

# Surviving a Reclamation Project

## Shifting Fisherfolk Provisioning Strategies in a Metropolitan City

Development has often been equated with modernization and urbanization, as reflected in government development programs such as the Cebu Integrated Area Development Master Plan (CIADMP). One of the flagship projects under the CIADMP is the 330.9-hectare Cebu South Reclamation Project (CSRP) formulated by foreign consultants, local government authorities, and the business sector. Underlying these indicators of economic development that encourage such projects, urban fishing communities have been uprooted from their livelihoods that are reliant on the sea subsequently reclaimed by the project. This study focuses on how the affected fisherfolk in Cebu City changed their household provisioning strategies as a result of the CSRP. The study primarily utilized ethnographic research methodologies, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, deep hanging out, and field observation. Newspaper research and secondary data analysis were likewise done to supplement field data. Findings are based on the narratives of the affected residents, which show that prior to the CSRP, primary livelihood strategies of most residents revolved around small-scale fishing practices: *panawom* (diving/spear fishing), *pamasol* (hook and line fishing), *pamukot* (fishing using mesh nets), *panginhas* (gleaning), and *panu* (gathering shrimps and crabs at low tide). The implementation of the CSRP has adversely affected their livelihood, leading them to shift to less lucrative and mostly informal, irregular, temporary service-related work. Strategies employed were not only in terms of livelihood options but also in tapping social networks, pooling resources, cutting on consumption costs, and joining resistance movements.

**KEYWORDS:** adaptive strategies, development, fisherfolk, reclamation project, urbanization

## HOUSEHOLD 1

Household 1 is composed of a fisherman. He is a widower living in the home of one of his married children in Purok Tabay, Sitio Alumnos, Barangay Basak-San Nicolas. He was 65 years old at the time of the interview in 2010. He has been living in this area since migrating from Getafe, Bohol in the early 1970s.

I continued my fishing livelihood even with the implementation of the CSR. We really did not know at first that there would be a reclamation project in this area. We were just told by the mayor's office in a community meeting that a dike or seawall will be made there to protect us from big waves. We later realized that this was not a seawall or dike anymore as we saw more and more trucks entering our community carrying loads of limestone and soil. But we could no longer do anything to stop the trucks from covering the sea with earth. Fishing became quite difficult for the fisherfolk when the CSR was implemented.

*Kargahon pa namo among sakayan labang sa karsada nga ilang giabuno diha sa agianan sa dagat aron inaog nasad sa pikas para makabugsay na mi libot pa sa Ludo sa Pasil para makaadto na mi sa dagat. Mas hago, mas gasto, alkanse.* (We had to carry our boats across the dirt road constructed from the main road to the CSR area since it blocked the waterway to the open sea. We had to row our boats all the way to Pasil near the Ludo factory so we could go out to sea. It is tiresome and more expensive. It's not profitable.)

It took us a longer time to get to the fishing ground, which was also further away now. We had to go all the way to Cordova town in Mactan Island just to catch some fish. But there are also restricted areas there where there are marine sanctuaries. So, sometimes I would come home without any catch or with only a minimal catch good for panud-an. Fishing was "alkanse" (not profitable), as we needed additional effort and expenses for fuel and food when at sea as compared to the meager catch and earnings we get.

## INTRODUCTION

Government authorities have long been planning and implementing programs and projects geared toward urban growth. The vision of such programs is that of a city that overwhelmingly caters to the needs of large industries and multinational corporations. As Scudder (1973) points out, development projects are imposed by national or regional agencies upon a local population that has virtually no say during the stages of planning and implementation. One such project is the 330.9-hectare Cebu South Reclamation Project (CSRP). It is one of the flagship projects under the Cebu Integrated Area Development Master Plan (CIADMP) formulated by consultants from the Japan International Cooperation Authority (JICA). Coastal communities in ten Cebu City barangays in the Philippines have been directly affected by the implementation of this project, specifically in terms of livelihood. This paper puts a premium on the narratives, perspectives, and experiences of affected households in one of these coastal communities.

The common perspective of “development” popular among government officials is aligned with the modernization theory. The modernization theory is one of the major perspectives in the sociology of national development and underdevelopment in the 1950s that has long been discarded by social scientists. This view envisions a highly urbanized and industrialized economy through development projects such as the CIADMP. But from the broader perspective of globalization defined as “the rising and accelerated operation of economic and cultural nets at a global level on a global basis” (O’Sullivan et al. 2001, 156), such projects are anchored on free capital movement resulting in the dominance of global financial markets and multinational companies over national economies (Soros 2002, 15). As the economies of the North have increasingly pressured those in the South to open up their economies to foreign corporations and foreign investment, around 80 percent of these Southern nations’ populations have become poorer (Sassen 2005, 174). Alongside government development projects primarily meant to attract foreign investment, marginalized sectors have continued to exist. They have survived despite the difficulties they have encountered either directly or indirectly resulting from the implementation of such projects.

Changes in livelihood have been made to respond to natural changes in the physical environment. Over time, however, people have introduced more and more alterations to the natural environment.

Some of these human-made changes have had negative impacts not only on the environment itself but on the livelihoods of people as well. Strategies employed by people as a response to environmental, structural, and cultural changes take on many forms. Claire Wallace (2002) points out that household strategies were applied to specific social groups that must draw on a range of resources in the struggle to survive in a hazardous environment. These strategies are often termed as “survival” or “coping” strategies. Koki Seki (2004) expounded on a case of a changed environment due to changes in government policy, pointing out the survival strategies employed by ex-loggers upon the government’s imposition of the logging ban in 1990. This resulted in massive layoffs of workers in logging operations. He mentions three types of survival strategies: seeking jobs elsewhere, staying and engaging in upland farming, and continuing to log.

In a paper on coastal poverty, Campbell, Whittingham, and Townsley (2006) specifically point out that people living along the coasts, especially the poor, have to adapt not only to the dynamic nature of the coast itself but also to the changes brought about by population growth, industrial development, pollution, habitat and diversity loss, among other factors. They stress that coastal people traditionally dependent on natural coastal and marine resources are now faced with increased marginalization and displacement from these resources on which they depend for subsistence. This calls for them to employ adaptive strategies to cope with such changes.

