# SOCIAL WORK PURPOSE, MOTIVATION AND IDENTITY: FILIPINO SOCIAL WORKERS AT HOME AND ABROAD

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# Abstract

This thesis is concerned with social work purpose and identity in international contexts. It explores the perspectives of social workers, social work academics and policy makers in the Philippines and of Filipino social workers who moved to England to undertake the 'same' job.

The study took a critical realist approach, starting from participants' own accounts but alert equally to professional ideologies, institutional structures and social divisions. Primary data were gathered in a 5-week study visit to the Philippines (during which 'indigenous' literature was gathered, study visits made and semi-structured interviews undertaken with 24 participants in the Philippines: 11 social workers; 1 social worker in training; 7 social work academics; 5 policy makers) and also via semi-structured interviews with 9 Filipino social workers in England. The analysis was thematic, employing a combination of inductive and deductive coding, the development of comparative categories and second-level coding.

The primary focus of the research is upon what it is to be a social worker and to do social work in the Philippines and to be a Filipino social worker in England. Insights gained from Filipinos practising in the Philippines inform a discussion of the cross-cultural transferability of practice to England. The thesis uses a Bourdieusian conceptual framework to consider the roles of structure and agency in the construction of social work identities. In reflecting upon what they do and why, social workers and social work academics shed light on their personal-professional identity and motivation and upon the field of social work 'locally' and internationally.

The originality of the thesis is derived from several aspects of the study. Firstly, there is almost no published work in which the perspectives of those directly involved in Philippine social work are described and analysed. Indeed, the country rarely features in the international social work literature. The focus on professional transition also constitutes an original contribution, with no literature currently considering the specific case of transition from the Philippines to England. Finally, the application of Bourdieusian theory to social work has been explored in few articles and not in relation to the Philippines or to economic migration and identity within social work. The key arguments centre upon the helpfulness of the concepts of field and habitus in informing a reflective practice that takes account of both agency and structure and the importance of considering the layered nature of professional fields and impact upon professional identity and purpose. The findings will be of particular interest to those involved in the study of work and professions, in 'professional migration' (as employer, migrant or researcher) and in the growing academic field of international social work.

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| 4Ps | Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (conditional cash transfer scheme administered by DSWD in the Philippines) |
| AOP | Anti-Oppressive Practice |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| BASW | British Association of Social Workers |
| CHED | Commission on Higher Education (Philippines) |
| CWDC | Children's Workforce Development Council (UK) |
| DSWD | Department for Social Welfare and Development (Philippines) |
| FREGC | Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee (Faculty of Health and Social Science, University of Brighton, UK) |
| FWO | Filipino Worker Overseas |
| GO | Government Organisation (Philippines) |
| GSCC | General Social Care Council (UK) |
| HCPC | Health and Care Professions Council (UK) |
| IASSW | International Association of Schools of Social Work |
| ICSW | International Council on Social Welfare |
| IFSW | International Federation of Social Workers |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisation |
| KALAHI-CIDSS | Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services programme (Philippines) |
| LGU | Local Government Unit (Philippines) |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals (UN) |
| NASW | National Association of Social Workers (USA) |
| NASWEI | National Association for Social Work Education Inc. (Philippines) |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PASWI | Philippine Association of Social Workers Inc. |
| PO | People's Organisation (Philippines) |
| SASS | School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, UK |
| SCWRU | Social Care Workforce Research Unit, UK |
| SWT | Social Work Team |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund (formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

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This thesis is also dedicated to my old mate Helen who would have been more proud of me than I am.

But most of all, this is for us, Joe.

## Author’s Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated

# Chapter 1: Introducing the Scope and Purpose of this Thesis

## 1.1 Introduction

*"At any time and in any society, there is a social and political settlement of the role of social work services in a welfare regime. This changes over time and therefore so does the role of social work."*
(Payne, 2012)

This thesis contributes to debate about the meaning of social work internationally. More specifically, it explores social work purpose and process in the Philippines and considers what the perspectives of Filipino social workers might tell us about identity, vocation and profession in that context. By offering a space to reflect upon what they do and why, social workers shed light upon their own personal-professional habitus and upon the field of social work 'locally' and internationally (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1984). The thesis also incorporates findings from research into the perspectives of social workers who trained and practised in the Philippines but then moved to England to undertake the 'same' job. The intention was to explore the notion of core social work purpose and values, by encouraging practitioners to reflect upon the differences between and transition from social work in a 'developing' country and that in a 'developed' country. The search for a more critical, progressive form of social work, which seeks to influence both agency and structure, underlay the project.

The Research Questions which the thesis addresses are as follows. Those chapters most specifically related to each question are included in brackets:

1. How have historical and international processes shaped social work in the Philippines? (3, 5, 8)

2. How do social work practitioners, academics and policy makers describe social work purpose, motivation and identity in the Philippines? (2, 6, 8)

3. What do Filipino social workers' accounts of moving to and practising in England contribute to an understanding of the purpose and transferability of social work in an international context? (2, 7, 8)

The origins of social work, in the West at least, lay in a broad range of disparate and sometimes competing responses to social need. The social work profession, if that is what it has become, continues to both reflect and wrestle with its own sense of purpose. Should it seek radical responses to poverty and marginalisation (Bailey & Brake, 1980; Corrigan & Leonard, 1978; Ferguson & Woodward, 2009) or the maintenance (Davies, 1994) of individuals and families in some socially acceptable place? Should social work seek collective or individualised responses to the issues it seeks to address? How should it engage with the complex nature of social divisions (including poverty) in the societies in which it operates? To what extent should social work aim to influence social policies shaping the lives of those it supports? Does social work need clarity about its unique contributions and are these dependent on time and place? Such questions reflect the critical realist (Bhaskar, 2008) orientation of this project, in recognising structural power and inequality whilst seeking opportunities for social workers and service users to resist such realities and in acknowledging struggles between those proposing different 'solutions' within the fields of professional social work and social work academia.

This is, importantly, *not* a comparative study, though elements of comparison will permeate the work. Rather, it uses an examination of the Philippines (and of Filipino workers in England) to inform reflection upon the meaning and potential of social work. To do this, a Bourdieusian conceptual framework (incorporating elements of more traditional social work theory) is employed. To quote Payne & Askeland (2008, p4), *"Western social work should be influenced by non-Western social work, which will inevitably have different values and practices. Nevertheless, Western cultural and economic power means that we have to establish ways for it to achieve that influence."* It is hoped that this thesis plays some small part in furthering that influence.

## 1.2 Background and Motivation

This study was proposed at a time of heightened interest in the contributions of overseas social workers in the UK, in a context of shortages of qualified workers and concern about training and support needs (CWDC, 2009; Hussein, Manthorpe & Stevens, 2008). The GSCC, which regulated social work at that time, had raised the equivalency requirements for workers entering the UK (GSCC, 2008) and the Migration Advisory Committee was reported to be recommending the fast-tracking of certain applications from overseas to become social workers in the UK (Syal & Doward, 2009). A Skills for Care-commissioned report had examined the continuing professional development needs of internationally qualified workers (Brown, Bates & Keen, 2007) and the Social Care Workforce Research Unit was undertaking a government-funded research project exploring the use and experiences of international workers in social care in England (Hussein, Stevens and Manthorpe, 2010). It should be acknowledged that the numbers of social workers from overseas registering in the UK has been reducing more recently and that the range of countries from which those workers are mostly coming is also narrowing:

*"Tighter immigration controls, criticism of predatory employer practices, and publication of stressful experiences by existing workers have influenced this reduction. Of those qualifying overseas, 60 percent are from Australia, South Africa, the USA and India (Mickel, 2009: 16)."* (Dominelli, 2012)

A case could therefore have been made for the currency of researching international social work and transition to England. These factors did not, however, prompt the initial development of this study but rather an interest in 'what social work is' in different parts of the world, how workers might 'transfer' their practice and ultimately what an analysis of such comparisons and transitions might yield in terms of an understanding of 'better' practice. It also reflected an interest in social work in the 'developing' world, the processes by which social work had achieved global-presence (IFSW, 2006; Payne, 2005) and efforts made to 'indigenise' social work (Gray et al, 2008; Hugman, 2010). Qualitative interviews were undertaken in both the Philippines and England. However, as the data analysis developed it became

apparent that the core focus of this thesis should be based primarily upon data gathered in the Philippines, offering a critical discussion of what it is to do social work and to be a social worker in that context. This account considers the interplay of global and local structure with the particular preoccupations and practices of social workers in the Philippines. Thus, again, notions of field and habitus come into play. The original interest in transferability remains and findings related to this are introduced towards the end of the thesis. The work as a whole contributes to attempts to, *"…understand social work's inherent diversity and to identify common features across its different forms, which requires in turn a clear and careful historical and conceptual analysis"* (Lorenz, 2004, p146).

## 1.3 Terminology

This section offers some provisional definitions and application of terms used in the thesis. We begin with Bourdieu's key concepts, before defining some other terminology employed.

**Habitus**

Stenner helpfully explains habitus (and its conceptual roots) as follows: "*habitual, routinised and 'instinctive' repetition (what Bourdieu, following Elias and William James, called 'habitus')."* (Stenner, 2013, p119). Throughout this thesis, the term 'habitus' is used, in this Bourdieusian sense, to refer to the cognitive structures through which people engage with the social world. These are acquired initially by the young child in the home as a result of the conscious and unconscious practices of her/his family but evolve as the person encounters fields beyond that of family. For Bourdieu,

*"The habitus… is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present."* (Bourdieu, 1977b, p56).

Bourdieu is, however, careful to avoid determination here: habitus is an internalised structure that *constrains* thought and choice of action, but does *not determine* them.

The habitus suggests what one should think and choose to do but people engage in a conscious deliberation of options:

*"The habitus, an objective relationship between two objectivities, enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves observable social conditions… Because it can only account for practices by bringing to light successively the series of effects which underlie them, analysis initially conceals the structure of the life-style characteristic of the agent or class of agents, that is, the unity hidden under the diversity and multiplicity of the set of practices performed in fields governed by different logics and therefore inducing different forms of realization, in accordance with the formula [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice."* (Bourdieu, 1984, p101).

Everyone has a habitus, and it is a reflection of one's long-term occupation of positions in the social world. For this thesis, the impact upon habitus of joining the field of professional social work (and, for some, of moving within the international field or, perhaps, between the fields of social work in the Philippines and England) is of key interest. The thesis focuses upon habitus in terms of professional identity and 'sense of self' but seeks to understand and situate that identity within contexts of individual history and the field of social work. It considers the socio-cultural contexts within which the habitus of individual Filipino social workers were generated and the collective practices expected of social workers. The concept of habitus informed the analysis of data relating to motivation, identity and professional purpose and of the process of adapting to practice in different contexts. This thesis constitutes a reflection upon individual and collective habitus, placing this within an analysis of the field(s) of social work and in the context of struggles over the meaning and purpose of social work (locally and internationally). The concept of field is now discussed.

**Field**

The concept of field is used throughout this thesis in Bourdieusian terms, to refer to a structured space which both constrains and is constantly shaped by relations between individual agents and institutions struggling for influence:

*"What exists in the social world are relations – not interactions between agents and intersubjective ties between individuals but objective relations which exist 'independent of individual consciousness and will' as Marx says."* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p97)

Whilst the social work profession is a key part of the field of social work, so too are researchers, policy makers and so on. In this thesis, therefore, characteristics of the field of social work in the Philippines are identified, as described by those social workers, social work academics and policy makers who are part of that field. It considers also the influence which those actors (individually or collectively) have upon the field of social work. For Bourdieu, and in this thesis, 'field' refers not only to the structures, processes, regulations and roles typical of many taxonomies of professions (Weiss & Welbourne, 2007) but also to relationships of relative power. A field is therefore an arena for contestation and competition, as explained by Monnier (2007, p347):

*"A field is a structured space of positions, a hierarchy (dominant/dominated)… The amounts and types of capital with which agents are endowed determine their relative positions in the field… fields are characterized by struggles to improve one's position and to define what counts as legitimate production… Fields also compete with one another for dominance… According to Bourdieu, any sociological analysis should start by examining the field under study to determine the different positions, what kind of capital is most valued, how legitimacy is defined and by whom, and the struggles and strategies actors engage in."*

The field of social work – in the Philippines, in England and internationally - is constrained by but also shapes the perceptions and practices of those within the field. Furthermore, the concept of 'field' (applied to social work internationally and in particular countries) acknowledges struggles between those with differing visions of what social work should be. This research identified 'layers within layers' of social work field(s) and considered the historical development of the Philippine field of social work in a context of the relative dominance of social work originating in the Global North. The concept of field allowed us to situate social work within wider

social debates and fields of relative power, including politics and religion. The thesis considers the process of 'induction' into the field of social work and impact upon habitus, or personal and professional sense of self. For Crossley (2005), *"Whenever we enter a new field we discover that it has a pre-established and taken-for-granted structure of both meaning and power"* (p81) and the habitus of individual actors within a field (in this case, the field of social work) must develop into a *"feel for the game"* (p84). As will be seen, Filipino social workers who moved to England had to adapt to what was, in very many ways, a less comfortable, recognisable or 'taken-for granted' field, in which different 'rules of the game' were in play. It is with this transition in mind that we now consider briefly the meaning of the term 'hysteresis', before turning to offer some introductory thoughts on capital, as defined by Bourdieu and used in this thesis.

**Hysteresis**

As we have seen, Bourdieu saw habitus as a set of internalised external structures, acquired as a result of occupying a position in the social world (in this case, for example, as a social worker) and through which the world is understood. However, if a person's position changes (for example, by moving from the Philippines to practise in England), their habitus will be rendered less suitable or, at least, challenged. Bourdieu (1998, 1999) used the term *hysteresis* to explain such situations. Hysteresis refers to a dislocation of habitus resulting from change to a field or from a move from a familiar field to an unfamiliar one (Bourdieu, 1998). Indeed, the hysteresis effect may be seen to be a natural consequence of the two-way formative relationship between field and habitus, in which struggles occur over the nature of the field (between people with different stakes and access to capital) and actors have to make sense of changed environments (Kerr, 2009). In this thesis, therefore, hysteresis is defined in the sense of a personal and professional culture shock expressed (and very much felt) by Filipino workers who had moved to England.

**Capital**

In entering the field of social work, individuals bring *and* accumulate capital in various forms. Indeed, access to different types and 'amounts' of capital brings with it different forms of power and influence within the field of social work. Bourdieu

(1999) identified four forms of capital, of which the following have most relevance to this thesis. For Bourdieu, one accumulates *social capital* through connections, which here includes professional networks, academic association and wider membership of groups within society. However, Bourdieu also wrote about *cultural capital*, which – in this context – relates to formal training and registration but also to the less formal processes by which individuals adopt approaches and attitudes which share some commonality with other members of a field. Finally, Bourdieu identifies the *symbolic capital* which lends social legitimacy to the professional power of, for example, social workers. This thesis reflects upon some of the processes through which individual social workers develop and use capital in engaging with service users and in 'struggles' within the field of social work. On moving to England, social workers described having less social and cultural capital both generally and in practice contexts. Meanwhile, they were seen to be negotiating different forms of symbolic power (for example, identifying more legally-based power but a less grateful or compliant client base). Nonetheless, the data suggested that Filipino social workers in England went on to gain capital through processes including training, observation and supervision, by seeking to understand local culture and behaviours and by adopting some of the approaches and practices of their new teams and colleagues.

**Global North & Global South**

Throughout this thesis, the terms 'Global North' and 'Global South' are used when distinguishing between richer and poorer nations of the world. This terminology has been in increasing use since the publication of the Brandt Report in 1980 (Brandt 1980). For Mosoetsa and Williams (2012, p4), the *"idea of the global South is meant to identify countries in similar economic and geopolitical positions in the global capitalist system and to highlight their shared strategic objectives and interests".* On the other hand, the terms 'developed' and 'developing', when applied to nations or regions, suggest some 'ideal' to which countries should aspire and thus undervalue other dimensions of culture, promoting a particular (capitalist) model of development (Rigg, 2007). These terms are, therefore, avoided and the position taken by Payne and Askeland (2008) is adopted: *"We refer to North and South as collective terms denoting the difference between rich and economically developed nations and poorer nations with less developed economies".*

It is acknowledged that, although the regions of the world lying below the equator are generally less affluent than those situated above the equator, there are some significant exceptions (for example, Australia and New Zealand). Indeed, the Philippines is located above the equator and therefore within the northern hemisphere. However, the terms 'Global North' and 'Global South' refer not only to geography but also to socio-economic differences which, as Rigg (2007) suggests, are not necessarily a function of, geography. It is acknowledged that any categorisations remain unsatisfactory but suggested that these terms are in common usage and increasingly widely understood (Williams, Bradley, Devadason & Erickson, 2013). Where the language of 'Global North' and 'Global South' is employed in this thesis it should, therefore, be understood in the manner explained here.

**Service User**

Throughout this thesis, the term 'service user' is employed when describing people who receive input from a social worker. The word 'client' is avoided where possible, as it implicitly places the social worker in the position of expert. Though one could argue that this more accurately reflects power imbalances in professional relationships, the term 'service user' goes some way towards addressing notions of dependence and empowerment. Both terms imply an individualistic or casework model but, importantly, this thesis also encompasses social work with groups and communities.

**Social Worker**

One further issue requires initial discussion, here. Lyons, Manion & Carlsen (2006), among others, draw attention to the problem of defining 'who counts' as a social worker. Posts and agencies called 'social work' in some countries are not seen as such in others. Qualification and registration requirements vary around the world, as does the content of qualifying programmes (Hussein, Stevens & Manthorpe, 2010; Weiss & Welbourne, 2007). A 'solution' for Lyons, Manion & Carlsen (2006) is to adopt the phrase 'social professionals', as a more fluid definition of roles which social work may undertake in differing contexts. There is much merit in such a definition. Indeed, as this research project proceeded, the stark differences in public and professional understandings of what social work 'is' became ever more apparent.

However, it was also important to place parameters around who might be selected as research participants. It was therefore decided that, where interviews were held with social workers, these would be professionally qualified and working in (or having worked in) positions for which a qualified social worker was required by the employing agency. This issue is revisited in the thesis.

Having considered some initial definitional issues, this chapter now turns to a question asked by most of the research participants: 'Why did you choose to look at the Philippines?'

## 1.4 Why the Philippines & England?

There were conceptual, pragmatic and personal reasons for considering the experience of workers in/from the Philippines. Given the researcher's connections through living and working in Asia, countries including Thailand, Taiwan and Cambodia were considered. Although a significant number of social workers in England qualified overseas, fewer are from the Global South. The only Southeast Asian 'developing' country with a significant presence in England was the Philippines. In May 2009, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) confirmed there were 109 Filipino social workers registered with them [email dated 13.5.09 held by researcher]. As the study progressed, it became apparent that fewer were currently employed as social workers in England, with some having moved on to other countries or never taken up employment in social work. This raises two issues: firstly, though the participants provided rich data and a meaning and validity to the findings, no claims of statistical significance are made, in terms of Filipino workers in the Philippines or England or social workers practising 'internationally' in general. This study concerns itself with the experiences and perspectives of 33 participants: social workers, social work academics and policy makers in the Philippines and a number of Filipino workers practising in England. The thesis considers what this data might mean for an understanding of social work identity and purpose in the Philippines for those undergoing 'professional transition' and for the core meaning of social work. Above all, there is significant validity in presenting voices seldom heard in international social work literature.

The Philippines was also chosen because there is a reasonably developed indigenous social work literature (Landa Jocano, 1980; Veneracion, 2003; Yu, 2006; Lee-Mendoza, 2008) and a well-established literature considering migration from the country, often associated with care work (Parrenas, 2001; Lan, 2003; Nititham, 2011). Furthermore, the Philippine Association of Social Workers (which facilitated access to participants) was established over 60 years ago, which suggested that social work was a relatively established profession in the Philippines. Importantly, the Philippines offers an intriguing 'case study', having sought to adopt and adapt western social work theories and approaches within a society which had very different cultural norms and social structures but was also subjected to (broadly Christian) colonial influence (Constantino & Constantino, 1978). Social work in the country is, in part, a product of 'professional imperialism' (Midgley, 1981), having seen the imposition of social policy and welfare practices from Spain and the US. However, there is also evidence of efforts to indigenise and 'authentise' (Walton & Nasr, 1988) social work knowledge and approaches in the Philippines.

There was, therefore, a considered rationale for selecting the Philippines as the 'host' country for this research. However, the question, 'why England?' should also be addressed. Firstly, the researcher was troubled by the impact of neoliberalism and processes of managerialism upon social work in England (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Evans & Harris, 2004; Harlow, Berg Luleå, Barry & Chandler, 2013) and interested in alternative ways of organising and practising social work. More importantly, England was the country and social work the researcher knew best, having practised and taught social work there. Any research into processes of transition, therefore, was always going to involve transition *to* the UK. However, to talk of 'British' or UK social work hides a good number of differences (across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) in terms of professional profile and legal/policy frameworks. As most Filipino social workers in the UK were in England, the focus was narrowed to the Philippines and England.

Having said something of the background to, and evolving motivation for, this research project, the chapter now sketches-in some demographic features of the Philippines.

## 1.5 The Philippines: A Demographic Outline

The following summary is based upon information from the Australian Government website (AusAID, 2011), the UN Development Programme website (referenced below) and the Philippine Government's own Philippines Midterm Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals 2007 (National Economic and Development Authority/United Nations Country Team, 2007). Australia, through its overseas aid program is one of the largest international donors to the Philippines and its website contained useful information. This section is intended to offer a broad overview only, rather than definitive information.

The Philippines comprises 7,107 islands, though the 3 main groups of islands are Mindanao (the southernmost islands), the Visayas (central) and Luzon (in the north of the archipelago), on which Manila is situated.

Map from CIA World Factbook, 2007.

Figure 1 Map of the Philippines

The Philippines has one of the highest rates of population growth in Asia. Its estimated population in 2007 was 88.7 million and the projected figure for 2015 is

approximately 102 million. Around 80% of the population are Catholic and 5% Muslim (of whom, the majority live in Mindanao). Although there are more than 80 languages and dialects, most people speak Filipino (closely related to Tagalog) and many, particularly in urban areas, speak English.

External commentators and the Philippine Government acknowledge poverty as a prevailing issue, especially (but not exclusively) in rural parts of the country and in the south (where armed conflict remains a feature). According to AusAID (2011), 44% of the population were living on less than US$2 a day in 2006 and, *"the actual number of people living in poverty has increased over the last two decades".* The UN Development Programme website stated that 26.5 percent of the total population lives below the poverty line, including 10 million women (accessed 10.4.14 at: www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/countryinfo). Around 10% of the population work overseas, and Remittances from Filipino Workers Overseas (FWOs) account for around 10% of GDP.

Contributing factors to this situation include global economic crises, natural disasters, high unemployment, a failing agricultural sector, high population growth and inadequate infrastructure and basic services. The impact of natural disasters and armed conflict must not be understated: millions have been displaced by such occurrences. Again, AusAID (2011) state that, *"the poorest 20 per cent of the population [account] for only 5 per cent of total income or consumption."* However, according to the UN Development Programme, *"Despite having widespread poverty, the Philippines has fared relatively well in Human Development Index (HDI), particularly in comparison to other Southeast Asian nations. In 2012, Philippines' economy outpaced the growth of its neighboring countries with 6.6 percent growth rate."* The country also has a 95.4% adult literacy rate (accessed 10.4.14 at: http://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/countryinfo/)

Though much more will be said of the Philippines as this thesis proceeds, it is hoped that this summary offers an indication of the context within which social work is defined and the potential constraints it faces in seeking professional influence. In circumstances such as these, and given that many Filipinos speak and write English, it is unsurprising that large numbers (though not typically from the very poorest parts

of society) seek work overseas as a way out of poverty. As will become apparent, many participants spoke of struggling, as qualified social workers in the Philippines, to earn sufficient to cover their outgoings and support their families.

## 1.6 Original Contributions, Potential Audiences and Concluding Comments

The originality of this thesis is derived from several aspects of the research project. Firstly, there is almost no published work in which the perspectives of those directly involved in Philippine social work are presented. No apology is made for devoting two chapters to those voices, which say much about practice in a country that rarely features in any detail in the international social work literature. A third 'data chapter' similarly provides space for the perspectives of Filipino workers in England. Indeed, this partial focus on transition and 'views from a new place' are under-represented in the social work literature, with none considering the specific case of the Philippines and England. Finally, the application of Bourdieusian theory to social work has been explored in few articles and, again, never in relation to the Philippines or to economic migration and identity within social work.

With these points in mind, one can identify a number of potential audiences for this work. Firstly, it is hoped that the research will be of interest to social work practitioners, academics and policy makers in the Philippines and efforts will be made to make the findings available in the country. The two current publications (Price & Artaraz, 2013; Price, 2014) make a start in this direction. Social workers considering moving to England (perhaps from a range of countries) should also be able to identify relevant messages from the findings which could help them to prepare for such a transition. It is suggested, also, that prospective employers of social workers (and perhaps other professionals) from overseas generally and from the Philippines in particular are a potential audience for aspects of the work. There are probably two further audiences for the thesis or for publications based upon the research. These are, firstly, academics interested in Bourdieu (in particular, the application of Bourdieu's ideas to work and the professions) and, secondly, those situated within the academic area one might call 'international social work'. The

thesis addresses issues of identity, motivation, purpose and definition that continue to interest social work academia and the profession internationally.

This chapter has begun to explain the study, why it was undertaken and the academic and practice areas to which it seeks to contribute. The thesis turns next to findings from the Literature Review, with Chapter 2 focusing upon establishing a theoretical framework and Chapter 3 identifying key themes from the international and Philippine social work literature in order to situate the field of social work in the Philippines within historical and international context.

