qualities that tone down and mitigate the chicanery that they commit against their fellow members in the community. In short, the everyday tactics of 'making do' is an art of the weak. As de Certeau explains:

> the more a power grows, the less it can allow itself to mobilize part of its means in the service of deception: it is dangerous to deploy large forces for the sake of appearances; this sort of "demonstration" is generally useless and the "gravity of bitter necessity makes direct action so urgent that it leaves no room for this sort of game." One deploys his forces, one does not take chances with feints. Power is bound by its very visibility. In contrast, trickery is possible for the weak, and often it is his only possibility, as a "last resort". "The weaker the forces at the disposition of the strategist, the more the strategist will be able to use deception." (de Certeau 1988, p. 37)

Among the inhabitants of the community, 'making do' means creating 'power' to persuade the target victim to accept a proposal which, contrary to the spoken promise, is in fact dubious at its best. Persuasive influence operates through the offering and

acceptance of reasons for acting in one way rather than another. At its simplest, this may rest upon a person's strength of personality and their attractiveness to others, but persuasiveness depends particularly on socially structured cognitive and evaluative symbols (Scott 2001, p. 13). Since community ethos prescribes lending to people who are in need, such local logic sets the tone for dealing with others.

No privileged group is dominant per se in the community, only at certain times, and so there are no public and hidden transcripts to speak of, that is, as defined by Scott (1985; 1990). This then brings me to my proposed schema of public and hidden transcripts and the function of governable and ungovernable spaces. As will be clear, my conceptualization of public and hidden transcripts will be different from that of Scott (1985; 1990). This is because everyone in the community draws from the same language of domination and resistance and so in their world of the relentless everyday contestation of power, the dichotomy between domination and resistance does not exist.

5.4.2 Public and Hidden Transcripts

When public transcript is invoked in the study, it refers to official accounts of acts done by someone against anyone that constitutes a violation not of established laws but of values that are held widely to constitute the moral fabric of the fishing community. These values – like providing for the people in need, primarily relatives and neighbours - are not enacted as official community discourses by local public institutions as such, but by the community. Thus, borrowing one's frying pan and intentionally forgetting to return it (and therefore keeping it for one's use for the longest time circumventing the need to purchase one for the borrower) does not constitute a criminal act, but in the eyes of the community is an unpalatable act that needs to be sanctioned. The same applies in the case of a fisher who, instead of bringing all his catch to the fish vendor who shouldered the expenses for his trip, sells them instead to another person to increase his profit. All these acts violate the values of the community. They are in the blunt words of the people in Sta. Filomena, 'kawalanghiyaan' (shamelessness). Nonetheless, cases like these do not produce public transcripts since they are not talked about in the governable space, the space inhabited by government rules and state laws which is represented by the

'barangay' office in the community. Cases that are brought there and made to produce public transcripts are those that concern grave violation of community values or threaten the life, either economic or social, of someone in the community.

In the community, as much as possible, people do not bring their cases to the attention of the authorities, unless of course, as mentioned, they are of grievous concern. Also, once a case is brought there for mediation, scripts are known publicly and gain an official status which, if kept within the confines of the community, in public spaces like 'sari-sari' stores, would remain pure speculation, stories, rumours and gossip. This then brings me to the notion of hidden transcript and of ungovernable space.

As mentioned earlier, acts that violate community ethos have to be sanctioned. Power that oversteps its bounds needs to be disciplined. When cunning is too much, when it reaches beyond the limit that the community could tolerate, it has to be identified as beyond acceptance. Sanctions must be in place for the fishing community to continue its day to day life. In most cases, people in the community prefer to address community issues among themselves by bringing them into what I will refer to as ungovernable spaces, which in turn produce hidden transcripts. These hidden transcripts serve as the community's way of disciplining community members and reminding them of the need to check on their acts and limit the use of tactics of 'making do' towards others. In these ungovernable spaces, tactics of 'making do' are made known to everyone, while the people behind them are either named or not. Thus, they are hidden because their production is performed in the absence of the person being talked about. In the local parlance, when one is absent in a certain gathering, one becomes the 'pulutan' (subject of gossip).[83] What is important though is that in these spaces and events (like 'sari-sari' stores and drinking sessions), acts which are contrary to civic virtues and community ethos are named and shamed. When tactics of 'making do' become too bold to be unpalatable, resistance is manifested against them in 'sari-sari' stores,[84] on the street[85]

[83] *Pulutan* is a Filipino term for food being eaten during drinking bouts. It could be chips, left-over cooked fish/meat, sweets or any food that could go with the local wine. Thus, when one becomes the *pulutan*, it means he or she becomes the topic of conversation, the one being 'eaten' by the participants.

[84] In Sta. Filomena, as much as any part of the Philippines, sari-sari stores are a ubiquitous feature of community life. During my fieldwork, there were 14 *sari-sari* stores in the community, many of them situated on the main street, standing side by side to one another. These stores are the

and during drinking sessions - the ungovernable spaces in the community. In these places and instances, acts contrary to the morale of the community are taken to task, while the people involved more often than not remain anonymous, though in many cases, being a small community, they could be readily identified.

In ungovernable spaces, unlike the governable ones, scripts do not follow any rule nor any formal language, the language of formalities and legalities that characterize the language of bureaucracy. Language in governable spaces is policed to produce an orderly account of events and follow a one-path logic of coherence and evidence-based argument. In the rare case of settlement between a debtor and a lender which I was able to witness, the entire proceedings were facilitated by the 'barangay' chairman with the help of the 'barangay' secretary, who annotated and voice recorded the exchange of words between the contending parties. The atmosphere felt like a courtroom hearing and the business was conducted in a very formal tone with the chairman explaining to the parties involved why they were there, their rights and obligations and the possible ramifications of the case if it were to reach the local court. In effect, the 'barangay' office is a first step to the possible alleviation of any case before taking it to a formal juridical court. It hears community disputes and resolves them as quickly as possible, and if all venues are exhausted, cases are then brought to the local court for final legal remedies. In the meeting that I attended,[86] each party involved was made to account for its version of

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focal point of convergence of people in the community who mostly gather in any of them from 9-11am and 3-5 pm. It is a mixed crowd, but most of those who stay in *sari-sari* stores to chat are women. Men join them from time to time, but most men usually converge in groups in basketball courts, where in between games, they talk about all sorts of events in the community. Also, if men are not out playing or watching basketball, they are in the house, usually in a group, drinking local wine. Thus, if *sari-sari* stores are women's domain, drinking bouts are men's, and in these spaces no one controls the flow of words, thus making them ungovernable spaces.

[85] On the street, the expression of limits to the committing of acts related to tactics of making do comes in the form of verbal exchange between opposing parties or individuals, and in some rare cases physical violence happens, too, although this is mostly limited among women. I witnessed two events pertaining to the latter case.

[86] My attendance at the meeting was not planned. I was having a conversation with the *barangay* chairman on the street when she remembered that she would be having a case heard in her office. When I inquired about the nature of the case, she told me that it was about money lending. This made me interested in the case. I inquired if it was possible to attend the proceedings for the purpose of research. She told me that she had to ask the permission of the parties involved, since meetings like that were usually kept private. It turned out that the people involved were past interviewees. Thus, I had no problem with access, although I told them also that whatever

events while the chairman listened. Each was told that he would have his time and to refrain from butting in. In a way, each was freely allowed to tell all while the others listened. When the first party was through, the second party spoke her version and in the process, either affirmed or contradicted some parts of the previous narration. When she had finished, the first party did the same, either confirming or dismissing what the other party recounted. In this exchange of words, which was often testy and charged, the chairman saw to it that no one used abusive words and firmly reminded both parties from time to time to mind their language, or otherwise she would dismiss the proceedings and leave the case unresolved. Right there and then, after both accounts were heard, a settlement was proposed by the chairman, and if it was agreeable to the parties involved, they were made to sign an official document some days later, which served as the official transcript of the conflicted event. This is, of course, a great departure from the way conversations about the same topic are conducted in ungovernable spaces. I will cite an example of a woman who wanted to evade paying her debt, and who claimed that burglars entered her house and stole an undetermined amount of money from her.[87]

The woman in question is a fish vendor and her husband is a fisherman. She supplements their income by borrowing money from money lenders to make ends meet. To make it short, not unlike many people in Sta. Filomena, she is heavily indebted. One day, while her husband was out fishing, she was found in her bungalow house – right beside a busy street where people drink and hold conversations 24 hours a day – naked to the waist, her feet tied up and her bosom sprinkled with candle drops. But her hands were untied. The local police force was called in to investigate. She said that her place was ransacked and she was molested by men in hoods, and that her money in the house, some

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transpired in the meeting would not reach the community, which of course did not happen because the following day, in the *sari-sari* store which I usually frequented, the topic was about the *barangay* case I had attended and the version was an amplified and embellished account of the entire proceedings.

[87] At first, I did not take what happened (or what she did) as a case of a tactic of 'making do'. It could be, in my mind, a clear case of robbery and/or sexual assault. Some weeks after it happened, a close friend of the victim (or the perpetrator of a tactic of 'making do'), in my interview, confided to me that what happened was really a staged act, made to buy time for her friend to raise the needed money to pay her creditors. According to her, before it happened, in one of their conversations, her friend talked about planning to do something to partially solve her problem. Before I left the field in December, I interviewed the woman in question and in confidence, she told me that "she had no choice but to do it."

20,000 Php in cash, was taken away. Neighbours were wondering why it would happen to her when the street was always busy and any shenanigan would be easily noticed. No one saw anyone entering and leaving her house. And they were wondering why her hands were not tied up and her mouth taped. She could have easily made a noise during and after the supposed burglary. The 'victim' insisted that she was robbed and she never made a noise because a knife was pointed to her throat. Through this incident, a message was relayed indirectly to her creditors that she could not be able to meet her obligations because of the robbery. She also in a way aborted an impeding summons before the 'barangay' office.

Her case was not brought to the 'barangay' for arbitration since none of her many creditors pressed charges against her for failing to pay her dues on time, but the robbery incident which happened (or which was staged by her, depending on to whom one was talking) found its way to the 'barangay' office. By the time I left the field, no public transcript of the incident had been made, but in 'sari-sari' stores and at drinking sessions, stories flew up and about, from the sordid to the absurd, the first account of the incident almost unrecognizable from beneath the layers compiled by almost everyone in the community. In one 'sari-sari' store, for example, someone recounted hearing a story that the woman in question was not really robbed, but was a victim of marital violence. Allegedly, before her husband went out fishing that day, the two had a heated argument and some neighbours saw the husband hitting her in the face. Others thought that that could be the reason why her husband was uncharacteristically irritable that day, and this observation came from the wife of a fisher who went with her husband to fish. Others thought that she was again possessed by a bad spirit, since when she was still unmarried, she used to do really strange things, like crying in the middle of the night. This bizarre thought was, of course, bolstered by the fact that the night she was allegedly molested and robbed by men in hoods, it was a full moon and such a time was propitious for spirit possession. A few would stick to the initial version that it was a staged event to elude payment. In the drinking bouts which I attended in the community, the same thing happened. There was a profusion of versions of the event and everyone made a claim as to the veracity of her account. One really funny version which surfaced was that she was rehearsing an act which she would do in a television contest that she was planning to join.

Among men, the peculiar interest was the sexual part of the incident. They were wondering if she was really molested, and if she was, what did the men do to her. In this aspect, dirty thoughts were framed in narratives of make-believe, wherein men speculated that one of the robbers could be her former boyfriend and he was exacting a revenge since she walked away from her engagement with him some years back. In all of these recounting of events and the essaying of alternative versions to her official statement about what transpired that night, what is interesting is the involvement of almost everyone in the community in constructing so many accounts of unofficial transcripts of the event. In this messy world of so many narratives no one could be said to own any particular narrative. Every hidden transcript of what happened was predicated by statements such as "I heard from someone [...]", "I was told by a friend of a friend whom I will not name [...]", "I forgot who told me this but I heard this from a previous conversation that [...]". No one would want to own up to whatever was said, which is of course predictable, since many if not all of the versions verge on the fantastic if not libelous. In this case, tall tales in the community about someone employing a tactic of making do is gossip, and gossip "refers to unverified news about the personal affairs of others, which is shared informally between individuals" (Litman and Pezzo 2005, p. 963). It is "a discourse about social rules that have been violated" (Scott 1990, p. 23). It is a social activity and a type of 'personal' or 'living' narrative through which people make sense of relationships and events, creating order and coherence from the complicated and contingent occurrences of everyday experience (Vleet 2003, p. 492). Though gossips are morally questionable (Litman and Pezzo 2005), they are a way by which the community expresses its reservations and critique of what has transpired, when this is thought to have violated the principle of fairness. It can be an efficient way to remind group members of the importance of the group's norms and values (Dreby 2009); an effective deterrent to deviance; and a tool for punishing those who transgress (McAndrew, Bell and Garcia 2007). Gossip allows the people in the community "to negotiate aspects of group membership, and the inclusion and exclusion of others, by working out shared values" (Jaworski and Coupland 2005, p. 667). In the community, gossip functions in two ways: "as a means of identifying group membership and group boundaries, and as a sanctioning mechanism of moral policing" (Jaworski and Coupland 2005, p. 668). Thus, while the

community could be said to deploy tactics of 'making do' generously between and among its members, it still harbours a core cache of values that it affirms through talks that take place in ungovernable spaces like 'sari-sari' stores and drinking bouts. As explained by Scott:

> A person's reputation can be damaged by stories about his tightfistedness, his insulting words, his cheating, or his clothing only if the public among whom such tales circulate have shared standards of generosity, polite speech, and appropriate dress. Without an accepted normative standard from which degrees of deviation may be estimated, the notion of gossip would make no sense whatever. Gossip, in turn, reinforces these normative standards by invoking them and by teaching anyone who gossips precisely what kinds of conduct are likely to be mocked or despised. (Scott 1990, p. 25)

Hidden transcripts produced in ungovernable spaces, as mentioned, are hidden not because they are performed in the absence of the dominant but because they are produced behind the back of the person who, though as powerless as any other member of the community, was at one time, or on a number of times, more powerful than others by virtue of her/his success at staging a tactic of 'making do'. These hidden transcripts are produced in the open with the collaboration and active participation of community members. Thus, it is no wonder that while it is hidden, it is also very much public. In the community, there is a saying that goes like this: 'may tainga ang lupa, may pakpak ang balita' (the land has ears while news has wings). Soon, what had been discussed 'privately' in ungovernable spaces would reach the person. He could either be informed by someone close to him or hear the story in another public gathering. And because gossip is mostly embellished and verges on the fantastic, their effects on the people who are their subjects are most hurtful. Thus, for example, if one borrowed 100.00 Php for someone and did not return the money in a week, the usual narrative with much improvisation would be:

> "So and so borrowed 500.00 Php from this and that. It is already a month since the money was lent and until now, so and so has refused to pay it. The lender has already visited her place so many times, but what she got was only hurtful words [...]."

In so many ways, the production of gossip in the community is pernicious. It is so disturbing to the people involved that at one time, during an interview, a fish dealer asked me if people in 'sari-sari' stores were talking about her behind her back. I said no. She

then opened up to me. She relayed how talk would reach her, commenting on her belligerent attitude towards fish vendors who did not pay on time. She was described, she told me, as greedy, inconsiderate and humbug. While she told me that she was not affected by the gossip against her, I could sense that she was unnerved by what she had heard. Some weeks after the talk, in a banter in a 'sari-sari' store, a fish vendor related how this fish dealer did not berate her for not paying on time. She used the money to pay for their electric bills and when she told her about it, the fish dealer just told her to pay her in installments. When I asked what had caused the change in attitude, she told me that this particular fish dealer must have heard the gossip going on in the community about her.

> "She must have heard about the gossip going the rounds portraying her as a heartless woman, someone who does not feel for the misery of others. Though the gossip seems like a bit exaggerated, it sends a strong message to her: if she continues being inconsiderate, people will not stop talking behind her back." (Interview 2008)

Gossip though a feature of everyday life in all societies (Hallett, Harger and Eder 2009), its presence and production in the community points to the existence of widely held community beliefs that need to be protected and affirmed concerning good conduct and fair dealing. While what is said in public is not what transpires in day to day life, such beliefs serve as standards that mark the boundaries for community members to be reprimanded and for the participants of gossip-making to be reminded that good values still matter in the community. Thus, for example, in conversation people in the community would speak of the need to only spend money on things that matter. In times of abundance one has to save money, so that one does not have to resort to dirty tricks just to put food on the table. It is interesting to note, for example, that in many conversations in 'sari-sari' stores that I attended, most talk did not stop at producing hidden transcripts about events and people in the community, but was soon followed by comments about righteous living. In a conversation in a 'sari-sari' store, for example, I heard someone say (after speaking about a tactic of 'making do' of one fisherman):

> "It's not always that we have money or something to eat. When we outsmart other people once or twice because we're hungry or we need money to pay our medical bills, it looks okay. But when we do it out of habit, we are doomed. It will sow rift amongst us and destroy friendships. Thus, when we have money, let us save

some. The sea is not always calm. 'Madalas, bugabug ang dagat' (Oftentimes, the sea is rough)."

Those who participate in producing hidden transcripts, are also reminded that in their absence, when they perform tactics of 'making do' in excess of what is allowed by the community, they will be talked about behind their backs, in effect, being tried and reprimanded by the public in 'private'. In ungovernable spaces, the entire community is put on trial and its members are its judges, the victims and the perpetrators of the 'crime'.

5.5 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has elaborated on the daily manifestation of power by looking at economic strategies employed by people in a fishing community in the context of a fisheries crisis. The focus on power contestation among its members who belong to the same class to some extent fills a gap, following Levi's (1999) observation, in the literature on power, domination and resistance that does not give enough case recognition to the hierarchies existing within subordinate groups and the kind of internal contestation that operates amongst their members. Furthermore, the manifestation of power is seen on a big, epic scale, like a landowner evicting tenant farmers or multi-national corporations depriving their workers of decent salaries and wage benefits. Power is always associated with a dominant monolithic entity. The micro manifestation of power in everyday life is elided, primarily among the poor, the unlettered, the ordinary folk, as if these people in absolute terms did not exercise power over others. In everyday tactics of 'making do', power becomes a productive resource that is appropriated, negotiated and contested by members of the community.

The diagnostic of power then needs to be shifted to the drama of everyday life of ordinary folks "as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their points of application and the methods used" (Foucault 1980, p. 12) by people and in places of marginal importance. Power could be, as this study suggests, about an everyday struggle to make do in an environment where resources are scarce, and therefore, people have to employ economic strategies that exemplify their cunning and use of social networks (and in effect, familiarity with one another) to gain advantage over

others. Through constant borrowing, lending money between fish vendors and fishers, not returning on time the money raised in selling fish and the constant giving in to the request of buyers for discounts, people in the community get by and enmesh themselves in a dense network of involuntary reciprocity and giving. By performing tactics of 'making do', they do not just survive the numbing effects of their economic powerlessness but also activate the potentialities of their creative selves in producing power, however trivial it may be, to survive and thrive.

This chapter takes its cue from and contributes to the works of Campbell and Heyman (2007), Haenfler (2004), Kates and Belk (2001) Levi (1999), Howe (1998), Kulick (1996) and Gal (1995) in critiquing studies heavy on the dialectic of the dominant-subordinate/powerful-powerless dichotomy. This chapter, then, echoing what Campbell and Heyman (2007) point out in their study, has sought to engage with the tendency of studies on power, domination and resistance toward oversystematicity, "assuming a closed universe in which one either embodies or resists domination, when the social field is actually more open, ambiguous and creative" (Campbell and Heyman 2007, p. 4). It has also tried to deal with the preponderance of belief in the homogeneity of intent, belief and cooperation among members of one social class glossing over its own internally generated conflicts. In short, the chapter has addressed how notions of power, and by extension, domination and resistance among the inhabitants of Sta. Filomena are articulated and manifested in their everyday lives –in their economic strategies and social networks - in the context of a fisheries crisis. The chapter has also offered a critique of Scott's (1985; 1990) notion of public and hidden transcripts and at the same time introduced what it calls governable and ungovernable spaces. Lastly, it has also contributed to the elucidation of how acts of living are a contested terrain in a place where resources are scarce, and yet because of that, ways of surviving are aplenty.

The ways in which groups in the community employ everyday forms of 'making do' in order to keep afloat in an economic environment are highly insecure and volatile. Power in the community does not reside with anyone and, coupled with their dire economic conditions, the state of powerlessness of community members has paved the way for the proliferation of tactics of 'making do' which are primarily directed not at a specific group of people but at an opportunity perceived to be the opening up of a space

which offers a temporary relief from poverty. The people in the community in a way do not resist specific people, but their own lamentable circumstances. As shown by examples mentioned earlier, everyday tactics of 'making do' are diffused and are not controlled by a particular group or deployed against a specific power block. In the community, while one engages a tactic against someone, the latter could also be doing the same to someone else. The performance of an act to survive economic difficulties is unique to everyone and cannot be ascribed to a mapped agglomeration of specific bodies. In this light, as Ortner contends, "every culture, every subculture, every historical moment, constructs its own forms of agency, its own modes of enacting the process of reflecting on the self and the world and of acting simultaneously within and upon what one finds there" (1995, p. 186).

Power as conceived in this chapter is understood as something that works not just "negatively, by denying, restricting, prohibiting, or repressing, but also positively, by producing forms of pleasure, systems of knowledge, goods, discourses" (Foucault 1981 cited in Abu-Lughod 1990, p. 43), and for the purpose of this study, ways of survival. I point to ways which allow people in Sta. Filomena to survive the fisheries crisis through a number of social practices that contest each other's position of 'power' in a world where, oddly enough, all of them are deemed to be powerless. I have scare quoted the word power here not so much because its existence and manifestation in the community is doubtful but because power in the community is not a given; it has to be created and recreated everyday. Thus, where there is no power, it has to be produced. Someone in the community possesses power only after the successful performance of a tactic of 'making do'.

Tactics of 'making do' are an expression and an appropriation of power, to a certain extent, by everyone and anyone in the community and showcase how social networks are visible avenues of power stratification and contestation in the community. The intricate webs of relations in the community – actual and fictive kinship – provide the grease that sustains the normal functioning of the community, in spite of the daily tension being created by the sustained deployment of tactics of 'making do'. Coritha's skirmishes with Luli would have become worse if not for their fictive kinship. What prevented the former from frontally attacking the latter for her failure to honour her

commitment was their sense of belonging to one family. Luli, on the other hand, could not forever ignore her debt and had to honour her commitment, otherwise she too knew that her relations with Coritha and Coritha's immediate family members would be strained. There was a brief row but it had been instantly diffused when Luli paid Coritha back. In a community where there are very few disposable resources to speak of, alienating someone permanently reads like economic suicide, indeed. It limits one's choices of possible targets for tactics of 'making do'.

In Sta. Filomena, power has a dual face: it is both productive and exploitative. Dominance in the community does not mean dominance in the manner in which the concept is usually defined. Domination as it is done in the community is not maintained through coercion or the employment of measures that insinuate a dominant ideology into the lifeworld of community members. Domination comes in pockets and is easily won and lost and gets appropriated and owned by someone. Where do I place resistance then? Here, another kind of resistance emerges. Resistance comes in the form of unofficial/hidden transcripts which are produced in ungovernable spaces like 'sari-sari' stores and drinking sessions. Again, resistance here is not the kind of resistance that exists in a world where there is an identifiable class that oppresses another class, say, the landed class over the tillers and tenants. Resistance in the world of Sta. Filomena is more of a communal act to highlight what is for everyone a set of values that is eroded in times of the deployment of tactics of 'making do'. Power has to be policed properly, and while domination continues, there is a constant production of resistance to remind everyone that community values are still worth preserving and held on to.

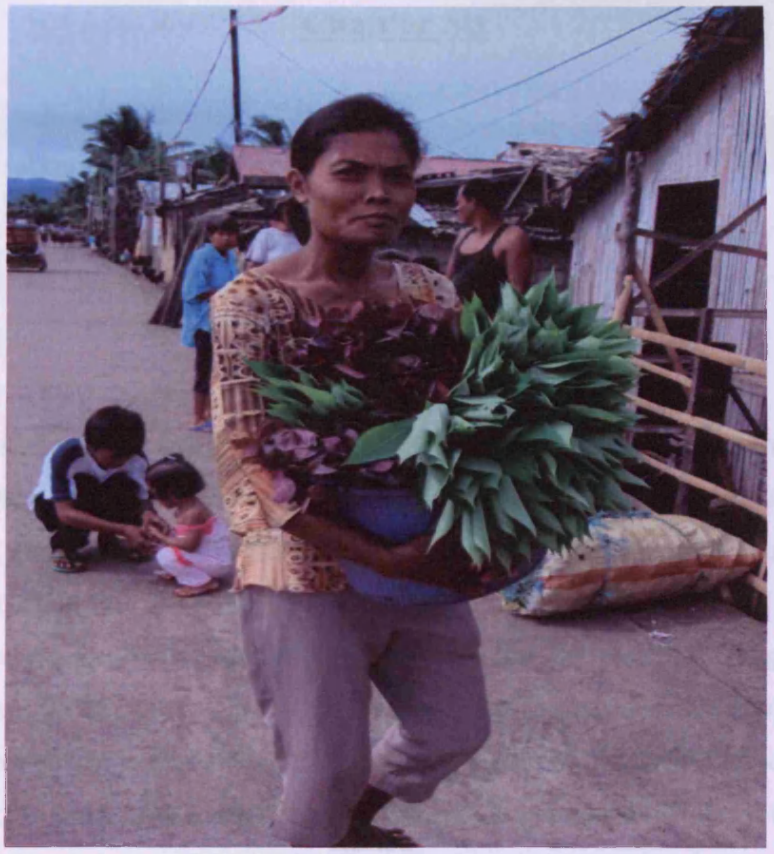
A community that experiences unprecedented changes in the politics of its economic production and is subjected to the vagaries of outside forces demands novel ways to survive without unraveling its foundation and undermining the very values that keep its bits and parts all together. Any tactic of 'making do' towards another is a calculated risk and a calculated move that one makes, not to decapitate the receiver but to enact a temporary transfer of power. When the end is achieved, the power leaves the receiver and transfers to another person. People should not overdo the deployment of their tactics of 'making do' though, so as not to deplete their reservoir of dignity and respect in the community. Otherwise, they would become the fodder of talk and

malicious gossip in ungovernable spaces, to be talked about, laughed at and censured, mercilessly.