This study focuses on strategies in household provisioning employed by the local fisherfolk as a response to a changed environment resulting from the CSR implementation. Over the past two decades, the household has become an increasingly important institution in development thinking as a result of the “downscaling of development” (Carr 2005), which means that micro-level perspectives and experiences of the household should be highlighted to illustrate how development is affecting the everyday lives of those at the grassroots. Ironmonger (2001) posits that the household is often solely considered as a unit of consumption and not of production. He contends that a number of households in developing countries usually utilize their own capital and unpaid labor to provide for household needs. He describes this arrangement as subsistence production in which the goods produced are used within the household that produced them. In addition to this, helping other households without any payment in exchange is often done directly on a household-to-household basis and through community organizations. The provisioning perspective stems from the need to

link the consumption and production ends of economic life especially at the household level. As Susan Narotzky (2005) puts it, provisioning is a complex process where production, distribution, appropriation, and consumption relations all have to be taken into account. It is also a useful way to understand social differentiation, the construction of particular meanings and identities, and the reproduction of the social and economic system as a whole. Thus, using this perspective, we shall look into not only the production processes but also the distribution and consumption patterns of households.

Household strategies shall be emphasized in the analysis to better understand the social foundations of economic behavior. The unit of analysis is the household rather than the individual or the family, since in provisioning, a combination of formal, informal, and household work is done by the entire household to provide for the needs of its members. Household strategies have increasingly become important in a rapidly changing society where their members are left in a situation of risk and uncertainty. Households have been forced to become reflexive and draw upon different resources to thrive and to survive (Wallace 2002). The provisioning perspective posits that there are different possible paths for obtaining goods and services using diverse modes including the market, state, community, and domestic groups. Furthermore, different people or groups will have differential abilities to use market and non-market paths; people will also have different abilities in using institutionalized formal and informal provisioning (Narotzky 2005).

## RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODS

Sitio Alumnos is the only coastal *sitio* (small village) that is part of Barangay Basak-San Nicolas, Cebu City, located around six kilometers south of the city center. It is a coastal community that has relied on fishing as its primary source of livelihood. As of the 2000 National Statistics Office (NSO) census, the barangay was the third most populated with a population of 31,840 living in an area of 1.15 square kilometers. In the 2015 NSO census, its population rose to 35,422. The barangay is bounded on the north by Barangay Mambaling and on the south by Barangay Basak Pardo. The coastal area of Alumnos was once rich in seashells, which residents could collect during low tide. The research was conducted specifically in the area behind the Alumnos gymnasium and other establishments along the road. This area consists of houses built closely together

on the seashore as well as several houses on stilts also built closely together right atop the sea. These houses are built on bamboo stilts. They are connected to each other via bamboo and cemented bridges over the seawater. The seawater underneath their houses is murky and full of garbage.

In the past, the low tide area (*bonasan*) was quite wide according to local residents (men, women, and even children). This allowed them to gather many seashells that they would sell in the neighborhood or in nearby markets. Aside from shell gathering, most of the adult male residents living along the coast with fishing boats go fishing using the hook and line method (*pamasol*) or fishing nets (*pamukot*). For near-shore fishing, they use non-motorized boats (*sakayan/baroto*) powered by oars (*bugsay*); for off-shore fishing, they use motorized boats (*pambot*). At present, however, the wide low tide area is now part of the reclaimed area of the Cebu South Reclamation Project.

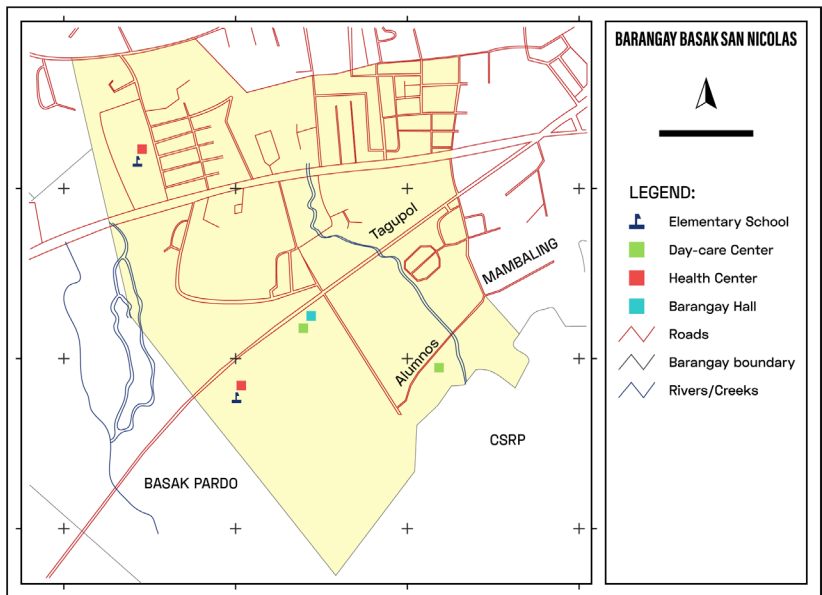


Figure 1. Recreated map of Barangay Basak-San Nicolas from Cebu City government blueprint, highlighting Sitio Alumnos

The selection of study participants interviewed was based on the following criteria: (1) they have been living in the community for at least ten years before the implementation of the CSRP;

(2) they are still living in the community during and after the CSRP implementation; (3) they were fisherfolk before the CSRP implementation and are either still engaged in fishing or in other occupations after the CSRP implementation; (4) they are members of a community organization. The purpose of focusing on those belonging to organizations was to explore not only household provisioning strategies but also voluntary organizations among households. After collating data from key informant interviews, four households for the household case studies were identified using the following criteria: (1) a household still primarily relying on fishing; (2) a household that shifted to informal legal livelihood options as a primary source of income; (3) a household that shifted to relying on formal employment; (4) a household relying on irregular livelihood options. A focus group discussion participated in by community organization leaders was also conducted to provide insights on the resistance movement as part of the provisioning strategies deployed at the outset by a number of community members.

## **CEBU SOUTH RECLAMATION PROJECT**

Due to the limited space in the lowlands of the island of Cebu, coastal reclamation is seen by the local government and its foreign consultants as a solution to expand its urban space. This is also a growing trend in East and Southeast Asian cities. The first major reclamation project took place in 1964 upon the completion of the 160-hectare North Reclamation Area in the coastal area of northern Cebu City going to Mandaue City. The CSRP was implemented starting in 1997 as part of the third phase of the Metro Cebu Development Project (MCDP). The MCDP is an integrated multi-sectoral and multi-phased project of the Central Visayas Regional Development Council (CVRDC) funded by an 18.4 billion yen loan from the Japanese government through the 20th Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF). The said loan is to be paid by the Cebu City Government from its income and earnings including the taxes that will be paid by the residents of the area.