# Chapter 2: Towards a Conceptual Framework

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter integrates messages from a range of broadly theoretical literature, some of which shaped the project from the outset and some of which emerged as pertinent as the research moved forward. The unifying concern across the chapter and the fundamental reason for using the literature presented, is a sociological one: that of mediating the place of social structure and human agency. To begin to understand Philippine social work required, in part, knowledge of what social workers do and why they think they are doing it. However, a critical realist approach to research implies that the parameters of agency, of what is possible (or perceived possible) are, in part, shaped by social structures. The recognition of the interplay between agency and structure underpins much social work theory, including that of Payne (2014), Thompson (2012) and Fook (2012), whose ideas are revisited here. It is acknowledged that an entire thesis focusing even upon one dimension of social structure could only scratch the surface. However, for the purposes of this thesis, social structure is taken to mean enduring relationships between social groups maintained by social stratification and institutions and revealed in forms of social capital, expectations and behaviours. The work of Bourdieu (1997), introduced in this chapter, acknowledged the agency of citizens (for example, as social workers or service users) but recognised the power relations within social groups (including professions) and between dominant and less-powerful groups. The place of social structures including economy, religion, family and cultural systems is discussed throughout this thesis and all are seen to influence the worldview and practice of individual social workers and the profession locally and internationally. Again, the focus is on what it is to be a social worker and to do social work, emphasising that this does not happen in a vacuum. All of this informs thoughts upon the extent to which social work should be seen as mostly situated practice or as having some international ‘essence’.

This chapter employs current literature to situate and frame the subsequent discussion and analysis of social work in the Philippines. Whilst Chapter 3 will draw upon literature specifically related to Philippine social work and places this in historical and international context, here we identify, review and integrate key themes from a wider range of social work and sociological literature in order to develop a conceptual and analytical framework for the thesis. The chapter rehearses some central dimensions of – and sites of disagreement about – social work purpose and orientation: as seeking social change or maintenance; as operating at a collective or individualised level; and so on. The chapter is broad-based, deliberately selecting insights and perspectives from a range of literatures, for reasons which are explained as the chapter progresses. The overall aims are to discuss the construction of individual social work identity, drawing upon the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus and capital; to place this within a discussion of what 'professional' social work is (using Bourdieu's notion of 'field'); and to make connections with relevant debates within the academic field(s) of social work theory and 'international social work'. In doing this, some core tenets of attempts to define and theorise social work and to articulate what Payne (2005, p3) might describe as the nature of its possibilities, in contexts of change and continuity, are explored. Consideration is also given to literature on 'professionalisation', identity and motivation (as a 'professional' social worker). The chapter draws also upon literature considering vocation and the influence of religion and spirituality in relation to work generally and social work in particular, an area of literature which emerged as necessary to inform data analysis. By considering the international, professional and personal, the chapter acknowledges macro/structural dimensions (making connections to 'field') and micro or individual factors (habitus, perhaps) that influence practice.

## 2.2 Approaching the Research

As has been said, this research was approached with a 'sociological imagination' (Wright-Mills, 1959) or from a position of giving due weight to the impact of social structure *and* the potential for human agency. The expectations and experiences we have reflect, in large part, our location in relation to processes of stratification,

division, identity-formation and oppression. An underlying theme of this thesis is that recipients of social work input usually need - or receive - support *because* they are unable to secure this for themselves and often in circumstances where the effect of social divisions (for example, social class, disability, age) contribute significantly to their situation. Social work can - and does - compound the oppression people face in their lives (Smith, 2008) and, often, works within or alongside systems that serve to blame individuals or communities rather than confront or even acknowledge structural cause (Jones, 2011). The ways in which 'problems' and 'needs' are conceptualised, by social work, government and society, shape the domains within which social work seeks or is permitted to operate. At the time of undertaking this research, there was some evidence of a re-developing challenge from radical social work perspectives in England (Lavalette, 2011) and this thesis seeks to contribute to those perspectives, by considering where individual and collective social work identity and orientation sits in this debate.

The thesis reflects and engages with a critical realist worldview, one that rejects the determinism of structural thinking and the 'infinite possibility' of some postmodern ontological positions. It sits closer to the critical approach of Fook (2012) who, building upon notions from postmodernism, critical social theory and anti-oppressive social work theory, suggests that social work should be, *"primarily concerned with practising in ways which further a society without domination, exploitation and oppression… on how structures dominate, but also on how people construct and are constructed by changing social structures and relations..."* (Fook, 2002, p18). Fook (1993, 2012) questions typifications of social work that, for example, suggest community-based or collective forms of practice have inherently more critical potential than one-to-one casework approaches. Similarly, whilst acknowledging the 'existence' of structural forms of oppression, and discrimination related to social divisions, Fook urges social work to avoid, *"constructing a passive 'victim' identity amongst the disadvantaged"* (2002, p9) and to acknowledge the value (including political potential) which 'individualised' forms of social work might contribute. Fook's writing returned to me whilst in the Philippines and as I began to analyse the data gathered there and in the UK. Why did social work in the Philippines strike me as 'more radical' than that typically practised in England? When Filipino social workers in the UK reminisced about community social work in the Philippines, what was it

that they were missing? What, indeed, might constitute a more emancipatory model of social work and does it involve a shift towards something more collective?

Writing about social work in the UK, Ferguson & Woodward (2009, p16) make the following comment:

*"Any approach that locates the sources of people's problems primarily in the structures of the society in which we live, and which encourages social workers to challenge these structures in their day-to-day practice, is likely to be viewed less favourably by governments and funding bodies than those approaches that instead highlight clients' individual inadequacies, faulty thought patterns or stunted emotional development... not only radical approaches but also collective approaches in general, including community development, have fallen off the agenda of many social work courses and agencies."*

Undertaking the research for this thesis led to a questioning of the suggestion, implicit in the above quotation, that collective and/or community approaches are, in themselves, more likely to be critical in nature and to foster social change. The individual identity, motivation and orientation of each social worker were identified as having a significant impact upon their recognition and use of professional agency, even though this is practised in a context of social structures and divisions and of the professional 'field'.

## 2.3 The Professional Journey

When originally conceived, it was intended that this thesis would mostly address professional migration from the Philippines to England. However, the 'critical gaze' of the researcher (which, for C. Wright-Mills (1959) implies research which is alert to political, historical and structural context) settled increasingly upon data gathered in the Philippines. It seemed necessary to interrogate that data fully before considering the position of those who had taken a further step of moving to England. Of course, such economic migration cannot be understood outside of broader debates about globalisation, which informed the research. Writers such as Stephen Castles

(Castles, 2006; Castles & Miller, 2008) have commented extensively on shifting approaches to immigration in the Global North, for example from assimilation to multiculturalism and arguably back to assimilation as core policy drivers. Processes of migration in part constructed the field of social work in the Philippines today and how individual workers construct their professional identities. Also, whilst the focus is not on the stories of workers who have travelled from Global South to North, notions of transferability are relevant to the movement of social work to (and imposition of non-indigenous religious teachings and professional practices upon) the Philippines. In this regard, an article by Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999) was formative in developing this study, particularly in terms of research focus and the shape of the interview guide. The article examined how social workers in India implemented and 'indigenised' an American treatment programme for alcohol dependency. There are clear limitations to the applicability of the work to this thesis, not least that the article was published 15 years ago and addresses neither England nor the Philippines. However, in revisiting debates about the development of social work in Asia, Nimmagadda and Cowger draw attention to a range of perspectives (Ejaz, 1991; Kulkarni, 1993) on the extent to which 'developing' countries and social work within those countries have been influenced by Western (and predominantly American) knowledge, values and social structures. The impact of the USA (and Spain) upon society and social work is critical.

Nimmagadda and Cowger say much about adaptations made by social workers using 'imported' techniques in an Asian context. More importantly, by drawing attention to the layers and dimensions of indigenisation, the article informed a 'working model' devised for this study. The diagram on the following page sets out a series of 'stages' or 'forces' that might be seen as shaping the habitus and professional identity of a Filipino social worker, from before qualification to a point of 'adjustment' to social work in England. Although the linear presentation over-simplifies the processes involved, it provides a model which helped identify areas of enquiry within the study and informed the data analysis.

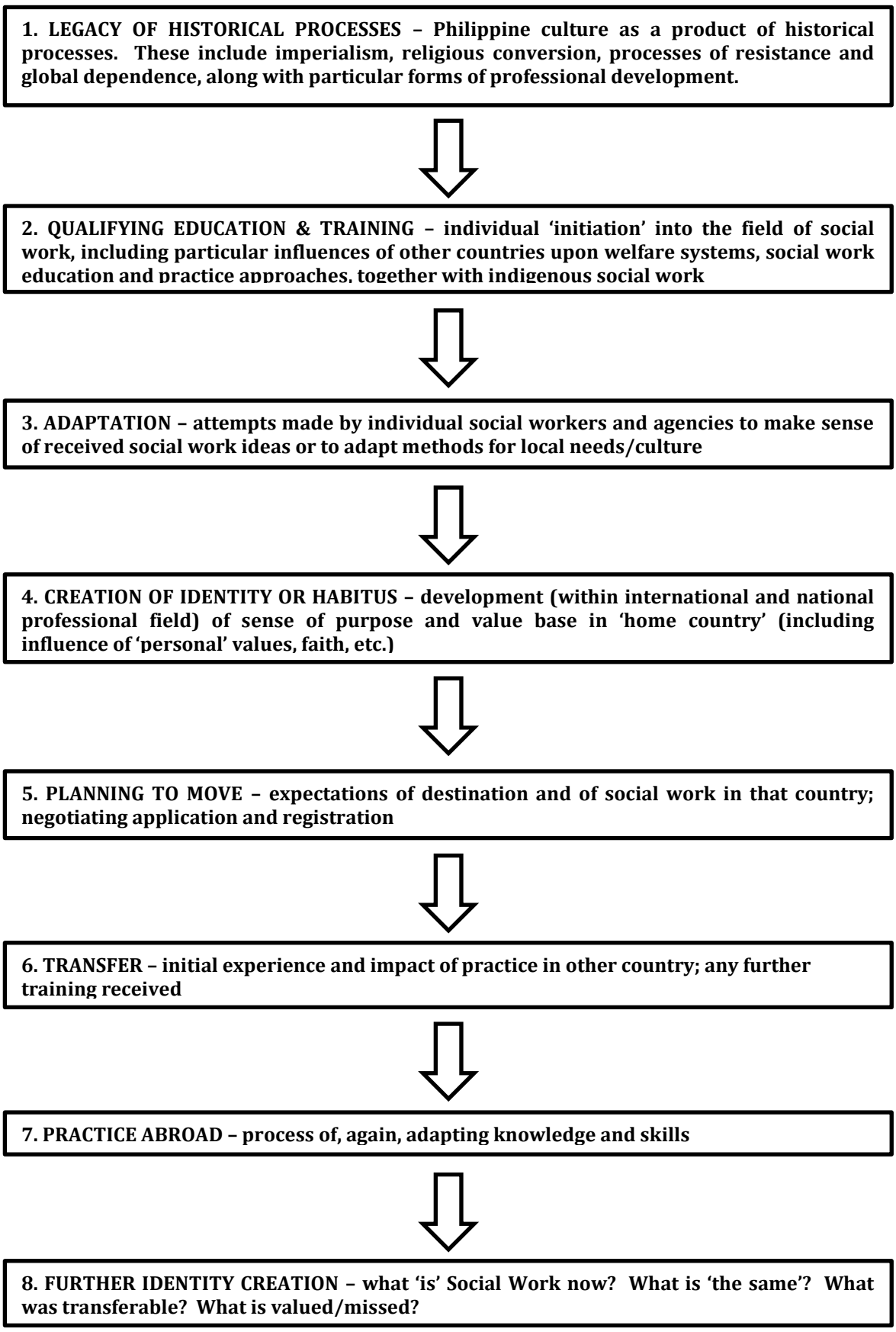


Figure 2 Development of Habitus (after Nimmagadda & Cowger)

The above model, produced before carrying out primary research, was a visual representation of a hypothesised process by which workers' professional identity and sense of self (habitus) might develop upon joining the field of professional social work and moving within the international field or between the fields of social work in the Philippines and England. The model sought also to represent the evolution of the field of social work in the Philippines in historical context. In some ways, it echoes elements of classical theories of learning (Kolb, 1984). Social workers in the Philippines often work in institutions and apply methods that are heavily influenced by the USA. Of course, as Nimmagadda and Cowger state, *"Social work practice models are laden with cultural values, norms, assumptions, attitudes and linguistic habits and beliefs, implicit and explicit, rational and irrational, formalized and intuitive"* (1999 p263). It was hypothesised, therefore, that Filipino workers were making sense of 'western' *and* indigenous approaches, in the context of Philippine society, own beliefs and values and the expectations and needs of Philippine service users. Through this process, individual social work identity would be forged. Parallels are, again, drawn with habitus, which Bourdieu described as the internalised dispositions and perceptions which social actors develop through, among other things, 'membership' of particular 'fields' (such as professions) and the associated development of cultural, economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1980; Wacquant, 2008). Where a worker seeks to practise overseas, in adapting to new national and professional cultures they re-adapt their knowledge and skills in a process Zubin (2006) calls 'double-culture shock'. Wacquant (2008, p267) draws our attention to the following particularly relevant dimension of Bourdieuian analysis: *"…persons experiencing transnational migration or undergoing great social mobility often possess segmented or conflictive dispositional sets".* This process, which Bourdieu named 'hysteresis', is especially pronounced across very different cultural contexts, where it is possible that the, *"…person's habitus will be thrown into complete disarray. Customs, social graces, deportment and basic meaning will all be problematised. What is more, the fields in the new culture will have different stakes and stakeholders"* (Houston, 2002, p161). These processes, and their outcomes in terms of individual perspectives on social work meaning, purpose and methods, are discussed towards the end of the thesis and will be the focus of further work.

As in Nimmagadda and Cowger's research, this study identified cultural and faith-based influences on Philippine social work and the motivations and identity of social workers. It also shed light on how the profession and social work academics tried to make 'western' social work approaches 'fit for purpose' (whilst under pressure to meet the demands of external aid providers). A desire to 'do good works' was a clear motivating factor for many workers. This provides a sense of vocation and ethic of care (Barnes, 2012) which underpins much social work effort in the country but which can manifest itself in forms that do not promote empowerment or self-actualisation. There is also evidence of social work being oriented towards social justice, advocacy and political change in the Philippines. Thus, the country provides fascinating insights into struggles *within* the field of social work, perhaps between notions of 'maintenance, stability or social harmony' versus 'empowerment, challenge and change'. Nimmagadda and Cowger highlighted tension between received 'western' notions of self-determination and the pragmatic and culturally-expected impulse to be directive. Again, similar dilemmas were identified among workers interviewed for this thesis.

All these tensions are influenced by social divisions and the expectations of workers and clients in terms of social hierarchies, family, gender and so on. However, Nimmagadda and Cowger also found that workers saw their own 'personality' as a key influence on their practice. Hence, notions of 'character' and use of self might be added to the web of factors impacting on practice. Finally, in the Philippines, much was made of perceived 'national' traits, personality and behaviours (usually conceptualised as aspects of Philippine culture, taught during qualifying training and considered factors to inform culturally appropriate or indigenous practice). Again, these dimensions of professional identity are explored in this thesis (see Chapter 5).

So, one article influenced significantly the design of this study and the analysis and writing-up of its findings. The article stresses the importance of being alert to processes by which individual workers' *"feelings, values, life history, practice experience, formal knowledge and internalized mentors seem to operate with one another for practice to emerge"* (p273). It is suggested, in this thesis, that the complex influence and interplay of social divisions and structures also exert considerable influence on that practice.

## 2.4 Core Themes of the Thesis

The following diagram summarises some central preoccupations of the thesis, as it relates to social work *in the Philippines*. It builds upon the earlier diagram but incorporates some main areas to be identified in the data chapters. Whereas the previous model was devised before undertaking primary research, this diagram arose from data analysis.

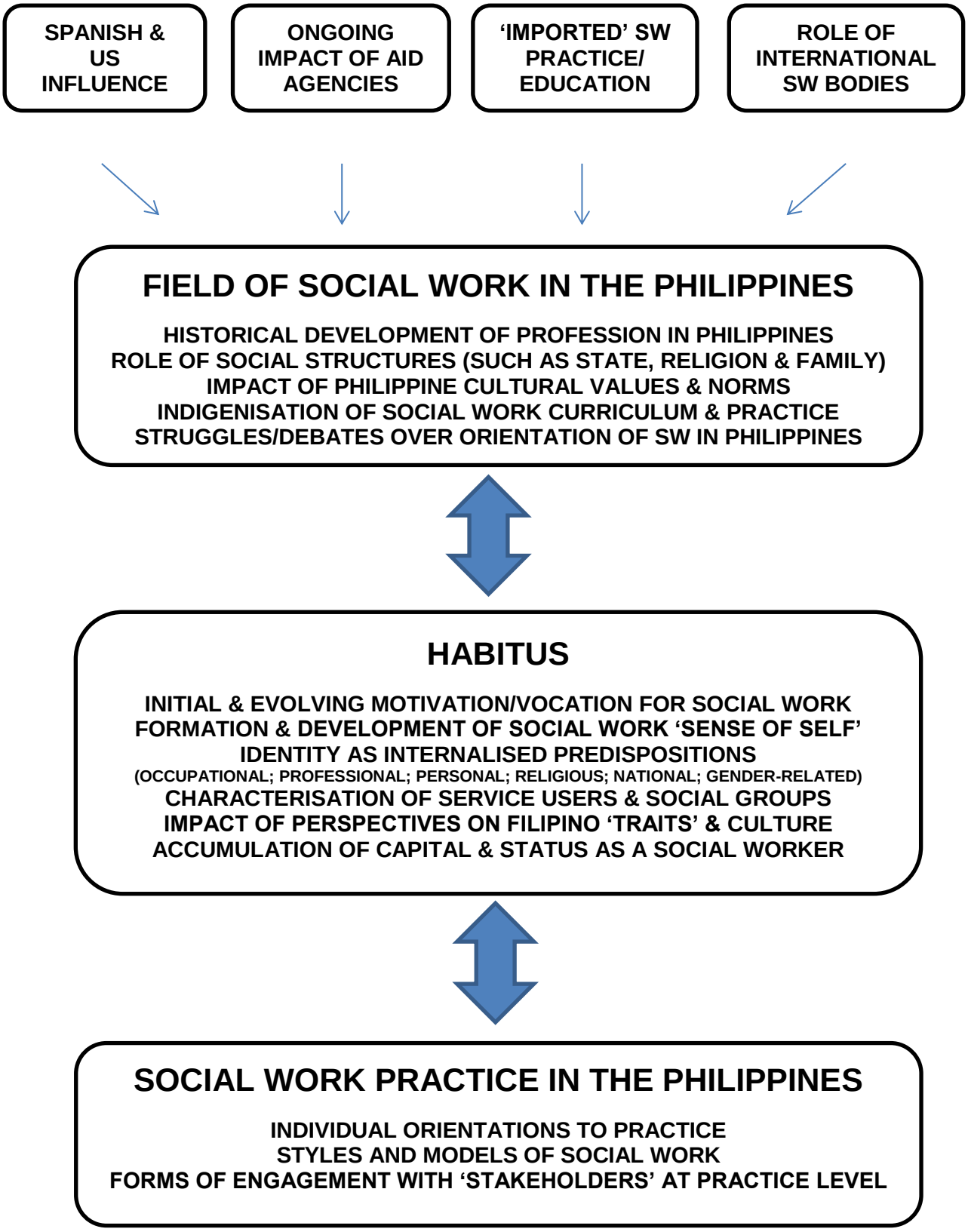


**Figure 3 Core Themes of Thesis**

The above diagram encompasses elements of structure and agency, of the 'professional journey' discussed earlier and of Bourdieusian concepts (field, habitus and capital), which are discussed later in this chapter. Chapters 5 and 6 consider the above factors in relation to Philippine social work, while Chapter 7 develops some of the areas in relation to Filipino workers in England. Findings suggested that Filipino social workers practising in England are, essentially, adapting their habitus, practices and identity to a different social work field or, at least, a different iteration of the international field.

Two models have been presented thus far. The first took the form of a flow chart incorporating forces that shape the field of social work in the Philippines and the layered processes by which a worker might be 'co-opted' into ways of *being* a social worker and *doing* social work. If that worker goes on to practise in another country, further adaptations of identity and practice are posited. The second model, presented as the above diagram, identified some key dimensions of the field of social work in the Philippines, some factors influencing social work practice there and suggested aspects of motivation and identity which shape what it is to 'be' a social worker in the Philippines. Both models are limited, as they reduce complex processes and factors into workable diagrammatic form. However, they offered a conceptual sounding board against which to consider the literature and the data. This is true, also, of one final model that draws upon two equally stylised models from established social work theorists and on the work of Pierre Bourdieu.

## 2.5 Field and Habitus: A Typology of Practice

As will become apparent, the Philippines essentially imported forms of welfare and social work which, over time, changed to reflect local culture and international development priorities. However, different providers of social work operate in very different ways and, indeed, individual workers adopt very different identities and orientations to practice. In this context, a typology of approaches to practice (which can be applied to the macro or micro, to field or habitus) was required. For the purposes of this thesis, two established models were combined to provide this. The model was intended not just to inform an analysis of what countries, agencies and

individual workers actually think and do but also to identify differing perspectives on social work 'mission', scope and potential. Radical social work accuses the profession of colluding with processes of oppression rather than exposing and challenging structural inequality (Davies & Leonard, 2004). However, as has been argued, there is sometimes a tendency to conflate notions of radicalism, collectivity and community, suggesting that community-based or collective approaches to practice are, inherently, more aligned to social justice and social change. This echoes the researcher's own initial response to social work in the Philippines. In seeking to question such assumptions, whilst retaining a focus on structure *and* agency, connections were made between the work of two social work theorists.

Payne suggests (2014, p21) that social work may be conceptualised as a discourse between three broad objectives or orientations, as shown here:

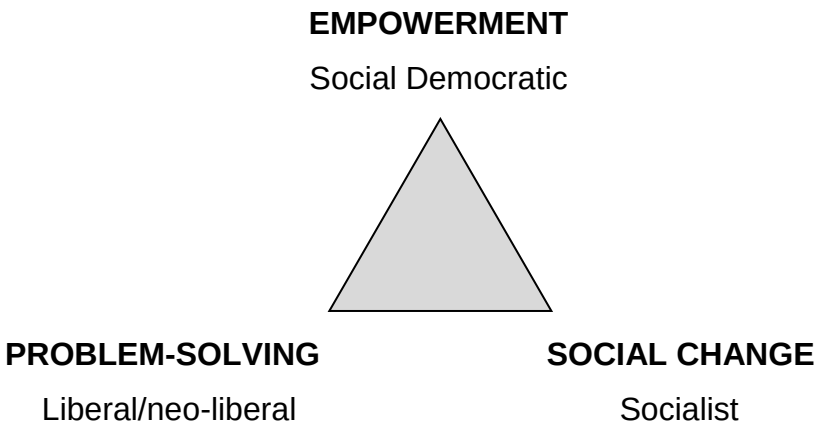


Figure 4 Payne's Typology of Social Work Orientations (Payne, 2014)

Payne's three 'types' of social work might be described as follows. Empowerment approaches to social work see wellbeing and self-fulfillment as the basis for individual and, in some forms, social change. People are empowered through reflection upon feelings and life choices, where the worker empowers service users, groups *or communities* to recognise and change or challenge their circumstances:

*"This view expresses in social work the social democratic political philosophy, that is, that economic and social development should go hand in hand to achieve individual and social improvement."* (Payne, 2014, p21)

Although this 'type' of social work might be most readily identified in one-to-one (sometimes therapeutic) and groupwork contexts, Payne maintains that it may seek wellbeing and growth at the community level. Social work as 'Problem-solving' echoes what Davies (1994) described as maintenance, with practice directed towards social stability, using legal intervention where necessary. Finally, Payne's 'Social Change' objective refers to transformational practice that promotes social justice and where workers raise consciousness of poverty and oppression, empowering people to challenge social relations and structures. Payne sees collective practice as the most likely approach here, with power gained through mutual support, exchange and action.

Having used this typology to inform data analysis, it became apparent (as Payne acknowledges) that definitions of social work are complex and thus, for example, that practice in the Philippines can be seen as simultaneously collectivist and neo-liberal or reformist. For Payne, these are not 'either/or' options. It is probably unhelpful and unrealistic to situate individual roles or agencies (or national welfare orientations) solely within one 'dimension'. Payne argues (2005b, p9) that social work constitutes a complex discourse, *"formed by the actions, understandings, thoughts and arguments of the people involved in it…".* Debate is ongoing within the profession, among academics and between 'social work' (whatever that may be), governments and wider society. In other words, there are struggles within the field(s) of social work and between social work and other fields. Individual workers (if, indeed, they question their purpose or reflect on their habitus) may situate themselves at particular points on the model. Their 'ideal' location or preferred form of practice may, however, be different from that which their current role imposes upon them. They might see themselves as struggling within a context to pursue a different form of practice. Thus, for example, one participant spoke of unease with practice in a 'social action' oriented agency. Furthermore, a social worker may identify aspects of their work that could be considered therapeutic but others that sit closer to a social order paradigm. Again, the territory is that of personal and professional identity within the wider context of the (contested) field of social work.

Social work has a long history of seeking to define and position itself, to articulate what unique perspectives and contributions it has to offer. These dialogues happen within the professional field, between professional fields and with government, society and service user. Tensions and debates within Philippine social work are highlighted in this thesis, making connections to historical and ongoing international influence. Of course, government ambitions and priorities change, in terms of social work roles and scope for action (more so where reliant on other countries/INGOs). Furthermore, those who 'use' services have perspectives upon what social work *is* and *should be*. In the Philippines, there is a broadly positive public disposition towards social work, though this may reflect functions that include providing direct, tangible assistance (as well as links with faith and to arguably the limited expectations of recipients). Social work may, or may not, also reflect the aspirations and preoccupations of the society in which it sits. To add further layers of difference, social work responds to particular cultural and national contexts but continues also to articulate its defining features and mission internationally (IFSW, 2000; IASSW/ICSW/IFSW, 2011).