The powerlessness of the people in Sta. Filomena is mitigated and the feeling of economic insecurity is temporarily relieved of its pernicious character through tactics of 'making do'. In so many ways, tactics of 'making do' show that anyone in the community has a claim on anyone else's property. The person performing a tactic of 'making do' feels that he could do something to better his lot, albeit temporarily and still within the bounds of what the community deems tolerable and acceptable. Power, in this case, as displayed in the tactics of 'making do' of the people in the community, should be understood in a much more nuanced light, electing an analytical optic that highlights "a greater sense of the complexity of the nature and forms of domination and resistance" (Abu-Lughod 1990, p. 43).

It is said that global processes have rendered some lives enjoyable and others unbearable. There are so many angles and hues to the benefits and challenges being offered by the forces of globalization. Each community has its own ways of coping. Ways of living in local places in the context of an interconnected world are determined by the presence and absence of 'survival kits' at everyone's disposal. There are no homogenous tactics to combat life's difficulties. Everyone is limited to and at the same time provided with tools of coping by their immediate environment. In places where social networks could provide economic relief, tapping into and making use of them depends much on everyone's resourcefulness. One's geography is one's potent resource to 'make do'. The inability to be mobile does not kill the will to live. Powerlessness does not translate to helplessness. It could, in fact, propel novel ways to survive.

If this chapter is about the public realm in Sta. Filomena and how everyday social relations among its people could be used as a means to diagnose how ways of survival are also about power contestations in their most mundane manifestations, the next chapter takes the private realm, the household, as its area of analysis. It will talk about how the local economic re-structuring impacts on the gender dynamics in the household and, in effect, how power is allocated and renegotiated between husband and wife, a strategic bringing to the fore the space of contestation elided in this chapter - the everyday life of people in the community as it is conducted in the privacy of one's home.



Picture 6.0
A woman selling fresh produce on the street

Chapter Six

Of 'Housebounds' and Wives: Changing Socio-economic Roles and Gender Relations in the Household

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the changing socio-economic roles of fishers and their wives in Sta. Filomena in the context of the fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay, their livelihood strategies in response to it, and the crisis' implications on their gender identities and household power dynamics. Although the fisheries crisis directly relates to numerous global, national and local issues (which are dealt with in chapter 4), in order to best explore its gendered impact, it makes sense that issues of diversity must be emphasized, stressing not only the differences between men and women, but also the differences among men and women themselves. It is worth reiterating that while this study is about local lives, the parameters in which these local lives unfold are implicated with what transpires beyond the community. Thus, while the study speaks about the local world of the fishing community, as it were, it is also about the global world. It is in this associative entwining of the local and the global that in understanding the fishing community's local world of work, "experiences of globalization through work are very much localized; they are historically and culturally situated and interact with broader processes in dissimilar fashion" (Menjivar 2006, p. 86). In more specific terms, it is contingent that we focus "on men and women's social location to understand different outcomes and experiences of development within similar economic and ecological circumstances" (Hapke 2001, p. 314). All in all, this chapter considers how local values and gender ideologies construct economic roles which, in turn, have implications on livelihood strategies and gender relations in a rural, economically marginalized setting.

This chapter limits its analysis to fishers and their wives. Specifically, it speaks about men who call themselves fishers and yet have chosen to market fish for the time being to weather the fisheries crisis. It considers some 23 families. This chapter's aim is

to illustrate that it is problematic to claim that there is a homogenous and predictable effect of the fisheries crisis on fishing families. It is important that the heterogeneity and complexity of life in fishing communities are explored and an attempt to disaggregate the experiences of their inhabitants be made. The first section deals with how the global economic restructuring of the past decades has made an impact on the sexual division of labour in fishing communities. In effect, this section is a contextualization of the study and an attempt to relate the changes in the socio-economic roles and gender identities of fishers and their wives in Sta. Filomena to a bigger world. In the succeeding sections, I look at the changes in socio-economic roles and livelihood strategies among fishers and their wives and how they re-frame and (re)negotiate gender identities in the community. For the conclusion, I explain that the on-going fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay has resulted in changes in the socio-economic roles and (re)negotiation of gender identities of fishers and their wives in Sta. Filomena and, in effect, created spaces of contestation and negotiation of power in the household and the sharing of burdens and experiencing of double burdens between husbands and wives.

6.2 Gender Dynamics in Fishing Communities

In fishing communities, and here Sta. Filomena is not an exemption, a sexual division of labour is often well delineated. Men go fishing while women are primarily responsible for pre- and post-fishing activities – mending and maintaining tools and nets, preparing meals for fishing trips, and processing and marketing the fish catch (Banez-Sumagaysay nd; D'Agnes, Castro, D'Agnes, Montebon and Foundation 2005, p. 454; Davis 1988; Eder 2006; Hapke 2001; Munk-Madsen 2000; Siason, Tech, Matics, Choo, Shariff, Heruwati, Susilowati, Miki, Shelly, Rajabharshi, Ranjit, Siriwardena, Nandessha and Sunderarajan nd; Thompson 1985; Williams, Nandeesha and Choo 2004). Men are paid for their catches while women who do the ancillary work are not, unless of course they do the marketing of fish for other people and not for their husbands. Though women are central players in the credit economy which is a feature of most fishing communities, as Busby (2000) has pointed out in her study of a fishing community in Kerala, their activities are often regarded as low-value versus men's activities which are considered high-value

(Novaczek and Mitchell 2004; Williams, Nandeesha and Choo 2004). Most of women's work is unpaid, but is necessary in the whole fish production system (Banez-Sumagaysay nd, p. 118). Furthermore, women in fishing communities, in the words of Davis (1988), are 'grass widows', which means providing female, land-bound emotional support for male, sea-bound fishery activities.

The power relations between fishers and their wives evidently favour men and the role of women as indispensable allies in managing sea resources is most often trivialized and assigned no productive value. Interviews with people in Sta. Filomena point towards this. Fishing is a 'tough' job while women's chores at home are essentially 'light' and 'easy'. A fishing community like Sta. Filomena is first and foremost, therefore, a space where fishing and fishermen determine every aspect of its socio-economic life. The sea signifies the power of the masculine, the power of men to tame nature, the logos that inscribes masculine dominance onto the fabric of community life. The hegemonic masculinity of men – how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance – (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994) is premised on their mastery of fishing and the ways in which their prowess in this work translates to economic productivity. Men 'own' the sea and the life that supports it. To extend the argument further, the sea sustains the land, and consequently, fishers provide sustenance for their families.

Recent changes in the global economy though, and by extension, in the national and local economies, have had a great effect on how gender relations are played out in the household. With the reorganization of production on a global scale, changes have taken place in consumption patterns, cultural practices, community and family work, and household expenditure (Menjivar 2006). Important aspects of this economic restructuring include women's increased participation in the labour force, women's experiencing of what Hochschild (1997) calls 'second shift' (after their paid work, women do another round of work, at home, doing household chores), men's increased reliance on women for household maintenance and men's heightened sense of insecurity vis-à-vis their dominance in household politics. It is now worth turning to the local manifestations of these developments as they transpire in the everyday life of fishers and their wives in Sta. Filomena.

6.3 Men Who Sell Fish

Prior to the fisheries crisis, there were two major sources of income for men in the community: fishing and hauling logs. Fishing was of course the predominant source of income in most households. While women did odd jobs to supplement the income of the family, men concentrated on fishing. Though fishing did not provide them with a comfortable life comparable to that of people living in the town centre, it got them by; it sent their children to school and provided for their daily needs. Hauling logs on the other hand was a seasonal work for men and was, for most of the time, precarious since logging at that time was (and still is) a controlled and limited commerce, subjected to the Philippine government's constantly changing laws and regulations on the exploitation of natural resources. These logs came from the northern part of the Philippines, transported by sea and were unloaded in the long stretch of sand dunes in the community. Men in the community provided the workforce in unloading logs from ships and carrying them to waiting ten-wheeler trucks. The work was done twice a month and provided the people in the community with some extra cash to pay for unforeseen needs like medical bills, among others. In the early 1990s, a series of flash floods in the Philippines blamed to unsustainable logging practices in the country put a stop to this lucrative source of additional income for men in the community. By the late 1990s, fishing was becoming unproductive in Sta. Filomena and by 2000, there was a fisheries crisis. With very few options of alternative source of income compared to women, most men in the community took to selling fish. This shift was further encouraged by robust sales in fish brokerages in the community which were minimally affected by the fisheries crisis since the fish they sold came from a fish port in Lucena City and the weekly landings of commercial fishing vessels plying the high seas of Pacific ocean.

In Sta. Filomena, there were 34 men and 15 women selling fish on average at the time of my fieldwork. However, the number fluctuated depending on the lack or availability of other jobs in the surrounding areas and localities. For example, other men who did construction work would also market fish when their contract ended. During my fieldwork, from July until September, there were as many as 50 men selling fish, but when some construction work became available in October, many men stopped selling

fish and did construction work. When I ended my fieldwork in January, most of the men were back and selling fish again. Thus, for many men in the community, selling fish is the most accessible job there is while waiting for other opportunities to come by, though for others, selling fish has become their primary source of income. For this section, I will talk about fishers who have taken up fish selling as their full-time work.

The life of Pedro starts very early in the morning. At 5 am he must be up already and at 6 am he must be on the shore, waiting for the arrival of boats or as is the usual case, in a shed on Villaverde Street huddled together with other men in the community, waiting for fish traders to start their business. Pedro joins an increasing number of men who market fish, a work traditionally gendered as feminine in the community as much as in other fishing communities in Asia (see, for example, Hapke 2001). Fish selling usually starts at 9 am and ends at 11 am. It starts again at 3 pm and lasts until 6 pm. Some men market fish just within the vicinity of the community, doing the rounds of houses, while the rest go to other communities and neighbouring towns.[88] Those who stay in the community to sell fish earn less than those who visit remote places. The chances of losing more money are greater for those who visit far-flung places than those who do not go far, since their overhead expenses are higher. But the prospect of earning more is also higher for fish vendors going to remote places since they charge their buyers more. For those who sell fish around the community and its immediate environs, they either walk on foot or use a bicycle to facilitate their ease of movement, echoing the selling practices of other fish vendors in most Asian countries (Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004). But since bicycles were not within the financial reach of most fishers, during my study, only three fish vendors had a bicycle.

Their income varies and fish vendors earn an average of 150-200.00 Php per day. For women, the amount is much lower since, unlike men, they can only bring less than 20

[88] A reiteration of distinction is necessary. As mentioned in chapter 4, some fish dealers augment their income also selling fish in faraway villages and towns. They ride their converted motor cycle with a sidecar where they put their fish. In a way, they are also fish vendors and their income is a lot better, since they usually peddle a crate of fish, some 60 kilos at the most. But they are not the fish vendors that I am talking about here. Here, I am referring to mobile fish vendors who get fish from fish dealers on credit and whose transaction is limited to 20-30 kilos only.

kilos of fish per transaction with them. Two reasons are usually cited. First, many of these women could not afford to be away from home for too long, since either no one looks after the house or bringing too many fish is too physically taxing for them. That limits the ability of women to earn as much as men. Everyone's income is even determined by the kind and quality of fish they are selling. Other fish vendors even told me that they would sometimes accept payment in kind, like rice and vegetables. Thus, Pedro explained that most of the time, he went home with just 50.00 Php in profit after payment and several kilos of rice and a bagful of vegetables.

There are several reasons why the fishers interviewed for this study chose selling fish over other work. Some of these reasons included the employment history of the family, the unavailability of other work, low educational attainment and lack of employable skills, peer pressure and influence, age and the flexibility of time that the work offered. However, the most cited reasons among fishers who turned fish vendors were the employment history of their family, the lack of work opportunities in the community and in surrounding areas and the flexibility and easy money that it provided. Earning money in fish selling, though not as good as other kinds of work, also functions as a way to re-affirm the vendors' masculinity and social status defined in large part by their ability to provide material sustenance to their families (see, for example, Hapke 2001). Even if their wives are already working and contributing to family expenses, it is very important that they do not take a break from work. Andy, a 48-year old fish vendor, explains:

> "Selling fish is better than waiting for fishing to be economically viable again. I only earn 150.00 Php everyday, but at least I have something to give to my wife at the end of the day. She cannot nag me that I am not doing anything. I can always tell her to her face that I am a responsible father to my children." (Interview 2008)

For others, selling fish frees them from doing household chores. For them, cooking and other associated work in the household are not their lot. Another fisher argues:

> "My wife can't ask me to lift the broom and sweep the floor like what other men in the community do since I still work. I sell fish and I earn money for the family." (Interview 2008)

This crossing over of work boundaries signifies among other things a re-assertion of men's premium place in the income generation sphere of the community, since by selling

fish, they reinstate their role in the household as the premium income generator. By selling fish, fishers do not lose their power to earn a living for the family and in the process re-claim their central position in the household economy. It frees them from the spectacle of being dressed down by their wives, and, in effect, losing face. That has propelled many men in the community to sell fish, among other reasons. While selling fish is normally conceived to be feminine work, it at least buys time for them and re-affirms their sense of worth in the household. Doing household chores diminishes men's masculinity and questions their centrality in the equation of power in the family. Thus, through selling fish, though it is feminine work, they cannot be accused of being slothful and dependent on their wives for sustenance, the usual tirade against men who have chosen to stick it out with fishing rather than do other work. A fisher-wife says:

> "It's good that my husband decided to join me in selling fish. Otherwise, he will join the company of his friends, who spend most of their time talking to one another. They are good-for-nothing husbands. They can't leave fishing. They are unreasonable." (Interview 2008)

While some men found selling fish to their liking, others did not. This has to be pointed out to effect an early claim to the heterogeneity of experiences and reception by men with regard to selling fish. Although most men in Sta. Filomena share a number of similarities, like low educational attainment and family work background, their age and other biographical attributes contribute to their divergent experiencing and valuation of the work. It is in this context that a number of men fish vendors admit that "selling fish is not for them", "a most uncomfortable job" and "not enough to make them feel that they are doing everything for their families". Their income is paltry and this makes them feel inadequate. While selling fish answers some of their needs, they feel that something is amiss.

> "I can't really say it. It does not just feel right, I should say. There is always this feeling of discomfort. It's like [...] I'm doing something which I should not be doing at all." (Interview 2008)

It must also be pointed out that in the process of re-asserting their importance in the domestic economy, fishers are also re-negotiating their gender identities and the way their work is socially constructed in the community. In doing a woman's work, fishers have to negotiate a new range of work habitus that goes against their habituated world of

masculine traits. Habitus here means "a system of lasting transportable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions and actions" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 34). It is 'history turned nature', interactional experiences incorporated into memory, to form the common sense with which people's expectations about, and reactions to, subsequent incidents are shaped (McElhinny 1994). They have to deal with their new work subjectivity and endure some personal struggles attendant with their new productive role. Compelled to do feminine work, fishers in the community are forced to confront the specificity of work ideology that the community (which could also be read as the ideology of patriarchy) has erected for its members: fishing is for men while selling fish is for women.

Selling fish concerns itself with emotional labour and "when men are required to perform emotional labor, it is often the projection of negative emotion or of affectlessness" (McElhinny 1994, p. 167). Selling fish means being cozy and personal with customers and women are perceived to be adept at this. Showing emotions publicly is conceived to be a feminine trait and men who do it are branded as sissy and ridiculed in public. Male fish vendors reported that the first reaction among buyers was extreme surprise (at least during the early days when there were just a few of them selling fish) when they encountered them selling fish on the street. According to men fish vendors, they never knew that their entry into fish selling would solicit such surprise, and in some circumstances, outright hostility from many people. Selling fish according to them needed no gender and yet in their first foray into the market when people started asking them why they were selling fish, they realized that what they were doing was seen at-large as a woman's job. A mobile fish vendor relates his experience:

> "I never thought that men selling fish would be an issue. Either it's a woman or a man, it is still fish which are being sold and if someone buys from a man, the taste of 'galunggong' (a local fish) will not change. But when people started asking me questions and women smiling at me for no reason at all, I became conscious of what I was doing. You know what, after my first try, I didn't do it again for a week. It got on my nerves. Because of these people asking me questions, I felt like wearing a skirt and swaying my hips!" (Interview 2008)

Another mobile fish vendor speaks of public humiliation and ridicule. According to him, people who saw him selling fish asked him why he was into it when it was work for women. They would often tell him to look for another job.

> "People tell me to work either in construction or anything aside from selling fish. But I ask them why should selling fish be just for women. Men can sell fish, too. When I ask them that question, they can't find the answer. They will just tell me that it's not right, it does not look good." (Interview 2008)

I personally experienced this when I sold fish in a neighbouring town with another man fish vendor. When we were called upon by a group of housewives to take a look at our fish, one of the women looked at me and remarked:

> "Who is with you? Another young man who could not find a decent job, something suitable for men."

Bemusement and sometimes hostile reactions from people were not just the concern of many male fish vendors. Aside from the comments they were getting from their customers, it is their own internalization of the habitus of fish selling that alarmed them. They had started to imbibe some traits which they thought were very feminine. The traits that typically concerned male fish vendors were the idea of being loud ('maingay'), talkative ('madaldal') and questioning ('matanong').

Selling fish requires that men should be 'acting' like women which means among other things being talkative and highly sociable, asking prospective customers about their daily chores, what food they had last night, what their favourite television shows are and where they got their new dress from. Thus, while selling fish, men have to be talkative and questioning. They should also be loud to draw people's attention to them. They can't sell fish if they are timid and reserved. By being 'a woman' while selling fish, they establish rapport with their customers and attract buyers. If they are scanty with words and answer in monosyllables, customers usually tell them, "you're such a lousy vendor, you have no life stirring in you whatsoever, I'm losing my interest to buy from you". Whereas fishing is solitary, private and tight-lipped, selling fish is public, frenzied and outwardly. Fishing is about being reserved, stiff and quiet while fish selling is the opposite. Men who profess a flippant attitude while fishing are looked down upon, since fishing needs concentration and human noise is thought to drive fish away. Men selling fish, on the other hand, have to be loud and noisy. They have to attract attention in this way. If men are into an economy of affect in fishing, in fish selling, they have to engage themselves with a robust and unabashed show of affectation with their customers. By

economy I mean to suggest the extent to which this style is shaped by the particular nature of their involvement in the labour market (McElhinny 1994).

This livelihood strategy therefore asks for a (re)negotiation of one's occupationally conditioned habitus. While it could be said that the attributes mentioned earlier were perfectly expected of anyone selling goods, it has to be remembered that these male fish vendors used to be fishers and had been fishing most, if not all, of their lives. They used to work in an environment very different from the work they were doing now. Where salesmen in malls and department stores had months of training or years of undergraduate modules to prepare them for their task, fishers had nothing.

In this section I made a case for how fishers re-asserted their prime role as money earner in the domestic economy by turning into fish selling in the light of the fisheries crisis. By selling fish, they freed themselves from the prospect of sharing the burden of doing household chores, since for many of them it is not their lot but their wives'. In a sense, fishers are re-affirming their masculine status in the community through fish selling. Nonetheless, such re-assertion is fraught with tension since by selling fish, they have entered a woman's trade, which necessitates the adoption of feminine traits. In so many ways, fishers - being men and therefore socialized to perceive household work as feminine work - are re-negotiating both their status in the household and their gender identities. Men fish vendors, in this instance, while freeing themselves from doing household work by selling fish have, on the other hand, hurled themselves into doing work which requires them to be seemingly feminine in their ways.

6.4 The 'Housebounds'

Aside from men doing 'womanly' work like marketing fish, among men and women, contestation of gender identities comes in the form of shifting roles in the household division of labour. In this section, I will talk about men being out of work and therefore doing household chores and looking after the finances of the family, which is work traditionally done by women.

In the community, there were around 17 families in which the primary earner was the wife: seven were working in the city as either factory workers or househelpers, while

the remaining ten were either selling fish or maintaining a food stall in the street. In this case, their husbands had taken over some of their household chores, like cooking meals and looking after the children. While women would still do some housework, their new-found centrality in the economic sphere had afforded them the chance to pass up on some household chores. Among these husbands, those whose wives were working in the city were the most 'housewifized' (Mies 1982). Their wives' long absence from the house had compelled them to forgo looking for a full-time job. Someone had to look after the house and the children, and obviously, they were the ones to do it. All of these men still went fishing but on a very limited scale, usually once a week. Sometimes, they would earn some money but not enough for household expenses. This made them reliant on the money being sent home by their wives.

One good example is Noel. He fishes irregularly and now relies on the income of his wife who is working in a factory in a neighbouring province. In the morning, he cooks the meal for his children and when they go off to school, he starts cleaning the house. When he is done with the household chores, he goes out and chats with his friend. In the afternoon, he goes back to the house to prepare lunch. He takes a nap afterwards and leaves the house at 3 pm to check on his boat and then spends the whole afternoon conversing with his friends. In the evening, he prepares dinner, sees to it that the children are working on their school assignments, and then goes to a neighbor to watch television, or if someone invites him, he goes out for a drink to his friend's house. He explains his present status in this manner:

> "Here I am now, always at home and chatting with friends. It feels like I am a 'pensionado' (living on a pension). I'm not comfortable with this new set-up since I am not used to staying at home. I am now a 'housebound' husband." (Interview 2008)

Among 'housebounds', the feeling of inadequacy comes from the realization that home is not their domain, the sea is. The longer they stay at home, the more they feel a sense of being less of a man. They find everyday routines at home dull and a chore. A fisherman whose wife is working as a machinist in a garment factory in Manila spoke of his feeling of unease every time he had to call his wife to check on her condition and report about their children and what was going on in the community. According to him, it felt different ("parang iba") that he was often compelled to provide an account of their

expenses at home, since he was afraid that his wife would think that he was being wasteful with the money that she was sending them. His struggle was both mental and physical. When I visited him in his house for an interview, I found him bathing his four-year old daughter. After the interview, I wrote in my notebook:

> The house looks like a war zone and clearly, Eric struggles very hard in his new role. Some dirty clothes are heaped on top of one another in a corner. The air in the house smells bad, maybe because of the unwashed clothes. He felt embarrassed that I chanced upon their house in total disarray.

Noel and other fishers who are relying solely on their wives for sustenance have experienced the most radical change in their household roles. Compared to other fishers who still earn a living, though smaller than before, by selling fish, fishers who have stopped working completely have suffered the most diminution in terms of their importance in the household. According to Mayo, whose wife maintains a profitable eatery in front of their house, when he was still earning enough for the family, whatever he said in the family was law. Although the making of decisions was not unilateral, as most of the time they were made between him and his wife, when there was disagreement, he would always insist that his was the best option. When his children wanted new shoes and he said no, there was no way the decision could be reversed. Things had changed since his wife had started earning for the family, while he, on the other hand, was earning less and less. As an example, he mentioned how some days ago, his oldest son who was in his final year in high school wanted to join a school field trip. He asked for his permission. He wanted to say no, since the expenses were too big and he did not see any use for it. His wife asked for his opinion and he said no, but his wife said that there was enough money for it and he just told her that it was up to her. His son had his way.

> "What's the use of asking me in the first place if she will have her way? This would not happen if I still earned for the family. But since my wife earns more than I do, the decision rests with her." (Interview 2008)

This shift of power in the household could be largely attributed to the availability of more options for women to earn a living compared to men. Of course, this local labour condition has a global dimension to it. As Menjivar observes:

> Women have been playing a "conspicuous role" as economic actors (in contrast to preexisting definitions that emphasized their domestic role) in the reconfiguration of the global economy through the feminization of the labor force both in wealthier as well as poorer nations. But while global processes affect workers the world over, an examination across different geographic sites highlights the importance of how such global trends are played out locally. (Menjivar 2006, p. 88)

In Sta. Filomena, while most men are limited to fish selling and some occasional construction and carpentry work on the side, women have more choices for earning money. Some earn a living by selling food in the street, washing clothes for other people, doing domestic help for others, selling clothes and other personal effects, and doing 'tornohan'.[89] These alternative livelihoods are largely undertaken by women and there was only one guy I met in the course of my fieldwork who was into selling clothes, and he was single and homosexual. The main reason commonly cited by men with regard to why they did not engage with these jobs was because they were for women.[90] In this case, the construction of these alternative livelihoods as feminine is advantageous for women. Competition from men with regard to these jobs is out of the question.

The fishers mentioned in this study are not equipped for the challenges of the brave new world of work. Lacking the skills and qualifications needed in the formal economy, they feel alone in the world, with no opportunities at hand to see them through. Their options are also limited by how the community constructs its notion of which work is suited for men and women. Their coping strategies with regard to the fisheries crisis are limited by the very nature of the job that sustained their dominance in the community

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[89] *Tornohan* in English means installment. It is done by contributing a certain amount to a group led by someone on a daily basis. A pot of say 10,000.00 Php is given to every member every 20 days, depending on the agreement of the group. A *tornohan* usually runs for as long as seven months, and the person who has initiated it gets the same amount without contributing any money to the pot. Her only contribution is her labour (everyday, she has to do the rounds of collecting money and spending her own money in the event that someone defaults on her contribution). Some women in the community run as many as 5 to 10 *tornohan* simultaneously in a year. [89] In her study of a fishing community in Kerala, India, Busby (2000) also mentions the same money-generating scheme among her women-respondents. She refers to it as a chitty fund. Although the mechanisms are different, some similarities can be observed (see, for example, Busby [2000, pp. 184-186]).

[90] This reasoning is of course dubious if not faulty, since selling fish was also known before as primarily woman's work. But in the case of money lending, for example, I was told that since most borrowers are women, it does not look good that they borrow money from men, since transactions are usually done in private. It sounds logical.