The CSRP covers over 302 hectares of coastal flats along the southern coast of Cebu City, spanning 14 kilometers of coastline of ten coastal barangays of Cebu City and two coastal barangays of Talisay City. The CSRP encompasses the entire bay of the immediate southwest portion of Cebu City about 3.5 kilometers southwest of

the central business district from Tangke, Talisay to the port area in Cebu City. The off-shore boundary is from Talisay to Kawit Island and from Kawit Island to the port area of Cebu City. The project's official rationale was to provide more space to accommodate export-oriented industry and foreign direct investment that would be very near and accessible to ports in Cebu City's business district and the airport in Lapu-Lapu City (Katahira and Engineer's International 1999). Another component of the project was the construction of the Cebu South Coastal Road (CSCR) from Talisay City to Cebu City. As stated in the JICA report (2012), the CSCR is funded by a loan of 12.2 billion yen from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The CSRP is the first project in the country being implemented by a local government unit. In 1993, the Cebu City government together with the Regional Development Council and the MCDP submitted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in compliance with Presidential Decree 1586 establishing an Environmental Impact Statement System including other environmental related measures. Actual work on the CSRP started in 1997 with contractor Toyo Construction, a Japan-based construction company. DENR through then Secretary Angel Alcala issued an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) in favor of the project. It was stated that marine resources along the shore were already deteriorated and thus, no major impacts from the CSRP could be foreseen. In a 2019 speech by Mr. Bimbo Fernandez for a forum on the Manila Bay Reclamation Projects, a consultant from the Cebu City government explained that the CSRP was designed to avoid dislocation of informal settlers living along the shore by placing a 100-meter waterway from the reclamation itself. This could also be an access route for fisherfolk going out to sea. Although it was ensured that coastal residents would not be displaced, the EIS's risk factors missed out on the socio-economic impacts on the livelihood of residents on the opposite shore who rely on the marine resources in the area (JICA 2012).

As of December 31, 2003, the reclamation works of the CSRP had already been completed, while the CSCR was completed on December 31, 2004. However, there are still some parts of the reclamation area that have not yet been covered as of 2007, such as the 88-hectare Pond A, due to a lack of filling materials that also delayed the completion of the project. Another problem faced by



the city government was a concern in project monitoring due to the lack of staff in the project management office. The main target of these projects is to catalyze the development of the southern portion of Metro Cebu by catering to domestic and foreign investors who will put up business establishments in the area. To date, a growing number of investors, foremost of which are Fil-invest Corp., Bigfoot, and SM Corp., have bought large tracts of land at the CSR for commercial and industrial development.

In 2004, JICA recommended a comprehensive social development plan that includes livelihood, education, environment, and other concerns for urban poor communities in the affected barangays to address negative impacts of the project. Since 2005, the Cebu City government implemented a social compensation program for the affected communities. The target beneficiaries were 3,700 households living within 100 meters from the shoreline. Based on the JICA report (2012, 11), this program included:

- 1) assistance for livelihood projects (massage, rag sewing, meat processing and others); 2) education, health services and environmental programs including mangrove planting; and 3) . . . showcasing of livelihood products.

This was implemented by the Cebu City government in partnership with non-government organizations, community-based organizations, and the private sector. However, the JICA study (2012, 11) pointed out that only 15 percent of the target beneficiaries said they benefited from this program while 47 percent said they did not benefit at all. There were also some problems regarding the management and sustainability of the specific livelihood projects implemented. Nevertheless, the effort of the Cebu City government to mitigate the negative livelihood impacts of the CSR on affected residents is commendable.

Coastal reclamation projects generally have both economic and ecological consequences. In a study on the economic and environmental costs of the Cordova (Cebu) Reclamation Project, Montenegro, Diola, and Remedio (2005, 1) cited four major ecological impacts: “(1) loss of on-site fisheries; (2) loss of reef gleaning; (3) the loss of potential recreational benefits from the affected coral reef; and (4) the environmental damage from landfill quarrying.”

The study points out that the environmental costs of coastal reclamation are not trivial and thus should have been incorporated in the economic feasibility studies of such projects. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that from the perspective of the less-advantaged sectors of society, coastal reclamation constitutes a significant loss of livelihood especially for households engaged in fishing and reef cleaning activities (Montenegro, Diola, and Remedio 2005). In fact, the JICA “Ex-post Evaluation” (2012, 11) for this project points out that it affected the livelihood of 1,400 households and generated a series of complaints regarding livelihood impacts resulting from the deterioration of the environment caused by the project.

New infrastructure development in this area include the construction of the third bridge leading to Mactan Island along the exit point of the CSR; construction of a hotel and resort by the Universal Hotels and Resorts, Inc. on Kawit Island (which is now part of the mainland because of the CSR); as well as an SM-Ayala joint development project. Some access roads have also been constructed affecting some coastal residents in Barangay Mambaling.

## LIVELIHOODS PRIOR TO THE CSR

From a provisioning perspective, production relations are highlighted in the types of livelihood pursued by individuals or groups. Livelihood is defined as the “capabilities, assets, and activities” required for a means of living (Chambers and Conway 1991). Livelihood strategies are the ways and means employed by people individually or as a group to earn an income for the basic needs of the household. For rural people in many developing countries, livelihood strategies directly rely on the natural environment, mostly through cultivation and fishing. Because of the limited income generated from these activities, family members also engage in additional types of work and income-generating activities to earn a living.

Because of the irregularity of income from the informal sector and the low wages earned from the formal sector, many urban settlers located along or near the coast opted to engage in fishing and other coastal livelihoods. This enabled them to augment their family’s food consumption (*panud-an*) and earn some income from selling their catch. Primary livelihood strategies of most residents revolved around small-scale fishing practices involving two or three

individuals of a family or of neighbors. Common near-shore fishing or gleaning methods included *panawom* (diving or spear fishing), *pamasol*, and *pamukot* among the males; and *panginbas* (gleaning) and *panu* (gathering shrimps and crabs at low tide) involving the males and females. Income from these types of livelihood ranged from PhP 200 to PhP 1,000 per day. According to the residents, they always had something to do at sea from morning until evening.

For additional income, residents both male and female, young and old, engaged in handicraft making for export companies like Alcon Industries. The company exports seashells as well as souvenir and home decorative items made of seashells and other indigenous materials to Australia, Europe including Russia, the United States, Canada, South Africa, the Middle East, and even Latin America. Workers, regardless of gender or age, are drawn from the urban poor to manufacture export products at home. The company provides all the materials to the household employed and pays for every completed piece.