Payne's model offers much to a discussion of purpose and identity in social work and can begin to provide a framework for this study. Though Payne cautions against a crude application of the model, sometimes such dualities can help one to 'see the wood for the trees'. His emphasis upon the socially-constructed nature of social work, without suggesting that there are no continuities, commonalities *or* social realities, accords with the critical realist ontology of this thesis: *"Instead of defining social work as one thing, one practice, one social system, I argue that social work constantly redefines itself as it is influenced by others, by social need and social change, and by its own internal discourse about its nature"* (Payne, 2005b, p2).

A second model which contributes to discussion of social work context and purpose is Neil Thompson's 'PCS' Model, which identifies 3 inter-related 'levels' at which discrimination and oppression operate and at which social work may challenge (or collude) with those processes (Thompson, 2012). It identifies spheres in which individual and social injustice occurs and suggests social work might focus its action and have more or less influence in different spheres. It is a model for conceptualising people's 'problems' and considering their causes but also points

towards domains within which social work might take place. Thompson (2012) presents his model as follows:

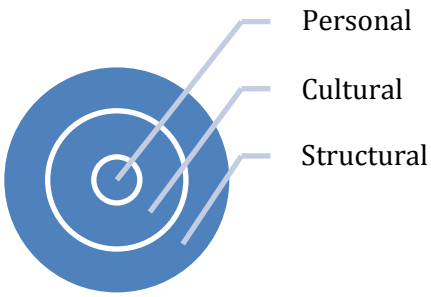


Figure 5 Thompson's PCS Model (Thompson, 2012)

The 'Personal' sphere is that of direct inter-personal practice, feelings and interactions. Discrimination here may be direct prejudice or practices that pathologise individuals and families. The 'Cultural' sphere might better be thought of as mediating processes. Here Thompson refers to social rules, 'shared' norms, dominant (and less powerful) beliefs and meanings and notions such as consensus and conformity. Finally, the 'Structural' level refers to social divisions and to the operation of power imbalances at societal level, including dominant social institutions and structural inequalities. The model, therefore, acknowledges agency and structure and speaks to the critical-realist ontology of the thesis.

Thompson (2012) suggests, therefore, that social work operating at the personal level must engage also with cultural processes and structural constraints. He acknowledges that the model understates the interplay and interconnections between the 3 levels. However, its strength is that (as with Bourdieu) marginalised or poor individuals and communities are seen to experience their lives within dominant cultural norms and a society where inequalities are patterned by social structure and social divisions. It is true that people contribute to continuance and change in cultural terms; that they experience their lives individually, in part reflecting their unique identities and locations in relation to social divisions; and that where there is structural oppression, there is also the potential to resist through personal agency. However, it is also true that poverty, sexism, racism and disablism, to offer just some examples, are 'felt' as very real manifestations of social structure, maintained in part through cultural and inter-personal process. For Bourdieu, social structure is *internalised* by service users and social workers alike (the *habitus*) and

actors in society (and within social *fields*, like the social work profession) exercise unequal and competing claims for the power that *capital* (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) brings.

The following diagram, bringing together the Payne and Thompson models, was produced, again, in the early stages of the project, as an attempt to produce a Typology of Practice. For this thesis, the literature and primary data were considered, inter alia, in relation to this model:

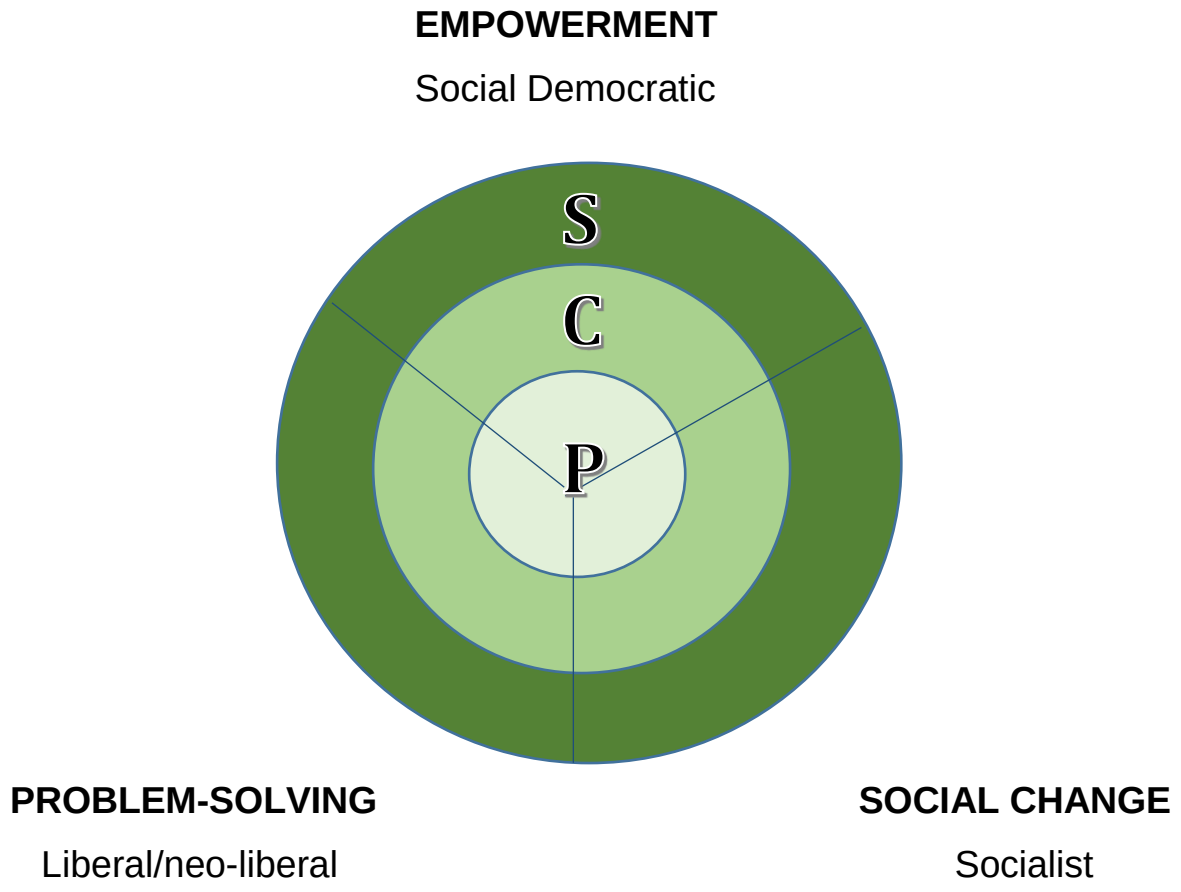


Figure 6 Typology of Practice (after Payne, 2014; Thompson, 2012)

As with all diagrammatic representations the above model has limitations. It cannot convey fluidity or tensions in terms of roles, identity or power relations. However, it proved a useful framework for considering issues such as the relationships between social work identity or ambition (for example, radical 'or' functional) and spheres of engagement (one-to-one, group, community, social action). Importantly, Thompson

(2010, p66) suggests that habitus (in the Bourdieusian sense) links the individual to the cultural. The above model was therefore an attempt to present the individual social worker within the field of social work and in the context of cultural and structural constraints and possibilities.

At the point of data analysis, the notion of intersectionality discussed by Huegler, Lyons and Pawar (2012, p 14) was also found to be a useful one. Given the focus of this research project on two nation states (and transition) and also on what Bourdieu called field and habitus (see below), the impact of 'location' – actual and symbolic – upon social work identity is a core theme. As will be seen, the literature and data also highlighted, *"… time-related perspectives, on the macro-level of historical developments…"* including tensions and power relations between Global North and South and during the Marcos era (Huegler, Lyons and Pawar, 2012, p 17). Finally, the theme of Diversity has also proved a major one for this thesis, for example at the macro level of imperialist oppression and in relation to questions which emerged about the nature of Anti Oppressive Practice in the Philippines.

We turn now to look briefly at social development perspectives in social work before considering some messages from the sociology of work and of the professions.

## 2.6 Social Work and Social Development

As will be seen, social work in the Philippines is significantly but not exclusively seen as 'social development'. It is necessary, therefore, to consider what this means and how social work in the country could be conceptualised in terms of the above models. In a different text, Payne (2012, p127) offers the following definition:

*"Social development: concentrates on the social change objective of social work: it encourages people affected by economic development to come together in groups to identify and take action on issues of shared concern and is aimed at enhancing social solidarity and resilience in responding to change."*

However, the extent to which social development orientations seek "social change" is debatable and reflects how one interprets such change. Payne maintains (2014, p241) that social development models essentially, *"… confirm and promote the existing social order"* but, it seems, do this with a wider focus than approaches at the personal/interpersonal level. Indeed, some forms of social development may be closer to the 'empowerment' mode suggested by Payne (and arguably contribute also to 'problem-solving' or maintenance visions/goals). Huegler, Lyons and Pawar (2012, p14) suggest that, *"…a social development perspective… utilising various levels of intervention, should be the 'sense of direction' for international social work"* but acknowledge that (whether or not part of social work) it may seek more or less radical/critical outcomes, saying (ibid, p7) it:

*"… is about systematically introducing a planned (sometimes radical) change process, releasing human potential, transforming people's determination, reorganizing and reorienting structures and strengthening the capacity of people and their institutions to meet human need. Additional goals include reducing inequalities and problems, creating opportunities and empowering people, achieving human welfare and well-being, improving relationships between people and their institutions, and, finally, ensuring economic development."*

Clearly, social development in social work will be oriented to goals that are broader than the individual and a combination of cultural and organisational factors will determine whether workers are specialists in the field or draw upon such techniques occasionally (Payne, 2014, p240). However, it will often be aligned to broader national and international political and economic objectives. In the Philippines, social work often involves, *"… social workers in community-based programmes that foster human capital development…" (Midgley, 1996, p21).* This can take many forms, often aligned closely to economic development (Midgley, 2008). Midgely provides the following example of the Philippines (1996, p22):

*"Social workers have also been active in the creation of micro-enterprises… These self-employment ventures include both small-scale individual and family owned businesses as well as larger cooperative enterprises. Social workers are extensively used in micro-enterprise development in Asian countries such as the Philippines*

*where the government abolished its traditional social assistance programme in the mid-1970s and replaced it with a micro-enterprise programme…"*

As will become apparent, social workers in the Philippines struggled with a public image that associated them with 'dole-out'. Although direct social assistance may have been abolished, they remain closely linked with the provision of food at times of crisis and charitable funds for those in poverty at times of particular need. With notable exceptions, those interviewed for this thesis rarely offered a critical judgment of social and economic structures and processes and tended to see individual or community effort as the way out of absolute poverty. Most Filipino participants working in England saw benefits dependency as problematic and indicative of the culture and aspirational deficits of individuals and families.

This thesis is concerned with the historical, international and culturally-specific processes shaping the field of social work and with the journeys made by individual workers into and within that field. It begins also to consider the impact of journeys taking workers overseas to 'continue' their practice. There is, therefore, a concern with the layered processes which construct professional identity and how these connect with a person's motivation, orientation and identity as a social worker. A typology has been proposed which takes Payne's orientations to practice and suggests (after Thompson) that these may operate at cultural and structural levels, as well as at the level of personal agency. The model, therefore, can be applied to an individual worker's practice context and sense of purpose or to an analysis of the broad orientation of social work in a particular agency or even country. In other words, it can be used to think about a field of social work or the professional habitus of a particular worker. Given the nature of much social work in the Philippines, we have looked at the possible place of social development within this and begun to consider how such approaches (as implemented in the Philippines) fit with radical or critical practice (Fook, 2012; Mullaly, 2007). The chapter now looks at some key sociological insights into work and people's reasons for doing work, along with perspectives on 'the professions', as these also shaped the data analysis process.

## 2.7 Some Messages from the Sociology of Work

This section explains how insights from the sociology of work were incorporated into the theoretical framework for this research. It begins with some brief comments on the sociology of professions, before considering what sociologists have said about work more generally.

### 2.7.1 Professions

Some within the sociology of professions have developed taxonomies that identify core characteristics of *any* profession (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933; Etzioni, 1966). These approaches describe how occupations undergo a process of 'functional' development to semi-profession and finally to profession, emphasising such factors as the development of national associations, regulation and specialised qualifications. Others (Becker et al., 1961; Siegrist, 2002; Evetts, 2003) examine processes of professional socialisation or initiation, focussing on the individual development of professional identity. This involves embracing pre-determined professional values, norms and behaviours. Bourdieu might have conceptualised this in terms of developing a professional habitus, through a process of acculturation within the field of, for example, social work. Whilst there is resistance within the field, for Bourdieu the power exerted by professions would be difficult to resist or even identify.

Beddoe (2013) draws on a study of New Zealand social workers' experiences of continuing professional education following the introduction of limited statutory registration. The study, which involved group and individual interviews with 40 workers, raises issues pertinent to this thesis, though caution is taken in applying it to the Philippine context. Citing Witz (1992), Beddoe writes of the 'professionalization project' whereby a group of skilled workers seek control over entry to that area of work, codifying what it does and the knowledge it should draw upon. Among her key findings were that workers had pride in the profession and saw its breadth as a strength but did not feel its achievements were widely recognised. They felt that continued education would strengthen their professional

identity, measuring this in terms of comparative status vis-à-vis other professionals with whom they worked. This, she felt, echoed the findings of Roach-Anleu (1992) that qualifications were more important to social workers in multidisciplinary settings where their expertise was questioned. Beddoe also cites Zufferey (2012) who suggested that social workers were perceived as 'jacks of all trades' who struggled to construct professional identities beyond reference to their agency settings. She acknowledges that social workers themselves sometimes saw their work as practical rather than academic, drawing on Green (2006). The notion of profession is returned to later in the thesis.

### 2.7.2 Sociology and Work

Before turning to a fuller application of Bourdieu to this project, some relevant debates and developments within the sociology of work should be introduced. Though the classic study by Goldthorpe et al (1968) of a British car factory in the 1960s could hardly be further from Philippine social work in the twenty-first century, it was one of the first studies to look beyond work conditions, levels of autonomy and so on and to pay attention to workers' attitudes, hopes and expectations. It therefore acknowledged the need to consider a person's motivation for, and orientation to, work. Over time, sociologists have come to see work as a source of identity and social status and tried to understand the *meaning* of work. For Bourdieu (1986), work is significantly a means to economic capital but also provides social and cultural capital and, for some (perhaps including social workers) significant symbolic capital.

Sociologists have also considered the place of vocation in relation to work. Weber (1997 [1905]) identified the significance of Protestant ethics for the development of capitalism, as a result of which people were urged to be industrious within secular vocations and plough accumulated wealth back into business, rather than spending on luxuries or, indeed, making donations to charity (which encouraged idleness). Whereas the 'Protestant Work Ethic' emphasised hard work and frugality as necessary for salvation, Catholicism emphasised attendance at church and 'good works'. As we shall see, the interplay of 'traditions' of Catholic charitable giving

when a Spanish colony and notions of targeted relief and limited state involvement in welfare introduced by the US during their period of colonial rule undoubtedly helped construct the Philippine approach to social work. Several participants suggested that social work was, for them, a morally defensible activity and perhaps a route to salvation. Faith (with professional values) helped them make sense of their roles. Indeed, central to this thesis are identities (religious, national, professional and personal) and motivations (such as faith, vocation and family influence), all of which impact upon what it means to be a social worker in the Philippines. Meanwhile, the fields of social welfare and social work there reflect social development imperatives which often translate into poor people being encouraged to work their way out of poverty or change their ways through conditional cash transfer schemes. Again, the concepts of field, habitus and capital offer an analytical lens through which to view these factors.

Bradley (2000) reminds us that people have many identities, of which work-related identity is only one, but one that reflects *and* impacts upon all our other identities. For a social worker, who may also be a parent and a political activist, her or his identities are an amalgamation of personal feelings and the value placed upon them by the public, 'clients', the state and perhaps even God. In Bourdieusian terms, factors affecting identity include the 'mission' endorsed by the profession and other social fields, the role of habitus in making sense of the world and also struggles over forms of capital within and beyond the profession. For Bourdieu, identities are not cast in stone, though habitus reflects childhood and reinforces dominant social structures and divisions (such as faith and national or ethnic identity). However, subsequent events, such as social work training, alter our habitus and reflexivity can bring habitus to the surface and allow one to question one's assumptions.

Gender and perceived gender roles are fundamental to identity in work generally (Bradley, 1989) and social work specifically. The notion of horizontal segregation (Hakim, 1979) remains evident in social work, a profession dominated by women. For some this reflects a 'natural' propensity to care among women but, of course, for others society has restricted admission to some paid work and encourages engagement in 'appropriate' occupations (Hearn, 1982; Williams, 1995). Indeed, what is considered 'work' - and which work is paid - is socially defined, with many

activities not seen as work (such as caring for children) traditionally allotted to women. Orme (2002, p803) points out the essentialising of care as a female role, which:

*"… not only denies the contribution of men and constructs them as non-caring [but] it also confines women to performing care functions in ways which impact on their capacity to be full citizens."*

Many participants in the research undertaken for this thesis spoke of 'being caring', not only individually but as a national trait or identity. Furthermore, though not necessarily a gendered dynamic, within social welfare and social work one can identify roles which attract payment and others that do not. Again, social structures such as government and family impact upon the work people do and the value afforded to such work. Whilst there is not room here for an extended discussion of gender in social work, it is discussed often within the social work literature (Balloch et al, 1995; Orme, 2002; Christie, 2006) and will reappear when considering the primary data.

Social work in the Philippines is not highly-paid, though it can offer at least some form of relative financial security in a country where so many live in poverty. In considering motivation for work, such extrinsic rewards are hugely important. However, Bradley et al (2000, cited in Erickson et al, 2009, p120-1) also discuss intrinsic rewards:

*"… satisfactions to the inner self that arise from working such as the use of skill, the challenge of work, the sense of self-worth that arises from work, and the construction of identity, particularly occupational identity…"*

In the Philippines, to *have* a job brings social capital and, unlike in some countries, to be a social worker provides even more. Intrinsic motivations might come from belonging to a profession, believing in the aims of the agency you work for or feelings of satisfaction through trying to make a difference. A sense of vocation is a strong form of intrinsic motivation and, in the Philippines, one which very often links to faith (predominantly Roman Catholic but also other Christian faiths and Islam).

Participants in this study fell broadly into two categories: those for whom a calling existed before entering the profession (often influenced by family, priests, etc.) and those who effectively stumbled into social work but came to 'love' the profession. For Pierre Bourdieu, to whose ideas we now turn, this might indicate habitus in action.

## 2.8 Bourdieu and this thesis

The work of Bourdieu offers a good deal to this project, as a framework for understanding how individual workers develop a professional identity which reflects their own biographies and education but also is formed by the national and international fields of social work. Indeed, Huegler, Lyons and Pawar (2012, p14) refer to Bourdieu's work when considering the significance of 'space' (discussed earlier in this chapter) for an understanding of social work:

*"… Bourdieu (1999) described 'physical space' (the site where people are physically present) and 'social space' (people's relationships or 'symbolic locations' in relation to other actors and objects)."*

No claim is made that the thesis develops Bourdieu's work, though it does offer a rare application of his ideas to social work and the first known attempt to do this in relation to the Philippines. His conceptual arsenal was able to 'hold' the research questions and enabled them to be considered from many angles. So, for example, the idea of 'field' applied to social work internationally and in particular countries and was sufficiently dynamic to allow for struggles within those fields between different social work visions (linking meaningfully with the work of Fook, Payne and Thompson). Meanwhile, the concept of habitus bridges structure and agency in a way that made sense when examining participants' accounts of motivation, identity and professional purpose. It helps us also to consider the extent to which habitus must adapt in order to practice in different contexts. Using Bourdieu's theoretical framework, one can consider, at a macro level, the nature of the field of international social work and, at a micro level, the factors that drive and shape an individual worker.

Bourdieu acknowledges that resistance occurs within fields and that individual actors can effect change, whilst insisting that various forms of capital exert power over the potential for agency. Bourdieu's preoccupation with the interplay between institutions (in their broadest sense) and 'acquired dispositions' within 'socialized bodies' (1993, p15) offers much to our understanding and development in practice of reflection or reflexivity in social work:

*"If it is true that the idea of personal opinion itself is socially determined, that it is a product of history reproduced by education, that our opinions are determined, then it is better to know this; and if we have some chance of having personal opinions, it's perhaps on condition that we know our opinions are not spontaneously so."*
(Bourdieu, 1993, p27).

Bourdieu wrote only briefly about social work itself (1999) but took a political stance that was critical of the march towards neoliberalism and alert to the plight of poor and marginalised people. Indeed, Bourdieu was dismissive of the notion of 'profession', seeing it as a category constructed by those with vested interests and suggesting that 'field' be used as an analytical unit instead. This section introduces the core dimensions of Bourdieu's approach and applies it to social work and the central concerns of this thesis. It looks first at the concept of field, before introducing the notion of habitus and Bourdieu's understanding of capital. Finally, the concept of symbolic violence is discussed, before applying these terms to social work in the Philippines.

For Bourdieu, social practices, *"… are not objectively determined, nor are they the product of free will"* and, in an attempt to bridge the agency-structure divide, he developed the concepts of field and habitus, with practice representing the dialectical relationship between these internal and external states (Ritzer, 2007, p174). People - and people as professionals - are shaped by social structures, expectations and norms but by no means is this an absolute or deterministic process, which reflects a broadly critical realist orientation. Callinicos (2007, p291) cites Bourdieu (1990, p14, 123) as follows:

*"… Bourdieu does not totally break with structuralism. Thus he toys with the formulations 'genetic structuralism' or 'constructivist structuralism in order to characterize his own position. He believes that 'there exist in the social world itself, and not merely in symbolic systems, language, myth, etc., objective structures which are independent of the consciousness and desire of agents and are capable of guiding or constraining their practices or their representations."*

The concept of field which, for Swingewood, is Bourdieu's *"…fundamental objectivist concept"* (2000, p212), draws in part upon Weber's ideas of rationalisation, discipline and regulation, which of course also have bearing upon the actions of professions. However, *"Bourdieu thinks of the concept of the field relationally rather than structurally"* (Ritzer, 2007, p178). In a field, individual agents and collectivities or institutions take positions and struggle for influence but, importantly, this operates within the constraints of the field itself. For Bourdieu (1993, p72):

*"Fields present themselves synchronically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)."*

This thesis seeks, as the above quotation suggests, to identify characteristics of the field of social work (in the Philippines and/or England) and of those social workers, social work academics and policy makers who are part of those fields. However, it also reflects upon the influence those actors (individually or collectively) have upon the field as well as ways in which the field is itself constrained and, in turn, shapes the practice and perceptions of those who practise within it. As Eisenberg (2008, p319) helpfully points out, fields occur, *"… on a local level reflecting particular situations as well as in broader, social contexts… Similar to a 3-D chess game, actors find themselves embedded within fields that are embedded in larger fields."* Thus, the field of social work is much bigger than just the profession, though of course professional associations and individual workers are a key part. Field refers to dominant and subversive positions within the social work hierarchy, including the relative dominance of 'western' social work, to its traditions and institutions. The field of social work (or a macro version of it) also 'comprises' academics and educators,

those with influence over social policy (locally and beyond), international social work associations and so on. One of the implications for this research is the existence of 'layers within layers' of social work field(s). The historical development of social work can be examined in terms of the establishment of an acknowledged field, different from other helping efforts and within which struggles exist around roles and purpose. One might look also at processes by which social workers are 'inducted' or 'co-opted' into the field (and, as we shall see below, adopt a 'revised' habitus). Importantly, all fields involve battles between more dominant voices and other actors (by no means necessarily at the level of individual people). One might ask whether Philippine social work is an 'iteration' of international social work or a separate field (or of course somewhere between these extremes). It was certainly possible to identify struggles within the field of Philippine social work from the comments made by workers about identity and purpose (not least in relation to focus on maintenance or change, person or environment).

So, the concept of field gives us a conceptual tool through which to consider the profession of social work as part of a wider field of social work within which battles take place over definition or mission, practices and functions. It also allows us to situate social work within wider social debates and fields of relative power, be they the Church or politics. After all, fields perform political functions and social work does this in very direct ways. Importantly, the field of social work seeks both to develop and to defend itself from perceived threats. We now turn to Bourdieu's concept of habitus. As Swingewood puts it,

*"Bourdieu is concerned with the general historical trend towards the autonomisation of fields and identifying mechanisms which produce change. In describing his standpoint as genetic structuralist, he identifies the dynamic principles producing change as the relation of habitus to field in which dispositions oriented agents both to the past and the present."* (Swingewood, 2000, p216)

The potential for change within the profession of social work (and the generation of personal-professional identity) lies somewhere in the relationship between habitus and field. Bourdieu defines habitus as follows (1977, p72):

*"The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor."*

The collective is 'deposited in each individual' in the form of habitus (Bourdieu, 1993, p15) from childhood but evolves as people re-learn the rules of the game in order to master the practices of 'new' fields (Moore, 2008), such as that of becoming a social worker. Through habitus, conscious factors interact with the unconscious to restrict perceptions of what is possible.