Picture 6.1
A woman fish vendor gutting fish for distribution to her customers

Picture 6.2
A woman waiting for customers while breastfeeding her child

Picture 6.3
The only couple in the community who goes fishing together

Picture 6.4
Some of the community's numerous men fish vendors

for so long. While women could venture into many productive activities, most men could only contemplate working as labourers or construction workers, which sorely limited their chance of gaining employment. This turn of events, men losing their jobs and women gaining employment, makes possible the (re)negotiation of gender identities in the household and de-centres men in the equation of power in household management. In this intertwining fate of fishers and their wives, they are both limited and empowered by the place they inhabit and the global and local discourses on the gender of work.

6.5 Ladies Who (Skip) Lunch

There are two eventual results of the fisheries crisis on fishers' wives. It has either made their lives even more difficult, or in some measure, provided them with opportunities to venture out and join the domestic economy. Thus, the results of the fisheries crisis are uneven and how women have reacted to the local economic re-structuring would depend to a considerable degree on their age, educational qualifications, network and mode of socialization (see, for example, Nixon 2009).

Among 15 women fish vendors, 5 are co-selling with their husbands, while the rest are doing it alone. All of them had been selling fish even before the onset of the fisheries crisis. Their most cited reason why they had gone into selling fish was because of the influence of other family members. All of them had family members who once sold fish. They also mentioned that they liked the work since it does not take them away from their families, which some work usually does, like working in factories or serving as househelpers in the city. In what will follow, I will look into the different experiences of women in the community as they do battle to maintain "normal households" (Menjivar 2006).

The involvement of men in fish selling has had repercussions for the ability of some women fish vendors to earn money. For women who are being helped by their husbands in selling fish, men becoming fish vendors is good news, while for others who do it by themselves, the competition has reduced their ability to earn:

> "It used to be that we had a monopoly on the trade. Now, men are giving us stiff competition. They are eating into our customer base. Oftentimes, we lose out to them since they move faster and cover more places than we do. Before we reach

> our destination, they have already sold fish to many of our customers." (Interview 2008)

One good example is Myrna. She is in her late 60s and has been selling fish for the past 40 years. She is a widower and supports herself. She lives by herself in a small hut she used to share with her husband. She has seven children and most of them are in the same trade as her, although two of her children are living in the city. Because of her old age, she has limited her rounds to the immediate environs of the community. But because of the presence of other fish vendors in the community, she has lost many of her customers. According to her, her rheumatic legs could not compete with the agile bodies of the men fish vendors. While it used to be that she could earn enough to cover her daily expenses, she now has to ask for help from her children. Her sentiment is shared by many women fish vendors. Consolacion, a fish vendor, of the same age as Myrna, laments:

> "It used to be that I could sell 20 kilos or more per day. Now, I can barely sell 10. Men are taking over our business. They do better than us." (Interview 2008)

It is in this context that for women fish vendors in the community, the fisheries crisis has further weakened their earning capability and burdened them even more. Their earnings per day have been greatly reduced. Men are now lording it over fish selling. This has even discouraged other women from selling fish, which partly explains why the youngest woman fish vendor I met was 37 compared to the youngest men at 21. Since the majority of women fish vendors were past their prime age and mostly unlettered, their only alternative was to work as a household help or washer woman in some affluent neighborhoods in town. This further burdened many of them, who, to compensate for their reduced income in fish selling, were also forced to do odd jobs on the side. The case of Iluminada is illustrative of the fate of many women fish vendors I interviewed.

> "When I'm done marketing fish in the morning, at around 12 noon, I have a quick lunch at home and then go to houses in the town proper to collect dirty clothes. Oftentimes though I skip lunch like some of my friends just to make more use of our time. From 1-3 pm, I wash some clothes. I resume washing in the evening, when I return from selling fish. I eat a good meal after." (Interview 2008)

In the case of other fisher wives though, the fisheries crisis opened doors for them. When their husbands' income was still enough for their needs, many of them were prevented from working by their husbands. In other cases, when they were allowed to spend time

earning some money, their movement and time spent outside was restricted. This changed when their husbands' income became insufficient to meet their everyday needs.

When the fisheries crisis broke out, Krista was one of the many women who formed a group to be eligible for a loan application from a micro-credit lending institution based in a nearby town.[91] When her loan was approved, she used it to buy ready-to-wear clothes and other accessories in Manila, which she in turn sold on credit to her neighbours and friends. On some days, she would purchase some 20 kilos of dressed chicken from a poultry shop and would sell them on credit. Knowing the precarious economic condition of the community, she devised a plan wherein the full payment would take a week to happen. If the price of the chicken was 70.00 Php per kilo (she was making 10-20.00 Php per kilo), she would demand a payment of 10.00 Php per day for seven days. On some days, she would cook sweet food as a snack. During my fieldwork, she was maintaining a small store just beside the store of her mother, in which she sold bags of charcoal and cold fizzy drinks. Her husband would even help her with her business. He would volunteer himself to look after her small food stall while she was making the rounds collecting money from her debtors. For Krista, aside from the income, it was the feeling of being useful and productive that satisfied her the most:

> "I find fulfillment in what I do. In a sense, I realized that I could do something to better our lot. I am happy that I am able to help my husband earn extra money for our family. I feel more important now than before when I was just in the house cooking and cleaning." (Interview 2008)

Other women who belonged to the group expressed the same sentiment. For many of them, their release from the confinement of home provided them with the opportunity to assert their worthiness in the community, far from the stereotypical conception of a housewife who just cleans the house and takes care of the children. Members of the group have a monthly meeting in which they talk about their experiences about their work and pass on tips of how to manage their loaned money. One such woman is Annabelle who in my interview spoke about her new found strength and confidence in life:

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[91] Helping Hand is a micro-lending and banking institution based in Santa Cruz. It lends money to small-scale entrepreneurs. In 2000, it started a program providing loans to women in rural areas of up to 10,000.00 Php to start a business. The money which became their initial investment in the undertaking came from a loan granted to them by the World Bank.

> "Before, I was very meek and very shy. Earning my own money helped me a lot. In some ways, it gave me confidence. I feel like a new person. My husband would often crack a joke that he is now married to a different woman. I take it as a compliment."

Aside from being able to manage their time freely, in terms of decision-making in the household, they also became more assertive and outspoken. Prior to joining the domestic economy, fisher's wives usually deferred to their husbands for decisions. Mely, whose husband runs several boats says: "In all important family decisions, I look up to my husband. He decides for us." This is typical among families where the husband is the main income generator. Nonetheless, among families in which wives were contributing to household finances, women were finding their voices and often blatantly contesting the decision made by their husbands. Vivian, a woman in her early 30s, is a case in point.

Vivian also applied for the loan mentioned earlier. The money she got, she added up to her savings from her work as a laundress, which she used in a fish-dealing business. Her husband was a fisherman and she used to sell his catch in the neighbourhood. But the dwindling catch meant little fish to sell and most of the time, her husband would land his boat with nothing in his box but a couple of small fish. She never sought the opinion of her husband about her plan, who she said was never interested in what she was doing. She just told him that she was planning to buy fish in Dalahican to be sold in the neighbourhood.

She is already three years into the business and although her income is still not enough for the burgeoning needs of her family (the oldest is now in college in a local school), she feels that it is much better than relying on her husband's earnings from fishing. Her husband is a drunkard and when he was still making good money, most of his income went to buying liquor for his friends. Whatever little money they saved was often borrowed by her husband's family. This was the cause of their intermittent feud, since the money borrowed was often not returned.[92] Whenever she reminded her husband about the debt of his family (the last time was for his brother's hospitalization), he would

[92] This is the usual source of rift among husbands and wives in the community. Borrowing money and not returning it is not unusual, primarily among relatives and family members. I discussed this lengthily in chapter 5 of this study.

tell her to shut up since it was his money and not hers. The constant reminder that she was not earning enough money for the family made her feel bad.

Things changed when she started earning money on her own. Nowadays, she can tell her husband to limit his drinking with his friends and she already has a voice as concerns lending money to her husband's family. While there are times when she cannot say no if her husband tells her to give money to his mother or any family members, she can now show her discontent by expressing verbally what she feels, which she has never done before. One time, she refused to part with her money being borrowed by a sister-in-law and when her husband asked her why, she told him point-blank that it was her own money and he had not been giving her any money for weeks. Her husband never said a word. No money was lent.

The authority of men to decide how money is spent and where it goes is one of the key powers of men in the household. In the case of Vivian, while her husband continues to earn for the family, the power to decide becomes de-centred and she now shares it with her husband, since unlike before, she is now earning money for the family. This sharing of power is, of course, a familiar discourse in any household management (Eder 2006). Husbands and wives share power. The sharing of power though is predicated on the notion of who earns money for the family and therefore is not a normative given. The power of men is therefore derived from their economic leadership and when women flex their muscles in the productive field, women earn the right to partake of this authority.

On the other hand, the emergent power of women in the household could also be manifested in the way women consciously caricatured men's power or their assumption that they still had it. In an example below, I relate an experience I had with a group of women when I was invited to a birthday party.

A couple of weeks before I ended my fieldwork, I attended a birthday party of one of my informants. Her husband was a fisherman, while she was into selling ready-to-wear clothes and other personal effects. She was earning better than her husband. There was much merriment. While we were drinking, one of them looked at the watch and told the birthday celebrant that it was already 12 midnight. She stood up and went to the door in haste; she looked really terrified. Then everyone to my surprise burst out laughing. I

looked at everyone and it seemed to be a private joke among them. When the laughter died down, the woman who had made a dash to the door explained that two years ago, there was a small party in the house. While they were partying, the husband of the celebrant arrived from his late night banter with a neighbour. He looked at his watch and told her wife that it was 12 midnight already and the party must stop. They all went home. The husband was known in the community to be short-tempered. But now, said the celebrant, her husband had changed. He had mellowed. When I asked her why, she said that maybe it was because he understood that he was wrong. One of the guests told her in jest that it would be bullshit ('kawalanghiyaan na') if he were to do it again when the celebrant was feeding him and he was not earning enough for the family. The celebrant told her to shut up. Her husband was upstairs and he might hear them. There was much laughter again.

While the diatribe against the husband was not expressed in his presence, an act of speaking the truth to power (Foucault 1977), poking fun at him signifies an assault at his authority. While the wife evaded the issue of her husband losing his tight grip over her by saying that her husband had mellowed (which she attributed to her husband realizing that he was wrong), someone uttered the unspoken words for her: he is powerless because he is now economically marginalized. In most of my interviews, when their husbands were not around, their wives would speak critically of them, some even caricaturing them and would enact in front of me the bossy attitude of their husbands. In all these charades of defiance, women would speak freely of their contribution in the maintenance of the household.

Not all fishers' wives, though, enjoy the freedom of movement and the opportunity to earn extra income for the family. Again, as mentioned earlier with regard to men in Sta. Filomena, work experiences also differ among women. A number of factors are at play in the re-constitution of household roles and gender identities in the community. Usually, those women who joined the micro-credit group formed in the community are in their 20s and early 30s. Most of them are also high school graduates. A few even attended a local college, although they did not finish their degrees. Older women tend to be wary of joining organizations that involve money, since according to them they are afraid of court litigation and legal proceedings, which could happen if they

failed to pay back the amount they had borrowed.[93] They are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged fisher-wives in Sta. Filomena, quite unlike the women fish vendors of the same age documented by Rubinoff (1999) in Goa.[94] Younger women on the other hand are bigger risk-takers, bolder and more confident about their capabilities. Thus, while older women's tendency is to stick it out selling fish, their younger counterparts are doing other things. They are selling clothes, personal effects, dressed chicken and other food items where returns are good. I also noticed that an aversion to fish marketing had developed among young women in the community. They perceive it as dirty, lacking social prestige and demeaning. For them, fish selling is suited only for those whose educational attainment is low. For most of them who have finished high school, they thought that they needed to make use of what they had learned from school. According to Melinda, a 24-year old mother who had spent some years in a local university, "while I have nothing against marketing fish, it's not for me. I want to do something else, work that does not bring me out to the street."[95]

Furthermore, some fisher-wives are constrained by a number of factors from actively involving themselves with the domestic economy as other women do. For example, I have interviewed a number of women who had to return the money they had borrowed from the lending agency, because their husbands simply did not want them to leave the house for an extended period. One woman had to abandon her plan of expanding her ready-to-wear dress business because her husband was complaining that she was starting to neglect the family, meaning, her husband was now taking on more household chores which visibly irritated him. To avert the brewing domestic trouble, she decided to strike down her plan. Melody, on the other hand, was particularly angered by

[93] Apparently, in the 1990s, some women in the community were hauled into court for failing to pay their loan to a local bank. This must have given the impression to the old women in the community that all kinds of loans would lead to similar incidents.

[94] Some women fish vendors have prospered, though in small measure. They are the ones who own fish stalls in the market. They used to sell fish on the street, too. Their number is limited. In the community, there are only three of them.

[95] Busby (2000) on the other hand showed that among fish vendors in Kerala, only women are allowed to sell fish and that only married women are to be found in this trade since it necessitates too much traveling and socialization with men. Unmarried women are perceived to be at risk if they do this trade. Also, among women fish vendors in Kerala, door-to-door fish selling is frowned upon. They see it as demeaning. They prefer selling fish in the market. The findings of Busby (2000) and my own account signal how local contexts shape the logic of work in different places.

her husband's parents refusal to take care of their two-year old daughter while she was away working in the city. She was accepted as a machinist in a garment factory. Being from another place, she did not have any real family members to look after her child. With no one to take her place, she was forced to abandon the offered employment and contented herself with selling rice cakes in the neighbourhood, while her husband was eking out a living as a carpenter, fish vendor and fisherman.

In this section, I have shown how the changing socio-economic roles of men and women in Sta. Filomena contests the dominant discourse on the equation of men to household supremacy. Women who have joined the domestic labour force have found their experience empowering and this affects their view of themselves and their share of burden in maintaining the family. As mentioned though, not all women have found opportunities in the fisheries crisis. Others found their lives even more difficult since they now have to look after two things: ways to earn money and to manage the household. Thus, the effects of the local economic re-structuring are uneven and cannot be reduced to a normative generalization that women suffer more than men and vice versa.

6.6 Negotiating Power in the Household

It has been suggested that the fisheries crisis has been an economic threat to fishing families and communities (Binkey 2000; Munk-Madsen 2000). This is, of course, quite true as the case of Sta. Filomena attests. The damage though is not just economic. The fisheries crisis is also about changes in the ways that life is experienced by affected people as this study suggests. Families lost income, but fishermen lost their identity as hardworking breadwinners and providers with the restrictions on their fishing activity. Women's role as providers, on the other hand, increased their importance and leverage in the family (Illo and Polo 1990; Pena and Marte undated). This challenge to the supremacy of men by women is a recurring concern among fisher-wives. While most fisher-wives are quick to highlight the new-found confidence brought about by their involvement in the domestic economy, they are also saliently expressive of their desire to downplay their new role in the household. For most fisher-wives, earning money for the family also means underscoring the fact that their husbands still rule the family. While

their actions – and I was a witness to many of them - negate this, their spoken words are unequivocal about propping up the image of their husbands. A normal household must be maintained amidst the changes in the local economy, which means among other things that women have to continue being household 'managers' and 'care givers'.

Amongst women in Sta. Filomena, when their husbands got easily annoyed at small things, they saw it as their way to release tension. "When my husband becomes temperamental, I take it as his way to express his frustration for being at home for the longest time. He is not used to being at home doing chores. I understand him," a fisher-wife told me. This notion of feeling empathy for the economic powerlessness of men in the community provides a lubricant in their otherwise tension-filled marital relations. In the face of their newly acquired status in the community, women are quick to downplay their achievement.

> "You see, we're just helping our husbands. We're here to support them. In my case, for example, I see this arrangement as temporary. My husband will soon go back to fishing and I will resume my role as a full-time housewife." (Interview 2008)

While fisher-wives in the community savoured their new-found freedom and authority, they were also quick to disown them. As much as possible, some fisher-wives did not want their husbands to know that they relish their new status in the household. For them, men will take over the productive realm of the household soon when things go right. Thus, for some women, their power over the household is a temporary affair. Also, men's economic powerless, quite ironically, has provided some men the opportunity to re-assert their masculinity and for women to further show their submission to men. As one good example, I will mention the case of Liza.

My interview with Liza was postponed several times, since our schedules did not match. She did not know the time she would return home from a whole day of selling fish and when she returned home, she told me, she would still be busy with household chores, so that it was impossible for me to interview her. Finally, after some weeks of waiting, she informed me that she would be free one Saturday afternoon. So, I went to her place and interviewed her. While we were having a discussion about her family life, her husband came in from playing volleyball. He told Liza that he was hungry and asked if

she could prepare something for him. Liza excused herself and got some food from the pantry and laid it on the table. She also prepared a mug of coffee. While her husband was eating, we stopped talking, and Liza went upstairs to get a shirt. When her husband asked for a glass of water, Liza stood up again and served her husband. When he was done eating, he stood up, left the table and went out. Liza explained the behaviour of her husband in this way:

> "He started becoming irritable and sensitive when he stopped fishing. I just let him do what he wants. I just do things the way he wants them to be. If he asks for something even if he could do it by himself, I just follow him to avoid confrontation. I somewhat understand his situation. Now that he is earning less and more dependent on me, he feels like his authority at home is diminished. That is not true of course but the idea bugs him. Men are like that, I think. They always want to be in control of everything. It's their nature." (Interview 2008)

Liza attributed this change of behaviour of her husband to his dwindling income and being dependent on her. The power to earn money and provide for the family is the prime role of men in the family. Unable to do this, Liza's husband had become irritable. This is expected, according to Liza, because it is in the nature of men to feel sidelined and unimportant if this prime economic role is removed from them. When her husband arrived from playing volleyball and demanded that she serve him, she did not say a word. She complied with his request most willingly, even though she was now earning for the family. In a sense, she was doing the task which her husband should have been doing in the first place – providing for the family. Liza explains her submission to her husband's changed manners through the deployment of a discourse that naturalizes man's dominance in the household, and implicitly removes from him the agency to understand how complex life has become in the face of the fisheries crisis and that, as much as men are affected, women are, too. Men act the way that they do because they are men, and women have the duty to take it as it is. Men do not act differently for no reason. They act irresponsibly because the situation calls for it. When her husband arrived and directed Liza to prepare his food, he was exercising his power in the household, a patented right to command and direct anyone in the family since it is his lot to boss them around. Liza, just like other fisher-wives in the community, did not see any problem with this. They might be earning money for the family, but still they were wives to their husbands and they had

duties to fulfill. In this case, as explained by Munk-Madsen (2000), women care a lot about the masculine identity of their husbands through under-communication of their own contributions to what had previously been his sole field of responsibility, and by normalizing and sanitizing what is otherwise an aberrant and irrational attitude. Instead of reminding her husband of his responsibility to share the burden of household chores, Liza assumes that her husband's more pronounced bossiness reflects his personal struggle and agony in the household where he finds himself at the losing end because of the fisheries crisis.

This was an account which was repeated to me in different ways by women who had assumed the role of earning for the family or contributed a considerable amount to the finances of the household. Their stories were the same. According to them, they always felt that they had to assure their husbands that they were still the authority in the family and that their role as the head of the household remained uncontested. Lolita, a fisher-wife, told me:

> "It's a tiring job, you know, making them feel important, that is, serving them even if inside me, I am seething with anger. I'm so tired at work and when I come home, my husband will ask me to prepare his food when he could do it by himself. I just told myself that it's his way to re-assure himself that I still do what I am expected to do in the house, and that is to be a good caring wife." (Interview 2008)

The disavowal of women of their importance and continued subservience to the wishes of their husbands lead us to the very fraught and tension-filled social field that women in the community negotiate. While they clearly savour their new-found freedom of movement and the right to speak up to their husbands (as exemplified by Krista and Vivian in this study), women are also active players in maintaining the façade of 'normalcy', the preservation of the structure of hegemonic masculinity, in their everyday lives. While they are extracting feminine dividends from the on-going economic re-structuring in the community, they are also complicit with their own subordination. This act of subordination is, of course, a conscious one, a role they have to play given the societal structures that construct and constrain their lives. It is, in some respects, a feigned subordination.

6.7 Discussion and Conclusions

In fishing communities all over the world, the impact of contemporary global and local processes is tremendous (FAO 2006; Jones 2005; Kurien 1998; McGoodwin 1991; Sann 1998; Taylor, Schechter and Wolfson 2007) and its effects are among other things gendered (Davis 2000; Davis and Gerrard 2000; Hapke 2001; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004; Siason, Tech, Matics, Choo, Shariff, Heruwati, Susilowati, Miki, Shelly, Rajabharshi, Ranjit, Siriwardena, Nandessha and Sunderarajan nd; Skaptadottir 2000, 2004). The gendered effects of globalization could be seen in different ways, like fueling a crisis of masculinity by increasing the low-paid jobs for women and weakening men's position in the labour market (Menjivar 2006). In observing thus, it has to be affirmed though, as Menjivar rightfully comments, that there is a need to "territorialize globalizing forces, taking into account those conditions, those social relations, that result in enduring commitments to particular places" (2006, p. 88). Furthermore, while some places share commonalities, people living in these places would have, to a certain extent, a diversified experiencing of events and uneven taking on of challenges and opportunities:

> Broader political, economic, and sociocultural factors interact and are patterned differently across time and locale and, as such, generate a multiplicity of experiences. And even though patriarchal ideologies are more general (and may be even universal), their local expression varies according to different contingencies, including the social organization of work, labour market and sociocultural configurations, the women's (and men's) position, and historical specificities of the places in which they live and work. (Menjivar 2006, p. 89)

Pomeroy (1991) notes that fishermen today are more aggressive and mobile in their pursuit of fish because of declining fish stocks, and predicts that gender roles are likely to change in the direction of greater female involvement both in production and domestic chores. In their study of a fishing community in Bugtong Bato, Central Philippines, Pena and Marte (undated) relate how the increased volume of catch brought about by the introduction of new fishing gear and methods in the area provided opportunities for old women. They became fish traders and, in effect, led their respective households in earning money while their husbands' income dissipated primarily because, first, they were employing traditional means of fishing, and second, they could not visit far fishing

grounds because of old age. They had to contend with fishing in nearer but over-exploited fishing grounds. In some places like Goa in India, as shown by Rubinoff (1999), fisherwomen prospered from expanded catch of fish and shrimp due to mechanized fishing and improved fisheries technology, while small-scale fishers were made redundant. In places where fishing has become unrewarding due to overfishing (Binkey 2000; Guieb 2009; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004) or limits to volume of catch imposed by the government (Arbo and Hersoug 1997; Floysand and Lindkvist 2001; Lindkvist and Antelo 2007; Robards and Greenberg 2007), women are burdened more than men since they are forced to take on more responsibility for supplementing household income and providing for their family's subsistence needs (D'Agnes, Castro, D'Agnes, Montebon and Foundation 2005). Men, on the other hand, lose their job and, by extension, their prime source of masculine power and household authority (Davis and Gerrard 2000; Eder 2005, 2006). In her study of a fishing community in Newfoundland which underwent a fisheries crisis in the beginning of the 1990s, Davis found that "the crisis does have significantly different effects on different segments of the local population but also entails losses that affect men and women in similar ways" (2000, p. 346). When fishing became unprofitable, the instrumental and expressive role of women disappeared:

> Women were the anchors of emotional and moral strength in their families and the community. It was the task of women to worry over the safety and welfare of their families. Women's worry was a form of women's work and tied them into fishing ethos and occupational identity in an active and valued fashion. (Davis 2000, p. 349)

On the other hand, the decline of fishing as the community's prime source of income was traumatic for men. Since fishing was the source of men's dominance in the community, and the image of masculinity was closely tied to fishing, men had to look for other spaces where they could assert their authority. In a fishing community in Newfoundland, amongst other contested spaces, women were no longer welcome in the bars during the day and those who dared to enter entered a sexually predatory environment (Davis 2000). Thus, as Davis (2000) shows, the fisheries crisis affected the lives of men and women in different ways and their responses in re-creating their lives, both socially and economically, differed also.

Volkman (1994), on the other hand, provides us with a good insight into how women in fishing communities on the southwest coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia, weather the rapid technological and commercial change in their midst by tapping into their cultural flexibility, including the willingness to abandon older ideals in linking womanhood and weaving. In fishing communities in Grand Manan in Canada, the introduction of internet and the growth of the tourism industries have opened doors for women to intensify their re-connection among themselves and with the outside world (Marshall 2001). The traditional gender relations in the island though, which valorize men's central role in community life, hinder women's desire to participate fully in the redefinition of new social roles in the community. In a different setting, when a moratorium on cod harvesting in Norway was implemented by the national government, while men were reeling over the loss of their work, women seized the opportunity to lead the community in organizing local celebrations and summer festivals to attract tourists and earn extra income (Gerrard 2000). Festivals are a means to express political matters, as explained by Gerrard (2000), and in a way, fisher-wives used them to assert their importance in the community and how they are affected by the fisheries crisis.

The effects, then, of economic re-structuring point to variegated ways in which fishing families cope with the changes around them. How global and national processes affect local lives depends a great deal on local logics – my sweeping term for local cultural contexts, community values and institutions – and how men and women are socially embedded and make do in their everyday lives. Clearly, fishing communities in the developing economies experience global and local processes differently from fishing communities in the developed economies. This chapter therefore re-asserts the need to view life processes, particularly in fishing communities, within the context of their own history and social dynamics, but not without taking into consideration the logics of forces beyond their boundaries (see also Hapke 2001; Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004). Thus, as Marshall (2001) explains, it is important that we develop a contextualized understanding of social change, explicitly acknowledging and incorporating the active roles of individual settings and the complexities of particular places (see also Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Skaptadottir 2000). Only then can we perform a critical engagement with the

way in which global developments touch upon local lives as well as how local contexts shape they way we live our everyday lives.

The dwindling catch in Lamon Bay did not just result in economic difficulties, but also reconfigured the socio-economic roles and gender identities of fishers and their wives. Economic difficulties such those experienced in Sta. Filomena have provided us with a glimpse of the livelihood strategies of fishers and their wives. The fisheries crisis resulted in the production of new roles and the re-evaluation of old assumptions with regard to gender roles and the allocation of power in the household.