With this scheme, export companies cut costs on workers' wages and benefits as well as factory space. This type of production is defined by the International Labor Organization (2015) as home-based work or homework. This entails work carried out for remuneration by a person in his or her home or any other place than the employer's workplace resulting in a product or service specified by the employer (Singh 2000). Among the residents of Sitio Alumnos, this activity was only considered as a productive pastime before the CSR was implemented. Income generated from this activity supplemented their primary income from fishing, providing them with pocket money for immediate minor household expenses.

Before the CSR was implemented, only a few households relied on formal employment. Most households either primarily fished or gleaned to provide for their basic needs. To supplement income from these sources some households engaged in secondary livelihood strategies in the informal sector as either "homeworkers" assembling export products or fish vending. As one woman said,

Panagat jud ang among gisaligan diri. Gikan buntag hangtod gabii, tua jud mi sa dagat. Mabuntag sayo kung hunas, manginbas, among mga bana mamasol, mamana. Ang kuha, isuroy, ipanud-an. Naa na dayon mi kwarta para bawn sa mga bata, nakakaon pa jud mi. Mahapon

kung hunas, manginhas. Hasta gud ang dili taga-diri, manganhi para manginhas. Inig kagabii, manu na sad mi, kuha mig lambay, pasayan. Isuroy na sad namo, kwarta na sad mi. Mao na hayahay jud mi katong naa pa ang dagat. (We really relied on fishing here. From morning until night, we were always at sea. In the early mornings, we went gleaning if it is low tide. We would glean while our husbands were fishing. The fish and shellfish caught and gathered were sold around the neighborhood, while a portion was left for family consumption. So we had money to give as school allowance for our children, and we were able to eat. In the afternoon at low tide, we went gleaning. Even those who did not reside here came to glean. At night we would gather crabs and shrimps using either a kerosene-fueled *sulo* or a battery-powered flashlight, a small net, and a pail. We would sell this catch, and again we would have money. That is why we really lived comfortably when the sea was still here.)

Informants explained that because the sea was kind to them, their families never experienced food shortages nor hunger during that time. They could just go down to the water to gather shellfish, and they would have food on their table. In addition, they earned from selling the shellfish to nearby households and markets. Even their children could earn money on their own from shellfish gathering. The money earned daily was used for the children's school allowances.

Most families engaged in fishing. The men were the ones who went out to sea. Some of the families had their own baroto, which they rowed to deeper waters to catch other kinds of fish through the various methods discussed earlier. The bulk of the catch was either taken to nearby markets or sold by the women who would go around the neighborhood or nearby villages. The rest of the catch was set aside for family consumption. Daily income from selling fish and shellfish was used for household needs, primarily for food (rice, salt, spices, sugar, vegetables, etc.) and the school needs of their children. Most of the residents reported that they had been

able to earn a gross income of around PhP 200 to PhP 500 per day primarily from fishing and gleaning plus have fish and shellfish for consumption. Secondary sources of income contributed smaller amounts. Nonetheless, households were generally earning sufficient income to meet their daily needs. A few even reported that they had set aside some savings. Their narratives indicate that before the CSRP was implemented, most coastal residents recalled having had subsistence incomes from various sources sufficient to provide for the basic daily needs of the household. They perceived their prior situation as better than when the sea was no longer there for fishing and gleaning; they had food on their table aside from the cash they earned from their primary and secondary sources of income.

In general, they perceived their situation as *hayabay* (comfortable), even if they were earning on a daily basis and were directly reliant on nature. Sitio Alumnos residents explained that they did not have many worries about being able to provide for their family's daily needs. This income also enabled them to send their children to public school where fees were minimal and buy medicine when someone in the household would fall ill. However, with this income they still could not afford to buy a lot for building a house. As a result, these households continued to live near the coast, some in houses extending over the water. Since they did not have any extra money left after all the expenses had been deducted from their income, the idea of savings commanded little attention. They were content with their lives even if they did not have money to spare for better housing, recreation, and leisure. They just made do with simple activities that did not entail a lot of expense, such as chatting with neighbors and for the men, playing basketball.

These data point out the significance of fishing and shellfish gleaning in the coastal community of Sitio Alumnos. They also illustrate the importance of the informal economy in providing supplementary income for many households prior to the implementation of the CSRP. The combination of livelihoods responded to the basic needs of the household: primarily food, education, and health.

### HOUSEHOLD 3

Household 3 is composed of the parents and their children as well as two of their married children's families. The head of the household was 52 years old when interviewed in 2010.

I sold my pambot due to high overhead costs from the substantial added distance of our new fishing ground near Mactan island from the community. But I still went fishing for panud-an sometimes using a baroto to cut on fuel costs. But my family no longer relied on fishing as our primary livelihood. It became a supplementary livelihood sometimes providing food for the household. But most times I do not have any catch, so I eventually decided to stop.

We now rely more on the formal employment of our children and their spouses. Our eldest son is working as a mixer [of paint] at a hardware company and earns a minimum wage of PhP 257 per day; while his wife is working in a recruitment agency. Our second son is working as a newsboy selling newspapers from which he earns roughly PhP 150 a day. Our third child is working as a saleslady at a local department store where she earns PhP 170 per day. Since we are all living in one household, we pooled our resources together in order to respond to the basic expenses such as food and school allowances. Our three children are high school graduates. Our two other children are still in school—one is in elementary and the other is in high school. They are studying in nearby public schools. We have three grandchildren who stay at home with us; we are the ones taking care of them while their parents are at work.

## EFFECTS OF THE CSRP

Coastal reclamation literally erases the marine resources along the shore as filling materials cover the target area and convert it into dry land. Montenegro et al. (2005) point out that coastal reclamation brings about adverse effects in the surrounding environment by covering up and destroying intertidal reef areas and the marine environment. Accordingly, coastal livelihoods are greatly affected when the marine environment changes drastically

The implementation of the CSRP has greatly affected fishing and shellfish gathering. Some respondents candidly asked, “*Asa man mi managat nga gitabunan na man ang dagat?*” (Where will we fish and gather shells when the sea has already been covered with soil [when soil is where the sea used to be]?) A number of residents in Sitio Alumnos could no longer engage in shellfish gathering as the low-tide areas have become permanent land. This transformation had the first direct effect on their livelihood source.