*"Habitus is the mental or cognitive structure through which people deal with the social world… internalized schemes through which they perceive, understand, appreciate and evaluate the social world. Through such schemes people both produce their practices and perceive and evaluate them."* (Ritzer, 2007, p175)

A social worker's habitus will have been formed within a particular socio-cultural context and augmented by messages and behaviours (collective practices) that, over time, have come to be expected of social workers. Critical reflection offers some possibility of identifying and perhaps challenging one's habitus. For Bourdieu, social structures (family, religion, social class, ethnicity) produce and control practice but in ways which are not deterministic but similar to the (more familiar to a British social worker) notion of 'internalised oppression' (Cudd, 2006). Habitus is restructured throughout life, as people engage with new experiences and fields. This research has afforded an opportunity to reflect on individual and collective habitus among Filipino social workers and to situate this within an analysis of the field(s) of social work. Whilst not naming it as such, participants were encouraged to bring to the surface aspects of their personal and professional habitus (or to identify processes which may have impacted upon that habitus), which have been analysed and placed

in the ‘field’ of international social work. All of this is, of course, situated within the context of social work seeking to identify what it is/does and also struggling to establish a position vis-à-vis the state (and powers beyond the nation state).

Though individuals become socialised into the field of social work and habitus tends to repeat itself, this does not mean they are passive. They can challenge and modify social work, at the level of individual practice and in broader policy or definitional ways. To become a professional social worker, an individual must accumulate capital as, indeed, must a profession in order to be accepted or validated. Bourdieu (1977) demonstrated that power was no longer wielded (always, at least) through processes of direct subjugation but identified four forms of capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) which contribute to an individual’s power and influence. In the field of social work, such capital may manifest itself in many ways: for example, in the form of dominant policy orientations such as managerialism or a development ethos; more ‘accepted’ and contested narratives within social work academia; or in the direct use (or abuse) of power in social work interventions with service users.

The first of Bourdieu’s forms of capital, economic capital, is probably less central to the focus of this thesis, though access to social work training (and therefore to the profession) is unlikely to be available easily to – or to be considered a realistic option by - those in society with very limited economic resources. In the Philippines, where many live in absolute poverty, education was described by participants as a prized and respected resource. This, in turn, contributed to a sense of deference to those, including social workers, with more formal education and associated qualifications.

Bourdieu uses the term *social capital* to refer to networks (in this case, professional or academic) and connections (including, for example, political contacts). Social workers accumulate social capital through their qualifying training and on-going practice experience. They learn the ‘rules of the game’ through contact with others (for social work, perhaps, influential colleagues or educators) and must work (consciously or otherwise) to maintain their social capital. As we shall see, the development of social capital for social workers in the Philippines might be exemplified by an expected ability to engage with local politicians through the Barangay (see section 3.6).

Thirdly, Bourdieu speaks of the accumulation of *cultural capital*, which – in this context – relates to formal processes such as registration and the less formal adoption of attitudes and ways of working which others in the field recognise. Thus, for example, Filipino social workers had learnt to conceptualise their practice as anti-poverty work (something which was less readily meaningful for those who had moved to the Philippines). Cultural capital, in the form of approaches, skills and values, also plays a large part in differentiating between professions. Though social work does not buy entry to social privilege, such factors are, of course, relative to other forms of work and one can certainly observe the machinations of social and cultural capital within the profession:

*"Institutionalized cultural capital alludes to the certifications (like degrees and diplomas) that give official acknowledgement to the possession of knowledge and abilities."* (Allan, 2006, p178)

The final form of capital discussed by Bourdieu is *symbolic capital*, which Allan (2006, p176) describes as, *"… the capacity to use symbols to create or solidify physical and social realities."* Whereas capital brings power, symbolic capital lends legitimacy to that power. Bourdieu (1977, p177-8) refers to symbolic capital as all *"… goods… that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation – which may be 'fair words' or smiles, handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults…"* Therefore, symbolic power creates and reveals social divisions and might be seen as a form of operation of power that is seen to be legitimate. Bourdieu wrote of symbolic violence, which Ritzer (2007,) presents as a 'soft' process through which power relations and the legitimacy of those in power are legitimated. Thus, in social work, factors such as the legislative basis for practice and the validity and value afforded by others in society to social work impact upon levels of symbolic power and social legitimacy of the use of professional power. Individuals in different professions and in different cultural contexts will need to do different things in order to gain and hang on to capital.

Social workers from the Philippines felt, on arriving and beginning to practice in England, that they had less social and cultural capital in practice contexts and

broader society. They spoke of a process of developing these forms of capital and identified also the need to accumulate *different* forms of symbolic power (for example, in contexts where forms of practice were legitimated in terms of law and due process but where power was less able to rest upon grateful or compliant service users than was perceived to be the case in the Philippines). Filipino workers in England did, however, accumulate capital through, for example, observing (and at times 'copying') the practice of colleagues in the 'new' field, through the supervision process (a site perhaps for passing on 'how things are done) and through a more general process of coming to understand cultural expectations and behaviours in England. The data suggests that, having left a social work field in which they had been relatively comfortable with their sense of self (or their habitus as a social worker) and undergone processes which, in Bourdieu's terms, demonstrate the hysteresis effect, Filipino social workers came, over time, to develop a 'feel for the game' of social work in England (see section 1.3).

This thesis seeks to apply, make sense of and offer some developmental thoughts in relation to the formula Bourdieu sets out in his most celebrated text (1984, p95):

*"[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice*

The study attempts to explain the genesis of the social world field and the contribution social workers and organisations might make to the continuation or change of that field.

Before looking further at the application of Bourdieu to professions and to social work, it is important to acknowledge some criticisms of his work. The most obvious *limitation* of Bourdieu for this piece of work, potentially at least, is the fact that he actually rejected the term 'profession' (seeing it as produced by those *within* the so-designated occupations rather than a sociologically-defined term) and suggested instead that we think in terms of "autonomous, historically constituted social fields" (Schinkel and Mirko Noordegraaf, 2011, p77). In response, however, the writers make the valid point that Bourdieu seems inconsistent in this respect, as he adopts other forms of language apparently uncritically, and go on to claim (p80*) "… that it is possible… to retain the concept of profession in some form while maintaining critical*

*distance from the "native" point of view… it is also possible to regard professions as occupational fields in Bourdieu's sense, and as themselves enmeshed in a larger field of struggle between such professional and extra-professional or newly professionalizing fields."*

It is this approach which has been taken in this research project. However, the main criticism of Bourdieu which requires response is what Turner (2010) terms his cynical approach. As Turner puts it (p156):

*"Bourdieu's work is littered with words like 'mis-recognition', 'invisibly', 'denial' and so on, words which suggest that he, Bourdieu, can see what others cannot see, and that it is the task of sociology to lay bare the mechanisms that those who enact them are unable to articulate."*

Indeed, reading Bourdieu at times brings to mind notions of 'false consciousness' and carries a somewhat reductionist message that social actors have limited ability to appraise the fields in which they are situated or to develop their own attitudes. He is accused of overstating the significance of structure over agency, despite seeking to forge connections between these. As Cuff et al (2006) point out, though the relationship between habitus and individual action is not a deterministic one, for some it is very close to this, whilst others critique Bourdieu's conceptualisation of forms of capital:

*"Marxists see only a Weberian-style dissolution of Marx, a transformation of the notion of class into an equivalent of 'status'."* (Cuff et al, 2006, p328).

Despite these reservations, for this work Bourdieu provides a theoretical framework which spoke to the data and avoided the equally reductionist tendencies of some forms of social constructionism. Indeed, one can argue robustly that the field of social work does indeed reproduce dominant social structures, not least social class. Also, in defense of Bourdieu, much social research (not least critical social work research) is, indeed, about seeing things that may not be immediately obvious to the participants or anyone else.

Another related criticism often levelled at Bourdieu's work is a perceived focus on selfish individuals struggling within fields to achieve greater status. As Swingewood puts it (2000, p217):

*"It is not a question of agents agonising over values, principles and fundamental beliefs in a critical and reflexive mode but of action which is wholly instrumental."*

As will be discussed in the next chapter, many people *do* agonise over the social work mission, locally and internationally. There are divisions and debates which Bourdieu's notion of field, taken at its purest, might underplay. However, the operation of social, cultural and symbolic capital cannot be underestimated, even in a supposedly altruistic profession. Importantly, there is a solid base of literature applying Bourdieu's conceptual framework to the professions (Artaraz, K., 2006; Rhynas, S. 2005; Schinkel & Mirko Noordegraaf, 2011) and some application to social work in particular (Garrett, 2007a, 2007b; Houston, 2002). This section now provides an overview of key themes from that literature.

Two articles examining professions using a Bourdieusian framework, were published by Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel (Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel, 2011; Schinkel and Mirko Noordegraaf, 2011). Here, they set out their approach to the professions, which echoes that taken for this thesis:

*"We regard professionalism as a form of symbolic capital, the substance of which is constantly at stake in power-driven contexts, both internally and externally. Professional fields are embedded in objective relations with other fields… Within each professional field, the legitimate substance of what it means to act in a "professional way" is constantly at stake. In turn, across various professional fields, within what Bourdieu describes as a larger field of power, the very idea or "formal content" of "professionalism" is subject to struggle and (re)negotiation."* (Schinkel and Mirko Noordegraaf, 2011, p67)

Having pointed out that professions typically define themselves in terms of 'good work' and a 'higher calling' (phrases which resonate particularly in the context of vocation and faith in Philippine social work), they go on to remind us that theorists

and researchers such as Leicht and Fennell (1997) and Evetts (2003) moved the sociology of professions beyond its earlier functional conceptualisations and development of taxonomies:

*"Functional approaches are then replaced by power-centred approaches that highlight clashes between professions, as well as within professions…"* (Schinkel and Mirko Noordegraaf, 2011, p70).

Schinkel and Mirko Noordegraaf's work speaks also to this research in making connections to historical and political context (2011, p85), seeing:

*"… "professionalism" as a form of symbolic capital characteristic of a historically constructed field of power. This can be linked to available constructionist and critical accounts of professionalism, but it also adds a lot."*

In the article attributed to Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel, they consider a study of conflicts between professionals and managers in terms of struggles over symbolic capital. There is certainly evidence of such conflicts in social work, though the profession can also be analysed in terms of battles with other professions. For Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel, Bourdieu offers a way to transcend the dualisms common in the sociology of the professions (2011, p103):

*"Meanwhile, the mainstream literature on professionalism is full of sharp divisions: between functional and power-centered approaches, between material and symbolic understandings, and between systemic and strategic outlooks. By contrast, Bourdieu's social theory… enables us to overcome such dualities."*

Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel begin (p98) to observe that the historic development and continuing evolution of professions can be observed, in political and economic context, through a Bourdieusian lens. A profession is a field, within which one can identify practices and forms of capital (qualifications, positions, networks) and which is striving for relative autonomy and influence (symbolic capital) in relation to other fields. Individual members undergo a process of adjusting to the professional field. A social worker's habitus *may* have 'fitted' the profession before

entering it but then adjusts over time, reminding us of the model (after Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999) proposed in Chapter 2. Again, Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel provide a helpful explication of this:

*"… the professional is not only educated in a technical sense. He or she is also socialized into a group as a member and really "becomes" a professional in an embodied sense. Over time he or she will develop a socially constituted capacity to act and acquire a professional habitus, a set of dispositions that influences how he or she perceives, thinks and acts. This embodiment of capital is more than subjective; it is influenced by objective social structures, not only within a (professional) field but also in society, such as class, family and (earlier) education."*

(Mirko Noordegraaf and Schinkel, 2011, p104)

When considering the data, attempts are made to identify factors shaping habitus (and external and internal factors shaping the field of social work). Again, one might refer to 'fields within fields', or those larger fields of power, in the context of globalisation and neo-liberalism, which shape the perception (or manipulation) of economic and social troubles and the policy priorities within which social workers operate.

Peillon's attempt to integrate Bourdieu into an understanding of social welfare provides important insights. With regard to the field of welfare, he says (1998, p217):

*"But another 'power resource' matters in the welfare field: the capacity of agents in the field to accede to 'individuals' in order to mould their behaviour… This form of power capital… can be conceptualised in terms of Bourdieu's framework. In the past, people such as doctors and priests possessed the cultural and symbolic capital which enabled them to patronise those they dealt with and command access to their privacy. This relationship was elaborated on the basis of a habitus organised around trust and deference. Nowadays this power of access to individuals is more likely to take place within a bureaucratic field... nearly always based on investigatory and classificatory practices…"*

It could be argued that Philippine social work relies both on 'expertise'/classification and, as we shall see, trust and deference. Peillon (1998, p222) states:

*"Two sets of practices are implicated here: one engendered by the habitus of those who deliver social benefits and services, the other by the habitus of those who receive such benefits and have to cope with official agencies."*

Thus, the habitus of the social worker *and* of the recipient of support play a part in constructing any interaction although, as Peillon points out, both are subject to the field of welfare and the larger field of social formation which, I suggest, includes national and international dimensions. Those forced to rely on social services in the Philippines no doubt possess little of any of Bourdieu's four forms of capital, though within their communities and families may possess capital in several ways.

Morberg, Lagerström and Dellve (2012) used field, habitus and capital as a framework for analysing and presenting data from interviews and focus groups with school nurses. The profession was seen to occupy a subordinate position within schools, where the dominant field (numerically and in terms of social, cultural and symbolic capital) was that of education. The school nurses perceived themselves in ways that demonstrated a different habitus and different forms of capital, which were valued and understood less in contexts where they had a minority presence. Again, relative capital within and between professions (and vis-à-vis other social groupings in the Philippines) is important for this thesis.

Another interesting application of Bourdieu can be found in Artaraz's article on professional habitus within 'Connexions' (a young people's careers service) in the UK (2006). Artaraz considers the impact on individual identity of professional cultures. Again, Bourdieu is seen to address both the structural and individual, whilst stressing the inter-relationship between the two. In his interviews with advisers from the service, Artaraz found resistance and a determination to retain a distinctive professional identity within a context of significant structural and cultural change, suggesting the ability of professional habitus both to adapt and struggle for continued 'levels' of capital within a shifting field.

Artaraz makes reference to research by Garrett (2002b) into the impact of the 'Connexions' culture. As we shall see, Garrett went on to be the most prominent proponent of the application of Bourdieu to social work, not just in relation to the profession but to its broader vision. However, the first direct attempt to understand the significance of Bourdieu for social work was made by Houston in 2002. Houston's project was to outline a model of culturally sensitive practice based on Bourdieu's work which, he says, *"… acknowledges, on the one hand, that there are irrepressible structures linked to the mode of production within capitalism that shape culture, while, on the other, it gives recognition to actors' abilities to effect change in their daily lives."* (Houston, 2002, p155). Thus, Houston (p156) appears to equate fields of power with culture and presents habitus as a rather more deterministic 'process' than Bourdieu intends:

*"For Bourdieu, there is a fundamental danger of misrecognizing how culture cements individuals and groups into patterns of domination. Because we are immersed in culture, it will determine our thoughts and actions – often in subliminal ways."*

Whilst some of his application feels crude, Houston (p159) does make the link – for social work, in particular – between reflective practice and habitus:

*"Unless we reflect on our personal habitus and the professional field in which it is anchored, there is a danger of replicating biased notions that have been inculcated through professional training, managerial directives or experiences in embattled social work agencies."*

For Houston, processes within the social work field such as training, supervision and policy expectations result in social workers perpetuating and contributing to symbolic violence. Though he perhaps tries too hard to bring the need for critical examination of habitus, field and capital around to a 'solution' in the form of 'conscientization', Houston (p163) raises questions which apply to social workers and service users:

*"Who is in the field? What stakes or interests feature? What types of capital are being used and by whom? Are there any alliances? Where are the main divisions? Are there any discernible contradictions between the various actors in the field..?"*

Importantly, Houston makes connections between the personal, cultural and

structural dimensions of anti-oppressive social work (Thompson, 2012) and the notions of field and habitus and the operation of capital in all its forms.

Garrett (2009, p39) goes so far as to suggest, about Bourdieu, that, *"… there are at least two significant ways in which he might aid in the construction of a reconfigured critical and 'radical' social work in the early twenty-first century."* Citing the aforementioned work of Peillon (1998), he argues firstly that an understanding of Bourdieu's social theory could alert workers to the potential to create or compound more or less positive manifestations of capital in the lives of 'clients' (p39). Thus, his ideas should inform direct practice, such as assessment. Secondly, and importantly, Garrett states (p40) that:

*"… Bourdieu's work could help social work to reflexively fold inwards, with social workers and 'social work academics' scrutinizing their own personal and collective habitus… to interrogate more closely these destabilized and evolving professional fields…"*

Garrett concludes that workers and academics must be alert to attacks on the autonomy and integrity of the field but also needed to fight within the field for more progressive ways forward. In an earlier article (2007b), Garrett asserts (p225) Bourdieu's *"role as a critical intellectual and activist, foe of neo-liberalism and defender of embattled public services"* and someone for whom (p238) *"the relation between people and their environments and more expansive ideas associated with the championing of liberation, human rights and social justice are all core themes..."*. His view is that (2007b, p240):

*"Still related to the importance of social workers' interrogating the spaces they occupy, Bourdieu encourages us, to see the social totality… His work emphasises how this is a more than abstract consideration because on a daily basis neo-liberalism bites into practice in social work and related fields…"*

Though relevant to all, this could not be more relevant to the Philippines and to the tensions facing social work there. The extent to which critical voices exist, in a country where demands for greater professionalisation and specialisation 'battle' with calls for collective, development perspectives and social action, will be discussed. However, as Dominelli puts it (2010, p164), social work could do worse than learn

from Bourdieu's thoughts on the 'tyranny of the market':

*"A critical, reflexive, holistic approach to practice enables social workers to become allies in acts of resistance to the logic of the market, which has elevated an economic order managed for the benefit of the few over social life, human need and the planet (Bourdieu, 1998)."*

Having discussed how Bourdieusian concepts are relevant to reviewing the literature and analysing and presenting themes from the data, we now consider theories of motivation for work and notions of personal and professional identity.

## 2.9 Social Work: Motivation & Identity

This section draws predominantly upon literature from and about the Global North and is used with caution. Nonetheless, issues of initial (and ongoing) motivation to be a social worker and of professional identity are an important theme in the research and what follows is an overview of literature which has informed the study in this regard.

An appropriate starting point is the seminal work of Perkin (1989) looking at the historic rise of professionalism. He identifies a process whereby the professional ideal became a powerful force in 'western' society: the belief in professionally-granted expertise; the ethic of service to society; and the claim of greater social efficiency, benefiting whole nations, derived from the contributions of the professions. These impacted heavily on public policy through the twentieth century and, *"… became the leading factor in the passing of those Edwardian social reforms which we now recognize with hindsight as the origins of the welfare state."* (Perkin, 1989, p155)

Perkin was, of course, writing of England but his articulation of processes of professional growth have much to offer more widely. It is probably the case that social workers never achieved the independence from which it could *"criticize without fear of the consequences"* (p379), though Perkin did see social work as a profession

which had achieved success in establishing itself, albeit as gatekeeper and part of the system:

*"Most of the social services have been organized around professional skills rather than client needs, for the obvious reason that the professionals came with the rise of public welfare to control access to the service and allocation of its resources at the point of provision." (Perkin, 1989, p348)*

In the Philippines, social work is also tied to the state, though the profession defines itself as a much broader (often literally) church. Social workers can be involved in disaster relief and working in conflict zones, where the help provided is much more tangible. However, particularly government social workers do take on roles of assessing eligibility for support. It is interesting to look at Philippine social work identities in these contexts.

A critical realist account of identity would suggest that there are 'external' structural/cultural influences on identity (such as class or religion) and more individualised or psychological factors. Parallels may be drawn with Bourdieu's conceptual framework: social capital; symbolic violence; field; and habitus. Approaching their research from a social constructionist perspective, Butler et al (2007, p285) offer the following thoughts on identity:

*"The need to give shape to personal experience, seek coherence through the process of selection and synthesis, ascribe consequence and value by such means, and make those accounts available to others is a prerequisite of the human condition… Identity is not fixed but dynamic, subject to 'thawing and freezing' as historical, social and psychological contexts change (Williams, 1996: 71)."*

So, whilst subscribing to a postmodern-feminist, narrative approach, the impact of what could equally be called social structure is acknowledged and there is a central concern with the relationship between the personal and the political in social work identity (Butler, et al, 2007, p281). Payne (2006) also sought to apply postmodern and social constructionist conceptions of identity to social work, suggesting that

identity derives from the interaction between consciousness of self and relationships with others, including other professions:

*"A professional identity is a social identity, interacting with personal identity."* (p140)

Payne cites Jenkins (1996), who sees identity as a dialectic between the internal and external dimensions of identity. The social work profession also has an identity reflecting debates, tensions and power relations within and outside the profession. Again, the relevance of Bourdieu's concepts will be discussed in this regard. Payne says (p140):

*"Thus, a social worker acquires a personal identity as a social worker that affects their general and professional behavior and attitudes, and this identity is created through the social processes that create the professional group. The personal identities of social workers contribute to the social construction of the social identity of the professional group."*

Payne reflects the view that, in postmodern society, there has been a shift from structure to agency and that identities are less socially ascribed than was formerly the case. Whilst this may be partly true, this thesis maintains that dominant forces continue to play a significant part in social control and the identities people see to be possible. Social work's identity is, in part, shaped by law, policy and social norms (which, in turn, reflect patriarchy, the power of capital and media and so on). In the Philippines, where the fluidity and resistance identified by postmodernist theory is less evident, religion plays a key role and the poor depend on international aid, the relative place of self and structure in forging identity must again be questioned. For Payne, there is not one identity but, *"… a constantly changing set of social works"* (p143). He suggests (p144) there are three inter-related arenas in which the identity of social work is created:

(1) *"a political-social-ideological cycle, in which political and social ideas affect the nature of social work in a society as debate changes"*

(2) *"an agency-professional cycle, in which professional organizations such as education and professional bodies interact with agencies to define the sort of social work that will be practiced"*

(3) *"a client-worker-agency cycle, in which demands from clients, patients and carers and professional colleagues change the kind of practice that social workers perform"*

In the Philippines, this suggests one might construct cross-cutting layers of identity, which filter down to and are absorbed and adapted by individual workers. When discussing individual professional identity, we must consider such aspects as dominant and minority political and cultural perspectives on social problems; the demands of those engaged in social action; the definitions of social work promulgated by international and national associations; the roles and tasks ascribed by agencies; the impact of education and training on identity; and the expectations and demands of other professions and of service users, individually or collectively.

There is some literature looking at motivation for (and evolution of professional identity after) becoming a social worker, though none in relation to the Philippines. This was, however, an area discussed by participants in the research for this thesis and is examined later. Jovelin (2001), writing of social workers in France, identified themes which felt familiar when reviewing what Filipino workers said about their journeys into the profession. His work builds on a series of studies which found that people justified their move into social work by reference to 'wanting to help' but that their stories suggested other influences including socio economic status, family history and feelings of having been failed by the education system (and therefore 'forced' into social work). Jovelin (2001) questioned the existence of vocation among more than half of his research participants, suggesting that they often became social workers for pragmatic reasons, out of necessity or because of some aspect of their personal story (such as failing to achieve the grades their parents had hoped for). However, he also identified a post hoc rationalisation of entering the profession, identifying with the value base of social work and suggesting that it 'fitted them' in some way. As we shall see, though some Filipino social workers spoke of vocation or family tradition, many talked of coming to the profession by accident but then of strongly identifying with (their version of) what social work stands for. Social work, it

seems, provided a sense of meaning and purpose but this came not before but after entering the profession. A proud professional identity, linked to personal identity, was constructed later, perhaps through socialisation into the field of social work and continued development of professional habitus. In a sense (Jovelin, p101), the hidden causes of choice of profession were resolved and rationalised once membership had been embraced.

For Jovelin, in considering motivation, one must consider both macro dimensions (the employment situation; the balance of social work across statutory and non-statutory settings; new social movements; range of social work roles and settings) and individual dimensions:

*"These factors will in turn interact with the personal biographies and motivations of individuals who have or who are intending to enter social work."* (2001, p95)

We will look both at historical and structural factors, including importantly the place of religions, in the Philippines as well as individual accounts of motivations for and orientation to social work. There is, it seems, perhaps a stronger vocational drive in the Philippines, for cultural reasons, and yet the picture is not simple, with few speaking of innate personal qualities. The tone of Jovelin's piece is uncomfortable in that the researcher appears to know better than the workers whose stories are presented and interpreted. In the Philippines, some participants named processes of initial ambivalence whilst others spoke of ethical, religious, personal or political motivations. We can certainly take from Jovelin's work the fact that the growth of professional identity is a complex process of adjustment that reflects the pre-existing field of social work (internationally and locally).

Another European academic, Silvia Fargion, researched dimensions of identity emerging from Italian social workers' accounts of their practice. In a 2006 article, echoing longstanding debates around social work as art or science, evidence-based or evidence-informed, she used Mannheim's discussion of two forms of thought (1953) to illuminate data from interviews in which 22 social workers gave accounts of their cases. Her hypothesis (p2578) was that workers who are 'Enlightenment Thinkers' would be forward looking, trusting in science and universal truths and

seeking to bring order to practice issues, whereas 'Romanticist Thinkers' would be more skeptical and not seeking to predict or control everything. Fargion did not necessarily find two types of 'thinker' in social work but did identify two styles of thought. Enlightenment thinking was, she said (p269), *"…the most widely legitimated model of professional practice"*, evident where workers spoke of systems, rules and process. However, this form of thought appeared to be rather more rule-driven than, ironically, grounded in theory. Meanwhile, the Romantic style of thinking was more accepting of unpredictability and of the part played by the worker in defining problems but was not indicative of anti-intellectualism or of basing decisions on emotion. Fargion's later (2008) qualitative study of social workers' views of the profession, again in Italy, pursued similar themes, suggesting three dimensions of (or contributory factors in) professional identity. She concluded that:

*"… we can identify in practitioners' representations different and opposing tensions: between social and psychological dimensions, between rigor and immediacy/spontaneity, between the idea of a relationship with knowledge as use of ready-made theories and as generating theory from practice."* (Fargion, 2008, p216)

Fargion states (p207) that, *"… despite being rooted in a particular national context, practitioners' self-representations identify themes that recur in international debates."* These are (p207) balancing three things: the individual and the social (or person and environment), the scientific and humanistic and the application or generation of theory. She did not, however, find a political or social justice orientation within the identity of Italian workers, suggesting that this might reflect a desire for 'professional neutrality'. This will be reflected upon in relation to social work identity in the Philippines. In this regard, Fargion reminds us (p206) that:

*"Stressing the existence of a common professional project is seen by some as a way to oppose the power of neo-liberal ideologies linked to globalization processes…"*

The aforementioned article by Butler, et al (2007) argues strongly for the reinjection of use of self and relationship into a social work overshadowed by evidence based practice. They are not anti-evidence but argue (as does Fook) that all knowledge ('findings' from assessment, service user knowledge, practice wisdom and personal

emotional response, social work theory and research) should be seen as incomplete, contradictory, uncertain and partial (p283). Using the phrase 'the personal is professional' (p290), they suggest that:

*"Current inequalities of power in most user-worker relationships are exacerbated by an imbalance of disclosure, such that the professional remains remote and unknown to the service user, often to quite an astonishing extent."* (Butler et al, 2007, p294).