This chapter has shown how fishers have negotiated their new role as fish vendors. They had to learn the ropes of their new job, which in many ways reinserted them to the world of women, albeit not because of their own volition, but because of the needs of the time. By selling fish, they in some ways were able to re-assert and maintain their public identity (Hochschild 1997) in the household as income provider. But fish selling is socially constructed in the community as feminine work, which has compelled men to 'act like women' in selling fish. In a period of crisis, their gendered living is transformed and they have to accommodate the feminine construct of the trade in themselves to do well and earn well. But in conforming to the feminine requirements of the trade, they have also 'annexed' and 'improved' upon (Tewksbury 1993) what was once an exclusive domain of women through their physical prowess, which has greatly disadvantaged women fish vendors.

Among other things, strategies to ride out the storm of economic difficulties are conditioned by the social construction of work, the ways in which the community constructs roles for every member with regard to the kind of job that they should do. In this case, while women are more visibly impacted and burdened, they are also more adaptive and clever at finding creative solutions than men. While men are limited to looking for construction and public work (which appears to be very rare and highly competitive), women have a gamut of opportunities to consider. As Eder argues, "most rural men in Southeast Asia are traditionally and primarily either farmers or fishermen and their roles are hence fairly well specified culturally, women are better positioned to innovate or diversify, as necessities or opportunities arise" (2006, p. 410). This runs counter to some studies that say many women have fewer choices and less control of

their lives, due to the spread of market processes (Pyle and Ward 2003). Structural impediments for men to engage in waged labour in the formal economy as this study has shown are more daunting than for women. For example, construction work is hard to find, and if there is any, previous experience matters. Amongst women on the other hand, work is readily available in the service economy and export processing zones (primarily in semi-conductor companies manufacturing computer chips, among others) where women workers are highly valued because of their supposed hand dexterity and attention to detail.

Economic restructuring, it is normally argued, tends to reinforce and exacerbate existing gender inequalities, furthering the domination of men and the marginalization of women (Hapke and Ayyankeril 2004; Pyle and Ward 2003). While this may be true in certain places and specific economic spheres, a normative and generalized claim is not tenable, since the effects of the fisheries crisis are uneven for both fishers and their wives, as the study shows. In Sta. Filomena, while the crisis has provided some women with opportunities like going back to their old work – selling fish and putting up a small store and eatery, among other options – it has also to some extent exacerbated their suffering, since they now have to manage two worlds: the world of managing the household and earning money for the family. They have to earn money and at the same time be responsible for the social reproduction of the household. It should also be noted that, as Menjivar observes, while "women may experience the empowerment of earning a wage and deciding how to spend it [...] they also face the disempowerment of recreating conditions of gender inequality in the home so as to maintain an idealized (class-specific) union" (2006, p. 93).

Not every woman has benefited in the regime of radical change that is happening in the community. Old women are disadvantaged by the incursion of men into fish selling. Some men re-assert their authority by doing work mostly conceived to be feminine, while others opt to manage the household and rely on their wives' income while waiting for fishing to be profitable again. Some men view certain livelihood strategies differently from others. Where selling fish is attractive to some, for others, they would rather stick it out with fishing, even if it means relying heavily on their wives for economic sustenance. Fishers and their wives in this study responded to economic

transformations in different ways. This is because gender is embedded in institutions, such as social networks, political arenas, employment, and the resource-management regime (Skaptadottir 2004, p. 264). Thus, it is difficult to speak homogenously about fishers and their wives and their lives as affected by the fisheries crisis. Each has her/his own way of negotiating her/his role and asserting her/his agency for the survival of the family and quite instinctively of her/himself. Husbands and wives have to share the burden of the difficult times ahead in varying ways (see, for example, McKee and Bell 1986).

This chapter has made a contribution to the following three concerns: first, how the specificity of social location and personal histories play a role in the allocation of work opportunities in a community; second, how livelihood strategies are indicative of one's embeddedness in particular local gender logics; and third, how gender relations are re-worked in the course of economic restructuring and ecological crisis. This chapter also highlights how local developments which are rooted in global transformations affect men and women in different ways. It should be added, though, that while place-based consideration of life in a fishing community has been invoked throughout, Sta. Filomena does not just inhabit the local sphere. As Massey argues, "the particular mix of social relations which are thus part of what defines the uniqueness of any place is by no means all included within the place itself. Importantly, it includes relations which stretch beyond – the global as part of what constitutes the local, the outside part of the inside" (1994, p. 5).

If this chapter has been about the private sphere, the next chapter goes back to the public sphere and brings to the fore issues about the domestic economy of the community, focusing on how market practices, primarily in fish brokerages, are embedded in local social relations. It will take up how men and women in the community make sense of the market economy in the largely informal market that they have become accustomed to.

Picture 7.0
The façade of one of the community's four fish brokerages. The people shown here are waiting for fish to land

Chapter Seven

'Saliva as Capital': Some Local Ways in Fish Trading

7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters (chapters 5 and 6) discussed the wide-ranging effects of the fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay as manifested by the proliferation of tactics of 'making do' and the changing socio-economic roles and gender identities of fishers and their wives. In those chapters, it was shown how, in order to survive the fisheries crisis, aside from diversifying their sources of income, people in the community deployed a host of tactics that saw many of them taking advantage of one another, banking on and abusing intimate social relations to make ends meet. It was also shown how fishers and their wives re-negotiated their socio-economic roles and how, as a result, their gender identities in the household have been reconfigured in a number of ways. Wives became breadwinners while some fishers stayed at home and others took to selling fish as an alternative livelihood. In discussing all these changes, however, what has never been explicitly mentioned in the previous chapters is the looming presence of the burgeoning and thriving local market practices in the community's four fish brokerages.

Market practices the world over differ from one country to another, although, primarily, capitalism's neoliberal strand is usually perceived to have homogenized the ways market transactions are executed, cutting loose market practices from their local moorings. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the Russian Federation in 1991, capitalism has become the *de facto* economic system of the world, though its associated practices vary from one place to another. For instance, China's brand of capitalism is quite different from the Western world. Nonetheless, though capitalist practices differ from one place to another, the logic of the capitalist economy - self-correcting, impersonal and disinterested - is thought to have colonized the lifeworld. The logic of the capitalist economy appears to us in most economic discourses to be "unitary, singular and totalizing" (Gibson-Graham 1996). Such hegemonic discourse of

capitalist ethos sidelines and obscures the place-specific particularities of capitalist practices being practised in many places throughout the world. In Capital, Marx wrote that an economic base could show infinite variations and gradations in appearance because of innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, etc. (Wolf 1997, p. 303).

This chapter does not specifically deal with market transactions which are an alternative to capitalism, nor a new kind of capitalism, but rather, market practices which are largely socially embedded and place-specific. Thus, this chapter is about local capitalism in a fishing community as it is impacted and molded by both internal socio-cultural dynamics and external developments. It shows how and in what ways local capitalism is shaped by the agency of its participants and at the same time how the logic of capitalism itself reshapes market practices through the people who participate in them. Furthermore, this chapter considers continuity and change in market practices among fishers and fish vendors and elucidates the dynamics of localized market practices in fish brokerages never before addressed in studies concerning fishing communities. It should be clear, though, that this chapter is not about public auction being a localized market practice *per se*. The chapter adds to Floysand and Lindkvist's view that "economic actors of local capitalism adaptations are "embedded" in an observable spatial system of relations" (2001, p. 115).

This chapter has five sections. The first section will discuss why fish brokerages have largely replaced the traditional way of fish dealing that formerly involved only fishers and fish vendors. It will also describe the fish auctions that take place and the personalities who are involved in them. The second section looks into how fish vendors master the art of bidding, internalizing in the process the rules and demands of market practice in fish brokerages. The third section takes up the practice of obtaining fish on credit by fish vendors from fish brokerages, a community market practice called 'laway lang ang kapital' (saliva as capital). This section points to a more engaged problematization of the importance of personal interaction with, and personal knowledge of, community members on the part of market players, foremost of whom are the fish brokers. The fourth section shows how fish dealing in the community, primarily joining fish auctions, is very much predicated on personal(ized) relations, and situated

knowledge of the local market and how such knowledge is embedded in a wide array of social practices and relations in the community. One's knowledge of the 'social life' (Appadurai 1986) of fish as a commodity, or the lack of it, points to the making and unmaking of fortunes of fish vendors in the community. I cite some lengthy examples to make my case. The conclusion summarizes the arguments and points to the need to contextualize our understandings of contemporary processes – like market practices in marginal places, as this study illustrates - since as Burawoy contends, "a totalizing theory too easily stifles imaginaries from below, silences diversity of the local, and becomes a new ideology, presenting what is as natural and inevitable" (2000, p. 349). The chapter closes with the assertion that, despite an increased globalization of the international economy, economic actors continue to be spatially, culturally and socially situated (Floysand and Lindkvist 2001).

7.2 Of Bids and Circumstance

Fish brokerages are a recent market phenomenon in Sta. Filomena. Their emergence was brought about by the thriving commercial fishing industry in the town which started in the late 1980s and peaked in the 90's. As more and more fish were landed by commercial fishers in the community, on top of the catches by small-scale fishers, the need for more fish brokerages to handle fish trading grew. The great demand for fish from neighbouring towns and cities made a case for an increased investment in big commercial fishing boats to meet demand, and at the same time, a liberal local fishing regime further boosted the proliferation of commercial fishers in Lamon Bay. The first fish brokerage was opened in 1989, and soon afterwards, three more followed. Their emergence in the community would have several implications on how fish as a market commodity is traded.

Prior to the introduction of fish brokerages, fish trading was done between the fisher (or the boat owner) and the fish vendor (both mobile and market-based).[96] Fish

[96] In Sta. Filomena, fishing and its associated livelihoods are a family affair and encompasses webs of relations. In cases when fish is not brought to fish brokerages for a number of reasons (one of these could be the small volume of catch), fish vendors are most likely to be family members, relatives or anyone in the community who has close relations with the fisher's family. Someone who is not closely aligned or related will be the least priority in the selling of fish, since

vendors in this case were mostly relatives, friends and neighbours, which affected how the pricing of fish was set. While both sides (fishers and fish vendors) were keen on making a good profit (which means someone has to earn more than the other), their close relations tempered their capitalist desire and compelled them to look at the enterprise more like a family business, in which profit was spread out rather than monopolized by one entity. Fishers hand in their catch to their next-of-kin not just because the latter would give them the best profit (often that is not the case, the fishers told me) but because they want to help them earn a living, too. Thus, predicated on these kinship-based market relations, fishers would trust fish vendors to give them a good price for their catch. Fish vendors, on the other hand, believed that fishers would in return give them their fish landings, since they were providing them with good income. Their intimate relations were further cemented by the fact that, in times of need, fishers could ask for assistance from fish vendors. This cash advance was without any interest and to be deducted from future sale receipts. Their relations followed that of a moral economy, where "the calculus governing behavior led to more moral outcomes with respect to each other's welfare than that under social arrangements and institutions of modern capitalism" (Popkin 1980, p. 412; Scott 1976). These particular market relations between fishers and fish vendors prevented the former from expecting too high a profit from the latter, while fish vendors in return saw to it that fishers obtained a good value for their catch.[97] In

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shunning a family member for someone who offers a better price is frowned upon in the community. The usual expression that applies in this case (when a relative is for example bypassed in favour of a nominally related fish vendor, because the latter offers a better price) is *parang hindi magkakamag-anak* (like we're not related). The importance of close relations then is central to any transaction, since it both opens up opportunities and obliges people to make priorities over others. This makes sense, since in times of need, people turn for help to the people they are related to or with whom they have fostered some degree of close relations. This resembles what Metzo (2001) calls 'blat' in post-Soviet Siberia, where people tap into their social connections and local kinship practices in addressing their everyday needs to survive the economic restructuring in rural areas. Tapping into one's kinship and social relations in times of need is a daily occurrence in Sta. Filomena, which as I suggest in chapter 5, partly explains why forms of making do proliferate and are not particularly disruptive of community life, regardless of their 'violence' in terms of depriving other people of resources which they could have used themselves. In relation to this, resource concentration in Sta. Filomena, while encouraged publicly, is also disparaged privately, since it signifies that the person has accumulated a lot of wealth, not so much because of hard work, but for hoarding and not sharing it with others.

[97] The phrase good value is of course relative. What could be of good value to a fisher might not be the case for a fish vendor. Thus, as I was told, to arrive at a good value, before catches were sold by fish vendors, a short negotiation would normally take place. The fisher or his wife would

effect, fisher-fish vendor relations were not largely profit-driven but rather hinged on equity and sharing of bounty between participating market actors.

This set of relations, of reciprocities and dependencies, has changed with the coming of fish brokerages into the community. While some fishers still deliver their catch to fish vendors, most fishers have shifted allegiance and now bring their catch to fish brokerages.[98] The reason is obvious: fish brokerages pay better prices. It is not because fish brokerages pay better *per se*, but because of their system of determining the price of fish. They set the price of fish through a public auction. Though public auctions pre-date capitalism (Smith 1989), its present-day resurrection in the community could be said to epitomize the tenets of a liberalized market economy: free, unhampered competition among market players and the maximization of profit. In the case of fish brokerages, with an open competition and more people out-pricing each other, a good price for fish is assured. In this case, most fishers' relations with fish vendors were cut off as their dependency on each other shifted to fish brokerages. With a different venue and a different set of personalities involved in fish trading, what used to be a simple transaction that only involved fishers and fish vendors now involved two more personalities, the owner of the fish brokerage (to whom I refer in this study as fish broker)[99] and the person who conducts the auction, locally known as 'magpapabulong' (which literally means the person who hears the bid or the auctioneer). In a sense, this is a great departure from

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state his/her price to the fish vendor. The fish vendor would either accept it or ask for a lower price. The latter was the usual option, since I was told that fishers or their wives would usually ask for an inflated price as they knew that fish vendors would ask for a discount.

[98] In public auctions, whoever bids the highest price gets the fish. Fishers in this set-up are almost always the clear winners and fish vendors, stripped of their former privilege to obtain fish directly from fishers, struggle to make a decent profit. This could have been a boon to fishers in the community if there were no fisheries crisis in Lamon Bay. The local economic re-structuring made fish vendors out of fishers, and in this new equation of things, fishers-turned-fish vendors are surely finding their new lot precarious and difficult.

[99] Not all fish brokers come from and live in the community. Nobody in the community had the money to put up a business like a fish brokerage, which I was told needs a capitalization of not less than 1,000,000.00 Php. They belong to the moneyed local families or have just returned from abroad and decided to invest in fish brokering businesses. While they manage the finances of fish brokerages, it is the fish auctioneer who deals with fish vendors on a day-to-day basis. However, fish brokers are drawn through the years gradually into the web of relations existing in the community. Many of them have since become godparents to many fish vendors, making them fictive relations of many fish vendors.

otherwise simple market relations, and concomitantly, the introduction of capitalist logic to fish trading.

The fisheries crisis did not in any way make a large impact on the operations of fish brokerages in the community, although to a certain extent, the volume of catches from supplying local fishers was greatly reduced, and in effect, their profits were down compared to previous years. However, the reduced catches of local fishers being sold to fish brokerages were amply compensated by the fish supplies coming from the big fishing port in Lucena City and the usual landings of external commercial fishing boats that plied the high seas and not in Lamon Bay. Thus, when fish supplies from local suppliers were small or no commercial fishing boat was scheduled to unload their catches, fish brokerages bought fish in Lucena City. It can be said, then, that while the fisheries crisis greatly affected the lives of people in Sta. Filomena, the operations of fish brokerages, though not unaffected, remained robust, and profits, though not as good as before, were not totally discouraging.

There are two sets of fish vendors who get fish from fish brokerages. They are the market fish vendors and mobile fish vendors. Market fish vendors are the ones who bid for fish, although some mobile fish vendors also do so, but rarely and only if the amount of fish for sale is not too big. Making a bid needs considerable capitalization and a base of regular customers, and market fish vendors have both. Mobile fish vendors, on the other hand, get their fish either from the fish brokerage itself, which sets aside a box of fish just for them, or from the winning bidder by asking her/him for a share. In some instances, mobile fish vendors form a group to bid. One of them acts as the main negotiator in and for the group. If they win, they divide the fish among themselves. The leader of the group will be answerable to the fish brokerage, if ever one of the members of the group defaults on payment. This makes her/his position difficult and renders the forming of groups to compete with market fish vendors rather a rarity. Not everyone wants to take the blame for someone who defaults in payment.

Most market vendors and mobile fish vendors go from one fish brokerage to another, scouting for fish and making bids. Others, though, choose to keep their transaction limited to one or two fish brokerages only for personal reasons, like finding

the owner of a certain fish brokerage abrasive or inconsiderate.[100] A select few, on the other hand, are forced to bid or get fish from one or two brokerages, only due to unpaid balances in others. During my fieldwork, there were 12 market fish vendors and 23 mobile fish vendors doing business with the four fish brokerages.

All fish brokerages follow the same format in fish trading. When fish is brought in, the 'magpapabulong' sends one of her men, or one of the employees of the fish brokerage, to fetch fish vendors in the market if they are not yet there. Those who have cellular phones are sent text messages. When the 'magpapabulong' has determined that a sufficient number of 'mamumulong' (that's what fish vendors are called in fish brokerages) are present to make the bidding competitive, or sometimes, their favoured 'mamumulong' are already there, she tells the crowd to examine the fish and think about their prospective bids. The 'mamumulong' get some fish samples and assess their quality and the possible weight of the box (see appendix for the ways in which fish vendors assess the quality of fish and determine its possible auction price). It is a policy in all fish brokerages that the weight of the fish, if it is sold in boxes, remains unknown before the bidding takes place. Thus, all fish brokerages' weighing scales can only accommodate not more than 20 kilos of fish. This ensures that the weight of the fish is a complete guessing game among the 'mamumulong'. The power of estimate of the 'mamumulong" is her/his ticket to either making or losing money in this price war.

When all 'mamumulong' are done with their examination and assessment, the 'magpapabulong' starts the auction by asking each and everyone of the 'mamumulong', one by one, to state their price by whispering their bid to the 'magpapabulong'. Sometimes, a calculator is used by the 'mamumulong' to indicate to the 'magpapabulong' her/his bid. Every 'mamumulong' sees to it that her/his bid is not heard (or seen in the case of using a caculator) by anyone except by the 'magpapabulong'. When all are done with their bid, the 'magpapabulong' asks them for a 'dagdag' or an increase in their bid. "May dadagdag ba" (Is anyone adding any more?), she/he asks. The

[100] Reasons vary why fish vendors choose to stick it out with a particular fish brokerage. Others would say that the owners are good to them and, therefore, getting fish from other fish brokerages is an insult to them. Some claim that the owners of other fish brokerages are ill-tempered, greedy and inconsiderate. But many say that staying with one fish brokerage diminishes the likelihood of incurring huge debts. This last reason is the usual explanation of fish vendors opting to limit their transaction to one fish brokerage only.

'mamumulong' either say no or add more by saying, this time for everyone to hear, 'isa', 'isa't kalahati' and 'dalawa'. 'Isa' means 100.00 Php, 'isa't kalahati' means 150.00 Php and 'dalawa' means 200.00 Php. What they say will then be added to their original bid. Thus, if a 'mamumulong' originally bids 4,500.00 Php for a box of fish, it becomes 4,600.00 Php if he says 'isa'. This figure is of course known only to the 'magpapabulong'. In some but very rare instances, a 'mamumulong' says 'bente' or 'trenta' or 'sampu' which means 20.00 Php, 30.00 Php and 10.00 Php respectively. Any amount, then, is acceptable since any little amount being added to the original bid could spell a big difference. It could either win or lose a bid. When the 'mamumulong' is done with this, she/he then consults with the 'magdadala' (the owner of the fish or the person who brought the fish to the fish brokerage). She/He asks her/him if the highest bid which is known only to her/him is good enough for her/him. If the 'magdadala' accepts the price, the winning bid is announced and the 'bulungan' is concluded. If the 'magdadala' sees that the bid is lower than her/his expected price, she/he says no and asks for an addition. The 'magpapabulong' then returns to the 'mamumulong' and says this: "The owner of the fish demands a higher price. If you want to increase your bid, then state it and if not, there is no problem". Some will then say, for the second time, 'isa', 'isa't kalahati' or 'dalawa'. When it is done, the 'magpapabulong' then consults with the 'magdadala' again, and when he agrees with the price (which is usually the case), the winning bid is announced.[101] The winner brings the fish to the market while the 'magdadala' receives her/his payment from the owner of the fish brokerage.

The next section will discuss how fish vendors have to adapt to the rigors of the market which call, among other things, for a highly entrepreneurial individual market participant who plays her/his cards very well. Furthermore, it will speak about how bids are won and lost and how winning a bid does not always translate to monetary gain, but can, in fact, represent a loss.

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[101] This wont of saying that the price is below his expectation has become a standard practice among *magdadala,* I was told. Even if the winning bid looks fine already, it will always be found "not up to the magdadala's expectations". This happens particularly when fish are scarce. On one very rare occasion that I witnessed, a *magdadala* pulled out his fish because the price was too low for him. He transferred to another fish brokerage. But since fish brokerages almost always 'employ' the same fish vendors, the fish fetched an even lower price, because fish vendors took it against the *magdadala* and decided to teach him a lesson.

7.3 Mastering the Trade

Among fish vendors in Sta. Filomena who participate in fish auctions, an in-depth local knowledge about the 'social life' (Appadurai 1986) of fish as a local commodity and the developments in the bigger regional market of fish has become essential. This evolving local knowledge and the wider scope of understanding how fish as a commodity fares from day to day are of course something which fish vendors were not privy to before. Since the emergence of fish brokerages, fish vendors became implicated with the bigger canvass of fish trading, not limited to the spatial continuum of the community. They too had to be informed of the past and current prices of fish in neighbouring towns to compete judiciously in fish brokerages. This happens because many fish vendors are partly selling their fish in other towns (market fish vendors, that is) where bigger fish markets are to be found;[102] and they are competing also in public auctions against a number of fish vendors coming from other places. Thus, fish trading has become complicated.

> "Winning in public auction needs one's great knowledge about both the local and external conditions in fish trading. One's knowledge about fish prices in all sorts of places and their effects on local fish prices is very valuable. It used to be easy. It was not as complicated as it is today. But it's the rule of the game and we have to follow." (Interview 2008)

In a way, fish vendors have to know the dynamics of the market well, otherwise they will be punished in a variety of ways. Everyone has to look after himself and not anyone else. One has to compete and compete vigorously. Thus, in fish brokerages, brothers compete against their own sisters and mothers make bids against their own children. Kinship therefore does not get in the way of community members competing against each other. On my first visit to one of the fish brokerages, I expressed surprise when some seven bidders came from the same family. They were competing against each other! I asked Aling Ikya who was then bidding against her three daughters, son and two sisters why they were competing against each other. Could they not just make a single bid? Aling Ikya told me that in bidding, they do not see each other as family members, but as

[102] Selling fish in Lucena where bigger fish auction houses are located is a lucrative business for some market fish vendors. This is particularly the case in the months of May – August, when there is a flood of some local varieties of mackerel like *galunggong*, *lumahan*, and *matang baka*.

competitors. Though she also claimed that sometimes, if she won numerous bids, she would give some of her share to her children. But most of the time, they were up against each other. In her own words, she summarized their relation in this way:

> "In fish brokerages, we are not related. They are not my children and I am not their mother. I am their competitor. We are very much on our own." (Interview 2008)

This taking up the cudgel for oneself may be termed the individualization of risk, whereby the responsibility for managing the risks of contemporary life have been redistributed, from the state and the economy to the individual (Cheshire and Lawrence 2005). People in the community are taught by the logic of the market, through fish auction, to rely on their ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit. Such moves are synonymous with the tenets of a neoliberal market that relies upon the construction of self-governing individuals who accept that the responsibility for improving the conditions of their existence lies in their own hands.

Fish auctions simulate a fair playing field which promises respectable economic rent to the best player in the market, obscuring the risky moves and dire futures associated with the process. Market players are the only ones responsible for their lot. What they do is entirely up to them. They are now free from the encumbrances of intimate social relations that characterized previous fish transactions between fishers and fish vendors. Fishers are now out of the equation, and fish vendors have to face the impersonal relations between them and the market.