At first some of the men continued to fish, but they found it very difficult since they had to carry their baroto across the access road built for the cargo trucks carrying soil for the reclamation. The road blocked their passage to the sea. Moreover, they now had to pass through the narrow channel toward the Pasil wharf in order to get out to sea. This entailed significant added expenditures of time, effort, and fuel. What they earned from fishing was no longer enough to compensate for these additional costs. Most decided to stop fishing.

Another grave impact of the CSRP on the livelihood of fisherfolk stems from its effects on the fish population in the area. Several “fish kills” were reported in the stagnant waters trapped inside the CSRP or Pond A, an unfilled 88-hectare portion of the CSRP (Sanchez and Ayuman 1999). According to the report, residents had spotted thousands of dead fish, shrimps, crabs, and other forms of marine life floating in the waters of Pond A. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Office VII maintained that extreme heat, low seawater levels, lack of dissolved oxygen, and the heavy siltation of filling materials in Pond A had apparently suffocated the fish. With the continued dumping of truckloads of soil extracted

from Cebu's mountains, the seawater had become stagnant, rendering the fish kill inevitable. It was also reported that a private sector representative of the MCDP and an executive committee member of the CSRFP had stated that the affected site was no longer considered fishing grounds but was now a part of the project. It should therefore already be off-limits to fisherfolk.

The fish kill highlighted the irony of a "development" project that not only destroyed the marine environment and killed thousands of marine life but also deprived fisherfolk of their livelihood, food, and income. The newspaper reported that coastal residents and even those from neighboring non-coastal barangays flocked to the fish kill site carrying sacks, large plastic bags, net bags, or other types of containers in which to place the dead fish (Sanchez and Ayuman 1999). Fisherfolk and children happily gathered as many dead fish as possible. When interviewed, they said that they were going to sell the fish in nearby markets and set aside some for family consumption. Warnings from the Department of Health (DOH) and BFAR against eating the dead fish due to possible contamination went unheeded. Apparently, people were more concerned about their livelihoods and having something to feed their families. One old man who had relied on fishing all his life candidly commented,

Abunda pa ta karon, pero mao na lang nay katapusan  
. . . pila ka adlaw gikan karon, wala na jud tay makuha.  
(There is still an abundance of fish today, but this may be  
the last . . . a few days from now, we can't catch any fish  
anymore.)

Once the CSRFP reclamation started, previous livelihoods of most of the fisherfolk households were no longer viable. At first, some continued fishing as it was their primary livelihood but later gave up due to higher operational costs and low fish catch. It was no longer considered a lucrative livelihood. The *sakayan*, *pambot*, and *baroto* of the fisherfolk were later sold since they were no longer used. Fishing, gleaning, and gathering activities near shore usually done at low tide became virtually non-existent; there was no longer any *honasan* to speak of. Shellfish gleaning that brought the young and old, men and women, residents and non-residents to the tidal flat could no longer be done given the CSRFP construction. Faced



with this situation, most households shifted to land-based informal livelihoods in which they had not engaged in earlier as vendors, construction workers, laundrywomen, *trisikad* drivers (bicycle with sidecar for passengers), among others. The CSR implementation has thus changed the livelihoods of south coastal barangay residents in Cebu City from mostly coastal and marine-related production to service-related informal work. The lack of employment opportunities in the city had been problems of the community residents even before the CSR was implemented. They therefore turned to fishing and shellfish gathering as the only available option for family survival. With the CSR, incomes dropped; food had to be bought, no longer caught or gathered from the sea; expenses increased. Now, earning PhP 200 per day was barely possible, and more likely they could only earn PhP 100 a day or less from doing informal work.

The CSR implementation meant their primary source of livelihood from fishing and gleaning has been diminished, forcing them to shift to other income earning ventures. The primary household expenses were still food, education, and healthcare. However, since they can no longer gather free food from the sea, food purchases became necessary; accordingly, other expenses especially for education and healthcare had to be cut. In some households, children had to stop attending school. Even if some children continued to attend public school, money for their lunch allowance and contributions to school projects and the like were lacking. Although these households can go to the barangay health center for free consultations, these centers do not offer the necessary medication and laboratory examinations. Patients are simply referred to a public hospital and must pay for lab tests that come with a prescription for medicine, which they purchase separately in a pharmacy.

The Sitio Alumnos residents asserted that the CSR has brought more harm than good. Their livelihoods as fishers and shellfish gatherers have been undermined, forcing them to enter the informal sector through fulltime vending, laundry work, *kargador* (stevedore), etc. Fishers were discouraged from going out to sea when they had to carry their boats across the CSR pathway and launch them at sites nearer to the water at Cordova, a municipality on Mactan island. Those with non-motorized boats said that overland transport was very tedious and time consuming. Those with motorized boats lamented that their gasoline expenses doubled because of the distance to the launching point.

Furthermore, some households emphasize the loss of regularity and predictability in their livelihoods: “*Istambay ra jud mi diri*” (We do not have jobs, and so we just sit around here). Many young people, women, and children can be seen simply hanging around. Some are sitting at the street corners, while others play popular local card games (*chikicha* or *tong-its*) or simply while away their time talking to one another. According to some respondents, a number of small stores or stalls around the community had meager sales due to stiff competition coming from those who have ventured into mobile vending.

In sum, the implementation of the CSRP has adversely affected the livelihood of most residents in Sitio Alumnos. The CSRP is perceived by residents as having aggravated an already difficult situation, especially for those engaged in fishing and shell-gathering. A shift from a primary livelihood of fishing and shell-gathering to informal and irregular service-related work affected most households. They had to cut down on expenses for schooling and health as the priority shifted back to basic survival needs, primarily food. Members of a local organization pointed out that they were promised jobs in the CSRP. Government officials told them that they would be prioritized in hiring when investors’ businesses would operate in the reclaimed area. However, this never materialized given their low levels of formal education.

The household provisioning perspective integrates many different aspects of people’s lives, taking into consideration the entire process from production to consumption of goods and services. Highlighted are the importance of various institutions like the state, the market, the community, and the family in regulating the flows of these goods and services. It likewise links the process to the material, political, and cultural forces that shape people’s economic lives. It looks into the different social relations at different stages of the provisioning process in various locations and historical periods.

## HOUSEHOLD 4

Household 4 is a couple born and raised in this area and who now have four children of their own. The husband was a young fisherman at the time of interview at 37 years of age; while his wife was 39 years old in 2010.