The research draws upon a particular narrative tool, in which the sharing of stories and inter-subjective process is central. Whilst this may be a less common approach in the Philippines, the question of 'use of self' was (as will be demonstrated) one that arose frequently. One particular dimension of identity which also arose in the data, and to which the chapter now turns, was that of spirituality.

## 2.10 Social Work Motivation and Identity: The Place of Spirituality and Religion

As the data collection progressed, the need to undertake a fuller review of the literature around faith and spirituality became apparent. Some writers (Mathews, 2009; Neagoe, 2013) identify ambivalence or even hostility within social work (in some parts of the world, at least) towards faith and religion. Yet, for many social workers and service users, religious or spiritual beliefs form a key part of their identity. Social workers in the Philippines are mostly Christian and predominantly Roman Catholic but there are also significant numbers of Muslim workers, reflecting the profile of the population as a whole. Here, we discuss some themes from the literature, whilst acknowledging that little of it is Philippines-specific. The purpose is not to understand faith in the Philippines but to sketch in some of the preoccupations and themes in published material looking at the interplay between social work, religion and spirituality.

Writers such as Neagoe (2013) have traced how social work, in much of the Global North at least, underwent a process of secularisation alongside, and resultant upon broader processes of secularization in society and in social science (Wilson, 1966).

Though there have been *"a number of challenges to the secularization thesis"* (Cohen & Kennedy, 2007, p391) even in the global north, many within the Philippines (including this social work academic) are concerned that belief is in decline, with negative social consequences:

*"The family has been the source of basic religious precepts, teachings, and the settings for religious practices. However, the family's value system appears to be fast deteriorating. As shown in the dailies and broadcast media, the family has gone through shock, pain, and suffering due to the different forms of crimes, lawlessness, and other immoral acts."*
(Pineda, 2000)

Even social work, therefore, at times aligns itself with perspectives which attribute people's circumstances to family values and personal morality rather than poverty. The link between personal religious orientation and social work judgment (in political context) could not be starker. Before identifying some themes around spirituality and religion, we should pause to consider what these terms might mean. Here is not the place for a detailed discussion but rather to offer some thoughts on definition, taken from UK and Filipino writers:

Pineda (2000, p655) says that *spirituality* is *"… not a belief system, but an emerging state of awareness… a transformative process... which opens up to discovery, awareness, or insight to a higher order."* Thompson (2010, p208) suggests that spirituality is about *"having a meaningful understanding of the world and how you are part of it"*. For Thompson (2010, p208), a *religion* is *"a structured institutionalized form of spirituality"*, whilst Pineda (2000, p655) defines it as *"a system of faith and worship, of rituals and codes of conduct"*. There is, on the face of it, broad agreement as to the meanings of 'spirituality' and 'religion', at least in definitional terms. Both writers agree that one might be spiritual without subscribing to a religion. Thompson (2010, p209), acknowledges the implications of religion and/or spirituality for our developing sense of identity, making an explicit link between Bourdieu's idea of habitus and the individual's sense of self:

*"Habitus can be understood as the individual's connection with the cultural level… In*

*trying to understand the 'person', therefore, we need to bear in mind that he or she will be a unique individual in their own right, but will also be 'embedded' in wider cultural and structural foundations that are very influential, but which do not determine who or what the individual is…"* (Thompson, 2010, p66)

Thus, Thompson links Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field to his own 'PCS' model (mentioned earlier). Interestingly, Moss (2005, p100-101) suggests that, *"… this theoretical framework may be creatively expanded into a PCSS model, where the dimension of the spiritual may be added to the other dimensions… if full justice is to be done to a person's experience and chosen world-view."*

Recent years have seen a revisiting of the place of religion and spirituality in social work and the lives of service users. Whilst some of this has come from writers in the UK (Mathews, 2009; Furness and Gilligan, 2010a, 2010b), there is a stronger tradition within North America of religion (or, at least, Christianity) in professional practice. Indeed, a journal entitled 'Social Work and Christianity' is published by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work. Given the influence US social work had on the Philippines, this dynamic is of interest to this study. Indeed, for the chapter of the Philippine Encyclopedia of Social Work on 'Spirituality and Social Work' (Pineda, 2000), approximately half of the sources drawn upon were from the United States. Thus, in calling for a 'biblical morality', Pineda (p657) draws upon a piece by Swindol attributed to 'USA: Word Publishing'. We will return to Pineda's chapter below. This section, however, identifies themes from the literature more generally around social work, spirituality and religion, where this informed the approach taken to the thesis.

Furness and Gilligan have written widely about spirituality and religion in social work. Based on a pilot study carried out with social work students in the UK, (2010b) they proposed a framework for social workers to help them decide if and how the spiritual or religious beliefs of service users are relevant to meeting their needs. They suggest, drawing upon a range of studies (Hodge, 2005; Purnell and Paulanka, 2003; Gray et al., 2008; Stirling et al., 2009; Papadopoulos, 2006; Hogan-Garcia, 2003), that such a framework would support workers in being 'culturally competent', anti-oppressive and making positive use of religious or spiritual beliefs when working

with service users. Importantly, Furness and Gilligan identify two main routes to more 'spiritually-sensitive' social work: through reflective practice or through incorporation into assessment models. It is of note that Pineda (2000, p660) also makes the point that:

*"Assessment may focus on one's religious beliefs and practices as well as the meanings they have on the individual's life situations."*

Furness and Gilligan (2010b) found that a framework brought judgments and assumptions to the surface, for those with or without religious affiliations or spiritual beliefs. For this thesis, this raised issues for the researcher and research process as well as analytical concerns around what might constitute an appropriate balance between prescriptive social work (perhaps imposing belief on service users) and judicious incorporation of these dimensions into practice (Neagoe, 2013) in a country where faith underpins so much of culture. In an earlier article (Gilligan and Furness, 2006), the same writers presented findings from their research project in more detail. Whilst those findings related to the UK, the questions asked of social workers and students in questionnaires provided food for thought. Participants in the UK were asked about the appropriateness of forms of intervention, including gathering information on clients' religious or spiritual backgrounds; recommendation of spiritual books; praying for (or with) a client; using religious or spiritual language; referring clients to religious or spiritual services; sharing own religious or spiritual beliefs; helping clients clarify their beliefs or develop ritual; touching a client for healing purposes; recommending forgiveness or penance; and performing exorcism (Gilligan and Furness, 2006). Though this article was accessed in response rather than prior to undertaking research in the Philippines, the approach to gauging attitudes and identity was influential.

For Graham (2001 cited in Cree, 2011) spirituality is a philosophy of valuing fellow human beings and collective identity. Discussing beliefs in Africa, he notes that, *"… who you are, your personhood, comes about through your relationship with your community…"* (p145) and speaks of a cultural *"… emphasis upon human similarities or commonalities rather than upon individual differences"* (p146). In the Philippines, the researcher was struck by what seemed to be a culture where collectivity seemed

more significant than individualism (yet personal morality was clearly emphasised) and, perhaps as a result, where notions of 'social divisions' and individual empowerment were less prominent. Thompson (2010, p216) also identifies the significance of collectivity when discussing the importance of connectedness:

*"Connectedness is a term used in the spirituality literature to refer to the important ways in which having other people in our lives is a central way of shaping our identity and our feelings of security or otherwise in the challenges of human existence."*

He goes on to discuss social capital in this context though might have considered other forms of capital. Bourdieu was conscious of hierarchies of capital, in that those with greater power possess more access to capital and to the perpetuation of capital. The poor of the Philippines have limited capital 'resources' but one might consider the 'emotional' capital provided by faith (and communities connected to faith), as well as more general forms of social capital sustained within very poor communities and which often form the basis of informal sources of welfare and support.

Thompson raises two more themes, regarding spirituality, worthy of mention in relation to social work in the Philippines. Firstly, he reminds us that faith can bring *hope* (2010, p221), something which social workers the world over seek to develop in service users, families and communities. Pineda (2000, p663) refers to a study undertaken of Filipino 'disaster victims' by Ignacio and Perlas (1994). Discussing their findings, Pineda says:

*"… coping with what looked like impossible situations was the Filipino's faith as source of 'courage, daring, optimism, inner peace and ability to accept tragedy and bear grief'. The Filipinos' religious nature helps them accept reality with a sense of optimism in the context that all events are within God's will and plan for the world (Ignacio and Perlas, 1994)."*

Participants in the research for this thesis spoke of hope, often imbued with religious connotations and also in a context of strength in the face of adversity. A billboard under a Manila flyover read "Never Give Up. God Loves You" (notes in research journal). Finally, Thompson suggests that spirituality and connectedness link with a

sense of feeling valued. He highlights the article by Houston discussed earlier, in which it is suggested that Bourdieu's conceptual framework hinges, to some degree, upon people being motivated by the need for recognition or validation (Thompson, 2010, p219). This too was a theme that arose often in the Philippines, mostly from social workers wanting to be appreciated and valued *by service users*. However, as Houston points out (2002, p161), those excluded or marginalised by society may be those least recognised and most likely to be denied a sense of personhood or value.

It is surely of significance that Pineda's contribution on spirituality to the Philippine Encyclopedia of Social Work discusses aboriginal culture but makes no mention of the Muslim faith. It attempts briefly to acknowledge the various forms beliefs can take but is shot through with Biblical references. Thus, for example, *"What is needed is a sustained treatment approach with spiritual empowerment from within, self-propelled by a Christ-centered relationship"* (p663). Pineda's concluding message (p664) is one of individual faith and stoicism as the way to overcome adversity, with social work supporting this process. The reference to self and/or environment appears to be a nod towards causes of circumstances outside of the individual, though it is very much down to the individual (with the help of the social worker and God) to sort their life out:

*"Spirituality in social work is like an umbrella with spokes represented by responsibility, accountability and commitment. The handle is the belief that one has dignity and worth as a child of God and who helps others to become worthy. One needs a perspective of a 'victor' who thinks of what is better or best, and one who is motivated to want to bring change to self and/or his environment, than a 'victim' who has no choice."*

In some parts of the world, most notably Latin America, religion has played a major part in the development of critical forms of social work. As Payne puts it (2014, p221):

*"Traditional Christian ideas were considered as accepting oppression as the preparation for a happier afterlife. Liberation theory contests this by seeking a movement from oppression to liberation within the concrete issues of daily life… both*

*personal and 'social' sin, that is, structural oppression by social institutions, must be overcome by non-violent social change…"*

Whilst this thesis is not a place for extended discussion of 'liberation theology', it certainly exists within the Philippines (Haight, 1985; Liwang, 1992; Nadeau, 2002; Pernia, 1990). However, its absence from the social work literature and, indeed, from primary research findings was noticeable. This is an appropriate point to return to Bourdieu, who discussed religious fields mostly with reference to the Catholic Church (Bourdieu, 1991). As one would expect, Bourdieu conceptualised the Church in terms of symbolic violence and its generative relationship with habitus, emphasising its global influence but also acknowledging potential for resistance. Some would argue (Rey, 2007) that he overstated the determinist influence of religion on day-to-day practice (for example, of social workers) and underestimated the power of human agency through movements such as 'liberation theology'. As will be seen, religion was a central theme in the data gathered for this study and (with a number of notable exceptions) was seen as a positive aspect of social work.

## 2.11 Conceptual Framework: Concluding Comments

This chapter has drawn upon a broad-based analysis of social work and sociological literature to develop a conceptual framework and to identify a set of theoretical and research-informed themes that are utilised throughout the thesis. The aim of the research project has been to understand professional social work journeys by situating the *evolving* individual professional habitus within macro contexts that shape and influence the fields of social welfare and social work. This 'journey' will be explored within the field of social work in the Philippines (itself, in part, a product of international and national policy, social work education, public perceptions, historically and culturally constructed societal expectations and so on) and also in relation to Filipino workers who move to England. Attention is paid to individual and collective orientations to social work (for example, as seeking social maintenance or transformation) and to the role of professional socialisation. This feeds into an understanding of the importance which work can have for identity, considering aspects of motivation, vocation and symbolic capital. Again, the theoretical

framework suggests that all of these things can change as a person develops through a professional career, within (in this case) the Philippines and potentially when practising overseas. The notions of field and habitus, along with the capital which the field of social work affords to its members in different contexts, have been introduced and are revisited throughout the thesis. Professional identity has been presented as the product of the interplay between self, relationships with others (culture) and social structure. An 'individual' habitus will reflect political and societal constraints and aspirations, social structures (for example, religion and family), competing positions within the profession and social work academia and factors which have shaped the life-course of each individual worker. It is this interplay, between macro and micro, between structure and agency and between field and habitus which will be explored in the chapters that follow.

The next chapter identifies and critiques literature that considers the purpose of social work as an international activity which may have some core common values and mission. It then looks at the growth of social work internationally and, in particular, the specific experience of the Philippines in this regard.

# Chapter 3: Philippine Social Work in Historical and International Context

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter concerns the processes by which social work developed as an international activity and as an international profession, and the specific experience of the Philippines in this regard. In other words, it, *"… uses an international lens to view social work as a local activity…"* (Huegler, Lyons & Pawar, 2012, p2). It begins with a discussion of the growth of social work in the Global North, before exploring the development and current state of social welfare and the field of social work in the Philippines, drawing attention to the impact of imperialism and attempts to indigenise social work. These context-setting accounts are then situated in a discussion of broader attempts to define social work internationally and literature which considers the 'export' of social work from the Global North and the response of countries in the Global South. The chapter draws upon international and Philippine literature to provide a picture of the nature and orientation of social work in the Philippines, connecting back to the theoretical material in Chapter 2. It reviews the global processes that influenced the field of social work in the country and subsequent attempts to render it 'relevant' to local culture and needs, within an ongoing context of ongoing international aid and development status.

## 3.2 The Growth of Social Work: Competing Orientations

Literature on the early development of social work typically refers to what Hugman (2010, p1) calls, *"...assistance for those people who were seen to be experiencing problems of daily life that were grounded in poverty."* This might seem self-evident but, of course, poverty existed long before social work. It is, therefore, suggested that social work evolved as a 'modern' response to the impacts of 'modernisation'. Social work arose as a named occupation towards the end of the nineteenth century in North America, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands (Midgley, 1981; Payne,

2005; Weiss & Welbourne, 2007). For Davis, social work in Birmingham, England was a reaction to the, *"...poverty and disadvantage of individuals and families struggling with the rapidly changing social and economic conditions of a growing and industrialising City."* (2008, p3). It arose to formalise or bring some coherence to ad hoc responses to the fallout from urbanisation, whether through religious organisations, institutional 'care', individual charitable works or more politicised responses (Horner, 2009). Dominelli (2010, p12) is clear that, *"Social work as an informal but structured helping profession within social institutions and organizations predates modernity. However, modernity initiated the formation of professional social work and, with it, the individualization of both the service user and the way in which help was delivered."*

Social work is a relatively young profession and has struggled to assert or even explain itself. In the latter 1800s, in North America and Europe, universities began to deliver social work courses (Healy, 2008) and, in 1928, the First International Conference of Social Work in Paris hosted delegates from 42 countries (Lyons & Lawrence, 2009). To contextualise, the Philippines were, in 1898, beginning a period of American rule lasted for approaching 50 years and followed over 300 years as a Spanish colony. More will be said of the Philippine experience but, for now, parallels can be drawn with much of Northern Europe, at least in terms of the role of the Church in encouraging private charitable acts and poor relief (Almanzor, 1966; Yu, 2006). The Roman Catholic Church remains a core participant, alongside state and voluntary sector agencies, in care in the Philippines, through encouraging donors, providing care and delivering social work education (Lee-Mendoza, 2008).

The early history of social work is inescapably a history – or series of histories - of the 'Global North', as social work emerged alongside urbanisation and industrialisation. Prior to – and alongside – the development of professional social work, family and community based caring and charitable acts were the primary ways social needs were addressed. However, "*Charitable giving was often rooted in a moralizing tendency that sought to affirm views of goodness and 'acceptable' behaviour. Such acts were normative, consistent with the dominant views held by society, and often punitive, in that they sought to limit claims on goodwill to avoid legitimating a desire to expect handouts rather than working for one's living*"

(Dominelli, 2010, p18). Payne (2005, p23) identifies factors influencing the emergence of social work: the shift from rural to urban employment; the municipalisation of local government (increasingly responsible for administering welfare and 'care' institutions); transition to more secular forms of care; growth of organised approaches to caring, typically by women; and a heightened State concern about the effects of social change and disorder. As the 1800s progressed, industrialised countries saw a growth in asylums, hospitals, boarding schools and workhouses (Foucault, 1965; Horner, 2009) and shifting attitudes towards charity. Social welfare in Southern (predominantly Catholic) Europe might be characterised as dependent upon faith-based charitable acts and individual donations, whilst the Protestant nations of Northern Europe, though reflecting religious underpinnings, saw growing State influence. The notion of charity itself was questioned, particularly in northern Europe, on the grounds that it created dependence. The interplay of 'traditions' of Catholic charitable giving when a Spanish colony and notions of targeted relief and limited state involvement in welfare introduced by the US helped construct the Philippine approach to social work, of which more will be said later.

A further influential dynamic in the development of social work, particularly in the UK, was the growth of the women's movement and of the labour, co-operative and settlement movements (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989; Ferguson & Woodward, 2009; Horner, 2009; Payne, 2005). The latter, which arose in the UK but also grew solidly in the US, emphasised living alongside poor communities, social education, community development and (less so in America) social action. Projects like these remain common in Philippine social work and students regularly move into deprived areas to undertake 'practicums'. Social work from the nineteenth century did, therefore, incorporate collective dimensions (mostly less radical in the US) but social casework came to dominate. Horner (2009) sees these tensions between community and individual, between collective responsibility and personal social services, played out in the UK in disagreements between those proposing a continuation of Poor Laws and those demanding social reform and a comprehensive welfare state. One can identify similar tensions and debates throughout the history of social work, in all of its international manifestations and the reader is referred back to the discussion of social work orientations in Chapter 2.

Most accounts see the evolution of more formalised and comprehensive approaches to welfare, including the rise of 'welfare states', as a further phase for the profession (Beveridge, 1942). In the USA, psychoanalytic casework remained dominant, in the context of increased state support but a system which fell far short of being a 'welfare' state. In the UK, social work became primarily a state activity, with interventions targeted at individuals in need and families. As other government departments took responsibility for income maintenance and housing, and as the voluntary sector struggled to find a place within the emerging welfare state, social work in the UK embraced casework models from the USA (Payne, 2005). As will be seen, social work is viewed positively by the Philippine public which, in part, reflects links with tangible forms of support. It is centrally important here to acknowledge the place of Biestek, whose social work values are cited to this day. Emphasising the worker-client relationship, people as individuals; controlled emotional involvement; self-determination; and confidentiality (Biestek, 1961, p. 17), they are criticised for being Eurocentric and for their potential to pathologise, to see service users as 'patient-like' (see discussions of care 'versus' self-determination in the Philippines, later in the thesis) and to ignore structural causes of 'private' problems. Filipino workers cited many of these values but, as we shall see, interpreted them rather differently.

Social welfare and social work grew more rapidly, typically as a state activity, in Northern Europe in the period from, say, 1945 to 1975 and less so in Southern Europe. *"Part of the reason for this was the reliance of the Iberian dictatorships until 1974 (Portugal) and 1978 (Spain) on the Catholic Church and charitable effort."* (Payne, 2005, p72). Whilst the Philippines were, during this period, moving out of direct American rule (and direct influence on social work), the combined influences of Church and charity remained. By the 1970s, the social work profession (or field), with a growing base of practice methods and education, had begun to establish itself in northern Europe and North America. The nature and positioning of social work varied, as did approaches to state welfare, but the profession gained recognition and functions. Alongside this growth, some within the social work field (profession and academe) developed a critique of its roles, responsibilities and methods. Corrigan & Leonard (1978) and Brake & Bailey (1980) highlighted workers' control functions, emphasising alliances with service users and community-based solutions to

structural inequalities. The impact of radical social work on practice should not be over-stated but it influenced particular projects *and* the evolution of the social work value base. The individualised notions of Biestek were questioned and, in tandem with growing critiques of other structural inequalities (for example, second-wave feminism and anti-racist social work), informed the move towards anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 1988, Dominelli & McLeod, 1989), the restricted perception of which in the Philippines is discussed elsewhere. As will be discussed, research for this thesis led to a questioning of simplistic links between community oriented practice and social transformation.

Radical Social Work, whilst importantly emphasising social class, initially said little about other social divisions and failed to acknowledge the uniqueness and individual perspectives of service users (Ahmad, 1990; Oliver, 1990). The response was Anti-Discriminatory Practice and, later, Anti-Oppressive Practice, which better acknowledged the complexity of power relations (Dominelli, 1995). Horner (2009, p102) cites Thompson in offering the following synopsis: *"Modern social work practice rejects the dichotomy between individualisation and deindividualisation, and perhaps the essence of social work lies in its capacity to see, "...individuals as both unique in their own right" and "part of a broader web of social and political factors (Thompson, 2005, p121-122)."* Again, this connects with the thesis' focus on agency and structure, field and habitus. However, if social work had come to understand the oppression experienced by people in these layered and complex ways, the question remained – and remains – as to how it should respond. Payne (2005, p100) points to the development of notions of empowerment and the valuing of *"diverse cultures and identities"* as the most identifiable outcome of these debates and this will feature in the data chapters later in the thesis.

In the Philippines, with its focus on economic and social development, social workers spoke consistently of poverty but rarely of other dimensions of inequality, which raised questions around how social work can best take an anti-poverty stance (often implemented at a collective level) whilst *also* tackling difference and other social divisions. One might conclude tentatively that, where social work responds predominantly to conditions of absolute poverty, natural disaster and armed conflict, then attention to other dimensions of oppression ('race', ethnicity, sexuality, disability

and gender) may constitute a less urgent priority and perhaps a less visible component of the social work field. This over-simplifies the situation in the Philippines, where there is evidence of agencies and the profession seeking (for example) to respond appropriately to issues of faith, age and disability. It should also be said that, though the alleviation of poverty was cited consistently by workers in the Philippines as a central purpose, few spoke of its eradication. Garrett (2002, p193) makes the important point that, as social work (in some countries) focussed increasingly on anti-discriminatory practice, underlying issues of poverty may have been obscured:

*"For social workers seeking to operate in an anti-discriminatory way, therefore, it is vital that they are aware of how poverty relates to other dimensions of structural inequality rooted in, for example, gender, 'race' and ethnicity."*

The rise of neo-liberal economic and social policies from the 1980s onwards, saw a questioning of the role of the state vis-a-vis the private and voluntary sectors in most economies of the Global North (Harris, 2002; Petrie, 2009). In many countries this signalled a shift back towards specialised and individualised practice and away from generic, community-based or universal provision (Cree, 2011), with a growing emphasis on managing individual risk (Slater, 2004; Webb, 2006) and increased private and voluntary sector provision as a route to efficiency and effectiveness (Harris and McDonald, 2000; Rhodes, 2004). Ferguson & Woodward (2009) acknowledge that similar processes have impacted on social work in many parts of the world but suggest the UK was worst affected:

*"...it has lost much of its focus on holistic approaches… misplaced its commitment to social justice… bought into punitive notions of individual responsibility, which sit uncomfortably with concepts of partnership and empowerment; and… embraced, uncritically on the whole, the managerial agenda"* (p35).

As will be shown, the field of social work in the Philippines (as everywhere) is both a product of the historical development of the profession and of its own 'unique' cultural and structural make-up. This thesis suggests, at least in the case of the Philippines, that social work purpose and intervention are, to a large extent,

dependent upon the conditions in which they operate. In other words, social work is situated practice. However, it is argued that this makes attempts to understand social work internationally all the more important. Before turning to the international (and in particular the Philippine) development of social work, it is important to say a little more about social work as situated and/or universal.

Much of this part of the chapter concerns perspectives on what social work is, could or should be, with the search for the essential features and mission of social work globally. However, this section begins with what Lyons (2006) presents as a 'dissenting voice':

*"Webb (2003, p. 191) has suggested that 'social work has at best a minimal role to play with(in) any new global order, should such an order exist' and that 'any notion of global or trans-national social work is little more than a vanity'. I agree in part with his view that social work is predominantly about local practice (and, as such, is framed by national traditions, policies and culture(s)), but I also consider that social workers will lack understanding and miss opportunities to contribute to promoting welfare, individually and collectively, if we fail to recognize the effects of global and regional processes on the aetiology of social problems, and the need to develop responses (often in conjunction with other occupational groups and organizations) which aim to address such problems at regional as well as international levels."* (Lyons, 2006).