In the complex world of public auction, one has to know the previous and current price of the fish being traded. Thus, a knowledge of the monetary biography of the fish is in order. If a kind of fish, say 'lumahan', is up for bidding, one has to know its previous and current price. Previous in this case means the price/s of the fish for the past week. If the average price is 80.00 Php in fish brokerages for the past days, the soon-to-be quoted price should not be much higher or lower than the previous one. But this of course depends on two variables: the demand for the fish in the market (does it sell fast? Any news of someone incurring losses because of this fish?) and its current quantity in the market (are there too many people selling the same fish? Is there a flood of this fish on the market?). One has to know also if other kinds of fish are being sold on the market,

like 'galunggong'. 'Galunggong' is much preferred by consumers over 'lumahan'. If there is a big volume of 'galunggong' being sold, this will affect the price of 'lumahan'. A lower price is most likely. One has to consider also the nature of the day or get hold of news pertaining to events happening in the community the day the fish is to be sold. Is it a holiday and are there many people in town? The Lenten season is known for brisk fish selling since the people do not eat meat and fishermen do not go out to fish in observance of this Christian tradition. Is it a Saturday or a Sunday? Weekends are known to be lacklustre days since people do not go out much. When this is established, one has to look at the quality of fish being sold. Is the quality good? Is the fish 'iced' well? Are the eyes already red. If they are, then the fish is not of good quality. It has been in the ice for days. Is the flesh firm? Are the gills red? If they are, the fish is of premium quality. One has to look at the belly also and find out whether or not the fish has been gutted. If it has, the fish cannot be sold the next day. It only has a one-day shelf life. How about the size? Is it small, medium or large? A smaller size commands a lower price, and correspondingly, a bigger size commands a higher price. But this is not a hard and fast rule. It depends also on the species of fish to be sold. Too large a fish, such as 'maya-maya', diminishes its value. People refer to saleable size as 'good size', meaning not too small and not too big. But this, of course, is very relative and one has to defer to the expert opinion of a fish vendor in determining what makes a good size good.[103]

Once the quality of the fish has been established, one has to undertake the most difficult task: assessing the weight of the fish. This is done if the fish which is to be sold comes in a box. If the fish is to be auctioned per kilo, this is not necessary. But as noted in my fieldwork observations, most of the time, in the case of 'lumahan', 'galunggong', and 'kalapato', which were the most common varieties of fish during my fieldwork, fish were sold in boxes. No one knows the exact weight of a box when it is filled with fish. There is no exact science to estimate the weight of the box. One has to look at the

[103] In her study of a fishing community in Kerala, India, Busby (2000) observed the same dynamics in fish auctioning mentioned in this study. She wrote: "A bidder will need to be able to tell at a glance the precise quantity of fish and their potential market value, or she may find herself with an instant loss for the day. Not only must she assess the fish themselves, but she must have a good idea of the various other factors that can affect the price – what kinds of fish are to be expected at that time of the year, which fish are a rarity and will fetch a high price, what kinds of fish the buyers are asking for just now, what sort of night's fishing it has been (is there a glut or a scarcity to push prices high?).

packaging of the fish, and at the same time I was told time and again to trust one's instinct. I saw fish vendors poking their fingers through the fish and having a feel of the density of the fish inside the box. One also has to observe if the fish is wrapped in a plastic sheet, since if it is, the fish weight is less. It's even 'lighter' if the fish is swimming in water or there are too many blocks of ice in the package. A heavy box is a box with very minimal water, minimal blocks of ice and the fish filling it to the brim. All things considered, the average weight of a box with fish is between 50-60 kilos.

Any prospective 'mamumulong' has to play a number game and estimate whether the weight of the fish is around 50 or almost 60 kilos. It is a fascinating mind game and no one can claim expertise in this, not even someone who has been in the business all her life. When a 'mamumulong' is done with his evaluation, he readies with his number to be whispered to the 'magpapabulong'. A typical calculation could be as follows:

> I think "lumahan" would sell for 80.00 Php per kilo in the market. I would bid for 60.00 Php per kilo here. That gives me 20.00 Php profit per kilo. I calculate that the fish weighs 50 kilos, more or less. Thus, at 50 kilos x 60.00 Php per kilo, my bid would be 3,000.00 Php. At a selling price of 80.00 Php per kilo, I would make 1,000.00 Php. I would have to deduct my expenses from the profit. Let's say, I spent 40.00 Php for the labour, 20.00 Php for the transportation and 40.00 Php for ice, thus, I would have 900.00 Php, not a bad amount for a day of 'market speculation' and selling fish in the market.[104]

Price differences in bidding can be so minimal that oftentimes I wonder whether one knows what other people have whispered to the 'magpapabulong'. One time, Derick, a man in his late 30s who has a wife for a fish vendor and maintains a stall in the market, which he inherited from his mother, won a box of 'kalapato' for a price of 4,350.00 Php. The next highest bidder, Rodrigo, offered 4,300.00 Php. Sometimes also, the disparity of prices is just overwhelming. In one instance, the winning bid for a box of 'kalapato' with some lumahan was 5,700.00 Php. The next highest bid was 4,550 Php, a difference of 1,150.00 Php, and the lowest bid was 3,000.00 Php. If that happens, when the gap between bids is just too large to ignore, the usual comment is: "bumulong ng wala sa wisyo" (bidding without using one's mind).

[104] In one of my numerous interviews with market fish vendors, I asked one to tell me how she calculated her bid. She came up with this example.

Winning bids are therefore predicated on the skills of bidders who have mastered the complex workings of the fish market, and in the process, submit themselves to the mold of an entrepreneurial market-savvy subject. In a sense, the accumulation of local knowledge concerning fish market biographies is also about performing a basic requirement of the market – the capability to amass and manipulate information to one's advantage. While this requirement had of course also been demanded of fish vendors even before the advent of fish brokerages, the degree and intensity of information accumulation is greater than before. Since competition in fish trading has become democratized and freed from the confines of familial relations, the volume of market players necessitates greater and more involved knowledge in managing information related to fish trading. Fish transactions, being freed from the confines of kinship relations, have to be played well, taking into account the new rules of the game.

This section has primarily addressed the changes that took place in the realm of fish trading in the community with the emergence of fish brokerages. The following section deals with continuities, how the local saying and practice 'laway lang ang kapital' (saliva as capital) finds expression in the competitive atmosphere of fish brokerages.

7.4 'Saliva as Capital' (Laway lang ang Kapital)[105]

As observed by Busby (2000), in most fishing communities, a credit economy is pervasive since the daily income is highly unpredictable (see, for example, Acheson 1981; Firth 1966; Mangahas 2000; Mangahas 2004; Smith 1979). In Sta. Filomena, this credit economy is practised locally through the expression 'laway lang ang kapital' (saliva as capital). 'Laway' in the Philippines means saliva. In the community, 'laway' has a more important function than its physiological merit. Fish vendors credit their 'laway' for their survival in a place where no one has a permanent job and their source of

[105] The expression *laway lang ang kapital* came to me when I, unfortunately (or fortunately?), witnessed a verbal tussle between a *magpapabulong* and a *mamumulong*. Apparently, the *mamumulong* had failed to remit her payment. When she showed up, she was confronted by the *magpapabulong*. There was a heated argument until the latter, in a fit of anger, showered the former with an avalanche of expletives and ended it with: *"Kay swerte mo, laway lang ang puhunan mo!"* (You're so lucky, saliva is your only investment!)

income, the sea, has always been unreliable. The expression 'laway lang ang puhunan' is of course a metaphor for trust and word of honour. As is the case, in fish brokerages, fish is given on credit to fish vendors based on an unwritten agreement that payment will be made the following day. Trust is anchored in the promise uttered by fish vendors to fish brokers that when fish is handed to them, payment will be made, regardless of whether the fish is sold or not. It's keeping one's promise, honouring one's commitment to an unwritten agreement that when a broker lends his capital in the form of fish to a vendor, the receipt would be returned at an agreed upon time and date.

Trust is, of course, the underpinning element in this market arrangement, which is a "means of overcoming the absence of evidence, without benefit of the standard of rational proof, which is required to sustain relationships between persons or between a person and a social artifact, including money" (Barbalet 2009, p. 34). As Hart (1988) further explains in the context of market transactions in Accra slums in Ghana, trust implies depth and assurance of faith, with inconclusive evidence. Trust stands in the middle of a continuum of words for belief, mixing extremes of blind faith and open-eyed confidence. Explaining how market players in Ghanaian slums make do and transact business in the very insecure and volatile economic environment, Hart (1988) invokes the notion of friendship among the market players, since as he rightfully shows they learn to trust those whom they have chosen as friends.

Trust in the local language is 'tiwala' and this word is often invoked in many conversations I heard between and among fish brokers and fish vendors. When a fish vendor pays on time and does not incur any balance, she/he is much praised and is said to be 'mapagkakatiwalaan' (a trustworthy person). On the other hand, when someone defaults on payment and does not show up to explain herself/himself, she/he loses the trust of the fish broker and is described as 'hindi mapagkakatiwalaan' (someone not to be trusted). In a community where there is very little disposable income and the need to survive rests on the generosity and trust of others, cultivating a trustworthy self is very important.

> "In fish trading, we rely on the kindness of fish brokers and we don't want to lose their trust. That's our only ticket to getting fish from them. We don't have money to pay them in cash. Making ourselves trustworthy individuals creates money for

us. When we go to fish brokerages, it's our name and our track record that we use in doing business. That's all we have." (Interview 2008)

Most fish vendors in the community are related to one another, primarily through blood kinship, while most fish brokers are 'forced' to be related to them through fictive kinship. For example, when one of the fish vendor's sons was baptized, he got three fish brokers and all auctioneers in four fish brokerages as godparents. In the reception he hosted which I attended (I also stood as godparent which created a fictive kinship between me and the parents of the child and the rest of the godparents), other fish vendors were present and there was an air of familiarity among those present. Days after, in a conversation with my new fictive relation, the father of the boy, he told me that sealing his friendship with the fish brokers by making them his son's godparents helped him in various ways. First, if sometimes he was remiss in payment due to unforeseen expenses, he could invoke their fictive relation and not be banned outright from joining bids.[106] He was also cautious though not to overdo it, otherwise, his special relation with them would be destroyed. He did not want to lose face, he told me. While his fictive relation with the fish brokers gave him some privileges that other fish vendors did not enjoy, it also compelled him to be upright in his dealings with them. Other fish vendors spoke of the same sentiment, while on the other hand, fish brokers thought that their fictive relations with their fish vendors were forcing fish vendors to pay on time, because they were now bound not just by market relations but also by kinship. It should be noted though that the degree of friendship among and between fish brokers, auctioneers and fish vendors varies. Some fish vendors were closer to fish brokers and auctioneers than others. I will speak more about this in the latter part of this chapter.

How and when this practice of giving fish on credit, or as they call it, saliva as capital, started in Sta. Filomena is still subject to debate. Nonetheless, this practice could have started with the fisher-fish vendor relationship. As mentioned already, fish vendors pay fishers only after the fish has been sold. This must have influenced the way fish

[106] This is, of course, not done directly and with impunity. The approach is more subtle. For example, when the fish vendor I am talking about here defaulted on his payment for some days, he sent word through one of the vendors that he could not visit the fish brokerage because one of children was sick. It was then understood that he had spent the money on his son's medication. Whether this is true or not, the fish broker took it at face value. When he showed up some days after, he sold fish again and eventually re-paid his dues.

brokerages approached the conduct of their business in the community. With very little disposable income, people in the community have no capital to use in procuring fish from fish brokers. Fish brokers, on the other hand, must have thought that to make their business more palatable and in tune with the economic profile of people in the community, they decided to craft this arrangement, which is of course an adaptation of the existing relationship between fishers and fish vendors. However, Simeon, the oldest 'magpapabulong' in the community, said that when they started the business, they asked fish vendors to pay at once for the fish that they got; but very few participated and many of their fish had to be sold by themselves in the neighbourhood. This experience gave them the idea that it must be good business if, instead of asking for payment when fish is given, a one-day grace period might prove successful. Soon, when this scheme was introduced, fish vendors came in droves and volunteered themselves to sell the fish on behalf of fish brokers. When other fish brokerages were established in the area, the same scheme was used.

'Saliva as capital' is not, however, deployed as a mere scheme in business. It too must follow a number of rules. Not everyone is entitled to avail of the 'get-now-pay-later' practice of fish brokerages. Among fish brokers, there are unwritten rules that those who will be accepted to a fish brokerage's group of fish vendors must be long-time residents of the community, and their entry must be supported by a fish vendor of good standing. In many ways, being able to make use of saliva as someone's capital needs other people's saliva, too. Fish brokers work on application by recommendation. They rely on their pool of fish vendors to determine whether one is worthy or not of being granted credit. The number of fish vendors connected to fish brokerage is also limited. When fish brokers feel that they have a good number of fish vendors in their pool, even if someone is highly recommended by someone as a fish vendor, the likelihood of acceptance is nil. In many ways, fish brokerages follow the logic of supply and demand in this respect. Thus, an informal system has been set up to check on the number of fish vendors and their credit worthiness. Among fish vendors, an increase in their number means stiffer competition, and among fish brokers, the likelihood of bad credit mounts

Picture 7.1
Women fish vendors drinking local wine while waiting for fish to land in the fish brokerage

Picture 7.2
Two fish vendors inspecting fish for auction

Picture 7.3
A fish vendor making a bid

Picture 7.4
Fish vendors doing a valuation of fish up for auction

when they are exposed to more fish vendors.[107] They would rather stick to a limited number of fish vendors who have proven their worth and provide them with a steady source of profit.

Among fish vendors, not everyone's saliva is considered to be equal. Its quality is not a given, but one has to work for it through the years. The 'quality' of one's saliva (as capital) depends on the vendor's track record in two things: frequency of delay in payment and quality of bids. When a vendor pays on time, or in some cases sends word whenever delay in payment is inevitable and bids high, meaning her bids are consistently high compared to others and are, therefore, always winning, she is 'prioritized'. One good example of a fish vendor whose saliva is of good quality is Analinda.

7.4.1 The Case of Analinda

Analinda is a favourite among fish brokerages. She is free to bid in any of the four fish brokerages. She is a towering woman with the looks of a beauty queen in her better days. She is, observed another fish vendor, 'ang reyna ng komisyunan' (the queen of fish brokerages). Others call her in a joking tone, not without a hint of envy, the 'anak' (child) of the owners of fish brokerages, while they are just 'ampon' (adopted children). The use of the word 'anak' professes the idea of a fish brokerage as one family, with the owners the parents and fish vendors the children. Being an 'anak' of course entails more privileges than being a mere 'ampon'. Both are treated as members of the family, but as an 'ampon', there is always an element of envy that the real 'anak' is being looked after better than the 'ampon'. This metaphor is, of course, apt since Analinda is always the first

[107] When I speak here of fish vendors, I point primarily to mobile fish vendors. Fish brokers avoid having too many mobile fish vendors at their disposal, since it means dealing with and lending more money to more people. It has to be remembered that mobile fish vendors do not join fish auctions. They rely primarily on the kindness of winning fish auctioneers or the extra fish which the fish broker sets aside for them. The price of the fish they get is almost always set already, determined by bids made by market fish vendors. Having more market fish vendors, on the other hand, is entirely different. They could, unlike mobile fish vendors, precipitate frenzied bidding, which could then increase the price of fish. But fish brokers are also wary of having many market fish vendors bidding for fish. Their sheer number, as I was told, could artificially affect the price of fish. If bids are high, the price of fish could become prohibitive to consumers, which could then result in slackening sales and loses. In this case, fish brokers could also be at the losing end as much as market fish vendors.

fish vendor to be called in from the market to attend a bid. Her presence in any fish trading is a rule, rather than an exception. Her late payments are overlooked since she brings in a lot of money to fish brokerages. She is the *primus inter pares* among her peers.

One good example of how prized Analinda is among fish vendors follows. One day, seven boxes of fish were delivered to Fish Mo (name of a fish brokerage), and soon the usual group of fish vendors from the market were hauled in to make their bid. Eight 'mamumulong' were already present, good enough to make the bidding competitive. But the 'magpapabulong', Luisa, was not ready to start the bidding yet. She was quietly seated at her desk and making notes in a logbook. Soon, people in the room were asking when the bidding would start. They were already agitated because they had other businesses to attend to and it was getting late. The 'magpapabulong' looked up from her table and told them in a monotonous uninterested tone to wait for awhile. "We know already what keeps you from starting the bidding," said one. The 'magpapabulong' pretended not to hear anything. Minutes later, a tricycle pulled in and it was Analinda. "There she is," said many in a mixture of relief and irritation. Analinda was apologetic. She told the assembled crowd that she was late because of an emergency at home. But that did not keep a number of people from censuring her, albeit in a humourous tone. "You knew all along that they prioritize you. You should always be in a hurry," said one. The 'magpapabulong' got up from her chair and started the bidding as if nothing happened.

Not all fish vendors, though, enjoy the confidence and trust of fish brokers all the time. Many fish vendors have been barred from joining public auction for not being able to return the receipts for the fish sold. Reasons are aplenty, and most of them concern cash being used up to address some pressing household need or emergency expense like medical bills. In these cases, fish vendors cannot join public auctions anymore. But fish trading in the community is steeped in localized arrangements that are in tune with the cultural character of the community. Other means have to be found in order to re-incorporate the banned fish vendor into fish trading. Again, saliva plays a big role in providing the banned fish vendors with a means to regain the trust of the fish broker. As the arrangement goes, any banned fish vendor has to look for someone amongst the

existing pool of fish vendors who is willing to lend his 'saliva's worth'. One good example of this arrangement is the case of Karen. During my fieldwork, she accumulated a debt of 5,000.00 Php.[108] For a week, she was absent from the fish brokerage that she usually frequented. Then one day, I saw her again participating in a public auction. All along I thought that she had already paid her debt. The owner told me that one of the fish vendors allowed Karen to 'make use of her saliva'. Thus, in this case, if Karen wins a bid, the credit is not listed in her name but in that of the person who allowed her to 'use her saliva'. In case of default, it will not be Karen who is answerable, but the person whose name appears on the logbook of the fish brokerage. In this arrangement, many fish vendors who once incurred debts were able to pay up and re-join public auctions. Among the fish vendors that I interviewed, many were willing to 'lend their saliva' to others, since according to them they never know what will happen to them in the future, and their generosity is their buffer for their life in the community.

Thus, while the operative term in the relationship between the fish broker and fish vendor is 'laway' (saliva), in concrete terms it is based on trust, and trust has to be cultivated in several ways. But trust as an operative term is a tenuous concept and can be shattered in just one miscalculated bid. Trust in this case demands that its holder should regularly bring in money to the provider of capital, and at the same time earn a respectable profit for herself/himself. Attached to the notion of trust are the key community concepts called 'pakinabangan at pakisuyuan' (profiting from one another and doing someone a favour), which are very much in practice in the everyday life in the community. These concepts have since been adopted in fish brokerages and define the ways in which the relations between fish brokers and fish vendors are consummated in their everyday transactions.

[108] Apparently, this is the limit given to market fish vendors. When someone reaches this limit, she is banned from joining public auctions again until there comes a time when she pays back the money she owes. For mobile fish vendors, the limit is 1,000.00 Php. But this is, of course, not followed all the time. Analinda, for example, I was told during my fieldwork, owes one fish broker some 25,000.00 Php, way beyond the limit. But she is allowed to continue bidding, since she brings in lots of money to the fish brokerage and is paying back her debt in installments, which is good enough for the fish broker. But this arrangement is, of course, inconsistent with the case of other fish vendors. One reason also, I was told, is that Analinda is a drinking buddy of one of the owners. Their fictive kinship refrains the owner from enforcing the rule.

7.5 'Pakinabangan at Pakisuyuan'

Embedded in the discourse of trust is the expectation that both fish vendors and fish brokers help each other in maximizing their economic rent. On the part of fish vendors, the mere fact that they are allowed to take fish on credit compels them to grant requests being asked of them by fish brokers. They are, in a sense, in a perpetual indebtedness to fish brokers. But this granting of favours which sometimes are inimical to their interest is seen by many of them as a normative gesture of paying their dues to people whose munificence provides for them. On the part of fish brokers, providing credit to people who have nothing except their words for payment is a risky lot, and to mitigate their exposure, subscription to the community ethos of 'pakisuyuan' (doing one a favour) and 'pakinabangan' (profiting from one another) maximizes their economic rent in the business. The cultural notions of 'pakinabangan' and 'pakisuyuan' serve as a two-tier ideological framework that regularizes, normalizes and legitimizes what is otherwise an exploitative and lopsided relationship between fish brokers and fish vendors. But in some ways, fish vendors also get to use them to advance their lot.

In the community, people's lives are guided by the ethos of 'pakinabangan' at 'pakisuyuan'. When someone needs a hand with a certain activity, help can easily be obtained in the neighborhood. But providing help is not a one-way process. When one asks for 'pakisuyo' (a favour), one is expected to return it in some future time. When it is returned, both parties enter into an unending relationship of 'pakinabangan' (profiting or deriving favour from one another). People who are fond of asking favours and yet are reluctant to return the same are frowned upon and do not enjoy high esteem in the community. People like them will soon exhaust everybody's patience and will find themselves isolated in the community, unable to tap the community's reservoir of mutual self-help. They are labeled as 'mahilig makisuyo' (fond of requesting a favour) and yet 'hindi naman mapakisuyuan' (cannot be relied upon to return the favour). One thus has to return the favour first to enter a relationship called 'pakinabangan'.[109]

[109] In chapter 5, I spoke about members of the community taking advantage of one another. I should mention also that *pakinabangan* and *pakisuyuan* figure well in their play of acts – of tactics of 'making do' – since when borrowing from someone and failing to return it, the perpetrator would often say as a ruse for failing to return an object: *Hindi yun magagalit dahil*

These two words are often invoked by both fish brokers and fish vendors when they describe their relationship. For fish brokers, by providing credit line to fish vendors, the two of them enter the socio-cultural discourse of 'pakinabangan.' Fish vendors make money out of the capital (fish) provided by fish brokers, and the latter on the other hand, are provided with a willing 'army of labour' which makes their productive economy survive and prosper. The socio-cultural discourse of 'pakinabangan" then axiomizes an attendant community value which asks all its members to bestow favours on others who might be in need of help. If 'pakinabangan' profits all the parties involved, 'pakisuyuan' entails a form of sacrifice of one party while the other benefits. The act is expected to be reciprocated at some other time, when the one who granted it in turn needs help. It then becomes a form of 'banking' for one's future. But then again, as observed, 'pakisuyuan' serves as a tool for fish brokers to advance their own interests. The original definition is obscured and made to serve the ends of economic rent. I will cite some examples to make my case.[110]

7.5.1 The Case of Rexie

Rexie had been a regular fish vendor for Sea Cash (a fish brokerage) for so many years that he was friends already with the owner and Monica, the 'magpapabulong'. On many occasions, he would get invites to family affairs of the owner. In his day to day transactions with Sea Cash, he had incurred debt and seemingly endless balances, but he never got banned from doing business there, unlike some other fish vendors. He was fortunate, he told me, that they trusted him and they found him a loyal ally. In so many instances, he said, he thought he would be banned but was not. Thus, he returned the favour by offering his help to whatever request the fish brokerage made of him. He was

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nanghihiram din naman sila sa amin lagi. Kumbaga, nakikiinabang din sila. (They would not get mad at us. They too are given favours by us.)

[110] Among people who transact business with fish brokerages, it is the mobile fish vendors who are most of the time on the receiving end of fish brokers' invocation of the community ethos *pakinabangan* and *pakisuyuan*, although sometimes, market fish vendors are also prevailed upon to sell fish, not for profit, but just to accommodate the request of fish brokers.

proud that they too had benefited from their friendship. One good instance is about left-over fish.

According to Rexie, there were so many times that he lost money selling fish from Sea Cash which was refused by other people because the quality was not good anymore. A concrete example was when he was called in by Monica from his stall. He knew he would do one of those 'pakisuyo' acts and, true to his inkling, when he arrived, Monica was in front of a box of large squid. Monica wanted him to get it. He examined it and although it was still good he thought that by tomorrow, it would have to be thrown away. Not even a block of ice and a kilo of salt would save it. Monica told him that he could get it at the price of 50.00 Php per kilo, the same price as she had paid to the person who brought it there. Rexie could have said no. He would be losing money. The circumstances were not on his side. It was already 5 pm and by 6 pm people would stop buying. He had an hour to dispose of them. And although they were still safe to be eaten, he had to wash them carefully to remove the bad odor. It really was a losing enterprise. But Monica was begging him. No one wanted to take it. It was only Rexie who could help her. The other people she called were reluctant. One offered to take it, but only at 40.00 Php per kilo. Rexie brought it home and sold it together with the other fish. Luckily, he sold everything, but did not earn a centavo.

> "It was just a gesture of returning the favour. I lost no money, only my time and labour, since I spent no money getting the fish. It's the way things go. I owe them a lot for allowing me to get fish on credit in spite of my outstanding balances. Also, if there is good quality fish and no bidding is needed, they call me out and give it to me. So if they needed me, like this time when no one wanted to take the fish, then they call me in also to help them and I oblige. I profit from them so they can profit from me also. It's a matter of give and take." (Interview 2008)

7.5.2 The Case of Zaida

Similar things had happened to all the fish vendors that I interviewed. One of these was Zaida. She was a regular mainstay in Fish Mo. She would spend the whole afternoon there waiting for fish to arrive. One day as I was having an animated conversation with her, Luisa approached her and told her to get five kilos of 'tamban'. Fish Mo had bought a box of 'tamban' from Lucena thinking that it would interest the fish vendors from the

market. But it seemed that the 'mamumulong' showed little interest, and at that time 10 boxes of 'galunggong' arrived in KC (another fish brokerage). The market was flooded with 'galunggong'. Selling 'tamban' then would be economic suicide. It was not a favoured fish among the locals since it was full of bones. Making it even harder to sell was the fact that it had been iced for days already. While it was still fit for consumption, any discerning consumer would not buy it. Zaida looked hesitant but she showed no resistance. She got her pail and passively gave it to Luisa. Later on, five boxes of 'lumahan' were delivered, four were put up for bidding while the remaining one was distributed among the waiting mobile fish vendors. Zaida got five kilos of 'tamban' and five kilos of 'lumahan'. She could have asked for 10 kilos of 'lumahan' but she had already been given five kilos of 'tamban'. Ten kilos were her quota for every run.

The following day, I had a talk with her and asked her if she had made any money yesterday and she said yes, although she added that 'tamban' was very difficult to sell. She was already done selling 'lumahan' and she still had three kilos of 'tamban' with her. She had to give them on credit to her customers, so that she could get rid of them. But it was okay, she said. I asked her why she did it when she was sure that she would not make any money.

> "The fish brokerage treats me well. When fish lands, I get my share. Because my capitalization is small and I don't bid, the fish brokerage asks the winner to give me a part of her win, say, 5-10 kilos. They intercede for me. So, in a way, I return their kindness by granting their request, like the selling of 'tamban.' This fish is really difficult to sell because it's full of bones, but nonetheless, it gets sold. What you really need to have is patience. And if I incur a balance because of it, they understand." (Interview 2008)

On the part of fish brokerages, they see their demands as legitimate. One of the fish brokers, for example, explained that first, they would not ask their fish vendors to sell fish if they thought that fish vendors would not derive profit from it (which is false, as my examples showed); and second, it was their way of spreading the risk of the business. For many fish brokerages, the health of their business depends on the cooperation and sacrifice of their fish vendors, to which they provide with regular income.