I stopped fishing when the CSR was implemented since it took us long hours and high costs to go to the fishing grounds in Mactan. I was occasionally working at some construction sites as a supplementary source of income. But since I already stopped fishing, I continued being a laborer in construction sites. Our eldest son had to stop schooling when he was fifteen years old to help me in income generation primarily as a helper in construction sites. Since work is irregular and uncertain, we had to make do with whatever earnings we both had and prayed that we will have work. At times when the construction work is over, we had to look for another site where we could apply. Since we are dependent on the availability of work as referred to us by our social networks, there are times when construction work takes us to places outside Cebu City sometimes even as far as Luzon.

My wife also considers praying to be a coping mechanism. *“Mag-ampo jud mi nga unta makakita ra og katrabaho-an labi na og mahuman na ang ilang gitrabaho sa konstraksyon. Kung di katrabaho, wala may makaon ang mga bata kay wa may kwarta. Kalooy sa Diyos, makakita ra man sad dayon og trabaho.”* (We pray that they could find a job especially when the construction is done. If they have no work, then we could not feed our children because we do not have money. By God’s mercy, they find a job right away.)

## HOUSEHOLD 2

The household head is the wife, as her husband died in 2009. Only two of her thirteen children are still living in the same household as her at the time of interview in 2010. Four of her married children are also living in the same sitio but in separate households. Her other children are no longer residing in the area.

My husband accidentally slipped and fell while carrying his baroto across the CSRP access road. His buttocks hit the rocks and he was not able to move the lower part of his body. His fellow fishermen who saw what happened helped him and carried him to our house. Because we did not have the money to have him checked at a hospital, we made do with *Binisaya nga pagpanambal* (local healing practices) using herbs and *lana* (oil). For months, my husband was bed-ridden and was no longer able to fish.

I then took on the helm of earning income for our family with the help of our older unmarried children at that time. We began selling *pa-init* (early morning snacks) near a bakery by the roadside. We sold milk and coffee to early risers like *trisikad* and tricycle drivers, and market vendors. We got the milk, coffee, and sugar from a neighborhood store on credit, which I pay for after we already have sales. One of my daughters would boil water and place it in a thermos to keep it hot. We would then go to the bakery and set up a small stand there consisting of a small table and a small bench. The small profit we got from milk and coffee sales was used primarily for food needs of the household. Aside from this, we also resorted to assembling products for export such as the *tagutungan* decor, jewelry boxes, and accessories. This was better than doing nothing at all and not earning anything.

We also initiated card games in our house since it is situated beside a *mahjongan* (a place where people play mahjong) owned by a neighbor. Those who played would pay me a minimum of PhP 2.00 to PhP 5.00 for every game they played. When my husband slowly recovered and was able to get up after a number of months,

he was still unable to exert a lot of effort and had to take long rests.

He opened a small *ayos spatos-payong* (shoe and umbrella repair) stand in front of our house, as he learned this craft when he was still a young boy from observing a relative repairing umbrellas and shoes. Since it was no longer feasible for him to go fishing, he decided to use this skill for income generation. Sometimes he did not earn anything if there were no customers. But if there were customers, he could earn up to PhP 50 in one day or more if there were more customers. We pooled our resources together to be able to respond to household needs.

When my husband as well as one of my daughters died, we lost two important people in our household. But life has to go on. I still have with me two unmarried sons and we continue to struggle with uncertain livelihood options. One of my sons just recently got a job at the barangay as a garbage collector. I also joined a number of new organizations in order to avail of dole-outs either from NGOs, religious groups, the private sector, or the government. I even joined a non-Catholic religion even if I am a Catholic. When a born-again Christian religion established a worship place just across our house, I readily joined their worship services because they gave out snacks and other dole outs to the people who attended. Aside from this, there are also other groups who from time to time give out a few kilos of rice, sardines, noodles, and used clothes. This is also one way of coping with our day-to-day needs.

## ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

The research participants' new livelihood activities lie in the area of the informal economy and are less lucrative than their previous primary livelihood. As an alternative to their lost livelihood from the sea, many have engaged in various unstable temporary strategies. Among women, these commonly include assembling products for export companies, doing laundry, and selling foodstuff; and among men, these were driving a trisikad and doing construction work. Secondary sources of income became primary ones.

Home-based work for export companies, which in the past was considered a secondary source of household income performed mostly by women, has become the primary livelihood of both men and women in several households in the area. This entails the assembly of fashion accessories and other house decor made of shells, wood, stones, puffer fish, and other materials in their respective homes. Personnel from small and medium-scale export companies deliver the needed materials to their houses. Whereas household members that had already engaged in this work before the CSRP did it during their free time, it has now consumed the majority of their time after the CSRP since they can no longer engage in panginhas and near-shore fishing.

Personnel from the export company make weekly scheduled pick-ups of the finished products. Payment is computed on a per piece basis. The more finished products one accomplishes, the larger the payment. For example, for a necklace made of beads they are paid PhP 0.75 each and for a stuffed puffer fish, PhP 1.25 each. To earn more, they have to work doubly hard to finish as many products as possible. For some households, this means involving every member of the family including their children. The women in the community mentioned that even though the pay is very low, they still voluntarily undertake this type of work. "*Iyawat nalang makakwarta gamay kaysa mag-istambay ra.*" (It is better that we earn a little rather than do nothing and not earn anything.) Furthermore, this type of work enables them to stay at home where they also have to perform household chores like cooking, doing the laundry, cleaning, tending to the children, among others. This home-based work is thus considered more convenient than looking for work elsewhere and leaving the children in the care of neighbors or relatives who also have their own concerns, and neither can they afford house-help.

Others who had previously relied on fishing as their only source of livelihood shifted to work either in the formal or informal sector. Those who landed a job in the formal sector were mostly hired as contractual or casual workers. The work, known as “endo” (or end of contract), usually lasted five months or less to avoid government regulations on permanent hiring, depending on the company.<sup>1</sup> Usually, the ones who are able to work in the formal sector are the adult children of the family, most of whom stopped schooling to look for a job. Common places of work include fast-food chains, supermarkets, department stores, and manufacturing firms. The work includes sales, promotions, cashiering, and assembly as these do not entail higher tertiary-level education. Requiring at least some high school years of study or actual graduates, the company pays them on a semi-monthly basis earning an average net income of PhP 3,000 per month. Formal employment entails payment of taxes, social security, and health insurance as mandated by the national government. As lamented by those engaged in formal employment, these amounts are deducted monthly from the gross income of an employee’s salary, lessening the take-home pay of employees. Nevertheless, the wage-earning young adult members of the household contribute part of their earnings to the total household income because their parents’ income is now insufficient for the needs of the household.