In researching and writing this thesis, the relationships between 'local' and international influences became very apparent. Workers were seeking to adapt 'western' models and knowledge to the Philippine context but were also practising in ways which were culturally bound and dependent upon national circumstances and resources. Narhi (2002), drawing upon action research with social workers in Finland, makes the related point (made by others, including Fook) that reality is contextual and knowledge *is* socially constructed, not least in the interactions of service users and workers. For Narhi, therefore, any social work knowledge is, inevitably, situated; it may be transferable but cannot be generically applicable. This will be discussed further in relation to the historical transfer of social work from Spain and the US to the Philippines *and* Filipino workers in England. We now turn to the

growth of social work as an international activity, before focusing on the Philippines in particular.

## 3.3 International Development of Social Work

Thus far, the chapter has discussed mostly the evolution of social work in the Global North. Of course, this version of history relies, in part, upon definitions of what 'counts' as social work and connections made between social work and something called 'development'. It often ignores the experience of much of the Global South and the processes both of 'export' and indigenisation of social work internationally (Gray et al., 2009). Much has, however, been written about this, particularly since Midgley argued that social work had engaged in a process of professional imperialism, sometimes linked explicitly to empire itself (Midgley, 1981).

### 3.3.1 Social Work & Globalisation

Those writers who have sought to understand the history of social work internationally have concluded that the histories of individual countries and continents must be seen within processes such as colonisation and globalisation (Midgley, 1990; Lawrence et al, 2009; Harrison & Melville, 2010). Payne observes that social work had been only a residual (and usually voluntary or philanthropic) activity under colonial powers until the post-war period, when demands for independence grew and political stability was required, often in contexts of industrialisation and fears about Soviet influence. Following independence, countries typically adopted versions of community/social development work, a model preferred by the newly-formed United Nations and often supported by former colonial powers, through the establishment of Non-Governmental Organisations. A form of that model continues in the Philippines today. Agencies including UNICEF, the World Health Organisation and the UN Development Programme remain active in the Philippines, with the latter commenting recently as follows:

*"While the 2010 Philippines Millennium Development Goals Progress Report indicates improvement in promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality and malaria… the overall Millennium Development Goals situation is not encouraging. The likelihood that the Philippines will reach the Millennium Development Goals on poverty, education, maternal health, HIV/AIDS and environment is low… The Progress Report calls for sustained socially inclusive economic growth; improved targeting of anti-poverty measures; strengthened governance with greater transparency and accountability to ensure more efficient use of resources… and strengthened partnerships, including with the private sector, on Millennium Development Goals initiatives"*. (UNDP, accessed 10.4.14 at: http://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/countryinfo/)

Meanwhile, the World Bank (also established post-war and mandated to reduce worldwide poverty through sustainable globalisation) is very much part of the development context in which the field of Philippine social work is defined. The World Bank clearly see employment as the central route out of poverty:

*"Underlying the slow progress in poverty reduction is the lack of good jobs. 75 percent of workers or some 28 million Filipinos are informally employed with little or no protection from job losses and opportunities to find gainful employment"*.

(World Bank, accessed 17.3.14 at: http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/publication/philippine-economic-update-2014-pursuing-economic-growth-through-sustainable-reconstruction-and-job-generation)

The work of such international agencies is, of course, controversial and has a significant impact on the field of Philippine social work. This is revisited later but, for now, we return to the international growth of social work. Following independence, new national governments attempted to balance the needs for economic stability, welfare development and independence (Payne, 2005, p75-6). Midgley (1997, p176) describes a process whereby social workers and academics realised the limitations of imported individualised, remedial forms of practice, designed for 'western' urban settings, and instead set about designing methods which offered more to

development in contexts where lack of food and mass illiteracy (often in rural areas) were more typical problems. At a pan-Asia conference held in the Philippines in 1976, Delos Reyes noted that 64% of the Philippine population lived in rural areas and urged that, *"Noting the gross inequalities between urban and rural areas in income, facilities and opportunities, the thrust of rural development needs to be social justice and working towards a just society. The method best suited is that of social action-community organization"* (1976, p89). Though urbanised areas are expanding rapidly, approximately 52 percent of the Philippine population still live in rural areas and 70 percent of the total number of poor live in those rural areas, according to Philippines government statistics (Department of Health, Philippines, 2005). As will be seen, the primary data used in this thesis was gathered from social workers, academics and policy makers with experience of work in both rural and urban settings.

Those processes which, for now, will be termed 'globalisation' have had and are having profound effects upon the needs of those who use social work services, responses considered appropriate by the profession internationally and governments who have seen their capacity to implement independent social welfare policies restricted in the global context. Though this is not the place for an extended discussion of 'globalisation', this thesis adopts a multi-dimensional definition akin to that suggested by Midgley:

*"Whilst globalization does indeed involve international economic integration, it also has demographic, social, cultural, political and psychological dimensions. In this broader interpretation, globalization is viewed as a process of rapidly increasing human interaction within a 'one-world' system that transcends previous political, spatial and temporal boundaries…"* (2001, p26)

Though by no means a dominant theme in international social work literature, writers within the field are increasingly critiquing the place of social work within globalisation (Deepak, 2012; Lavalette and Ferguson, 2007). For the Philippines, government and many NGOs are dependent on aid, with strings attached. As everywhere, social work engages and arguably colludes with processes that perpetuate inequality but in circumstances not of their own making. Deepak (2012) reminds us that the Global

North have squeezed governments in the Global South, particularly in relation to social services provision, in turn leaving these subject to INGOs implementing directives of foreign governments.

Having paused to consider globalisation, we now look at attempts to define social work internationally before discussing the process by which social work came to the Philippines (which impacted hugely upon the type of social work there today).

### 3.3.2 Defining International Social Work

There is a long history within social work of attempting to articulate what is unique about the profession (a process necessary to be considered a 'true' profession, nationally or internationally). This section examines processes of producing such statements or definitions. In 2003, a special edition of the journal Research in Social Work Practice took up this debate, in the context of a review of the US 'Working Definition of Practice'. As Holosko (2003) notes, the Working Definition was produced by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which formed in 1955 following a merger of various associations (including those for community organisers and group work practitioners). To contextualise, the Philippines became a republic in 1946 (ending US administration) and through the 1950s the first Filipino social workers were trained in the USA. So, as social work in the US was amalgamating and developing its standards, recognition and prestige, social work in the Philippines also sought to adopt the practices and institutions of a profession. The field of social work in the Philippines was, as in many places, to some considerable degree 'imported'. By the late 1950s, Holosko notes that US social work latched onto the 'person-in-environment' model, which was sufficiently broad to encompass casework, group work and community organising. This formed the basis of social work education in the US and Philippines and remains so (certainly in the Philippines) to this day.

Debates around 'reworking the Working Definition' in the US acknowledged international context. Fulcher tackles the 'taken for granted assumptions' underlying western definitions, pointing out (2003, p377) that:

*"… cultural assimilation and transformation through education have been carried out through the work of early missionaries and teachers since the beginnings of cross-cultural contact."*

Fulcher does not refer to the Philippines but the comment could scarcely be more applicable. Indeed, much social work education there is still provided by Catholic Universities and much intervention delivered by Catholic agencies. For Fulcher, the Working Definition could 'learn from' perspectives within the social work field internationally and should reflect such principles, not least as the US remained influential on social work in many countries. Turner (2003) comments that social work is shaped significantly by 'external' social forces. The profession or, in Bourdieu's terms, the field of social work is shaped by societal expectations and governmental priorities (which in turn are increasingly influenced by global forces). Whilst there are developments from within and outside the field of Philippine social work, it still reflects and reinforces Spanish and US influence and the broader expectations of providers of foreign aid.

Ramsay (2003) reflects upon the individualistic focus of the Working Definition, preferring to emphasise co-dependency. When considering findings, this is discussed in relation to the Philippines. The ruminations in the US took place following the adoption of a revised definition by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) in 2000. Isadora Hare, who coordinated the development of this statement, reflected on the process in an article in 2004. It is striking that the central focus adopted as applicable across very different forms of social work in very different countries was (in words, at least) the very same as that devised in the US fifty years previously:

*"Initially some doubted whether these apparently divergent methodologies could be reconciled in one rubric. What emerged however was the core concept of person-in-environment."* (Hare, 2004, p409).

The words may be similar but the meaning would seem to be different. Hare says responding to globalisation was at the forefront of the minds of those updating the profession's mission. The appropriate form of practice (such as clinical, community organisation or social development, which seeks to integrate social and economic policy) depended upon the orientation of individual workers, settings and countries (reflecting habitus and field). The situational nature of social work was stressed, suggesting some contexts emphasise the individual and others the environment (defined in broad terms to include, for example, family, social policy, natural environment). The 2001 Definition says the profession seeks social change (which could be achieved at any 'level') through problem-solving (again, at micro or macro level). It therefore allows for practice which, for Hare, can be divided into *Direct Services* (at the micro/mezzo levels) which focus on service users (clinical social work; family therapy; social group work; case management; empowerment; brokering; social casework) and *Indirect Services* (macro level interventions focusing on agencies, groups, communities, institutional systems or societies) such as social action/advocacy; community organization; political action; 'conscientisation'; social development; agency administration; and policy practice). Again, attention is drawn to the 'typology of orientations to social work' offered in Chapter 2. For Hare:

*"These two components have continued to characterize the profession. In general, the direct or 'clinical' services provided to individuals, families and small groups have been dominant. However, the other component, variously described as community work, social and political action, and policy practice… in some contexts, and social development in others… has persisted and gained in significance."* (Hare, 2004, p411).

At the point of completing this thesis, the most recent attempt to define the purpose and parameters of social work internationally was coming to a close (IFSW, 2013) and, indeed, a revised definition was published in July 2014 (IFSW, 2014). What follows is a brief account of the process to this point. Following a process of drafting and consultation, discussions took place at the joint-conference of the IFSW, IASSW and International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) in 2010. At the conference (where this author presented and discussed initial reactions to data collection in the Philippines), workers and educators were encouraged to begin building a 'Global

Action Agenda for social work and social development'. In an editorial piece in 2008, the project had been announced thus (Jones, Yuen and Rollet, 2008, p847):

*"Significant moves have taken place… to strengthen the global collaboration between IASSW, ICSW and IFSW. The outcome will be the enhanced global influence of the social work profession as we make full use of our joint strengths and networks."*

Working together on a common statement was one step towards a stronger voice for social work internationally, in influencing social policy and social development (Jones, Yuen and Rollet, 2008). The previous definition had been adopted in 2000, replacing one adopted in 1982. Lyons, Manion & Carlsen (2006) are among many who have commented on the laborious processes for developing and agreeing such definitions historically and the fact that the outcomes have often been accused of reflecting the values and agendas of countries in the Global North.

As stated above, a final International Definition of Social Work was approved by IFSW and IAASW members in July 2014. However, the interim definition (IFSW, 2013) commenced as follows:

*"The social work profession facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing."*

The draft definition was, therefore, couched in terms of a 'mission' for social work as a *professional activity*. The accompanying draft 'commentary' places critical dimensions of social work centre stage:

*"The development of critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege and developing action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers are central to emancipatory practice where the goals*

*are the empowerment and liberation of people. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty, liberate the vulnerable and oppressed, and promote social inclusion and social cohesion."*

Echoing the theoretical model outlined in Chapter 2, the draft 'commentary' goes on to discuss aspects of agency and structure and to acknowledge that social work happens at individual, group and community levels:

*"The social change mandate is based on the premise that social work intervention takes place when the current situation, be this at the level of the person, family, small group, community or society, is deemed to be in need of change and development. It is driven by the need to challenge and change those structural conditions that contribute to marginalization, social exclusion and oppression."*

In a section entitled 'Principles', the draft document seeks, it seems, to balance individualised (arguably 'westernised') principles with those of collectivity and community:

*"The social work profession recognizes that human rights need to coexist alongside collective responsibility"*

As discussed later, some (notably Huang Yunong & Zhang Xiong, 2008, 2011) have critiqued the often simplistic representation of culture and society in the Global North as individualistic and in the Global South as collectivist. Furthermore, writers such as Healy (2008) have commented upon the mismatch between such international statements and the fact that social work has failed to deliver, or to be seen as delivering practice that promotes and safeguards human rights:

*"While many more statements and codes could be quoted here, it is safe to say that at the abstract level of mission and values, social work is indeed a human rights profession."* (Healy, 2008, p738)

For the Philippines, social work at times focuses, out of necessity, on what Healy describes as *"…emergency, action oriented human needs efforts, leaving human rights policy to others."* (Healy, 2008, p745)

In terms that go much further than previous international statements in naming and standing against professional and academic 'imperialism', the draft document includes the following comment:

*"… social work is informed not only by specific practice environments and Western theories, but also by indigenous knowledges. Part of the legacy of colonialism is that Western theories and knowledges have been exclusively valorised, and indigenous knowledges have been devalued, discounted, and hegemonised by Western theories and knowledge. The proposed definition attempts to halt and reverse that process by acknowledging that indigenous peoples… carry their own values, ways of knowing, ways of transmitting their knowledges, and have made invaluable contributions to science…"*

Finally, the section of the draft headed 'Practice' holds that:

*"Social work practice spans a range of activities including various forms of therapy and counselling, group work, and community work; policy formulation and analysis; and advocacy and political interventions… incorporating into a coherent whole the micro-macro, personal-political dimension of intervention. The holistic focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will vary from one country to the next, and from time to time depending on historical, cultural, political and socio-economic conditions."*

So, there is acknowledgment of the breadth of approaches and spheres within which social work may seek influence, together with a reference to the situated and contextual nature of practice. However, the statement refers explicitly to *professional* social work. This chapter goes on to say more about professional identity, particularly relevant in relation to social work, which some consider a semi-profession (Etzioni, 1966). Lyons, Manion & Carlsen adopted the term "social professionals" in recognition of the fact that 'social work' internationally covers a

range of occupational groups with different titles, with differing organisational locations (government, NGO, INGO, voluntary or informal providers, private companies) and that people calling themselves social workers will have different (and sometimes no) qualifications. It may be that, to consider social work internationally, broad definitions are needed. However, Askeland and Payne (2006, p49) questioned the value of attempts to devise an all-encompassing international definition, suggesting that,

*"A less hegemonic approach would be to accept distinct local social work traditions and identify some common elements between them."*

It is hoped that the new Definition, published in Summer 2014, will go some way towards achieving this end. The chapter will now identify some key relevant themes from literature addressing social work as an international profession or which considers how we might incorporate or adapt 'best practice' and knowledge internationally.

### 3.3.3 This Thesis as International

The area of social work literature typically described as 'international' is large and contested. This thesis draws upon themes from some of this literature and contributes to understandings in this area. My own location, as a white British male social worker researching Philippine social work (discussed elsewhere), places the thesis within the 'field' of international social work. The 'international' credentials of the thesis derive also from the fact that it draws upon international literature to frame the analysis and situates social work in the Philippines within international context. As has been discussed, a significant component of the research concerns international influence upon Philippine social work, not least through intervention by foreign powers and the on-going influence of neo-liberalism, global capital and foreign aid.

In the thesis, the process by which social work in the Philippines initially adopted a broadly North American model and then attempted to localise or indigenise that

practice, within the context of the developmental ambitions of the country and external donors, is a significant theme. For all these reasons, it is essential to draw upon the body of work that might be seen as 'international social work'. Firstly, however, the breadth of this area and some criticisms levelled at it should be acknowledged. International social work is concerned with practice, research and the relationships between the two. It relates, *inter alia*, to forms of practice which are international in nature or cause (such as work with asylum seekers or in international aid agencies), to the exchange of ideas between nations and to the fostering of an appreciation among all social workers that the issues they and their clients face are, in part, global issues (Haug, 2005; Healy & Thomas, 2007; Lyons, Manion & Carlsen, 2006; Dominelli, 2010).

One issue of particular relevance is the international drive towards professionalisation. Social work in the Philippines has taken professional form for many years, influenced by the US. There are longstanding debates within social work about the benefits of being professionalised. These include balancing prestige and quality assurance of practice against potential distancing from service users and greater state control over practice (Simpkin, 1979; Wilding, 1982; Healy & Meagher, 2004). For Hugman (2005), whose comments resonate with findings from the sociology of professions, the search for certainty (or evidence based practice) is not a pure quest for knowledge. Instead, it reflects the search for a social work identity, the need to demonstrate discrete theories, skills and contributions to service users and other professionals, to justify professional status (or symbolic capital):

*"Claims that social workers can resolve social problems, whether for individuals, groups or communities, had been the basis for the growth of the profession worldwide."* (Hugman, 2005, p613)

Yet, as Hugman (and others, such as Fook) asserts, the territory of social work is one too complex for certainties, truths or infallible solutions. Rather, for Hugman social work research and practice is about a simultaneous search for the certain and uncertain, which cannot and should not play the positivist game. Drucker (2003, p64) cites Martinez-Brawley (1999, p334) discussing related points regarding the 'international knowledge base':

*"Does the profession speak with the single voice of science and empirical evidence or with the complex fluidity of art? Is it possible or even appropriate for social work to be bound by the canons of positivism and scientific methodology or should it accommodate alternative, less orthodox approaches to knowing? Can a profession which is intimately bound to culture and language find generalizable principles?"*

Haug (2005) is critical of international social work, suggesting that all too often it equates to what Midgley called professional imperialism. International social work (ISW) is, for Haug, not neutral or benevolent but had devalued and ignored knowledge and approaches from the Global South, seeing such as somehow 'less professional'. She says:

*"The dominant professional social work paradigm, from which most of the ISW discourse has been constructed, represents a globalized local tradition whose theories and methods have been presented as a unitary knowledge system, universally applicable and superior to all other pre-existing traditions of social care."* (2005, p129).

Haug suggests (p133) that a truly critical social work would challenge the premise and impacts of structures and policies implemented at a global level by the IMF, World Bank and so on. If one were to apply such perspectives to the Philippines, inappropriate 'evidence' and approaches were imposed, by Spain and the US, cloaked in a guise of professionalisation. Furthermore, where international social work has embraced developmental or humanitarian models, it has been largely uncritical of the fact that these are often implemented in ways which made people poorer and even more powerless.

In social work, therefore, as in many disciplines, there has been a growing concern about who sets the agenda and decides what knowledge 'counts' in a context of unequal power relations at an international level. Bourdieu would conceptualise this in terms of struggles for capital within social work fields. For some, such as Haug (2005) and Mohan (2008), this links to dominant paradigms (science and professionalism), to colonialism and global inequity. What is clear is that, whereas

such voices were less common 20 years ago (Hartman, 1992), they are much stronger today and have exerted real influence on the attempts of international associations to say what social work should aspire to. Nonetheless, in a 2007 article reviewing fifty years of the journal International Social Work, Healy and Thomas drew attention to the very limited reference in articles throughout those years to globalisation or to issues such as debt and structural adjustments. It is of particular interest for this thesis that, in the 1970s, along with articles critiquing American models of social work, the journal saw attention shift to macro forms of practice, in recognition of the concerns of Asia and Africa:

*"The dominance of the traditional casework method of intervention was being dethroned by notions of social welfare, social planning and the need for social workers to become involved in the policy-making machinery."* (Healy & Thomas, 2007, p588)

Hence, international social work increasingly engaged with social work in the Global South but, perhaps, offered little in the way of critical voice or discussion of international forces or responsibilities. Furthermore, despite (as we have seen) ambitious ideals of securing human rights and social justice, it may be that social work *at best* offers localised support to the poor (in part, casualties of global systems) rather than exposing causes, responding to large scale suffering or challenging policy at a macro level. As Drucker asks (2003, p55):

*"Despite our sworn values, do we in fact function largely as selective stretcher-bearers (as Richard Titmuss used to categorize those who dealt with the halt, lame and excluded) of our own society, and act predominantly with a Western cultural orientation, indistinguishable from others, currently dancing to the compelling tune of unrestrained free market forces?"*

For Drucker, there is much value in responding to need at an individual level and he understands that social workers may choose to operate in this sphere only (for Thompson (2012), the Personal domain of the PCF model). However, Drucker suggests that social workers are typically 'professional outcasts', devalued operatives within marginalised services and perceived by service users to be part of

the problem in unjust societies. In the Philippines, although practice is more evenly distributed across clinical and community orientations and, on the face of it, responding to poverty (an aim rarely expressed in social work in the 'west'), one could question the extent to which it operates beyond the micro level. In short, social development work may utilise collective rather than individualised responses but may collude equally with root problems. Having said this, as we shall see, there is also a tradition of direct action within Philippine social work, which may be less present in many other parts of Asia or the world.

Most relevant for this thesis, Drucker (2003, p66) discusses his own interactions with social work in the Philippines and other parts of Asia in 1970 when, he says, *"Asian social work was seeking to adopt… a broadening of the educational agenda and practice and embraced the field of social development".* This he conceptualises as an attempt to move beyond the preoccupations and approaches of Western social work, though one might question *why* developmental issues were (and are) a concern for countries in the region. This was not an unfettered decision to adopt a developmental form of social work but reflected the local, global and historical conditions which rendered some places 'developing' and others 'developed'. However, Drucker suggests the Global North could learn from the discussions and resolutions made in Asia at that time:

*"In Manila at the same time (1970) there were also conferences of the… IASSW… IFSW and the International Congress of Social Workers… The in thing there was to exult at the prospects of social work operating effectively 'in the corridors of power' as the 'challenge of the seventies'. By 1970, then… social work had authoritatively had its attention drawn not only to the nature of the Asian situation, but emphatically to the necessary widening of social work priorities and direction everywhere."* (Drucker, 2003, p67).

So, though driven partly by forces beyond the control of individual states, a challenge to 'western' social work did begin to develop in Asia in the late 1960s and 1970s. Midgely (2001) suggested that the influence of 'western' social work was not all bad. It led to collaboration, innovation and an expansion of understanding. The fact that there is a wealth of literature to inform this thesis is testament to the positive aspects

of international social work. Yet Midgely reiterates the messages from workers in developing countries that, *"…the profession's individualized, therapeutic approach is unsuited to the pressing problems of poverty, unemployment, hunger, homelessness and ill health that characterises the global South*." (2001, p28). Midgely acknowledges the limited (but present) social and political activism within social work and more common commitment to remedial practice. In a comment that speaks to the Filipino context, he says (p29):

*"But some writers believe that developmental forms of social work do not address underlying social inequalities and injustices, and that they fail to challenge the pervasive exploitation of the poor, women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities and other oppressed groups."*

This theme is developed in relation to social work in the Philippines, when we look in detail at the data.

## 3.4 Indigenisation and Reconceptualisation

*"Bringing education to countries or regions where it would otherwise be inaccessible appears to be a valuable gift, but it also tightens the dependency of the receiving on the giving countries."* (Askeland & Payne, 2006, p735).

The field of social work internationally (dominated by 'western' perspectives and methods) has, in part, constructed the field of social work in the Philippines. This initially involved the imposition of culture, including religions and other institutions, upon the country under colonial rule and via a process of US training, followed by years of social work education drawing upon western models and values. Ferguson (2005) traces the exchange of social work from Europe to America, then (post-war) from America to the rest of the world. Drawing upon the work of Cox (1997), she identifies a 'typical' process whereby local forms of support continued but 'western' responses were also introduced:

*"The arrival of western colonial powers and missionaries in Asia, together with the rapid industrialization and urbanization of countries throughout the region, marked the inception of… the industrial charity model. During this period, the western model of remedial and charitable social services was introduced to schools of social work and to governmental and non-governmental agencies."* (Ferguson, 2005, p522).

Following this, Ferguson discusses two processes: indigenisation (the modification of 'western' models and understandings) and reconceptualisation (or what Askeland and Payne (2006) refer to as 'cultural translation'). Whilst the former attempts to adapt imported approaches to local political priorities, culture and social structures, reconceptualization is described as follows:

*"In the late 1960s, dissatisfaction with the outcomes of indigenization in the developing world prompted many countries to distance themselves from the western social work model and to generate new responses to structural social problems from within. The social work profession in many developing countries recognized that inherent in the western model were remedial approaches based on individual need."* (Ferguson, 2005, p521)

Ferguson points out that the theoretical origins of attempts to reconstruct social work to address structural inequalities originated in the Catholic University of Chile. There are few indications of this radical turn being taken-up by the Roman Catholic universities in the Philippines, though academics and practitioners did seek to indigenise and to focus, in part at least, on social development, community work and activist strategies. Certainly, the Philippines shifted from individualised forms of practice to social development approaches, though these arguably promote individual responsibility for getting out of poverty rather than challenging structural inequalities.

Askeland and Payne (2006, p733) acknowledge that education was used within empire to shift local values and culture towards those of the colonising country. Post-colonially, 'western' forms of knowledge (and knowledge production) were considered superior, universal and transferable. As we shall see, most texts used in Philippine universities delivering social work education are in English (including

indigenous texts). Askeland and Payne (p739) point out that the majority of international exchange in social work is in English or one of the other *"most powerful colonial languages"* (Spanish and French). They acknowledge, however, that, whilst globalised educational exchange may lead to homogenisation, it could promote good practice, whereby countries adapt and learn without compromising the local. Though Filipinos speak English and often study in English, the ethical implications of language for this research (and potential for cultural and linguistic misunderstanding) were ever present, as was the researcher's position within this.