> "This business asks for everyone's willingness to share his time and resources. When fish vendors come to us, we give them fish and in the process, we help them meet their daily needs. If this business fails, everyone gets affected, not just us. We lose money and they lose their source of daily income. Basically, it's a

give and take relationship. We extend them a favour, they (fish vendors) should also extend theirs to us." (Interview 2008)

But how do fish brokerages balance the capitalist imperative to make money and on the other hand provide fish vendors with the opportunity to earn well? In this case, balance is hard to find, and as illustrated by the example below, fish vendors turn the table on fish brokers and invoke the notion of 'pakinabangan' to some success.

7.5.3 The Case of Pedro and Other Mobile Fish Vendors

One December morning, while chatting with some fish vendors, a tricycle stopped in front of the fish brokerage and off stepped a woman with two big fish locally known as 'tanguigeng batang'. It was a middle range fish and according to Pedro, a mobile fish vendor, the fish would fetch a good price in the market. The 'magpapabulong', Solomon, was not yet around and everyone's attention was now on the fish, speculating about its price. Someone said that it would be around 150.00 Php per kilo in the market but in the fish brokerage, when it is bought whosesale, fins, tail, gills, innards and all, a bid of not lower than 90.00 Php was in order. Others thought that it would be higher. There was no agreement about the price. When I asked Perla, one of the market fish vendors, if she was making a bid, she told me she would and she wrote it down on a piece of paper for no one to see her planned bid. It was 97.00 Php. Soon, Solomon arrived and had the two fish weighed. The aggregate weight was 25 kilos. It was very seldom that this kind of fish arrived and everyone was already thinking about its proper disposal. Would they sell it in the market or bring it to Lucena where everyone knew it would fetch a higher price? But their enthusiasm was dampened when Solomon in his patented nonchalant ways asked the helper to put the two fish in the storage room, since he was planning to bring them to Lucena. He left soon after paying the woman without even talking to the assembled fish vendors. Everyone present was furious. For them, it was the height of arrogance on the part of Solomon. Pedro summed up the sentiment of the group in these words:

> "He knew for a fact that we were ready to bid for that fish. It is also our belief that we, the fish vendors, should be given the first crack at the fish before they are shipped outside. He should give us his price and if we can afford it, he should let us get it. We should be the priority here. You see, if the fish is not of very good

> quality, who gets the fish? It is us. Sometimes, it's the reason why we incur balances. But it's okay with us. That's how we help them out with their business. We get their fish so that they will not incur losses. We make a sacrifice because we know our position here, we owe them for giving us fish on credit. But they should reciprocate our gesture. When good fish arrives and we fish vendors can make a good profit, they should give it to us. It's our only chance of pocketing a handsome profit." (Interview 2008)

A week after, the same incident occurred, yet involving 'aswang' (small squid) and 'real' (big squid). Apparently, Francisco, a market fish vendor, did not earn well in his last transaction in KC. He just broke even. The fish which he thought would be sold at 90.00 Php per kilo was traded in the market at a much lower price. Although he did not lose any money, he was sore about his efforts and time. He relayed this to Solomon, who told him to catch up next time. He saw this opportunity when a large volume of squid was unloaded in the fish brokerage. When they were weighed, the total volume was almost a hundred kilos. At that time, the price of squid in the market was 100.00 Php per kilo and he asked Solomon to give it to him for 70.00 Php. There were four of them who were interested in getting 10 kilos each, Luis, Pedro, Lucas and himself. But this posed a dilemma for Solomon. Their asking price was fine, but what concerned him was the squid to be left once the four got their share. At 10 kilos each, 60 kilos more would be left. No other 'mamumulong' expressed interest. 100 kilos would be an ideal weight to be brought to Lucena, while 60 would not. He would not be able to recoup his expenses - trucking, ice, labour, etc. In this kind of transaction, they make money not in the kind of fish, but in the volume that they sell. If he gave in to the request of the four 'mamumulong' and kept the rest overnight in his fish storage which was to be sold the following day, it would be unwise. By then, other squid would have arrived, and as a result, his price would have to be lowered. He would incur losses. Solomon decided to take all the squid to Lucena. Francisco was furious. He could not be consoled, nor Luis, who several days before had lost 560.00 Php when he bid for a box of 'galunggong'. They were all damning Solomon. According to them, Solomon was 'walang pakikisama' (inconsiderate).

Two days later, Francisco brought this issue up with Solomon and his wife. Francisco explained his side. Solomon and his wife offered a different opinion on the other hand. They thought it was very harsh of their 'mamumulong' to just think of

themselves. It seemed, according to them, that these people forgot that they were in the business to earn money. It was not always the case that they too were earning well. They also had to seize the moment when they saw it coming their way. They could not always operate on the basis of providing for the needs of their 'mamumulong'. They too had losses to recoup. They had uncollected debts. They had to understand that it was not always that they had to give in to their requests. Their principal had invested his hard earned money and was expecting a good return. Was it not a favour already that they were getting their fish on credit? The fish vendors got their left hand. Now, they were asking for their right hand, too.

However, several days afterwards, there was a reversal of position. I was away for a week when it happened. I was in Manila doing some library research. When I returned, Luis told me how several days ago, three pieces of 'tanguigeng batang' were delivered to KC, and to their surprise, they were asked to participate in bidding. They were wondering about the change of heart. Others thought that he might not have made good money the last time he took the fish there. It could be that he was thinking that it was not worth the effort. Some people, on the other hand, were of the opinion that the couple might have heard of their misgivings and were forced to reevaluate their priorities. "Nahiya rin sa amin!" (They felt remorseful), they told me. Many of them believed that by constantly invoking the concepts of 'pakisuyuan' and 'pakinabangan', they put pressure on the owners of the fish brokerage that they mattered in the running of the business. Whatever the reason though, Luis, who won the bidding, was pleased enough because he earned 890.00 Php that day.

The deployment of the community ethos 'pakinabangan' and 'pakisuyuan' worked in the way that I have shown for both parties, between fish brokers and fish vendors. While the former could count on their fish vendors for the disposal of fish which is deemed unprofitable, the latter, on the other hand, could also invoke the same for their own interests. When the fish brokerage bypassed them and opted instead to sell the fish in Lucena, they felt betrayed. They felt it to be a violation of a relationship cultivated both by their mutual dependencies on each other and their subscription to and invocation of this community ethos. In the end, the logic of profit gave way to the pressure of community values.

In the next section, I deal with chicaneries in fish auctions.[111] These are, of course, not perpetrated out in the open and performed with the knowledge of other people. There lies the supreme importance of social network and connections in this kind of business. If one knows personally who conducts the bidding and enjoys actual or fictive relations with her/him, the venue is open for the rigging of bids. Negotiations are, of course, done in secrecy and they take place among close associates only, meaning, the 'mamumulong' should enjoy the confidence and trust of the 'magpapabulong' for the latter to enter into a fraudulent arrangement. Social relations that permit a 'magpapabulong' to rig an auction for a 'mamumulong' include being neighbours for a long time, relatives, co-godparent of someone, or a long-time drinking buddy. In this arrangement, market transactions which are perceived to adhere to a clear-cut rules are bent and disregarded. The logics of the market are sidelined to give way to personalized re-codification of market rules.

7.6 They Do It Their Way

Bidding though thought to be following certain rules and conducted in the presence of many people is open to manipulation. In a number of auction houses (not fish brokerages though) studied by Smith (1989), he speaks of how bids are rigged by the participants themselves. One of them is called a pool bid.

> Professional buyers may enter into collusive practices of their own, known as "pools" and "rings". In such cases, in order to buy a particular item at the lowest possible price, a group of professional buyers agree not to bid against each other. They rather select one of their members to bid against any nonpool-members and then hold their own private auction later. These private auctions are called knockout auctions. (Smith 1989, p. 70)

In this rigging of bids, there is an open alliance among a number of participants. In the case of fish brokerages, the rigging of bids is done differently. Fish vendors do not make

[111] I should qualify though that rigging fish bidding is not prevalent in fish brokerages, but it happens. All *magpapabulong* that I interviewed admitted that they engage in this chicanery once in awhile, but they do not call it a rip-off, a way to fool their fish vendors. According to them, they only accommodate the request of some close friends. They were also quick to point out that they would often do it only if they had the total confidence in the fish vendor. Thus, it takes years of cultivated friendship before a *magpapabulong* commits herself/himself to circumventing the logic of the market.

a pool bid. They act independently of one another. Any bidding is a time of war over prices. Furthermore, whereas in cases cited by Smith (1989, pp. 70, 91-93, 98, 125), the auctioneer was not involved in any form of chicanery, in the case of fish brokerages, the auctioneer plays a big part. Without her/his consent, no rigging would take place. As previously mentioned, however, relations between the auctioneer and the participating fish vendor should be tight enough so as to secure unshakeable trust in one another. In what will follow, I will cite two specific examples.

7.6.1 The Case of Sana

It was Federico who told me to observe carefully every bidding Sana was participating in. As advised by Federico, I assiduously observed the goings-on every time Sana participated in a bid. For one, I saw a pattern, she always won. She never went back to the market without anything unlike other 'mamumulong' who, on an unlucky day, could be waiting the whole day, participate in all the bids in all fish brokerages and still go back to the market empty handed. I explained that she was just a conscientious bidder. She knew her numbers well. She knew the right price for every box of fish. When I mentioned this to Federico, he smiled at me and told me to observe again. I was very much intrigued by then. I smelt something fishy, well, literally and figuratively. It was only after a week or so of thorough observation that I found out what he was talking about: Sana won most of her bids because she had an arrangement with Luisa, the 'magpapabulong'. The scheme was explained to me further by my aunt, who used to benefit also from this system. This is how she explained the system. Her story is quoted in full to provide a flavour to the chicanery being performed by fish vendors and the auctioneer.

> "When I was still making bids in Fish Mo (the fish brokerage where Luisa works), we were into arranging things in order for me to win bids. This is how we did it. When I joined a bid, it was pre-arranged. For example, if there were five bids to be made that day, she would see to it that I won at least two. We did not make it obvious, otherwise people would notice and they would complain to the owners. This is how the charade went. When everyone was done giving their quotation, she would approach me and ask me, showing me the calculator, if the numbers there were my bid. Of course, we were just staging a drama. What she was showing me was not my bid, but the bid of the highest bidder, whoever she

> was, plus 100.00 Php, or sometimes, 200.00 Php. We varied the amount as a precautionary measure. So, for example, if the highest bid was 5,400.00 Php, she would show me 5,500.00 Php. If the price was amenable to me, I would tell her, yes, you are right. But sometimes, when the amount looked too big for me and I thought that I would not make any money from it, I would tell her that she got it wrong. In a way, she would first consult with me. Then, of course, when I said yes, she would go the round, asking the same question to other bidders to simulate fairness. When she was done with her routine, she would tell the bidders what the winning bid was, and of course they would know that it was me when I carted away the box with me to the market. But you see, she got something out of our arrangement also. She would not do it if she could not profit from me. For every arranged bid, she got 100.00 Php from me. So, if I won three times in a pre-arranged bid, then she would make 300.00 Php in a day." (Interview 2008)

This arrangement would not take place without the intimate social relations between the actors. In this highly dangerous set-up, both parties, the 'magpapabulong' and the 'mamumulong' must have high level of trust in one another. Their 'saliva' should be worthy of each other's confidence. If the scheme were known, fish vendors would lose faith in the impersonal logic of the market in that particular fish brokerage, which could result in two things: fish vendors abandoning the fish brokerage in favour of others, or in order to appease them and rectify the situation, the owners would have to banish the 'magpapabulong' and strike from the list the erring fish vendor. But as it goes, no one knows of the scheme aside from the parties involved, or if there is someone who does know, he has no interest in making it public since he is not at all affected by the deceit. In the case of Sana and Luisa, they were long time neighbours and friends. This fictive relationship was further cemented when Sana served as godmother to one of Luisa's daughters' wedding. Ana's (my aunt) case is the same as Sana. She was Luisa's friend of 20 years and when the former was still earning well, she would lend money to Luisa free of interest. Thus again, in this case, as much as the relationship between the fisher and fish vendor is about trust, mutual dependence and reciprocity, this too could be said to be the logic that drives the anomalous set-up to work in a system like a fish auction which appears to be both public and impartial.

Social dramas could also be arranged to advance the interest of a fish vendor without the fisherman knowing it. They usually take place when a large volume of fish arrives (say, 15-20 boxes) and the owner feels that setting the price outright rather than his catch undergoing a public auction would do better. This is a gamble on the part of

fishers, since a public auction is almost always a fool-proof way to earn a good income. But as I was told, when there is a huge supply of fish of the same species, a public auction does not work well, so much so that setting the price outright is the better option for the fisher. It assures him of a respectable income and avoids the complication brought about by a failed bid when the winning price is not to his liking. Social dramas, in this case, as with the example given above, require the assent and participation of the 'magpapabulong,' a crucial and pivotal force in any bidding process. In this case, what appears to be a 'declamation of care' for the fisher is, in fact, a trap to advance the cause of a fish vendor.

7.6.2 The Case of Ana

Ana, my aunt who sold fish in the market, saw me in Fish Mo (a fish brokerage). She motioned me to come with her. I rose from my seat and followed her. She was going to Sea Breeze (another fish brokerage) and she told me: "May drama kami ni Simeon" (I and Simeon will be having a drama). I did not know what she was up to. Was she confronting Simeon, I asked myself. I was going to ask her what was it all about when I saw Simeon at the entrance of his fish brokerage house, motioning to my aunt that she hurry up. When we got there, there were 10 boxes on the trading floor. I asked Simeon what was it and he told me that it was 'lumahan'. My aunt asked about the price of the fish and Simeon told her that the price was 2,700.00 Php per box. There had been 20 boxes initially and the first 10 had been disposed of already. My aunt told Simeon that she was keen on having them all, but she wanted the price to be reduced to 2,000.00 Php per box. She was not selling the fish here obviously and she was bringing them to Lucena. Unlike selling them in town where profit was already visualized, bringing fish to Lucena was always a gamble. The stakes were high. She either profited handsomely or lost tragically. While they were talking with each other, a man in his mid 40s was looking at them. He was seated on a chair in a corner. While this was going on, I was wondering why my aunt was explaining to Simeon her rationale of asking for a lower price when Simeon for all his years in the business already knew it all. Simeon then turned to the man and asked him if he would grant Ana's request. The man told Simeon in no

uncertain terms that 2,000.00 Php was definitely out of the question. The price was already 2,700.00 Php but he was amenable to 2,500.00 Php. My aunt told Simeon that she would stick to her price. Then Simeon in a rather rehearsed (for me) retort addressed my aunt:

> "We understand your position Ana. When you go to Lucena, everything is still uncertain. You don't know the price and you will gamble. But even if, the owner of the fish wants the price to be kept as it is. He wants it fixed at 2,500.00 Php. And you told us that you could only afford 2,000.00 Php. I can't do anything. We follow the wishes of the 'magdadala'. We are only here to facilitate the pricing and not meddle with the decision of the fish owner. If you can't commit yourself to the price, then we can't give you the fish and the fish brokerage will be the one to buy it from the 'magdadala'.

My aunt did not say a word and left the place in a huff. When we were away already, far from the fish brokerage, we sat on a platform and my aunt told me that she was waiting for Simeon's call. She would have the fish at the price that she wanted, she told me. Soon, true to her words, Simeon gave her a call telling her that she could get the fish from him. My aunt was beaming, she was grinning from ear to ear. "See," she told me, "our drama was effective".

Apparently, even before my aunt went to Simeon to express her intention to buy the fish, they had already had a talk. They had already planned what to do. My aunt would quote a ridiculously low price which the 'magdadala' would, of course, reject. When the negotiation bogged down, and after Simeon's lofty talk about defending his 'magdadala's' interest, Simeon would then take the responsibility for 'buying' the fish, coming off as the saviour at the last resort. But then, in buying the fish, Simeon would tell the 'magdadala' that they could not get it at 2,500.00 Php. They could settle for 2,200.00 Php, 200.00 Php higher than the price of my aunt. Simeon would also tell the 'magdadala' that it was getting late and soon other fishing boats would land. If this happened, his fish would fetch an even lower price. It could be true, but most of the time, it was just a story to condition the mind of the "magdadala" to lower his price. Simeon knew what time and what boats were landing since he got loads of information from other fish brokers and boat owners, too. The 'magdadala' confronted with the spectacle of losing money because of his desire to make more money would, as Simeon's

experience taught him, give in and settle for the price he quoted. He would then pay him, less the 7% levy.

The price quoted by Simeon, 2,200.00 Php was really the asking price of my aunt. The 2,000.00 Php quotation was made to give Simeon an upper hand to quote a higher price, the real price. When the transaction was consummated, Simeon was given 500.00 Php by my aunt for his 'kadramahan' (theatricality). When I asked my aunt what if the 'magdadala' decided to refuse even the offering of Simeon and brought the fish to other fish brokers, she told me that it was most unlikely, although that happened sometimes. The 'magdadala' would not want to be branded disloyal and it was known by almost everyone that when the fish goes the round of fish brokers, it often fetches a low price. In this transaction, two things were accomplished by Simeon: he made the 'magdadala' feel that he was being valued as an important stakeholder in the business, while at the same time facilitating the procurement of fish of a 'mamumulong' at a price that would give her a fighting chance in the market. As a bonus, Simeon made 500.00 Php for less than an hour of dramatics, aside from his monthly income from the owners of the fish brokerage.

In this social drama, Simeon, the 'magpapabulong', was able to sell the fish brought by a fisher at a price that was both amenable to the latter and to the buyer, though the fisher was clearly disadvantaged by the arrangements between Simeon and my aunt. Simeon played his role to the hilt, in seamless perfection, to the fisher and to the fish buyer/vendor. By acting like he was forever committed to the interest of his fisher, he was able to cultivate a favourable working relationship with him. On the other hand, by accommodating the 'wishes' of his fish vendors, he was also solidifying his reputation as a caring 'magpapabulong' to other market players. In this instance, Simeon was acting as a human leveler and as a means to counter the impersonal touch of the market. He manipulated the entire market proceedings, but not to the point of disadvantaging his fisher too much. He also wanted to let him reap profit but not to the point of robbing other people from gaining money from the transaction. As Simeon told me, fish bidding often works against the interest of fish vendors and this is the reason why if he had a chance, he made it a point to intervene to protect the fish vendors' interest.

In these examples, I have shown how fish auctions can be a subject of chicanery on the part of market players and how the need to accumulate information to win bids

could be dispensed with. Thus, in a sense, fish auctions in fish brokerages are both subject to the logic of the market and the demands of the community where social relations impinge on economic production and capitalist relations. A capitalist subject who knows his number well could also tap into his community connections to make his case and circumvent market rules. The fishing community and its fish brokerages then provide a viable environment for the creation of a localized, community-embedded capitalism.

7.7 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has discussed a particular informal economy affected and the same time resilient to external market developments. It contributes to our understanding of local economies in developing countries (Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2006; Hart 1988; Portes, Castells and Benton 1989). It is also an exercise in highlighting the territoriality of market forces and the adaptability of people who make use of them (Roopnaraine 2001). It is a contribution to the burgeoning literature on the geographical situatedness of global forces like capitalism and how such forces are received and fashioned in different ways in different locales at different depths and degrees of commitment and involvement by people on the ground. It pays close attention to the robust domestic informal economy of the fishing community studied and contributes to its further articulation as a rich domain of local agency and at the same time a space in which global forces could insinuate themselves in varying ways. It also adds up to what have been succinctly articulated by a number of studies pointing to the significance of social relations, like kinship, in domesticating what could be otherwise alienating and foreboding external forces permeating market relations in local communities (see, for example, Hart 1988). It tells us that social relations in marginal communities are potent constraining factors in crafting and delineating spaces where self re-fashioning could both be made to adjust to external developments and global forces could be re-engineered to suit local needs and dynamics.

This chapter has shown the ways in which market relations have been localized and imbued with community values and social practices as they are played out in fish

trading. It discussed change and continuities in the community as these are made manifest in fish trading in fish brokerages. It has demonstrated the two sides of market practice in fish auctions in the community, one that adheres to the rigours of the market and one that refashions them according to the local specificities of market relations and the needs of market players. By submitting themselves to the disciplinary logic of the market, fish vendors compete intensely against each other, eschewing the primacy of kinship relations previously so valued in the fisher-fish vendor transaction and by accumulating local knowledge about fish biographies in town and in other areas to serve their ends. Market players subscribe to market rules that create subjects who have to master the rules of the game and inscribe faith in the impartiality of regulations. On the other hand, this chapter has also shown how 'saliva' is used as capital, how community ethos like 'pakinabangan' and 'pakisuyuan' play their part, and how fictive and real kinship relations work to re-codify the means in which bids are won in fish auctions. While the reach of formal market rules, as embodied in fish auctions, have not spared even a small fishing community like Sta. Filomena, market logics have to accommodate some distinct social practices in the community, as the people in the community themselves make adjustments and fashion themselves into competitive market players steeped in local knowledge and mindful of the dynamics of the market.

In the foregoing assertions, two streams of thought could be advanced: the agency of people to enact their ways into the dynamics of the market economy and the resilience of capital as the most dominant contemporary market relations. The ways in which the people in the community brought forth to their market transactions their own conception of what market relations meant for them highlights their agency. In addition, the agency of people to insinuate their rules into the logic of the market place is mapped out: it is limited. There are limits to tinkering with the market: "while capitalism can be cast in a variety of culturally and socially distinctive molds, there are definite limits that define these as varieties of capitalism and capitalist strategies for production [...] (Hudson 2001, p. 2). They cannot completely change the rules. They can only change so much. Notice, for example, the continued pressure on fish vendors to master a comprehensive knowledge of the biographies of fish in order for them to be competitive and survive. Not that they were not into amassing all sorts of information about fish and fish trading. Prior

to the introduction of fish brokerages, surely, fish vendors were also keeping a stock of knowledge on how to go about fish trading as a business. Thus, it is not the practice itself but the renewed, intensified and disciplined accumulation of information that they had to confront nowadays compared to previous times. While fashioning the market, they were also being fashioned by it, molding themselves into ideal market subjects: individualist, competitive, and profit-driven. The production of place-based market practices in Sta. Filomena is not, then, as evinced earlier, an example of an alternative to capitalist practices, but rather a localized articulation of market relations between workers (fish vendors) and capitalists (fish dealers). It is to be understood then as Hudson explains, that "the economic is culturally and socially grounded and embedded. What we understand by "the economy" is culturally constituted. Thus, economic rationalities are culturally created, take diverse forms, and are territorially embedded, with distinctive geographies" (2001, p. 29).

Central to the discussion is the role of fish brokerages in this transformation of market relations that suit the needs of the local people. Fish brokerages could been read as a manifestation of two inter-related events in the re-structuring of the fishing economy in the Philippines and specifically in Sta. Filomena. The first is capitalist market relations impinging on and restructuring the ways in which fish trading dynamics are played out in the community, and second, the manner in which people in Sta. Filomena and those who are into fish trading embed community values, and personal relations into otherwise impersonal, general, system-ruled transactions governed by the logics of market capitalism. The current market relations, then, as they are being practised in fish brokerages are a departure from the old ways of conducting fish trading in the community and at the same time, represent continuity: while changes in fish trading are quite visible, there is also the continuation of old practices. As elaborated in foregoing sections, community values such as 'pakinabangan' and 'pakisuyuan' have played a substantial part in how relations between fish vendors and fish brokers were actualized in their daily dealings with one another. Note also how kinship relations, both actual and fictive, paved the way for the possibility of chicaneries in fish auctions. In many different ways, fish brokerages became a space where people in Sta. Filomena could engage fruitfully with new market rules and the disciplining logics of capitalism as they supplement, displace or

locate their own market involvement within the realm of their own community social practices.

The practice of obtaining fish on credit from fish brokers on the basis of trust suits the economic condition of the community. In their economic relations with fish brokerages, people from Sta. Filomena capitalized on their 'laway' – the ability to summon the socio-cultural wealth of trust as a foundational praxis of community life – to gain employment in an informal sector of the economy. Through this, they were able to find alternative ways of providing for themselves and their families in a very insecure world of endless economic re-structuring and dire labour conditions. But such practice is not without its pitfalls. People from Sta. Filomena, as mentioned earlier, have to confront the exploitative nature of their relations with the owners of fish brokerages. The social practices inherent to these community values are, of course, used by fish brokers to serve their own ends. Fish vendors were asked to sell fish which failed to obtain interested bidders. They were tied up in a seeming perpetual bondage to fish brokers by virtue of their 'pakinabang' from them. While this is true in many respects, they were not devoid of ways of countering these lopsided relations, despite evident limitations. But what I would like to point out here is that complete victimization of fish vendors does not happen in fish brokerages. Otherwise, fish vendors from the community would stop patronizing them. They clearly have their own agency and in one apt fieldwork example, I discussed how the owner of KC allowed fish vendors to bid for 'tanguigeng batang' after knowing that they disapproved of his act. Invoking shared cultural values like 'pakinabangan' and 'pakisuyuan', they have to play the game that market capitalism dictates, but not without essaying their own amendments to the rules. Thus, market transactions in fish brokerages, whether presenting novel relations or continuing community-based practices among market participants, are also about power relations, how they are harnessed, allocated, negotiated and contested, not quite unlike what has been discussed in the previous chapters.

It is said that global developments have paved the way for the re-imagining of our relationship with other people, places and ourselves (Alger 2003; Giddens 2002; Grant and Short 2002; Jameson and Miyoshi 1998; Ray 2007; Scholte 2005; Schuerkens 2003). The fishing community studied is a manifestation of this re-territorializing and

territorializing of life practices as they are played out on the ground and within the confines of a particular geography. It is being reterritorialized because its people have to adapt to external changes which have immediate repercussions on their ways of life. On the other hand, as the processes of reterritorialization take place, people re-assert their agency and territorialize the very transformative forces that act upon them. In those instances, shared cultural values and beliefs that have been instilled in them through the years have served them well in the process of structuring their ways in response to changes around them. As such, as Hudson points out, "culturally embedded economic action should be seen as dependent upon collective understandings that shape economic strategies and goals" (2001, p. 29).