Those who have found work in the informal sector were mostly engaged in construction work (for males) and domestic work (for females). These jobs are largely irregular as they depend on the availability of work. Males are usually engaged as weekly paid laborers or helpers in construction sites. Sometimes construction work takes them to places outside Cebu City to as far as Luzon for weeks or months. They take the risk of working far away from home so that they can earn a living for their family’s needs. Their spouses lament that there are times when their husband is away for three months because of construction work in Manila or Cavite. Since the contractor only pays one round trip ticket by boat, they would have to pay their own fare if they wish to return home to Alumnos before the end of the contract. Most decide not to go home within the contract period. On the other hand, females usually work as laundrywomen on a per day basis or as home-based weekly paid workers. Because it is difficult if both husband and wife are working outside the home, women usually opt to stay at home hoping to work there while taking care of the children and tending to other household responsibilities.

While these forms of livelihood bring in needed cash for the household, these are not as lucrative as fishing and shellfish gathering. According to the informants,

suhol ra may saligan, ang panud-an paliton na man, di pareha sa una nga ang sud-an makuha ra sa dagat, ang kwarta para na sa ubang galastuhan (we rely on income from work, which we have to use to buy food. Unlike before, when we earn income and at the same time get food from fishing and shellfish gathering; the cash is used for other expenses).

Others (either males or females) choose to sell various items, including fish that they now buy from Pasil market. Some sell lunch boxes (inclusive of rice and viand) and even snacks bought from Carbon market like banana cue, *pinaypay* (fried banana shaped like a fan), *binignit* (mixture of banana, sweet potato, sago), *lugaw* (porridge), *biko* (rice cake), *puto* (another type of rice cake), juice, bread, coffee, and fruits (ponkan, mangoes, etc.). Women who had previously earned money by selling fish in the market reasoned out that they already had customers in the past when their primary livelihood was still fishing. As such, they have opted to continue fish vending even if they are no longer directly engaged in fishing. They buy fish from Pasil's fish market and sell them either through *suroy* (going around the neighborhood) or in nearby satellite markets. Those who sell various snacks and viands target the early morning workers, children, and neighbors. They explain that all people eat; and since Filipinos are accustomed to snacks, they are confident that people will buy what they are selling. Some simply sell their food items in front of their houses, while others pursue *suroy* in neighboring sitios.

Because these alternative livelihood strategies do not bring in much income, each household pools the resources of the earning household members. Even children contribute part of their earnings in support of household needs. In the past, they could provide free food from the sea for their families even if they had no money. Now, they need to allocate a larger part of the household income for food expenses. Their secondary source of income is now the primary source that is still insufficient to cover household expenses.

On the part of the city government, a number of livelihood assistance programs were implemented for affected communities such as massage therapy at the wellness center, crab-raising, rag-sewing,



meat processing, etc. Assistance was provided to interested groups in the community. There were those who availed of their offers, but many residents were apprehensive because the assistance provided was in the form of loans that were to be repaid over time. Of the city government's projects, the massage therapy wellness center is considered the most successful having trained 40 massage therapists who now work at the center and earn PhP 10,000 to PhP 15,000 monthly. The other projects, however, were not sustained largely due to management and leadership problems.

Aside from multiple alternative livelihood strategies and the pooling of the family income, many households adopted the coping strategy of cutting their expenses for food, education, and health care. As one informant said,

lisod kung naay masakit . . . muadto nalang jud sa social worker para makalibre (it is difficult if someone gets sick . . . we would just go to a social worker [at the hospital], so we could avail of free medicines and services).

They lament that although consultation is free in government hospitals, the needed medicines and laboratory examinations are not. As a strategy to avail of free or discounted lab tests and medications, they usually contact social workers in public hospitals, non-government organizations (NGOs), or government (often politicians') health assistance programs such as occasional free clinics. Most households rely on relatives who are better off to help them in times of dire health emergencies that entail hospitalization and expensive medication.

## **ALTERNATIVE CONSUMPTION STRATEGIES**

Before the CSR implementation, consumption among the residents consisted mostly of seafood such as fish and shellfish, which they caught or gathered through various fishing and gathering strategies. The most important staple food item was rice, usually bought per kilo and cooked in each household. Most households prepared their own food at home. In addition, they did not spend much on viands because these directly came fresh from the sea. Cooking rice at home meant they would have more rice to eat. With the readily available seafood, they could enjoy at least three meals a day. The smaller fish

they caught were usually what they ate, while the larger ones were sold to earn more. “*Di jud mi magutman sa una kay kung walay sud-an, makapanginbas ra man mi dayon*” (We never went hungry in the past. If we did not have a viand, we would simply go shellfish gathering).

However, with the implementation of the CSRP, buying food became a need. While they can still purchase rice by the kilo and cook it at home, this is not the case for *sud-an* of either meat, fish, or vegetables, which they have to now purchase in small amounts from the carinderia. Buying cooked food from vendors is one consumption alternative used by many households in the community. It enables them to save by avoiding having to spend for cooking fuel, spices, cooking oil, and condiments. Uncooked meat and fish are relatively more expensive. The usual price of vended viands is PhP 5.00 for vegetable dishes and PhP 15.00 for meat or fish dishes. With the perceived practicality of buying cooked viands, some enterprising households have ventured into selling cooked food to their neighbors. This serves as another alternative livelihood strategy. For viands cooked at home, the preference goes to low-priced food such as *buwad* (dried fish), *ginamos* (fermented fish), and vegetables. Instant noodles have become a common food item in urban poor households because of their relatively affordable price and ease of preparation. Children are usually prioritized in the sharing of food within the household. Food sharing is also common among related households.

Another strategy to maximize food availability in the household is to prepare more rice but less viand. In this manner, they can save on expenses for ingredients in viand preparations. Other households prefer cooking milled corn instead of rice because according to them, “*Mas bug-at og busog ang mais*” (Eating corn fills you up more, and you do not get hungry right away). Corn is also cheaper than rice. Others jokingly share that they drink more water while eating and in between meals so that they will not feel hungry right away.