Yan & Tsui (2007) use a case study of US social work literature to consider themes of universality and transferability to the Chinese context, or what they describe (p641) as, *"…the opposing forces of internationalization and indigenization"*. They make the important point that 'western social work' is riddled with different approaches and views upon desired 'mission' and that therefore any suggestion of indigenisation as a form of resistance to some homogenous, externally imposed form of social work is simplistic. In respect of the 'Person-In-Environment' definition, they point out (p646) that:

*"One ongoing controversy among social workers in the USA concerns the focus of social work: should social workers help people to adjust to the social environment or should they concentrate their efforts on changing the environment to eliminate the structural causes leading to human suffering?"*

Yan & Tsui also address the value of professionalised social work, again drawing upon the US example. In their analysis, the move to professional status usually entailed having a legally protected title (as in the Philippines) which, in turn, placed social workers further under state control, less able to exercise discretion, more distanced from unqualified workers (who often provide excellent services, such as those in NGOs) and less able to advocate for policy or political change. Their suggestion for Chinese social work is that the profession remain as broad as possible and open to all sources and forms of knowledge and practice methods. In two statements which resonate with the broad conception of social work evident in the Philippines, Yan & Tsui suggest the following:

*"Perhaps the social work profession in China needs to be more inclusive. It should embrace both trained and untrained social work practitioners and establish an agreed division of labour."* (p649)

*"For the social work profession in China, the example in the USA suggests that, instead of protecting an exclusive ground which may deter potential allies, a more inclusive approach should be adopted."* (p650)

Particularly interesting perspectives on indigenisation are offered, also from China, by Huang & Zhang (2008, 2011). In their earlier article, an overview is provided of calls for indigenous Chinese social work, including reference to Xiong's 2006 article that interestingly applied Bourdieu's theory of action to indigenisation but which (ironically) is available only in Chinese. Huang & Zhang (2008) argued that Chinese people might, if asked, prefer 'western' social work values like human rights, as a route out of oppression. This brings to mind the limited scope for self-determination for disabled people in the Philippine family-oriented culture (discussed later). Essentially, they suggest that a simplistic 'West is Bad/Indigenous is Good' model was unhelpful. In response, Gray & Coates (2010) reiterate the concern that social work in the Global North had insufficiently recognised local cultures, failed to hear alternative voices and introduced inappropriate forms of practice to other countries. This prompted a response from Huang & Zhang (2011), again stating that sensitivity to cultural difference was a vital component of social work but that this should be an expectation everywhere, not just in 'developing' contexts. They take issue with the dichotomous characterisation of the 'west' as liberal individualism (despite evidence of significant collective activity in the west) and the 'east' as something very different. These idealised types may, they say, serve to further marginalise and disempower those who are different. The case is also made that there are significant commonalities in terms of 'east/west' value bases and that the idea of universality should not be 'ditched with the bathwater'. Finally, given the positioning of indigenisation as a counter-balance to modernisation and global homogenisation, Huang & Zhang ask what social work should be trying to achieve if not development. Again, as we have begun to see, social work in the Philippines is very much tied to the economic and social development agenda.

## 3.5 Characteristics of the Profession in the Philippines

Accounts from within social work of its international (and national) development typically point (as have some sociologists) to factors like professional recognition, the growth of social work education, the sharing of ideas through conferences and internet-use, efforts to indigenise and evidence of cross-national practice, student learning and academic endeavour:

*"The professional concept rests as much on scarce resource as the landed or capitalist, but instead of controlling land or capital it sets out to control the supply of expertise… its value has to be protected and raised, first by persuading the public of the vital importance of the service and then by controlling the market for it."*
(Perkin, 1989, p378)

Hence, indicators of professionalisation include the development of professional bodies, strategies of closure (limiting admittance) through qualification, protection of title and some form of monopoly of 'unique' forms of practice. Such dimensions are now considered, making connections to the particular focus of this thesis. Weiss and Welbourne's (2007) comparative text, looking at the social work profession across the world, is illuminating. They name the 'drive for professional status' as a consistent –and consistently controversial – feature of the development of social work in all countries (p1). Indicators of 'degree of professionalisation' (such as the existence of Codes of Ethics and enforcement mechanisms, monopoly of specific roles or protection of the title of 'social worker) suggest social work is significantly more established and formalised in some countries than others. This section looks at those dimensions of the profession addressed by Weiss and Welbourne and offers comments on social work in the Philippines (not one of the countries surveyed for the text).

The first indicator of professional social work adopted by Weiss and Welbourne (2007) is that of having a knowledge base which is in some ways unique. The stage of development of "country-specific knowledge" varies, and most developing countries identified the limited transferability of 'western' casework models (ibid,

p227-8). In the case of the Philippines, the Preface to the second edition of one of the most-cited social work texts suggested that, *"...we must mobilize support for theory-building efforts so that we do not merely adopt or improve on practice theories or concepts developed in other lands but also develop our own"* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, viii). Lee-Mendoza goes on to introduce qualifying students to a range of theories and approaches developed in the US or UK. Whilst case studies and examples of agencies in the Philippines are employed, to 'localise' the concepts presented, little is described as 'Philippine social work theory'. In addition to knowledge connected to practice methods, Weiss and Welbourne say the knowledge base for social work typically includes knowledge about social problems in a country and about populations that suffer oppression. A review of the Philippine literature suggested there *is* evidence of a well-developed knowledge base in terms of social conditions and issues. Whilst there is certainly a literature engaging with structural factors such as poverty and gender in the Philippines, this would not appear to be conceptualised in terms of social divisions, power or anti-oppressive practice. Finally, in relation to knowledge base, Weiss and Welbourne refer to dissemination. In the Philippines, the cost of books is prohibitive and libraries struggle to maintain stocks of current literature, so access to knowledge is certainly affected by resources. A good number of local texts have, however, been published (Cordero, Pangalangan & Fondevilla, 2000; Veneracion, 2003; Lee-Mendoza, 2008) and a number of social work and related Journals exist, including the Philippine Journal of Social Development and Philippine Journal of Social Work. Finally, various social work associations hold conferences and other events at which knowledge is shared.

The second aspect of professional development explored by Weiss and Welbourne is that of public recognition, defined in terms of restriction on use of title, licensing and level of qualification. Here, social work in the Philippines 'scores well'. Republic Act 4373, passed in 1965, introduced the requirement that social workers complete a bachelor's degree, incorporating 1000 hours of supervised practice learning, and pass a government board examination to be registered (Lee-Mendoza, 2008; Viloria, 1987). Such recognition and regulation took far longer to achieve in many other parts of the world, 'developing' or 'developed'. Weiss and Welbourne found, in all the countries they considered, that social work qualifications were part of higher education systems (p234), though levels, requirements and standardisation of

curriculum varied. It is notable that a national curriculum has been in place for social work in the Philippines since the 1960s, with the most recent version developed by the National Association for Social Work Education (NASWEI) and the Philippine Association of Social Workers (PASWI) and approved by the Government's Commission on Higher Education in 2010 (CHED, 2010). The long-standing existence of social work associations in the Philippines is another indicator of professional maturity, according to Weiss and Welbourne. From the 1960s, the country saw ongoing efforts to set and monitor standards in social work education (Lee-Mendoza, p61-4). For Midgley (1997, p167), *"American influences can be readily detected in Asian social work education, particularly in India and the Philippines, where the American preference for university-level training was adopted... While India, the Philippines and Korea have numerous schools of social work, countries such as Singapore, Thailand, and Papua New Guinea have more limited provision."*

A further dimension of professionalisation identified by Weiss and Welbourne (p230) is the extent to which social work has a monopoly over, or is the preferred provider of, certain forms of practice. It is suggested that those areas seen as 'requiring social work input' are being eroded in parts of the Global North, often related to other professionals or unqualified/voluntary workers carrying out those tasks. Though social work is a legally recognised profession in the Philippines, no preserved roles have been identified in the literature review. An associated dimension of the development of social work as a profession is, for Weiss and Welbourne (p233), that of professional autonomy. They say this varies from workplace to workplace but particularly reflects the sector (private, statutory or not-for-profit) and nature of management 'control' over decision-making and action. As social workers operate in all these contexts in the Philippines, one can conclude that levels of autonomy vary. As we shall see, social workers and academics interviewed for this study commented on the impact of political influence (Yu, 2006) and financial constraints. Social workers are also commonly employed by self-help/people's organisations (whose agenda is set by service users) and by local and international NGOs (which expect funds to be used for pre-agreed purposes). As in all countries, therefore, social workers in the Philippines vary in their autonomy.

Weiss and Welbourne go on to identify the existence of a national Code of Ethics as a further indicator of professional development. The Philippine Association of Social Workers, Inc. adopted a code in 1964, with the most recent revision being in 1998 (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p134). The Code is discussed later in this chapter. The final dimension discussed by Weiss and Welbourne is that of prestige and remuneration. They comment (p240) that, *"Generally, the status and prestige of social work... is not high. In half the countries... its status is particularly low relative to that of other helping professions."* In the Philippines, again this in part depends upon the sector within which practitioners work but several research participants commented on low wages and on this being one motivation for becoming a 'Filipino Worker Oversees'.

Weiss and Welbourne's work offers a helpful framework for considering the profession of social work, though one which is largely functional in sociological terms. By placing Philippine social work within this framework, we see an established and well-developed profession but one that continues to tussle with the advantages and challenges of professional status and tensions associated with practice in varied agency contexts. The authors see much common ground in social work across the world, both in terms of, *"...the emergence of social work from a tradition of philanthropy and 'good work', often underpinned by religious values"* (p246) and the later influence (initially from the USA) of psychosocial casework, which, *"...was seen as a valuable tool in the struggle to professionalize social work by providing a unifying methodology for social workers in diverse practice settings"* (p247). Social work in the Philippines, where Christianity was imposed by Spain and the influence of North America was very direct, unsurprisingly followed a similar pattern of development. However, Hugman makes the significant point that 'social development' has constituted a core dimension of post-colonial social work (2010, p81-4). Whilst this may well be a response to poverty, Hugman also suggests that social development forms a bridge between micro and macro approaches, incorporating notions of 'harmony and cohesion' (p81) central to African and Asian societies. Whereas western' social work emphasises the inter-personal and individual social need, Hugman suggests that social work in 'developing' countries typically engages with capacity building in communities and with economic development at the local level, seeking to reconcile individual rights with those of family and community, in ways which might be considered contrary to western ideas

of anti-oppressive practice. However, for Hugman (p85), *"Ironically, we have to recognise that the terms of this debate are couched in the value system derived from the European tradition, in which the post-Enlightenment notions of human rights and social justice are understood predominantly in a very individualistic way... For social work to operate only with an overly individualistic notion of how these values are to be achieved in such contexts may be both practically counter-productive and also constitute an implicit form of neo-colonialism."* Dominelli goes further (2010, p12), asserting that, *"...challenges to hegemonic forms of practice are more diverse in the international domain, where social development goals are intertwined with individual interventions."* As we shall see, differing interpretations of the nature of oppression arose in data collected for this study.

This chapter now turns to the development of social work in the Philippines, tracking links to (and departures from) those 'Western' forms of social work and considering whether such processes accompanied that development.

## 3.6 Development of Social Welfare & Social Work in the Philippines

Almanzor (1966, p27) notes that *"the humanitarian impulse"* was present in the Philippines before colonial rule but goes on to identify the influence of Spain and the USA on the country. Over 300 years of Spanish rule, to the end of the nineteenth century, resulted in the 'unification' of thousands of islands within one state. Although Almanzor (1966) acknowledged the processes of 'Western' influence on Philippine social work, it fell to Yu forty years later to offer a more critical account of the pervasive ideological impact upon the profession of the colonial powers (Yu, 2006). Both accounts present Spanish rule as a time when social welfare developed, as missionaries converted most of the population to Christianity and developed schools, hospitals and almshouses. American rule (1898 – 1946) saw further development of charitable provision but also the extension of public coordination and welfare services. The position of the US vis-a-vis the Philippines, however exploitative, was different from that with Spain. Howe (2002, p32) observes that, *"...the indirect or informal political control exercised by... the United States over the Philippines, might (or might not, according to political preference) be described*

*as imperialism. But it is not colonialism, since... the Philippines retained formal political sovereignty. Nor is it colonization, since... American migrants did not settle in... the Philippines in significant numbers..."* Social work developed as a profession following independence, initially through the influence of aid workers from the USA and elsewhere and then through a small number of Filipinos, trained in the USA, who established the Philippine Association of Social Workers (Almanzor, 1966; Yu, 2006). Thus, writers on social work in the Philippines have broadly identified the adoption of Christian philanthropy/charity and American social work practice as the two major influences, with debate continuing around the interplay of those factors with indigenous culture.

Yu (2006) asserted that existing accounts of the development of Philippine social welfare failed to engage critically with the repressive dimensions and lasting legacies of foreign rule. He acknowledges that home-grown critical histories of the Philippines exist (Constantino and Constantino, 1978) but correctly sees these as absent from the writings of social work academics. Thus, "*The austerity of the Spanish colonial government and the omnipotence of the clergy created a model of social welfare that was dominated by the religious orders, with minimal government involvement."* (Yu, 2006, p561). Dominant accounts in social work continued to present Spanish rule as the time when hospitals and orphanages were established by a benevolent church and kindly individuals made private acts of giving as a route to salvation. This thesis will show that the ethos of charity and of donors is very much alive in Philippine social work (Price and Artaraz, 2013). Whilst the community orientation of practice in the Philippines impacted strongly upon the researcher, the potential for faith to limit expectations and individualise deservedness for support was equally striking. Again, for Yu (2006, p562), these beliefs *"…hold perseverance in suffering as a virtue, fate as the will of God and misfortune and poverty as punishment for sin or a test of character."* Notions of individual failings and salvation, within welfare and broader society, were a key legacy of Spain's colonisation of the Philippines.

Developments under US-rule included the establishment of a Board to coordinate the efforts of charitable organisations, some initiated and sponsored by American citizens; a chapter of the American Red Cross; the gradual growth of health centres,

social work offices in poor areas; and limited attempts to remove people from slum living (Landa Jocano, 1980). However, the impact of economic depression in the 1930s, in a context of reliance upon the USA, led to a need for basic relief work (Lee-Mendoza, 2008). A small number of women gained scholarships to attend American universities for social work training from the 1920s onwards. In 1935, the Philippines entered a commonwealth period under its first President. The economy began to recover, a minimum wage was introduced and there was expansion of public welfare legislation and programmes. For Landa Jocano (ibid, p63), the 1930s saw a transition in social welfare (prompted by American influence), both through a growing 'professionalisation' and increasing emphasis on coordination. In 1940, the Department of Health and Public Welfare was established. USA rule saw the introduction of democracy and of public provision and funding in welfare but, *"…welfare initiatives only had value if they facilitated colonial subjugation and assimilation. An individualist perspective also came with the restrictive colonial environment that would also have provided penalties for anyone who suggested structural attributions to social problems"* (Yu, 2006, p565). For Yu, therefore, colonial rule brought a functional, residualised and individualist form of welfare. It could be argued that the Spanish and US influences complemented and reinforced each other in this regard.

Lee-Mendoza, former Professor of Social Work at the University of the Philippines, deserves credit for writing a text which was among the first to seek to account for social work in a Philippine context and provide culturally-recognisable case examples. The third edition was published in 2008, some time after Yu's analysis (in which Lee-Mendoza is among the authors criticised). Yet, this edition retains a 'neutral' - and in many ways positive - account of welfare under Spain and the USA (and, for that matter, of the years of martial law). Of course, no history *is* neutral and Lee-Mendoza's oft-cited text is disappointingly uncritical, suggesting that social work responds to *"personal inadequacies"* and *"situational inadequacies"* (2008, p8). Though this does place individual 'inability to cope' within a loose social context, no framework of structural inequality is offered, but rather a 'maintenance' vision (offering a particular interpretation of the 'person in environment' definition). Humanitarian and social justice goals are described as, *"… the identification of the most afflicted, the most dependent, the most neglected, and those least able to help*

*themselves…"*, whilst the social control dimensions of social work are, *"…based on the recognition that needy, deprived, or disadvantaged groups may strike out, individually or collectively, against what they consider to be an alienating or offending society. Society therefore has to secure itself against the threats to life, property, and political stability in the community…"* (2008, p6).

Lee-Mendoza is not alone in her take on Philippine history and the place of social work. Viloria and Martinez (1987) and Landa Jocano (1980) paint a similarly benign picture. Although Viloria and Martinez offer some critique of Spanish domination, highlighting the *"appalling rise in destitution"* and the pain caused by *"the Sword and the Cross"* (1987, p23), this is tempered with a grateful acknowledgment of the growth of education, Christianity and charitable support for, *"the poor, the sick, the aged, the mentally ill and defective, the orphans, and youthful delinquents…"* (ibid, p24). No critique of the motives or impact of the 'American phase' is offered or, indeed, of the Marcos regime, which had collapsed the year before this account was published. Meanwhile, for Landa Jocano:

*"The early Spanish missionaries not only 'watched over' the spiritual well-being of the people but also administered in the maintenance of hospitals, asylums, and orphanages for the natives."* (1980, p19); and *"The colonization policies of Spain also emphasized education. By the middle of the 16th century, schools and universities were opened all over her colonies, introducing her cultural heritage to the subject states."* (1980, p21).

In 1946, the Philippines became a republic and state engagement with welfare grew. 1947 saw a Social Welfare Commission (later the Social Welfare Administration) which, for Lee-Mendoza (2008, p25) *"…signified the formal recognition of social welfare as a responsibility by the state."* The main areas of social work activity were financial and other forms of relief; institutional care; work-training/income-generation projects; and rural welfare (not only concerned with relief but the development of community kitchens, self-help programmes and cooperatives and construction of road networks). Building on the experiences of Filipinos trained in the USA, social work schools were established. The Philippine Association of Social Workers was formed by that same handful of overseas-trained workers in 1947. Social workers in

the 1950s and 1960s worked predominantly in hospitals and mental health settings, assessing eligibility for free treatment and financial support (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p56), and this more tangible link between social work and welfare *remains* a significant difference between Philippines social work and that in much of the Global North. UNICEF-funded training of social workers boosted numbers. A key development for the profession came in 1965, when Republic Act 4373 introduced regulation of social work and social work agencies. The formation of the Schools of Social Work Association of the Philippines in 1969 was indicative of a growing presence and recognition but also a response to the need for a revised curriculum post-RA4373.

In 1965, Marcos became President and remained so until 1986. Again, Lee-Mendoza offers no critique but does provide information relevant to understanding the development of social work. Importantly, she points to growing UN focus on a development agenda (2008, p31). UNICEF, for example, became more active and funds were directed to national initiatives aimed at tackling poverty and raising living standards. Indeed, it is suggested that Marcos' early years saw real attempts to achieve such aims. However, he faced growing protest and at times violent opposition, from students seeking educational reform, from the Filipino Communist Party and from Muslim separatists. In 1972, Marcos declared Martial Law, which remained, tellingly, until a visit of the Pope in 1981. Opposition leaders were silenced or forced into exile. Curfews were imposed and, seemingly, 'accepted' by much of the population. The armed forces grew in size significantly. Yet the 1970s saw economic growth, relative prosperity and a form of repressed stability. Much of this was sustained – if not created – by billions of dollars of US-aid, and American markets for Philippine produce.

In 1976, government welfare agencies evolved into the Department of Social Services and Development which, for Lee-Mendoza (2008, p31) reflected the *"...shifting emphasis from the traditional, often institution-based social welfare to community-oriented programs and services which underscored people's own capacities for problem-solving."* Though social work continued to provide services like emergency relief and day care, it became increasingly part of a drive for development, working with communities to develop small businesses and skills for

employment. So, as Martial Law continued around it and the country became ever more reliant on a former imperial power, many social workers arguably engaged with a system which placed the onus on the poor to work their way out of poverty.

Much of the development agenda was promoted through the existing political structure of 'barangays', originally a system of small village communities under hereditary local rulers grouped into regional federations. Viloria and Martinez (1987, p22-23) describe it as a structure for settling disputes or seeking communal support at times of need but one which existed around a social structure based on the subsistence of individual, self-sufficient families. The barangay were central to the social structure of the country until the Spanish introduced a centralised structure under a Governor General. Zulueta and Nebres (2003, p56) suggest that this concentration of power was *"the primary source of graft and corruption"*, which blights politics and development in the Philippines to this day. For the first 200 years of Spanish rule, the Philippines was divided into 'encomiendas', regions charged with promoting welfare and conversion to Catholicism. They constituted a reward to Spanish people who had assisted in the colonisation process. Towards the end of the 18th Century, a system of provincial government was introduced. Corruption manifested itself at every level of the system and, with the union of Church and State, a repressive state structure led to "*much oppression and untold suffering"* (Zulueta and Nebres, 2003 p60).

Social workers continue to grapple with a political and welfare system in which the personal power of elected representatives and paid officials holds huge sway. At the local level, the need to always work through the barangay is something which academics and practitioners raised in interviews for this project, often as a barrier but also as an opportunity, a resource and a link to local people. Thus, for better and for worse, the community context is direct and real for Philippine social work and those connections between barangay and welfare were first forged as part of Marcos' development programme. He emphasised barangays as the focus for community decision making and planning, though it is difficult to see how this was to happen under a declaration which, *"...denied the people any meaningful participation [and] respected no constitutional rights, no civil liberties."* (Zulueta & Nebres, 2003, p251).

Marcos' final years as president saw economic stagnation, increasing poverty and corruption. His position was fatally damaged by the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr. in 1983. In 1986, when Marcos was declared winner of an election, mass 'people power' demonstrations were held, Marcos went into exile and Corazon Aquino became President. She, too, was keen to see a shift from relief to a development approach, creating the Department for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which exists to this day. By the early 1990s, the DSWD was the largest employer of licensed social workers in the Philippines and policy was focusing on *"Low Income Municipalities (LIMs) and other socially-depressed barangays"* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p35-6).

The Local Government Code 1991 (Republic Act 7160) decentralised a broad range of responsibilities and functions from national to local government. Most social work and welfare responsibilities were devolved to the Municipality, with some devolved to the Barangay (Local Government Code, 1991). The DSWD became a research and policy planning agency but, *"...had to devolve its implementing functions together with its programs and services, direct service workers, budget corresponding to the salary and funds of the staff and programs, and assets and liabilities to the local government units starting in 1992"* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p35). This was a wholesale revision of the context in which most statutory social workers operate. Those employed within DSWD itself would, in future, be involved with support to – and regulation of – the services provided by local government, NGOs and 'people's organisations'. Yu (2013, p193) argues that, *"the devolution resulted in a policy environment that allows for varying levels of social support across municipalities and, consequently, the fragmentation of Filipino citizenship."* Indeed, Yu goes so far as to suggest that, *"… in welcoming devolution, social workers welcomed the advance of a policy regime underpinned by conservative ideology as a national social welfare system was dismantled in the name of local empowerment and development"* (Yu, ibid, p204). In a section that says much about 'space' (Huegler, Lyons and Pawar, 2012), Yu (ibid, p205) adds:

*"What practitioners need to realize is that the devolution does not only represent a change in their location in the institutional space comprising the national bureaucracy. Even if it does not appear to do so, devolution represents a*

*fundamental change in the character of Philippine social policy and, as a consequence, of their work… What does it mean when the national government commits the country to the promotion of social justice, the protection of human rights and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals? Given our experience with the devolution, the answer now seems to depend on which locality one resides in."*

From the 1990s onwards, social work continued to operate within local government units, NGOs, faith-based charitable providers and some private sector agencies (such as private hospitals and industrial settings). All of this activity is, to varying degrees, subject to the oversight and 'vision' of the DSWD, which still employs social workers in research and monitoring roles (some of whom participated in this study). Legislation since 1990 has focussed on empowerment/rights (for example of Disabled People in 1992 and Indigenous Peoples in 1997) and on protection (of Children, in 1992, and through an anti-trafficking law in 2003), which reflects the co-existence of development approaches and some growing concern with individualized needs and forms of practice. Lee-Mendoza (2008, p37) emphasises the pluralist nature of welfare in the Philippines and the particular role played by NGOs: *"…countless social agencies, organizations and institutions under private sponsorship are engaged in the provision of many different social services to meet a great variety of unmet human needs. With our scarce resources, NGOs supplement government efforts especially for the poor and disabled sectors of our society."* The Philippine Council for NGO Certification suggests there could be 60,000 NGOs in the Philippines. It is very significant that, to a much greater extent than in parts of the 'west', the work of NGOs is seen very much as part of social work and a place for social workers. Thus, the Mission of the DSWD (in 2011) was as follows:

*"To provide social protection and promote the rights and welfare of the poor, vulnerable and the disadvantaged individuals, families and communities that will contribute to poverty alleviation and empowerment through social welfare development policies, programs, projects and services implemented with or through local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POs), other government organizations (GOs) and other members of civil society."* (DSWD, 2011 (1))

The DSWD's 2009 Annual Report set out some areas of attention within the sector, including, *"...the expansion of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) or the conditional cash transfer program… from 337, 416 in 2008 beneficiaries to 1 million in 2009."* (DSWD, 2009, p3) Under this programme, to which participants referred during interviews, grants are made to poor households *"upon compliance to conditions set by the program"* (ibid, p4). *"The conditionalities include sending their children to school and bringing them to health centers on a regular basis, and providing pre and post natal care and delivery by a skilled birth attendant to pregnant women"* (ibid, p24). However, Raquiza (2010) notes that 1 million beneficiaries constitute only a quarter of those in poverty in the country. Furthermore, with a focus on education and health to break inter-generational poverty, the more direct issue of a regular income was, she suggested, being overlooked. The Report also highlights the growth of emergency employment measures, 'economic resiliency' assistance, disaster relief and rehabilitation.

What is striking about the Report is the extent of reliance upon agencies outside the Philippines. Many schemes were funded as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000). The 4Ps Programme was supported by UNICEF; projects in poorer regions (day centres; irrigation and infrastructure projects; health stations; livelihood centres; schemes to reduce 'gender violence') were funded by the Spanish government; and assistance to those affected by conflict in Mindanao was supported by the UN World Food Programme. A further high profile programme, part-funded through loans from the World Bank (Raquiza, 2010) and overseas grant aid, is called Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS). Funds support community initiatives including basic infrastructure, community enterprise, skills training and health/day-centres. Part of this programme, in urban poor communities, was supported by a US$3million grant from the Japanese government through their Social Development Fund (DSWD (2), 2011). Participants for this study discussed this programme which, again, is largely funded by international loans and grants. Raquiza (2010, p16) recognises some positive outcomes of the programme but emphasises the scale of poverty:

*"While program evaluation has been generally positive – increased incomes for barangay residents, increased access to social infrastructure and decision-making processes, the development of new skills for local residents, higher levels of collective action, social capital and local empowerment – the highly 'micro-ized and project-ized' nature of many of the initiatives under this program have shown that its impact is, at best, localized."*

The above article is taken from the 'Social Welfare and Development Journal' which, as a government publication, is far from independent although, as has been seen, some writers are critical of existing policy. Articles convey strongly the fundamental and emerging social issues facing the Philippines such as 'children in conflict with the law' (Mendoza, 2010); an increasing incidence of suicide (Gamboa & Lapuz-Estal, 2010); responding to natural disasters (Hashim-Taradji, 2010); and progress towards the MDGs. On the latter, Serrano notes that, *"Despite consistent positive economic growth – 6 percent on average – there are more poor Filipinos now than when we set off on the MDG track in 2000. The high inequality picture of 1990 – expressed in income, employment, spatial, gender, ethnic dimensions – hardly changed or might have even worsened"* (Serrano, 2010, p2).