The experiences of fish vendors in the community and how they have to adapt to the demands of the market are not unique. They happen too in other places, and yet, at a different speed, to varying degrees, and in divergent forms. How the people in Sta. Filomena responded to the introduction of fish brokerages in the community and the debilitating effects of the fisheries crisis was redolent of its history as a community of people and its marginal importance in the global economy. The people in Sta. Filomena have evolved their own ways of living and making do in the face of their locality being besieged on all fronts by forces beyond their control.

This chapter completes the discussion of the sets of relations which emerged as important in my study of Sta. Filomena – power, gender and economic relations - that actualize the importance of seeing the world not just in the putative globalised perspective of a universal subject but also in the minutiae of everyday life on the ground. Thus, while we do not lose sight of what Massey (1994) calls a global sense of place, we should also attend to the power of the local to produce places, and the localizing effects of globalizing forces. It is only then that we will have an engaged and liberating communion with contemporary life, both in its global breadth and local depth. Having said that, the next and last chapter of the thesis summarizes the key arguments made and in a number of instances further elaborates on some concepts which have been merely hinted at in past chapters, such as the importance of place and modernity in understanding the many geographies of globalization. It is also in this final chapter that other possible ways of understanding and concretizing the local are laid out.

Chapter Eight

A Fishing Community in Our Time: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Sta. Filomena as a fishing community demonstrates that while global processes have an impact on communities worldwide, some places are transformed by such processes more than others. Communities such as Sta. Filomena, while not unaffected by global transformations, coordinate their daily activities and fashion their ways of living largely on their own terms and within the locus of their place-based exigencies. Fish trading in fish brokerages, while structured to a degree by the laws of market capitalism, largely follows a community ethos predicated on kinship relations. Thus, whilst it can be argued that capitalism has penetrated all facets of everyday life (Harvey 2006), capitalist economic practices in this locality have been fashioned in accordance with local contingencies, and the agency of people to manoeuvre their way through the labyrinthine complexity of contemporary life is more robust than might have been expected. This observation connects with other findings of the study which elaborate on the power dynamics of people in the community as they deploy their tactics of 'making do', and as fishers and their wives negotiate and come to terms with their 'new life' in the context of the fisheries crisis. The production of local lives as they are lived in the margins by a predominantly immobile populace invites us to re-think many of our assumptions about contemporary life. Whilst the global behemoths – transnational corporations, regional economic organizations, supranational bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank – are very much credited with re-routing and re-fashioning our lives along the fiber-optic prism of global cultural flows (Appadurai 1996), many people 'on the ground' are left out and perform their everyday lives based on what they know and need within the forced confinement of their marginal geographies. Thus, as this study asserts, whilst the importance of the global in structuring everyday life is not lost on the ground, "it is

equally valid and indeed necessary to investigate the additional, emplaced, phenomenological lives, needs and motives of the people who were responsible for dispatching, passing on or receiving the exchanges they represent" (Kennedy 2010, p. 145).

By way of conclusion, this chapter will attempt to do several things: 1.) revisit and reiterate how local life is performed, produced, and reproduced in the fishing community in the midst of a fisheries crisis as manifested within power, gender and economic relations; 2.) highlight the salience of 'margins' as an important framing tool in understanding the complexity of contemporary life, and in conjunction with this, the role of modernity and place, two critical concepts not elaborated explicitly but often alluded to in the study, in understanding what contemporary life is like in a specific place and at a particular time; 3.) point out the continued relevance of ethnography in understanding the complexity of modern times and the many geographies of globalization, re-state the robustness and limits of my research methodology, re-iterate a refined notion of glocalization and point towards some new themes and possible venues for future research; and 4.) by way of summing up, underscore the highly contingent moments of local living (and therefore their fragile constitution) and how further global and local developments could be expected to instantiate new modes of life for a variety of communities as they grapple with a fast changing world.

8.2 Local Life In the Epoch of Globalization

This thesis discussed some key moments of local life in the era of globalization by considering the everyday life of people in a fishing community. It is about what de Certeau calls a mélange of daily activities that highlights the "procedures of everyday creativity" (1988, p. xiv). Local everyday moments in a fishing community undergoing real change are manifested through its inhabitants' power, gender and economic relations. While the study does not elide the fact that bigger issues are also of importance among the people in the community, like their fraught relations with big commercial fishing boats and the highly volatile town politics, they were not the main focus of the thesis. As with Busby's research, the findings here suggest that:

> for most people, most of the time, big issues did not touch them deeply. What was more important was the business of their daily lives, their hopes for the future of their children, their relationships with friends, neighbors, kin. (Busby 2000, p. 7)

In concentrating on the everyday lives of people in the community the study highlighted the many geographies of contemporary globalization. In doing so it supports the contention that:

> Globalization (in the economy, or in the culture, or in anything else) does not entail simply homogenization [...] There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations. There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise. And finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world. (Massey 1994, p. 156)

Industrial developments in some key areas in the Philippines have affected how power, gender and economic relations are played out among the people in the community, but as shown in previous chapters, fishers, fish vendors and fish dealers (among others) negotiate, counter and make do with these changes vigorously on their own terms (see also Gardner 2001). Sta. Filomena, while being affected by extra-local developments, is not simply annexed to the global core, and its ways of life made to look like a reproduction of other places and other people. The fishing community studied had ways of its own – ways of 'making do' in times of resource scarcity, allocating and negotiating power within households and transacting fish trading amongst themselves. In these ways, local life was produced and reproduced everyday.

The fishing community is a concrete expression of the production of locality – not in the sense of being backward, static, unchanging, close and insular – but rather dynamic, engaging, changing, negotiating, resisting, contesting and accommodating. While people in the fishing community move in constrained spaces, they are not oblivious and impervious to the existence of other places and forces beyond. By keeping track of how everyday local life is lived in the community, we attend to how space is transformed into place. Furthermore,

> by keeping in mind that notions of locality or community refer both to a demarcated physical space and to clusters of interaction, we can see that the

> identity of a place emerges by the interaction of its specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as a community or locality. (Gupta and Ferguson 2006, p. 610)

Thus, while their everyday lives are primarily constituted within the confines of the community, their localisation is not an act of isolation but a manifestation of an engaged though constrained interaction with other places and peoples. Improvisations in everyday life and the dynamic re/production of particular, place-specific life practices within the territorial marginality of the fishing community tell us that in the famous declaration of Lefebvre, despite the power of abstract space through capitalism, "the worldwide does not abolish the local" (1991, p. 86). While many are preoccupied with the fading of local life, this study indicates that in many places the local remains very much 'alive'. It is in accordance with the continuing salience of the local that we find truth in the assertion made by Kennedy (2010). According to him,

> the lifeworld held in common by societal members, their shared habitus, is also essentially concerned with and constructed around a set of everyday practices which are pressing and immediate, grounded in habit and repetition, coloured by idiomatic imagery, symbols and meanings and are more or less unique to, or fully understood by, those particular regional, class, ethnic or community members (Kennedy 2010, p. 151).

In seeking to understand how contemporary everyday life is lived on the ground in a developing economy, in a marginal community and by a largely immobile people with very limited social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986; 1989), the study focused on three overlapping everyday moments of community life which emerged as important in the data: gender, power and economic relations. These will now be revisited, elaborated on and further consideration will be given to some ideas initially explored in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

8.2.1 Cunning and Resistance

Chapter 5 endeavoured to highlight the ways in which power, domination and resistance are played out in the everyday life of the community through everyday tactics of 'making do' employed by everyone against anyone in the community. The point of the chapter is

to highlight how what emerged in the research was not a world of conflict brought about by the diminishing pool of resources in the community, but how the community makes use of power locally, and devises ways to contain the flow of power among its members, mitigate its excesses and maintain a sense of normality amidst the economic difficulties brought about by the fisheries crisis.

As mentioned in chapter 5, power in the community is not held solely by one entity or group of people. The community is a community of the weak, which means among other things, that while there seems to be an economic hierarchy among its inhabitants, such economic stratification is volatile, loose and untenable given the nature of everyone's capability (or inability as the case may be) to earn a living and the precarious state of the local community's economy.

Domination in the community is expressed in the tactics of 'making do' and how these impinge on the accumulation and re/production of material possessions from money to the very cutlery and crockery of community members. Thus, Scott's (1990) public and hidden transcripts are not sufficient when understanding power relations in this community. Since there is no identifiable hegemonic block here, expressions of domination and resistance cannot be singly attributed to a group of people. Ways in which members of the community take advantage of one another are not direct expressions of the contestation of the position of powerful individuals since the community sorely lacks figures who have social and political eminence, but are manifestations of how power is produced and creatively deployed to offset a lack of power and to improve life. Resistance is not about deflecting and contesting the might of real power-wielding individuals, but rather it is about staving off the exploitative nature of daily existence and the harrowing state of a marginal economic subsistence. Kept in their place and with no ability to access the material largesse of other places or even the town itself, fishers and their families 'make do' with what they have in the community. Each and every member's resource becomes in this instance the target of community speculation and often of the desire to re/possess. The tendency of some community members to attempt to acquire goods and money from others through means that sometimes put a strain on, but do not always undermine the ethical fabric of the community, is heightened by the lack of opportunities both in the community and outside

of it. When public and private resources in the community are up for 'grabs', cunning becomes a priceless form of capital to be cultivated and used judiciously.

The local dimension of the tactics of 'making do' does not mean that people in the community do not tap into other places for their resources. However their access to other communities is limited and their ways of tapping into the resources of outsiders are mixed: appeals to the provincial government for aid were made by 'barangay' officials as a result of complaints made by the people during 'barangay' assemblies;[112] families who have relatives working in the city or overseas sought their help and sent missives to partake of what others had to offer. A family which had relatives in the US, for example, had a garage sale of goods sent to them of which they were in no need, like bed sheets, bath towels, jeans, winter jackets, socks and shoes. Those who bought them, of course, did not come from the community itself but from other communities. Others sought protection from the dire consequences of the fisheries crisis by asking next of kin to send them money, while yet others left the community for good to try their luck in new places.[113]

The tactics of 'making do' were not explicitly condemned. Nevertheless, they were talked about, weighed up, commented upon and criticized, which served to maintain a sense of ethical normalcy in the community. In 'sari-sari' stores, which I referred to in this study as ungovernable spaces, talk of 'making do' was ripe. This did not appear to erect a clear divide between the person being talked about and the people present in the discussion, but rather it created a sense of probity by drawing and redrawing the everyday

[112] Twice a year, local *barangay* officials hold consultative meetings with local residents to report on and provide an accounting of developmental projects made in the community. It also gives an opportunity to residents to lodge public appeals for a number of concerns, like the construction of public toilets, situations of deteriorating peace and order, among others. I attended one during my fieldwork and the atmosphere was at times testy, funny and tense. Some local residents were very forward with their criticism of local officials, while in most cases, people were deferential and respectful with their questions and commentaries.

[113] Lolita, one of my most important informants in the community, left on December 20th, some five days before Christmas. She had been hinting at leaving the community during our numerous conversations, but the abruptness of her decision caught me by surprise. She had been telling me that she for the longest time she had been urging her husband to relocate to Manila, where a relative was willing to take in her husband as a driver. Her husband was unconvinced. But later developments served as a catalyst. Her husband was suspected of being one of the men who pilfered a fisherman's gasoline from his storage. He always maintained his innocence and to evade further questioning by local authorities, I was told that their family left very early in the morning for the city.

social practices which were considered acceptable. This is not to say that those who were present did not participate in the orgy of 'making do' performances. Most, if not all, of them did, and their presence in 'sari-sari' stores and at drinking sessions, also served to exclude them from being talked about and in the process, protected them from ridicule, and from being chastised and reprimanded. Such talk reminded those present that they and others could be expected to account for, and defend, their actions when they were seen as potentially threatening the social fabric. While talk is by nature speculative, it was almost always judgmental and discursive. This set the tone for the future transactions of community members. Thus, while tactics of 'making do' are largely condoned, they are not without their limits. People who go overboard and have a surfeit of their "maximum allowable quota of tactics of 'making do'" are subjected to malicious gossips and thus penalized for their wanton disregard of 'decency'. It is in this context that two things have to be guarded and cultivated zealously by people in the community: reputation as a resource and cunning as capital. Given that a good reputation can only be achieved through visible and well-executed agreeable social relations with community members, this resource is fragile and needs to be replenished and protected from time to time. Too much deployment of the tactics of 'making do' may deplete this valued resource. Those who had been exposed as shamelessly taking advantage of others, incessantly and with impunity, were targeted: their reputation tarnished; their everyday dealings with other people subject to constant surveillance and care. Thus, in the community, the degree and frequency of everyone's 'making do' practices set the tone for potential community engagement. Such relational differentiation reminded members of the community that while tactics of 'making do' could be employed from time to time, they could not be utilised on a daily basis and with impunity. Cunning had to be employed subtly and discreetly. It was a talent which had to be fashioned and invested in with much care. Furthermore, a cunning tactic might prove successful when deployed in relation to one person or group, but not in relation to others. Thus, cunning as capital is relational and contextual. It is closely related to the cultivation of reputation as a resource, since exposed cunning translates into the undermining of reputation in the community. Be that as it may, people in the community had to constantly re-invent their tactics of 'making

do' in order to survive, recalibrating their capital of cunning and varnishing or tarnishing, in the process, their good name and social relations.

8.2.2 The Burden of Sharing

In line with changes in the economic context of fishing in Sta. Filomena, gender relations in the community were altered and some gender practices reinforced, as chapter 6 has shown, and the changes were most palpable in the ways in which the wives of fishers have insinuated themselves into the politics of household decision-making, while men albeit with a grudging sense of helplessness, have recognized that women too have a voice in family affairs. However, such developments are unevenly distributed. Not all households have seen wives of fishers benefiting from the re-alignment of, and changes to, their socio-economic roles, and some may be described as worse off than before. Men too had experienced dramatic changes in their lives. With the fisheries crisis, they felt that their power in the community had diminished and their masculinity had been questioned by their incursion into a realm of work traditionally conceived of as feminine.

Fishing, as explained in chapter 4, used to be a source of pride and men's power in the community. It demands physical stamina, and an acute sense of space and discipline. The sea is a treacherous workplace (Acheson 1981), and women locally are thought to be unable to withstand the rigours of life at sea. Fishing in Sta. Filomena is therefore a very masculine job and men's monopoly of this work further boosts their power in a society that already deifies the stature of men as having the last word in all aspects of life. However, recent developments in the local economy have changed the household power dynamics between men and women, husbands and wives.

Men in the community were found to have a low level of education, which constrained them from joining the formal economy. Opportunities in the informal economy for men were few and far between. In contrast, fishers' wives enjoyed a better educational profile than their male counterparts. Coincidentally, at the time of the fisheries crisis, informal work in the community was more readily available to women than men. When fishers were out of work, their domestic power was reduced if their wives took up their former role of breadwinner. Nevertheless, they had no recourse but to

allow their wives to find work, to mitigate their economic difficulties. Thus, fishers' wives opened 'sari-sari' stores, sold cooked food on the street, rented out romance pocket books, operated as laundrettes and household service providers, and in a number of cases, worked in factories. Thus, in many ways, the fisheries crisis opened doors for many women: local economic re-structuring compelled many reluctant men to let their wives go and join the formal and informal economies.

For men in the context of a highly conflictual world of waged work, and given their educational profile and low level of skills, finding work in the city and outside of the community was an uphill battle. They sought work in factories, construction sites and fishing companies in nearby towns. But many of them remained unemployed. Work on commercial fishing vessels proved too tough for most displaced fishers, since either the work demanded longer times at sea, or they were unable to adjust to the very different conditions on the high seas. Some fishers complained that being on the high seas in the Pacific Ocean for weeks was beyond them, accustomed as they were to their one-day sojourn at sea. They also complained of the exploitative nature of work on most commercial fishing vessels.

Aside from occasional work as carpenters, and manual workers, most fishers therefore had ventured into fish selling, joining their wives doing the rounds of houses in the community and nearby places. The incursion of men into a realm of work commonly perceived to belong to women had two main consequences: men somehow re-claimed their role in the household as the primary income provider, whilst concurrently feeling that their masculinity was being eroded because of their adaptation to the feminine habitus of selling fish. Equally, those who chose instead to stick it out with fishing rather than to sell fish (for various reasons, one of which was that they were too old for it or they did not have the skills needed for the job), had to depend on their wives and children for sustenance, which also impacted on their sense of masculinity. It is the husbands of those who found work in the city factories, however, who experienced the most dramatic change in their gender identities and household roles. These men found themselves managing the household – taking care of children, juggling the finances and doing the shopping for food, activities which are deemed to be the lot of women. Most of these men experienced being sidelined in decision-making at home and had to put up with the daily

spectacle of following their wives' words on a number of things pertaining to household finances and child care. It also seemed to follow that since their command of the household emanated from their ability to provide for the family, most men whose wives had joined the waged work or the informal economy had to deal with their diminished authority.

Although changes in the gender identities and roles of fishers and their wives had been affected by the fisheries crisis, some qualification is in order. The data presented in chapter 6 demonstrated that not all women benefited from economic re-structuring in the community. There is inevitably a heterogeneity and complexity of life in periods of economic re-structuring (Bee 2000), necessitating the disaggregating of the experiences of men and women and their everyday lives (see also Ward, Fagan, McDowell, Perrons and Ray 2007). While a number of women spoke of their new-found 'freedom' and the ability to command respect at home, many thought that the fisheries crisis worsened their hardships. The diminished incomes of their husbands meant little money to spare for household expenses and a double burden on their part (McKee and Bell 1986). Most women complained of the difficulties experienced when working for extra money but also attending to household chores, where previously they only had to look after the household and did not have to work. This experience has previously been discussed in relation to other communities (see, for example, Hochschild 1997). The re-positioning of adults in the household – where men looked after the family while women worked - was also tricky and did not in any way create a tension-free environment, as power became contested and negotiable. Fishers did not want to give up their privileged position in the household, and their wives, socialized in the patriarchal way of things, recognized this and had to accommodate their husbands' woes of being jobless and the resultant emotional stress. Thus, while the fisheries crisis opened up opportunities for women, it also created difficulties for all family members.

The results of the fisheries crisis in terms of the gender identities and roles in the household of fishers and their wives did not follow a simple and homogenous trajectory. Clearly, each family had its own way of coping with the fisheries crisis and each of them negotiated their path through economic re-structuring differently from one another. However, some observations have to be made regarding how each individual's response

could be said to be brought about by biographical histories (skills, education, etc.). Responses to the crisis varied, and their variation speaks of how the community itself, as a repository of local values, ethos and ways of life, made an impact on how the members of the community reacted to such changes. Those whose lives remained the same or who suffered more could be said to have failed to take advantage of the potential that the outside world offered, limited as they were by their own capacity.

Gender identities and roles in the households of fishers and their wives in Sta. Filomena are still being negotiated and constitute a 'work-in-progress'. In a sense, fishers and their wives are entangled in relations of power, which are not unlike those characterizing the tactics of 'making do', yet in the private quarters of their homes.

8.2.3 Playing By and With the Rules

Chapter 7 dealt with the introduction of fish brokerages in Sta. Filomena and the ways in which these fish brokerages embodied the fusion of market capitalist practices and community values which impinged on and directed the rules of fish auctions and transactions in the community. It became apparent that dominant market processes – a liberalized market of fish, market-determined price of fish commodity, a public auction won by the highest bidder and bidders mastering the ropes of supply and demand in the local and regional markets of fish – overlapped with the values and social practices prevalent in the community.

It was only in the late 1980s when the first fish brokerage started operating in the community and when people in the community started transacting with them. Previously, fish was sold either directly to people in the street or to fish vendors for distribution in the town market. There was no middle person to speak of and market relations only concerned fishers and fish vendors. In this kind of relationship, fish vendors determined the price of the fish that the fishers caught. The relationship was, of course, beneficial to both parties. Market fish vendors gave credit to finance fishing trips, while fishers surrendered their catch to them. However, the introduction of fish brokerages altered the landscape of this relationship. While some fishers still patronized market fish vendors, many shifted allegiance to fish brokerages. The reason was simple: while fish brokerages

did not provide them with credit, their catches fetched a better price as a result of the manner in which they were endowed with market value. Public auction lured fishers away from market fish vendors, but with the fisheries crisis, another relationship was created. Fishers themselves became fish vendors and as a result had to deal with fish brokers within a very different 'terrain of engagement'.

Fish auctions followed a set of rules which, although unwritten, were nevertheless known by heart by fish auctioneers and auction participants. There was hardly a bid which was contested by participants and no bid was claimed to be rigged. The process was assumed to be fool-proof and bidders knew only one logic in bidding: whoever bids the highest gets the fish. Price determines the market dynamics. It is in this context that bidders had to be well-informed of the supply of fish in the local market and the surge in demand as contributing factors in winning a bid. In such a competitive environment, fishers-turned-bidders had to amass a vast knowledge about local market dynamics. In a sense, they had to submit themselves to the discipline of the market in more ways than one. The market, in this sense, echoing the words of Hartman, "is a merciless sovereign with little patience for those unable to look after themselves" (2008, p. 511). Compared to the arcane complexities of stock trading and foreign exchange speculation, bidding in fish brokerages would appear elementary; but in a community where most of the populace had a low educational attainment, the incursion of the dynamics of market capitalism, even in its simplest form, in fish auctions was a landmark event indeed. It created new market relations and dynamics, highlighted in more pronounced terms the importance of kinship, and made out of ordinary folk active market participants. In addition, a credit economy based on trust, locally referred to as 'saliva as capital', became the way in which fishers and their families facilitated their involvement in fish trading in fish brokerages. This play on trust also implicated some long-standing community values like 'pakisuyuan' and 'pakinabangan' in reconfiguring market relations and survival in the community.

In many ways, therefore, market players in fish brokerages participated in a global-wide exercise of the hegemonic disciplinary exigencies of capital accumulation, albeit on their own terms. A middle person now mediated the flow of goods and set forth a governing mechanism to tailor the responses of participants to a singular task –

providing the best price for a commodity. It is in this context that most participants in fish auctions would complain of the bewildering array of information they had to master in order to make a good bid. Most would also complain of winning bids and yet losing money in the process. The unpredictable nature of the local market for fish (which was not wholly unlike the global market in finance) had caused the economic downfall of more than a few market and mobile fish vendors. While fish was sold and traded locally, factors influencing how fish was priced and traded also emanated from outside. Thus, the local market for fish had become (while territorially bounded) an adjunct of other dynamics at play in other geographies. In this sense, echoing the observation of Masquelier (1993) in a different context, markets are inherently dangerous by virtue of their unboundedness. The money lost in poor bids was nothing compared to money dissipating 'into air' due to questionable corporate decisions and rogue trading in global capital markets. Yet in the community any amount, in such an insecure climate of economic difficulty, was a fortune. In such differentiated places and economic practices, where the rule of market sets the tone of transaction and relations among people, what binds them together, symbolic analysts and fish vendors, is the uncertainty of the future when the logic of fate is left to the market to decide.

Whilst the market rules of fish brokerages were unfavourable for many fish vendors, they could also 'play' with the rules, bending some and polishing others to their own liking, and keeping themselves afloat in a sea of market uncertainties. While auctions were governed by a set of rules and undertaken in the presence of the bidders and the owners of fish, results could in practice be rigged in favour of those with connections with the fish auctioneer. This was done primarily, but not exclusively, when bidders were competing against bidders from other towns. Such chicanery could never transpire without a degree of intimacy among interested parties, and most parties in rigging bids would, therefore, only involve close relatives, friends, and neighbours.

The incursion of community values in the conducting of fish auctions highlights the fissiparous nature of market capitalism, as it becomes embedded in the social fabric of the community. Community social relations and values, as a rule, should be extirpated from the impersonal rules of the market for transactions to be credible, just and fair. However, such fairness is, of course, defined differently in the community. As one bidder

said, if they let bidders from other places win most of the time, they would be left with nothing to sell and no food for their children. Market fairness is not fair after all. The global rule of market impartiality has to succumb to local exigencies, which among other things demand that market rules become the community's survival.

8.3 Margins, Places and Modernity

Sta. Filomena is self-evidently a community on the margins. In Sta. Filomena, people's activities revolve around a few activities which usually take place within the strict confines of the community. If there is no urgent reason for a person to leave the community, the days are mostly spent attending to 'sari-sari' stores (for store owners), doing household chores, looking after the children, chatting and drinking with friends (mostly women), playing volleyball on the beach (for young men), fixing boats and chatting with friends on shore (mostly old men) and selling fish on the street (men and women fish vendors). Only those who buy fish from Lucena are given the chance to travel and see the world beyond the community, albeit in a limited fashion, since most of them directly go to the auction houses and back. It is therefore not unusual to meet people in Sta. Filomena who have not visited Manila even once in their lives. Their knowledge of the capital city comes via the stories told by people returning from work in the city, or from the television shows that portray city life. This immobility in an epoch of hypermobility is, of course, not a matter of choice by the people in Sta. Filomena, but a restriction imposed by their biographies and concomitantly, by the power of geography. In effect, the 'Nigerian Been-tos' whom Hannerz (1992) speaks about[114] do not find any representation in the community. In the community, everyone it seems is a 'Nigerian bush'.