Other household food sources are the occasional feeding programs launched by civic organizations in their community. Mothers make it a point to take their children there to avail of the free food, usually *lugaw* or rice gruel. At Christmas time they can anticipate “bundles of joy” given out by students and other groups usually inclusive of rice, instant noodles, canned sardines, biscuits, and used clothing. According to the families interviewed, these are plentiful enough so that they will not have to spend for consumption for at least another day or two. They also recalled that way back in 1999 at

the height of protest actions against the CSRP, the city government gave out one sack of rice for every family. This was accompanied by canned goods and instant noodles. However, the residents perceived this as a “one-shot” form of assistance just to pacify the protesters. According to them, the city government never again gave anything to the affected families after that.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING STRATEGIES**

It is clear that households tap social networks to avail of food and other necessities. The more networks a household has the more resources they can access. A social network is a social structure composed of individuals or organizations that are interconnected through friendship, kinship, common interests, financial exchange, beliefs, and other aspects of interdependency (Wellman and Berkowitz 1997). In Alumnos, these usually consist of close kin, neighbors, and individuals outside their community. The types of individuals and groups within their social networks are also important determinants of the amount of resources households can acquire. Kin groups prove most accessible to the household when in dire need of cash, food, or other provisions. Most kin groups that the households rely upon are those relatives that live within the same community. In some instances, the household calls upon kin groups outside their community for assistance. Non-kin neighbors are also accessible but unlike kin groups, they do not feel obligated to help.

In Filipino culture, family ties are of value especially in times of need. As one informant puts it, “*Kinsa ra man diay magtinabangay kita rang mga paryente*” (Who will help each other but us relatives). The common notion is that when one is in need of help, the other will provide assistance; and when the other is the one needing help, the one who received help in the past will in turn unhesitatingly provide assistance. This is a kind of balanced reciprocity wherein one helps another expecting something in return, although not immediately. In Filipino parlance, this is called “*utang kabubut-on*” in Cebuano or “*utang na loob*” in Tagalog. As in the case of one woman whose husband was hospitalized, she sought help from her niece who was married to an American and was thus better off. The niece readily provided assistance since their families had a close relationship. Aside from kin and neighbors, they also tapped the NGOs assisting them, their barangay, and the city government.

In terms of small loans, most residents go to local lenders, usually foreigners (from the Middle East or India) residing in Cebu. These 5–6 lenders charge twenty percent interest and collect daily over a maximum period of sixty days. These lenders are commonly called “*Turko*” for their supposedly Turkish looks, or “*Arabo*” or “*Bombay*” having originated from the Middle East or India. Their 5–6 trade means if one borrows five pesos, one will have to pay six pesos at the end of the day or face further interest charges. Some Cebuano lenders engage in this informal lending scheme targeted at low-income groups. Residents see these lenders as a ready source of cash especially for small business capital as well as emergencies.

Community organizations established among affected residents were also considered a social network. Leaders and members were able to link up with each other to find ways to resist the CSR implementation and to help each other out through livelihood referrals as well as linking up with NGOs and government agencies for assistance. At the outset, a number of organizations with hundreds of members were formed for these purposes and they were very active. But these gradually dwindled over time as some of these groups already received some form of assistance from the government or NGOs. Over time, most of their members chose to focus on earning a living through alternative means rather than continue protesting or waiting for further assistance from the government.

In sum, household provisioning strategies employed by residents affected by the CSR implementation do not only consist of alternative livelihood strategies but also of alternative consumption as well as social networking strategies. Combining these approaches has enabled the affected residents to survive after the CSR despite the hardships brought about by its implementation. The CSR drastically changed their livelihood in particular and their way of life in general.

## CONCLUSION

Varying definitions of “development” largely depend on the context in which it is defined and on who defines it. Prevailing views of “developers” in government and donor institutions may be contrasted with the views of “development workers” in community development-oriented non-government institutions or civil society groups. Often disregarded are the views of the local people that “developers” claim to benefit. While the government proclaims big plans for the city,

as trumpeted in newspaper reports, there is also a need to take into consideration the plight of people affected by its mega-projects. There should be a balance between macro-growth and micro-level responses to resource-poor households' needs.

In this case, the Cebu City government in consultation with the organized segment of the urban poor sector designed the project to avoid the dislocation of coastal residents. The city's assumption was that the coastal households' livelihoods would not be affected as they could remain where they had always been on the city shore area and would integrate into the globalized urban economy. However, the negative socio-economic impact of eliminating the dominant livelihood of fishing and gleaning among coastal residents were not foreseen early on, leaving affected fisherfolk to shift to less lucrative jobs in the informal sector. By eliminating fishing and gleaning, the massive reclamation forced thousands of coastal dwellers who identified as fisherfolk to, in effect, be transformed into informal workers facing uncertain incomes and types of work. Instead of relying directly on the sea for subsistence, they have now become dependent on the vagaries and insecurities of a globalizing economy. This case is typical of worldwide trends shifting people from legally recognized reliance on "the commons" for their livelihood to being "illegal encroachers" on the fishing grounds privatized by investors supported by the government. The consequence has given them little option but to join the category of the "urban poor."

This study illustrates that even if communities are allowed to remain onsite along the city's coastline, the impact of government intervention (like reclamation), which disrupts, if not destroys, their long-standing sources of livelihood from the sea, can still lead to impoverishment. This is the irony of "development projects." They project an idealized picture of a modern city that disregards the needs of the communities affected by such projects. Although the project was said to be designed so as not to dislocate coastal residents, dislocation from their livelihood source still happened.

Yet, many communities, when faced with adversity, find ways to adapt and shift to other modes in order to survive. This case of a coastal and marine environment transformed into a reclaimed land area meant for commercial and industrial purposes prompted local fisherfolk to shift to other livelihoods no longer reliant on fishing and seashell gleaning. The provisioning perspective provides an explanation as to why and how local fisherfolk employed alternative livelihood strategies, alternative consumption strategies, and the

tapping of social networks. From productive fisherfolk and gleaners, they moved into the urban informal services sector. Their ultimate motivation is to provide for the needs of the household through various means in hopes of a better future for their families in the city. However, even with the shift to working fully in the city's informal economy, contract work at home, or low-level formal jobs, they are still likely to become poorer than when they were fisherfolk or gleaners with selective access to the informal economy. The support of a generally predictable earning domain has been knocked out by the privatization that has decreed the fishing commons a no-go zone for the fisherfolk or gleaners. This study underlines the importance of considering long-term impacts on entire communities in the issuance of environmental clearances for projects that affect household subsistence livelihoods and the need for implementing agencies to provide mitigating options to cushion such impacts on project-affected entities.

## NOTE

- 1 In the Philippines there is a law that if a worker has been employed in one company for six whole months, the company is required to grant regular employment to the worker. Thus, many companies now hire contractual employees for five months to escape the law of granting them regular employment.

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