Biographies limit or extend the opportunities of people in any community. What people come to know, and do, depends in part upon their positionality in terms of class, gender and other dimensions of social differentiation and identity and the powers and resources available to them by virtue of their position within a given social structure, its

[114] In chapter 2, I made a case for my *balikbayan* subjectivity, drawing a comparison with Hannerz' (1992) Nigerian Been-tos, his word for Nigerians who had lived and worked abroad and since acquired some air of cosmopolitanism and élan for display in their native locality.

organizations and institutions (Hudson 2004, p. 450). Most people in Sta. Filomena have low educational attainment and limited skills training. The limits of their education set the circumference and the reach of their travel, whether to work or to amuse themselves. Employment in the city is highly competitive and the best city jobs available in Sta. Filomena were in construction. Some put up with separation from their families and the lower-than-average salary that they got from construction and factory work, while many returned to Sta. Filomena, disheartened by the kind of life they led in the city: cramped living quarters, the impersonality of social relations, low wages and monotonous routines. As Dirlik explains:

> [A]s capital (and associated) organizations move along the networks, those who are not on the networks or are outside of the network economy, fall through the cracks and feel the effects of the global economy only by its inductive effects on their livelihood. The majority of the world's population is now in a process of marginalization or, as some anthropologists have put it even more strongly, 'abjection – being thrown down and thrown out of the global'. (Dirlik 2007, p. 96)

The people in the community are clearly what Dirlik (2007) refers to as "being thrown down and thrown out of the global". They are the ones who have to face the dire consequences of not being able to benefit from the good life that global economic developments supposedly create and make available to all. Theirs is a forced marginality, a product of the community's asymmetrical relationship with other places and peoples. To put it differently, the community is in fact very much integrated with the outside world, and yet its integration is detrimental to its own interest. Its marginality is brought about by its lopsided integration into the larger society. Surely, the people in the community make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing. Being far from the global core and from the Philippines' geographies of development, their lives have become in many ways marginal, and this marginality of places and people, explains Massey (1993), could be an expression of what she calls the power geometry:

> For different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and connections. This point concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn't, [...] it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement. Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway-differentiated mobility: some are more in charge of it than others;

> some initiate flows and movements, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are **effectively imprisoned by it** [emphasis mine]. (Massey 1993, p. 61)

The people in Sta. Filomena, while not in direct interaction with other people from other places, are enrolled in the flows of global and local events, which in so many ways are structuring their ways of life, their responses and the very local condition of their everyday life. Their lack of mobility is a result and an effect of other people's unrestrained movement and enjoyment of many of life's opportunities. When Lamon Bay's resources are appropriated by commercial fishers for the consumption of people living and working in other places, that changes lives in the community, renders some lives difficult, while others thrive and prosper in varying ways. No one, of course, in the community sees it that way. Their fortune (or the lack of it) is their own making, they told me. But as Massey argues,

> it is not simply a question of simple unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, and that some have more control than others. It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak. The time-space compression of some groups can undermine the power of others. (Massey 1994, p. 150)

Implicit throughout this thesis, as loci of both empirical data and theory, is the importance of place and modernity in any attempt to explain the salience of everyday life, and by extension, the production of locality, in understanding the varied geographies of globalization. Though these concepts were not mentioned and elaborated upon exhaustively, they retain a haunting presence throughout. The concept of place, as Escobar rightfully claims,

> continues to be important in the lives of many people, perhaps most, if we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), sense of boundaries (however permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed. (Escobar 2001, p. 140)

The ways in which power, gender and economic relations are played out in the everyday lives of people in the fishing community tell us how people are largely grounded and their lives visibly intertwined with their inability to move freely in and out of the

community. Thus, while it is important to acknowledge the power of extra-local forces in re-constituting life in the fishing community, it is also crucial to emphasize that:

> while it is evident that 'local' economies and culture are not outside the scope of capital and modernity, it also needs to be newly acknowledged that the former are not produced exclusively by the latter; this place specificity, as we shall see, enables a different reading of culture and economy, capitalism and modernity. (Escobar 2001, p. 141)

This study, in conjunction with the quoted assertion of Escobar (2001), reminds us of the need to look at local life processes not as subsidiary to global processes alone, but rather as forces which are as salient and as affecting as other forces, as a process constitutive of contemporary life. However, such a claim does not disavow the power of extra-local forces and their attendant modern-day axioms of mobility and deterritorialization, but rather highlights the tendency of most researchers to "lose sight of the continued importance of place-based practices and modes of consciousness" (Escobar 2001, p. 147) for the production and articulation of human relations. Thus, the accounting of daily life in the fishing community brings back the importance of place in our imaginings, and it underscores a claim that it might be possible to approach the production of social relations, and in effect daily life, not only from the side of the global but also of the local; not from the perspective of the abandonment of place, but of its critical affirmation; not only according to the flight from places, whether voluntary or forced, but of attachment to them (Escobar 2001, p. 149). It is in this context that, in conjunction with the focus of this thesis, "we need to restore a more central role to the local: to bring back place into focus" (Kennedy 2010, p. 145).

On the other hand, the production of modernity in today's world is primarily encoded in the discourse of development that nation-states effect on their citizens: good life, ease of transportation, mobile and literate people, and efficient public service, among others. Furthermore, in conjunction with the nation-states' project of crafting citizenry very much in the image of the west, modernization could be:

> increased exposure to the outside world, greater mobility, the integration of different communication media and technologies, increased access to secondary and post-secondary education, more active participation by women in the intra- and extra-domestic economies, and the multipolarity of life spaces arising from migratory flows and reflows to national and international destinations. (Vidas 2008, p. 257)

The attainment of modern life, phrased as 'maginhawang buhay' (good life) in the fishing community remains to be experienced by many. Beyond the community, there lies modernity, as it were; but as it is, the people in Sta. Filomena are not well provisioned to take advantage of modernity. While other sections of Philippine society, primarily those living in urban areas, have attained and are experiencing a measure of modern living, the rest, most especially those who live on the margins, are undergoing a crisis of modernity: while they see and know it, they never get to experience it. The Philippines could have been described as a nation of migrants (see, for example, Tan 2005; Tadiar 1993; Hannerz 1992), and yet, many Filipinos are still chained to their place. Domestic travel is still a luxury for many people. It is in this context that between mobile and immobile individuals, as documented by Gardner (2001) in Bangladesh, Mills (2005) in Thailand and Acejo (2009) in the Philippines, the former are better poised to improve their lives, economically, socially and politically. Thus, the national discourse of modernity or 'the good life' remains to be attained by many people in the Philippines. There continues in the Philippines an unabated miasma of poverty and immobility. As Sta. Filomena is not a community of labour migrants (both local and overseas), the chances of its people to vigorously engage and have a dialogue with modernity are nil. In a country where the best and fastest way to better one's life is to work abroad, the people in Sta. Filomena are incapable of joining this exodus, and in effect, of engaging with, penetrating and partaking of what Appadurai (1996) calls global cultural flows. Amongst the people in Sta. Filomena, while their place sustains their living in some ways, their place-boundedness also curtails their chance of experiencing what a supposed modern life offers.

8.4 Ethnography, Glocalization and Future Prospects for Study

In his edited book "Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World", Burawoy sets at the centre of his argument about globalization the importance of doing fieldwork so that a more nuanced understanding of how "globalization in whatever form is upheld and reproduced, or is challenged and

transformed" (2000, p. 344) is achieved. Ostensibly, this study very much echoes his assertion and forcefully brings to the fore the continued relevance, importance and salience of ethnography and all the research tools at its disposal in doing research and understanding and critiquing the divergent, conflicted and multi-variant notions of contemporary life. This thesis argues for a look at everyday life that considers a sustained and unflinching observation and participation in the unfolding of everyday life in places of interest, primarily those that have been sidelined and made marginal by global forces. Through this, we are most thoroughly alerted to "attend to the manifold and complex ways ideologies are produced, proliferated, transformed, combined, disseminated, appropriated and mobilized to change the world but also to arrest such change" (Burawoy 2000, p. 343). The robustness of this thesis' findings are mainly brought about by its methodology and how its associated methods, foremost of which was participant observation, laid bare the functioning of everyday life in the fishing community as it is performed in 'sari-sari' stores, households and fish brokerages. It has become fashionable nowadays to highlight ethnography's colonial and in effect checkered pedigree, its purported claim to objectivity in the name of ethnographic authority and its untenable position in the context of the crisis of representation. As this study robustly demonstrates, however, ethnography continues to be relevant, and more so, in an epoch of 'relentless globalization'.

In addition, the choice of a one-sited ethnography rather than a multi-sited one needs to be commented upon. In 1995, Marcus coined a phrase to characterize a new programmatic approach to understanding present-day reality: multi-sited ethnography. Multi-locale/multi-sited ethnography was an attempt to adapt anthropology to the changing realities of what had been known since the 1970s as the 'world-system', and in the 1990s became increasingly glossed as globalization (Candea 2007, p. 168). The traditional one-locale/sited ethnography, it was averred, was not up to the utter complexities of today's world. A bounded locale, thus limited and constrained, does not provide an exhaustive laboratory of myriad possibilities that the present world offers. A multi-sited ethnography, it was argued, "frees ethnographers from the conceptual boundaries of the delimited site, and allows them to follow movements of people, ideas, and objects, to trace and map complex networks" (Candea 2007, p. 169). Though

Marcus' 'research imaginary' (that is, multi-sited ethnography) has opened up new possibilities and path-breaking studies (see, for example, Ong and Collier 2005), its important contribution to knowledge should not be made at the expense of the traditional one-sited ethnography. Thus, echoing much of Candea's (2007) position, my choice of Sta. Filomena as my 'arbitrary location' does not evade nor eschew complexity and multiplicity of leads since "any local context is always intrinsically multi-sited and therefore, the problem is not finding a diversity of leads to follow, but rather finding a way to contain multiplicity" (2007, p. 175). In his study of a Corsican village, for example, Candea shows that the village that he studied "could be described as 'multi-sited', both through the many heterogeneous spaces of 'the village' as a physical location, and through the many historical, institutional, and conceptual spaces which an account of 'a Corsican village' deploys (2007, p. 177). The decision to stay in one single location to follow leads - people, things, processes – also provides a window into life's complexity.

> The decision to bound off a site for the study of 'something else', with all the blind-spots and limitations which this implies, is a productive form of methodological asceticism. To limit ourselves to arbitrary locations, geographic or otherwise [...], gives us something to strive against, a locus whose incompleteness and contingency provide a counterpoint from which to challenge the imagined totality of 'cultural formations.' (Candea 2007, p. 180)

Having defended the robustness of my one-sited ethnography, I also recognize (here, I acknowledge multi-sited ethnography's strength, yet without devaluing, as previously explained, one-sited ethnography's robustness as research methodology) that this thesis' methodology, and its exclusive deployment just within the confines of the community highlights its own limitations. While thick description in qualitative research is considered to be a good measure by which to assure researchers of a "degree of fit between the case studied and the case to which they wish to generalize" (Schofield 2002, p. 183), the present study's generalizability could be further enhanced and the robustness of its data improved if, for example, an engagement with other fishing communities in the area and the town as a whole were undertaken. In the context of power relations among the people in Sta. Filomena, for example, their relations with other people in other places were not addressed. Power relations were only proved and elaborated upon within the

confines of the community, and how the people in Sta. Filomena dealt with other people from other communities was not given critical attention in the thesis. This is apparent in the case of the women working in the city, who, while very much a part of the study, were not provided with the opportunity to reflect on their new found role in the household. A section in chapter 6 could have been devoted to their life in the city and how they managed to live two lives: one in the city and another in Sta. Filomena, and how their differentiated roles in these two places impact on their identities as women, mothers and breadwinners. Also, my identity as a native researcher set the tone with regard to how the major themes of the study were 'discovered' and accounted for in the thesis. A non-native researcher for obvious reasons would find other interesting things, and the people in Sta. Filomena would put forth a different reception to the researcher's ethnographic foray, to the same extent that I would possibly find other interesting issues in other fishing communities where I would be an outsider. The length of stay could also make a difference. While six months of intensive field work sounds reasonable as the basis for a thesis to be credible as both a textual production and a reproduction of lives lived in a marginal community like the fishing community studied, a much longer stay, could have proved revelatory and helpful in more ways than one.

Furthermore, doing ethnography in the fishing community made a case for how glocalization as it is understood and deployed in this study is performed on the ground, in the everyday life of fishers, fish vendors, fish brokers and their families. While global developments are providing the context of change and continuity in the modes of living of people in the community, local life is never sidelined and attenuated, but is rather made ebullient and manifest as people in Sta. Filomena battle against and experience marginality. Face to face interaction has not given way to community relations facilitated by electronic communication and surveillance cameras. It is therefore worth reiterating that living in the epoch of globalization does not automatically mean living a highly hybrid and mobile life. There are barriers to the attainment of an unproblematic and undifferentiated global village (McLuhan 1964). Glocalization of everyday life could also mean a strikingly marginal and local life in a fishing community where people's prime form of capital to survive is their cunning, where men revert to selling fish instead of catching them to assert their primacy in the household and at the same time experience

diminished masculinity, and where fish traders adjust to and master market imperatives and at the same time make use of their kinship to cheat on others to win bids. In this time and age of global babble (Abu-Lughod 1991a), it is sometimes difficult and unsettling to know that some lives are so marginally and locally lived that they feel, look and read like fiction. If this were the effect of the ways in which the thesis presented the lives of people in the community, its purpose has been served and the imponderabilia of everyday life in the fishing community made thinkable. Through this, we could, as people of privileged position in the power geometry, do something to turn the tide of globalization for the benefit of those on the margins. The call here is not to globalize their lives, but to make their local lives more humane and just.

Due to lack of time and some practical requirements imposed on academic treatises like this, other possible interesting grounds for intellectual probing have been elided and 'marginalized', as it were. For example, while the thesis talks about local life and the seeming unbearable poverty that the people experience in their everyday life, the absence of a conscious ideology among the people to band together and create solidarities to advance their cause is highly discernible. Or, it could be present but no one seems to have made the first move to sound the alarm for mass mobilization and to harness their agency for change. While people in most deprived and marginal communities are most likely, though not inevitably, to be highly politicized, and the creation of political organizations, or what Hudson refers to as "territorial social bloc, a place sensitive alliance of forces" (2001, p. 268) to improve their plight looks like a part of everyday life, Sta. Filomena offers a different scenario. While fishers and their families are conscious that the local government is doing less to improve their lives, they seem to be resigned and take no action. Thus, how is a place so ripe with cunning and improvisation to make ends meet so lethargic in terms of their power to act as one? Also, the concept of scale and how individual actions create scales – global, national and local – could prove helpful in understanding contemporary life's complexities. Understanding the politics of everyday life has been put forward already by a number of authors who averred the importance of sociospatial practices in the production of scales (see, for example, Herod and Wright 2002; Sassen 2007). Concomitantly, as explained by Mansfield (2001), scales are not just a product of social practices, the things that we do everyday, or what

Lefebvre (1991) calls spatial practices, but rather, they help enact what Massey (1994) calls "geometries of power", "the multiple relations of domination-subordination and participation-exclusion through which social and physical nature are changed" (Swyngedouw 1997, p. 144). Clearly, the thesis talks mostly about the local scale, and in some measure the global scale and does not speak much about the national scale – the role of the nation-state, specifically. Life in the community would never take shape as it is without the intervention and in most cases, non-intervention of national agencies and structures. Specifically, national fishing laws and local government ordinances affect the ways in which fishing is done and restricted in many fishing grounds. Thus, an excavation of the genealogy of the local could bring us to the door of the national and the global. It is this tracing of movements and counter-movements among and between scales, as people and structures contest and make use of each other, that is of particular interest if further research is to be done to fully grasp life in marginal communities like Sta. Filomena. Of particular interest also is the robust credit economy in the community which the thesis speaks about, albeit tangentially, in chapters 5, 6 and 7. A thorough treatment of the credit economy in the context of how men and women play their role in securing money in their everyday needs will further uncover the gendered nature of the local economy. These are just some of the possible areas of research which could be done in the future.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

Contemporary life is characterized by a new geography of centres and margins that not only contributes to strengthening existing inequalities, but also sets in motion a series of new dynamics of inequalities and local ways of living (Grant and Short 2002; Kennedy 2010; Sassen 1997). In this epoch of economies of sign and space, global communications, hypermobility, and neutralization of place and distance (Harvey 1989; Lash and Urry 1994; Sassen 2007), one's nationality, and therefore, territorial embeddedness, location in specific geographies, individual biography, educational history, and socialization in community ethos/values much determine our fate.

This study focuses not on the global-local connection as much as on how everyday life is lived today and why that in an epoch of intense transformation, a look at the ground, where people laugh, curse, hope and dream, matters. The importance of this study lies in the fact that it is focused on the domain of the everyday, immediate practical activities and on the embodied and place-based social life of people in a fishing community. Daily life while pretty much implicated and affected by global affairs is nonetheless conducted under the nose of situated, particularized, specific, and localized exigencies. As shown, this study subscribes to Kennedy's belief that "a more bottom-up, 'micro-level' approach to the study of global interconnectivities would give a more 'human face' to the idea of agency in global studies" (2010, p. 13). Furthermore,

> without analyzing local responses to wider global processes in far more detail, we are in danger of either recreating the generalizations of earlier, homogenizing macro-theories, or simply substituting obsolete notions of modernization with the more trendy notion of globalization, thus reducing it simply to a code for Westernization. (Gardner 2001, p. 15)

Whilst there seems to be no end to the production of global discourses, some pauses are needed and a look at everyday life might do to bring us all back to earth. As observed by Kennedy, "some theories engage in a kind of 'global overcoding' in respect of their treatment of the local. Indeed, in some writing it almost seems as if globalization absorbs the local to the point where the latter becomes little more than a figment of our imagination" (2010, p. 10). Furthermore, it is always tempting to view contemporary modern life on the ground, as Marx sees it,

> all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned. (Berman 1982, p. 21)

A look at how life unfolds in marginal communities like the fishing community studied reminds us that everyday life could be not just about places going global or communities being reformed in dazzling phantasmagoric ways. Not all battles are fought in airspace and on an epic scale. For many people, it could just be in a 'sari-sari' store, at home or in some fish brokerages – in some local familiar spaces of contestation and negotiation - and most probably, the people's battle is not as grand as protecting age-old ways of life

against local/national/global elites, multinational corporations and supranational institutions, but rather from where and whom they would get the next meal. Ordinary people continue to rely on knowledge which is practical, immediate, habitual, and grounded in their bodily needs (Kennedy 2010, p. 11). Not examining the bits and pieces of everyday life in different geographies makes us victims of the fallacy of globalism – "namely, that one can characterize changes of the whole without examining changes of the parts or, to put the fallacy the other way around, that the secret of the part can be found in the whole" (Burawoy 2000, p. 343).

Much of what has been presented here does not constitute a definitive example of how the local can be grasped and comprehended in the epoch of globalization. Other manners of living of other communities in the context of their own engagement with other places and extra-local forces should prove helpful in further probing the complexity of marginal and local life. Fishing communities themselves are different from one another and each has its own way of navigating the turbulent waters of present-day living. The moments of everyday life cited in the study could well be simply a passing moment in the history of the community (see also Volkman 1994). More than the fisheries crisis, other historical conjunctures, like the mind-blowing fast track penetration of global capitalist production processes in the periphery, might give birth to other ways of living, much different from what has been depicted, catalogued, chronicled and commented upon in this study. Thus, places (and in effect the fishing community in question) and ways of living are subject to continuing change and changing continuities.

> There may well be a continuum of places, exhibiting varying degrees of openness and closure, continuity and discontinuity, internal homogeneity and heterogeneity. Irrespective of how their geometry is conceptualized, places must not only be defined in terms of their spatial location and attributes but also in terms of their location in time. They must be seen as time-space envelopes. Any settlement of social relations into a spatial form will be temporary. However, some of these settlements last longer than others, forming relative permanences in a world of dynamic and fluid processes. (Hudson 2001, p. 258)

In the very near future, Sta. Filomena could well just stop nurturing people whose lives are oriented towards fishing and fishing-related livelihoods. If that happens, other modes of living could very well take place and instantiate another particular moment in the precarious world of fishing and fish trading, and the precarious world of living

marginally and locally in a fast changing world. Whether it will be more local than global, as this study has shown, or more global than local, is hard to predict.

Time passes.

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Appendix

Criteria in Fish Bidding

Quality of Fish

Are the eyes coloured red?

If yes, the fish has been kept for awhile and it will not command a good price on the market. It is not as fresh as it could be.

If no, the fish is in good condition and will fetch a good price on the market.

Is the flesh soft or firm to the touch?

If the flesh is soft to the touch and feels like a marshmallow, it will not command a good price on the market. It is not as fresh as it could be.

If the flesh is firm to the touch, the fish is in good condition and will fetch a good price on the market.

Is the fish covered in ice (if the fish is packed in a box)?

If yes, the fish will probably have a longer market life and will take longer to deteriorate. The vendor will have enough time to sell the fish.

If no, she has to pay to buy ice as soon as she gets the fish to keep it fresh and prolong its market life. Not much ice also means that in a short while the fish could show signs of not being fresh anymore, such as red eyes and soft flesh.

Is the stomach intact or innards coming out?

If the stomach is intact and the innards are not coming out (the locals call it 'nagtatae', literally, "the fish shits" when the stomach begins to burst), the fish is in good condition, otherwise, the fish will not command a good price on the market

Are the gills colored red?

If yes, the fish is still fresh and will command a good price on the market.

Size of Fish (applies to fish of the following species: 'galunggong', 'lumahan', 'kalapato', 'tamban', 'matambaka', 'tambong', 'atulay', 'lagidlid', 'talasan', 'buraw' and 'salasa')

Small size means a lower price
Medium size means a premium price
Big size means a lower price

Weight of the Box

Is the box almost full (puno), half full (malamig or nangangalahati), or bursting at the seams (kamabaw, punung-puno)?
A box that is full of fish will have a weight of around 50-55 kgs
A box that is half-full will have a weight of around 25-30 kgs
A box that is bursting at the seams will have a weight of around 55-60 kgs

Is the fish contained in plastic inside the box or is it just inside the box?
A box which has plastic in it, in which the fish is packed, will most probably be heavier than a box bursting at the seams with fish.

What is the trademark of the stryrofoam used? Is it "Fiesta" or other brands?
Boxes which use a styrofoam named 'Fiesta' are bigger than the other kinds of Styrofoam being used in the market. This should be considered when estimating the weight of the box.

Is the box full of water? Are there large chunks of ice?
The presence of too much water and ice in the box makes it appear as if the box were full or bursting at the seams, but it could be that when the water and ice are removed, the box would have just half of its assumed fish content.

Supply of the Same Fish in the Market

Is the market awash with the same fish?
If yes, then the great volume available in the market reduces the price of the fish.

Supply of Comparable Fish Species in the Market

Are there any other kinds of fish available in the market which closely resemble the fish to be bought in terms of pricing?

Thus, if the fish up for bidding is either lumahan or kalapato, varieties of fish that closely resemble 'galunggong', and the market is awash with 'galunggong', 'lumahan' or 'kalapato's' price should not be higher than 'galunggong', since the latter is more marketable and tends to be the people's fish of choice, otherwise, the fish would not be competitive enough in the market.

The same rule applies to 'tamban', a kind of fish full of bones. It should be a lot cheaper than 'galunggong', 'lumahan' and 'kalapato', unless of course the three kinds of fish mentioned are not available in the market at the time of bidding. Thus, in the hierarchy of fish pricing, one should take note of this 'order of things': 'galunggong', 'lumahan', 'kalapato' and 'tamban'.

Supply of Fish in the Market

Is the market awash with all kinds of fish?
If the market is teeming with fish and all kinds of fish are being sold in the market this should be a good reason for the bidder not to bid high unless the fish up for bidding has a target clientele which could afford to pay a lot. Some of the fish species which are relatively free from price fluctuations in the market are: 'maya-maya', 'bukbuk' (lapu-lapu), 'talakitok' and 'sibungin'. It is very rare that these varieties of fish flood the market. These varieties of fish command even higher prices when a national public holiday is being celebrated, since people from the city troop to the town, increasing the demand for these fish.

If bidding for 'tambakol' and 'tanguige' (two varieties of local tuna), one has to remember that 'galunggong' is more attractive to buyers than these. Thus, when one makes a bid for either of the two, one should know if the market is awash with galunggong. If it is, the bid price should not be so high that the price per kilo of either of the two would not eclipse that of galunggong. Thus, if 'galunggong' is selling at a price of 80.00 Php per kilo, 'tambakol' and 'tanguige' should be just in the region of 90-100.00 Php per kilo. At more than this price, the two varieties of fish would take a longer time to be sold.

Prevailing and Present Price of the Fish in the Market

What is the prevailing and present price of the fish in the market?
The bidder should know the present and usual price of the fish in the market. The bid should not be very different from the present price, unless other factors are present to necessitate a sudden upsurge in the price, like the scarcity of fish or a great demand among consumers.

Any Occasion at the Day of the Bidding

Is there an occasion on in town?
During Lenten Season, fish commands a high price, since meat is not eaten by the predominantly Roman Catholic populace. Other national and local occasions would also cause a sudden increase in the price of fish, like the town fiesta, All Saints Day, Christmas Day and other occasions when people from the city visit the town and spend their time there.

In setting the price of fish per kilo, the following conditions must be addressed:

1. A minimum of 10.00 Php profit must be made to break even with the expenses incurred in buying the fish. Generally, a 20.00 Php profit must be the norm. If the buyer does not ask for a discount, he gets the whole 20.00 Php. If the buyer asks for a discount, a discount of 5.00 Php must be offered first, and if he asks for 10.00 Php, that is the time when he will just quote it. That leaves him with a 10.00 Php profit. Thus, as a general rule, the highest possible price should be quoted all the time and should only be lowered if a request is made. The vendor should always tell the buyer even if it is not asked that her add-on per kilo is only 5.00 Php. To lie is to make good money. Honesty is not a good policy.
2. Time of sale is very important. When the clock strikes 6 pm, the price must be lowered and if necessary even to the original price sans profit.
3. If the fish is of good quality, a higher add on can be made to the price of the fish.
4. If very few vendors sell the fish, the price can be higher.
5. Weekends do not sell well, hence, fish should not be expensive.
6. If there is an occasion in town, whether a local or national holiday, one should take the chance and play ones cards well. Fish could be a little bit pricey then.
7. Not all buyers know the name of the fish, especially the big ones which had to be chopped into pieces in order to be sold. To quote a good price, look for a fish which closely resembles the fish being sold. Do not mention the real name of the fish if it is not known in the area or it sounds funny. One good example is a fish called "panchangga". People in Mauban did not know the fish since it came from Lucena. When chopped into pieces it looked like a big talakitok. Thus, in selling the fish, instead of calling it 'panchangga', it is called 'big talakitok'.

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