The theme of poverty is also taken-up by Raquiza (2010), who essentially argues for a comprehensive welfare system. Raquiza cites the concept of poverty adopted in a UN Declaration (UN, 1995), which encompassed social exclusion and deprivation (Raquiza, 2010, p17). She argues that certain groups, such as poor women and indigenous people, face particular discrimination and inequality in Philippine society; that the country is dominated by a small number of powerful families; and that population growth should be tackled within a reproductive rights framework. For Raquiza, current anti-poverty initiatives fail to address the structural causes of poverty and agrarian reform, progressive taxation and a universal system of social protection are needed. *"The Philippine government is also urged to explore a broader definition of social protection which includes addressing 'vulnerability associated with being poor' (for which social assistance is needed), vulnerability with the risk of becoming poor (for which social insurance is needed) as well as social injustice arising from structural inequalities and abuse of power (for which social equity is needed)"* (Raquiza, 2010, p19).

Critical voices do exist, therefore, if less commonly within social work academia. Whilst this chapter is critical of much Philippine social work literature, it appears that the Philippine Association of Social Workers *has* questioned government policy and actions. It, *"took a stand on such social issues like (sic) family planning, the integration of cultural minorities into Philippine society, the release of activist social workers who were detained for charges of rebellion during the Martial Law Period… (and it)… campaigned for opposition to the government initiated proposal to merge the DSWD and the Department of Health in the 1980s."* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p60-61).

This section has considered what social work *is* in the Philippines. Three dimensions of professional practice remain core to the social work curriculum and evident in practice. These are Social Casework (conceptualised as assistance towards individual adjustment), Social Groupwork (group activities organised for welfare purposes) and Community Organisation (Landa Jocano, 1980, p5-6). The latter, Landa Jocano describes thus (1980, p8): *"Its major interest is focussed on community problems and on how to mobilize all available resources - human, social and cultural - in the community in order to correct these deficiencies."* Thus, since the 1950s, social work education and practice have been *"patterned after the American model"* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p499). The scope of social work in the Philippines is seductive, yet the tone of this explication of social work purpose, whether at the individual, group or community level, is very much one of maintenance rather than opposition, of responsibility and, perhaps, blame.

## 3.7 Practice: Some defining features of Social Work in the Philippines Today

Social workers in the Philippines work across a wide range of organisational and practice contexts. They may, for example, be employed by international or national NGOs, central or local government, factories, charities or faith-based organisations. Areas of practice in the Philippines include child welfare and family support; work with older people, women, disabled people and those with mental health problems;

disaster management; community development and sustainability; community organising; and advocacy and social action. Roles and tasks range from direct practice with individuals, families, groups and communities to positions focusing on social administration, project development, training and programme management. Social work takes place in settings including private companies, military contexts, private and public hospitals, courts, statutory and non-statutory welfare institutions, schools and church-based services. Practice sometimes focuses upon particular 'groups' within the population, such as street children, farmers, the urban poor or migrant workers. However, it is equally likely to take the form of generic practice, tackling issues as they arise within a local area. Many qualified and registered social workers are in posts with titles that do not mention social work. Almanzor (1988) commented that this can be because they are working for NGOs or international organisations where the job title relates to funding requirements or specific aims (say, around youth work or campaigning for the rights of older people) or that they are in planning or research positions within, for example, the UN. Social work in the Philippines is, indeed a very 'broad church', though methods tend towards collective/community approaches far more than in England. As has been stated, social development is the underpinning aim of much state social work.

This considerable range of sectors, settings and roles has implications for the degree of autonomy afforded to social workers. Social workers do work in government positions but are also commonly employed by self-help/people's organisations (where the agenda is set by service users) and by local and international non-governmental organisations (which will, of course, expect funds to be used for agreed purposes). Workers and academics also recognise the impact of political influence and financial constraints on professional autonomy. As in all countries, therefore, one can identify differences in the extent to which social workers in the Philippines are able to act as autonomous professionals.

Above all, social work in the Philippines is described (in the literature and by research participants) as responding to poverty. However, social work, whether at an individual or community level, is arguably oriented to maintenance rather than change or to a conception of change reliant upon self-help and hard work. As has been said, the country imported an American model with 3 core dimensions:

casework, groupwork and community organising. However, despite the country being community-based (for example, through the barangay), social work did not take community form until the UN push for development in the 1960s. The preference for generalist skills and approaches (Birkenmaier et al, 2014) also makes pragmatic sense, in a context where one social worker may cover a large area with extensive social need, particularly in rural parts of the country. One might argue that generalist practice offers a richness of role and strategies denied to many workers in the Global North. Indeed, Lee-Mendoza comments that, even where social work in the Philippines takes individualised form (for example, in responding to child abuse or to adults with mental health needs), *"... case managers have no choice but to also provide direct service which means... resource provider, mediator, social broker, enabler, counsellor/therapist, and advocate"* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p529). Roles are perhaps defined 'softly', with workers able to conceptualise 'problems' broadly and work across boundaries, in ways that do not occur in many countries. This is, for some, a strength but others in the profession argue for increasing specialism.

One form of indigenisation of social work, though driven by an international agenda of development, was this shift towards generalist practice or what was known as the 'integrated method' (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p500). Practice that engaged at the individual level was not encouraged, as it did not easily support a development perspective. Tackling poverty was seen as a community issue: *"The recognized need was for social workers who have the knowledge and skills for engaging people in problem solving, in bringing needs and resources together, and in systematically using practice experience to document the level of effectiveness of existing policies and services."* (Lee-Mendoza, 2008, p500-501). An interesting phrase used, again, by Lee-Mendoza is, *"...working with an individual or a group as an entry point for working with a community"* (ibid, p503). Workers facilitate access to resources, raise funds, motivate people to participate and train community members to coordinate local projects.

Developmental social work uses a range of approaches to build capacity, self-sufficiency and prevention. Lee-Mendoza identifies the first of these approaches as 'advocacy' but employs the term very differently to its typical definition in the Global North. She says, *"...the practitioner takes a stand regarding important issues or*

*causes affecting client populations, and defends or recommends her position... in efforts to change policies and programs on behalf of sectors of the population, based on... professional values"* (ibid, p414). This interpretation of 'advocacy' differs hugely from the offering of support to individuals with which the term is associated in the 'west'. However, these are not the only dimensions of 'developmental social work' identified by Lee-Mendoza. 'Intercession-Mediation' (a phrase with ecclesiastical origins) refers to practices which support individuals or groups through 'the system', negotiate on their behalf and use law, policy and procedure to negotiate or confront on behalf of clients.

The next defining feature of developmental social work in the Philippines is, for Lee-Mendoza, what she terms 'Mobilizing the Resources of Client Systems to Change their Social Reality' (ibid, p273). This approach springs from a belief that problems are not the fault of individuals but reflect the fact that their basic needs are not being met. Though this acknowledges the structural, for Lee-Mendoza this perspective manifests itself in projects that support communities to be resourceful, generate income and undertake health promotion activities. Here, the social worker lives in the target community, leads 'study groups' and promotes capacity building. One could argue that models such as these do 'collectivise' rather than 'pathologise' but, in a sense, still leave individuals and communities responsible for clawing their way out of a poverty not of their making.

Lee-Mendoza goes on to stress the key role social work plays in planning welfare, locally and nationally (ibid, p512-513). In this context, the potential role developmental social work could make in challenging social inequality is discussed: *"The social action approach presupposes a disadvantaged segment of the population that needs to be organized, perhaps in alliance with others in order to make adequate demands on the larger community for increased resources or treatment more in accordance with social justice or democracy. Its practitioners aim at basic changes in major institutions or community practices. They seek redistribution of power, resources, or decision-making in the community or changes in basic policies of formal organizations"* (ibid, p385).

Norman reports the findings of an exploratory project looking at international practice variations, in which participants at an international conference completed a survey and 46 responses were received from all continents. Norman is clear that the findings could not be considered definitive or comprehensive but concludes that:

*"… much of the work lies in meeting physical needs, accessing resources, social development and community organization. Such efforts really reflect the heart and history of social work" (Norman, 2005, p566).*

Some of the responses received were from the Philippines. When asked to characterise what formed the majority of social work practice, Filipino respondents indicated 'Physical Needs' (presumably reflecting the focus on poverty, natural disaster and conflict) but added that *"In some schools, clinical social work is now given priority."* This suggests a division within qualifying education in terms of approach reflected in the data gathered for this thesis, where some believed that more specialist, clinical intervention (akin to that in much of the 'west') was needed, whereas others favoured social action or social development.

## 3.8 Philippine Social Work in Historical and International Context: Concluding Comments

This chapter has considered the purpose and practice of social work in the Philippines in historical and international context. It explored the meaning of 'professional imperialism' in the Philippine context and considered the degree to which indigenous social work knowledge and practice methods have been developed. In doing this, particular attention was paid to published Philippine social work literature. It attempts to offer thoughts, specific to the Philippine context, on the situated nature of social work which Payne describes below:

*"The emphasis of social work varies depending on the society that it serves. In societies and communities with poor resources, its focus is social development: working with people to develop social cooperation and facilities, often allied to economic development. In richer societies, its focus is social assistance or social*

*education (in Europe, this is sometimes called 'social pedagogy', emphasising its educational element). Social assistance offers problem-solving where someone has complex difficulties or distress, or personal growth and development where someone seems unable to fulfil their potential."* (Payne, 2005, p2).

Much of the data gathered in the Philippines and with Filipino social workers in England supports Payne's suggestion. This thesis is, in part, concerned with what lies between social development and social assistance, with the potential for collaborative or cooperative forms of social work in 'richer societies' and for alternatives to individualised responses to poverty and inequality. Having mapped the development of the field of social work in the Philippines, within international and historical context, the thesis now introduces the methodology underpinning the work as a whole and the methods employed in gathering - and 'making sense' of - primary data gathered in the Philippines and in England.

# Chapter 4: Research Methodology & Process

## 4.1 Introductory Comment

Having outlined the motivation for this research and introduced some of the central themes and preoccupations arising from the literature review, this chapter concerns itself with epistemological and methodological approaches, the research process itself, and ethical underpinnings and issues. Comment will be made on critical realistic ontology and on the place of research as a critical activity. The dimensions of this project will be discussed, as will the forms of analysis adopted for the study. The methodology and methods of the research both inform and respond to the research questions and objectives, which are set out below accompanied by a brief commentary on sources of evidence. The next section sets out the Research Questions and Research Objectives, offering some brief notes on sources of data which were used in addressing them.

## 4.2 Research Questions and Objectives

## Research Questions

| Question | Data Sources |
|---|---|
| 1. How have historical and international processes shaped social work in the Philippines? | • Primary data<br>• Literature review |
| 2. How do social work practitioners, academics and policy makers describe social work purpose, motivation and identity in the Philippines? | • Primary data<br>• Literature review |
| 3. What do Filipino social workers' accounts of moving to and practicing in England contribute to an understanding of the purpose and transferability of social work in an international context? | • Primary data |

Although the concepts are inherently connected and overlapping, one might broadly see Question 1 as considering the field of Philippine social work and Question 2 as being more oriented to understanding habitus among Filipino social workers. Question 3 tends also to an examination of habitus (shifting and/or constant) but in the context of international and local fields.

## Research Objectives

| Objective | Data Sources |
|---|---|
| 1. To understand and evaluate the core purpose, approaches and functions of social work in the Philippines, within historical and international context. | • International and Philippine literature<br>• Primary data |
| 2. To determine the perspectives of social work practitioners, academics and policy makers in the Philippines on the purpose and practice of social work. | • Mostly primary data |
| 3. To understand motivation for social work and the dimensions of social work identity in the Philippines. | • Primary data<br>• Philippine literature |
| 4. To determine the perspectives of Filipino social workers practicing in England on motivation, identity and purpose. | • Primary data |
| 5. To consider how the Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and capital might inform an understanding of what it is to be a social worker and to do social work. | • Combining theoretical literature with primary data |
| 6. To consider the implications of this study for the field of international social work and, in particular, the definition and purpose of social work internationally. | • International literature<br>• Primary data |

As already indicated, this thesis is concerned firstly with the meaning and purpose of social work in the Philippines and in international and historical context and the interplay between these. As Objective 6 above suggests, there was an interest in

the extent to which social work constitutes situated practice or an international field with some collective core identity and purpose. The research design and process were concerned therefore with understanding Philippine social work as a starting point for then engaging with Filipino social workers in England. For this reason, a 5-week study visit to the Philippines was undertaken, during which 'indigenous' social work and related literature was gathered, study visits made to social work agencies and projects and interviews undertaken with social workers, social work academics and students and policy makers in the Philippines. The insights and extensive data gathered during this visit feature in this thesis alongside what Research Objective 2 describes as the perspectives of social workers who qualified in the Philippines and who were practising in England. Indeed, the various sources of data have very much 'spoken to each other' throughout the processes of data collection and analysis.

As discussed more fully in Chapter 1, it is not suggested that the findings (particularly those relating to the Philippines) are easily generalisable. Indeed, it is unrealistic and potentially dismissive to claim that findings from qualitative interviews are 'typical' of Filipino people or of social workers moving to other countries (or even to England). It is suggested that some of the core themes may, with caution, be generalised (for example) to other North-South contexts; to countries subjected to imperialist oppression; or to studies of work and professions. It may also be possible to apply some of the more theoretical dimensions of the thesis to other research studies, in particular those using a Bourdieusian framework. The central message, however, is that the thesis presents findings which are valid and of value *in themselves*, rather than in some transferable way.

## 4.3 Reflexivity

This interest in 'international social work' should be placed in the context of the researcher's own personal and professional 'journey'. This has contributed significantly to what *I* think social work is and might be. My own 'habitus', or dispositions forged through experiences, have had conscious and unconscious effect

upon the work presented in this thesis. As Garrett (2007, p358), citing Brubaker, puts it:

*"…Brubaker (2003: 213, original emphasis) argues that 'it is the habitus that determines the kinds of problems that are posed, the kinds of instruments (conceptual, methodological, statistical) that are employed… the habitus determines the manner in which problems are posed, explanations are posed, explanations constructed, and instruments employed.'"*

I am a registered social worker who worked mostly with older people, disabled people and people with 'chronic' health problems. My paid experience as a qualified worker was in statutory settings but I also worked unpaid for two non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Prior to becoming a social worker, I spent 10 years in democratic services and policy development in a large English local authority, which developed my interest in how people influence public policy. I then undertook a 2-year masters degree in social work at a British university, which focused upon training for practice in Britain. Whilst some attention was paid to community and group work, the primary orientation was that of one-to-one practice, though nurturing a critical concern with structural inequality. I am a white, British gay male who spent all of his formative years in England, trained as a social worker in England and practised only in England. Whilst employed as a social worker, I was a trade union representative and a member of a work-based Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Social Work Group. Since 2003, I have been a lecturer in social work at an English university. All of these experiences have impacted upon this study and some recur as the thesis progresses. They shaped my cultural 'understandings', perspectives on the nature of society and social 'problems', personal and professional value base and starting point for engaging with social work internationally.

Formal social work education and the process of qualification is a fundamental step in becoming a 'professional'. Though centrally about practice, this study connects also with social work education and training in the Philippines. Writers including Butler, Elliott & Stopard (2003) and Dominelli (2002) have commented on the growth of anti-oppressive practice within UK social work training and on a perceived dilution

of such perspectives within the Department of Health (2002) 'Requirements for Social Work Training'. My social work course saw responding to the impact of social divisions, including poverty and class, as central to practice. My own experience as a worker and ongoing contact with workers in statutory contexts (as an academic delivering continuing professional development sessions) suggests many social workers are frustrated by the managerialisation of social work, the technical, bureaucratic nature of much of their practice and the rarity of opportunities for engagement in any form of collective practice:

*"They are well placed to see the ugliness of an unjust society but, under siege and surveillance, are loaded down with new responsibilities and pressed increasingly into a policing role, and are in danger of losing their commitment to progressive social change"*
(Humphries, 2008)

This sense that 'there must be a better way', sometimes conceptualised by practitioners as 'real' social work, also attracted me to global perspectives on social work and continued to emerge throughout the research process. I, like Midgley (1997, p179), am confident that,

*"Western social workers can benefit by learning about cultural diversity, poverty alleviation, and managing budgetary constraints from their colleagues in the developing countries. Third World innovations in developmental social work can also be adopted with appropriate modifications in the individual nations."*

One other aspect of my 'journey' led me to this research. Having spent two years teaching English in Taiwan and Thailand *after* qualifying as a social worker, I experienced being an 'alien' (as my Taiwan visa described me) seeking to live and work within a very different cultural context. My experience, as a white, English-speaking and comparatively 'rich' male, was *not* similar to that of Filipino social workers moving to England. However, the experience provided some appreciation of the multiple impacts of living and working overseas and raised questions about differing forms of social welfare internationally. The concern, in part, with transition and transferability crystallised when, as admissions tutor for a qualifying course,

applications were received from ‘overseas students’ and one wondered what UK-training offered to those wishing to apply their learning elsewhere in the world.

I have sought to adopt a critical reflexivity towards the research and would not wish to separate myself from any part of the process. I approached the work as a critical realist (Collier, 1994; Houston, 2001; Garrett, 2007), as an agent (rather than an actor) with internalised dispositions or habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) but also actively participating in the construction and interpretation of data. I attempt to emphasise both agency and structure, as I maintain that both contribute to the ‘reality’ of service users’ lives and of social work in its many contexts. Perspectives from sociology and social theory are drawn upon, notably the aforementioned work of Bourdieu, and also from social work theory, where I seek to work within a critical and anti-oppressive framework (Dominelli, 2004; Dalrymple & Burke, 2006; Price, 1997; Penketh, 2011). The renewed interest in the radical social work tradition in the UK (Jones et al, 2007; Lavalette, 2011) offered much inspiration, as did attendance and presenting at a Social Work Action Network Conference in 2011. My intention was to situate *myself* (as a social worker and academic wishing to give due weight *both* to structural context *and* to individuals, to potential and to problems) within the research and within this writing.

I could not begin to understand social work in the Philippines without going there. During 2010, I spent 5 weeks in the country, exploring what social workers learn, ‘think’ and ‘do’ and beginning a review of Philippine social work literature. I felt a ‘connection’ when talking with Filipino social workers. Perhaps this reflected some shared habitus. I believe this helped create a conducive and open research relationship but also note that this sense of commonality said something about the focus of my research. It *felt* (at times!) as though we had a core understanding of the social work project. This thesis, in considering social work in the Philippines (and some initial findings from Filipino workers in England), seeks to contribute to ongoing academic and professional discourse about the meaning and purpose of social work in an international context.

In the Philippines I was, perhaps, ‘dazzled’ initially by what felt like ‘real’ social work: practice which engaged with communities, named the fight against poverty as its

core purpose and appeared to have retained space for social action and critique of prevailing policy. This seemed in stark contrast to mainstream social work in England, so often portrayed as a technical-rational, managerially-driven and largely apolitical form of practice (Jones et al, 2007; Rogowski, 2010; Baldwin, 2011). There was some truth in my early conceptualisation and yet other less attractive dimensions of Philippine social work gradually came into focus. It continues, to a significant degree, to work to externally-imposed priorities, as a result of reliance on international aid and lending. Its focus on social and community development must be understood in this 'development' context, where social work has the potential to pathologise individuals and communities, requiring them to find economic means out of 'their' situations. I began also to question whether social work in the Philippines had an awareness of, or commitment to countering, forms of oppression related to social divisions other than - or in tandem with - poverty. The data led me to consider the extent to which collectivist approaches to social work might be just as (at best) 'reformist' in aim and outcome as individualised orientations (Payne, 2014). These are just some of the questions that emerged reflexively from a research process and orientation coming from a critical emancipatory position, which Grbich (2007, p7) describes thus:

*"A focus on questions of identity and how these have been shaped by… dominant cultural institutions…"*

As we have begun to see, the interplay between identity and social structure has been at the heart of this project.

## 4.4 International Research Methodology

The study has, thus far, been situated broadly as 'international social work research'. Before looking at methodology in more detail, it is important to acknowledge that several forms of international research exist and this has implications for the approach taken to that research. Tripodi & Potocky-Tripodi (2007) propose a typology, from which two 'forms' of international research seem most relevant to this study. The focus on migration and a 'host country' places the study within

‘intranational’ research, whilst the use of qualitative and, perhaps, quantitative comparisons between England and the Philippines introduces elements of ‘transnational’ research. Tripodi & Potocky-Tripodi refer here, in particular, to, *“programs, policies, laws, social resources, social needs, and/or social interventions”* and to, *“social indicators and/or to international standards”* (ibid, 171). Such data very much informs this study. The researcher maintains that the intranational and transnational features (Amelina & Faist, 2012) of the research required and justified the employment of more than one method and also a degree of methodological pluralism.

Given that the majority (27 of 33) of research participants were female and the vast majority (29 of 33) were non-white, being a white male researcher must be acknowledged. Significant ethical and practical concerns arose from the international nature of the study and I was conscious that there was (and remains) potential for power imbalance and misinterpretation throughout the research process. In particular, reflected upon my position as a white researcher from the Global North researching social work with non-white people in the Global South and, although the Filipino participants interviewed in the Philippines were not minority ethnic people in that country, part of my unease reflected a clear intention to avoid viewing or presenting those participants as somehow less developed or exotic:

*“Social research generally views minority ethnic people as the ‘other’ to general society and, therefore, a legitimate target for marginalised research focusing on difference and ‘exotica’.”*
(Chal, 1999, p69)

Whilst Chai is referring to research in the UK and commenting on the danger of white researchers choosing to focus on minority ethnic communities, I was alert to the potential within *this* research for comparable dynamics around ‘race’ to play-out in an international context, by perhaps stereotyping, romanticising or marginalising Filipino people. The emphasis on professional imperialism and indigenised knowledge was, in part, recognition of this concern. The fact that that the average length of interview was 90 minutes also indicates that real efforts were made to verify understandings

and to give participants time to develop their points clearly. Nonetheless, alertness to own location and identity was at the forefront of my reflexive thinking.

## 4.5 Methodology

The methodology of this study is qualitative and might broadly be considered psycho-social, viewing lived experience *within* social and cultural 'worlds' (Bourgeault et al, 2010). The research has taken a critical realist approach, not least because its starting point is that social work, however mediated and constructed it may be, takes place within complex and very 'real' social, political and cultural contexts. Bourdieu's own reflections on interviewing a French social worker captured something of the manifestation in social work practice of the tension between agency and structure (1999, p190):

*"Social workers must fight unceasingly on two fronts: on the one hand, against those they want to help and who are often too demoralized to take in hand their own interests, let alone the interests of the collectivity; on the other hand, against administrations and bureaucrats divided and enclosed in separate universes..."*

Efforts to understand and *do* social work require reconciliation of the personal and structural dimensions of existence and agency (Mullaly, 1997; Thompson, 2006). Likewise, social work *research* cannot and should not seek to be objective or, indeed, apolitical. Building upon critical realist ontology, therefore, this study and thesis is situated within the field of Critical Social Research (Humphries, 2005; 2008). Some of the reasons for this are indicated in the following paragraph.

The overwhelming influence of absolute poverty among users of social work services in the Philippines was absolutely apparent in the country's own social work literature (Yu, 2006) and by *all* of the persons interviewed. One cannot understand this poverty or social work responses without understanding the impact of imperialism, neo-colonialism or globalisation. Equally, service users in England are typically experiencing multiple deprivations and inequalities and issues of relative poverty were raised by participants in England. How social work is expected to respond and

*actually* responds, at the individual and collective level, is an inherently political act (Chu, Tsui & Yan, 2009). To give another example, Filipino social workers in England were adapting to very different social norms, law and policy, work processes, organisational structures and understandings of service user needs and appropriate response. All of these reflect, reshape and often reproduce entrenched social and economic forms of stratification. By way of final illustration, as will be seen, some research participants described experiences of discrimination on the grounds of 'race', ethnicity or cultural background in England. This thesis maintains that social divisions and oppression are social 'facts'. For Critical Realists, although the social world is not tangible in the way much of the natural world is, social structures and mechanisms (such as capitalism and racism) are seen to have some form of objective reality beyond the interactions of individual social actors (Bhaskar, 2008; Houston, 2001; Sayer, 2000). Critical realism and critical social research set out (to quote a social work student in the Philippines, commenting on their sense of purpose) to *"expose, oppose and propose"*.

Ontologically, it should be apparent that this research was devised, undertaken and written-up from neither a positivist nor interpretivist perspective (Crotty, 1998; Denscombe, 2010). A purely positivist theoretical perspective and objectivist epistemology, such as one which conferred primacy upon the causal nature of structure, would underplay the validity and significance of the perspectives of individuals within their social work roles and underestimate the potential of service users to challenge or change (Bryman, 2012). This research, therefore, incorporates constructivist perspectives. It maintains, for example, that individual identity, meaning and motivations all play a part in the practice considered in the study and that the profession defines and redefines itself over time (Payne, 2006) and from place to place. Equally, social workers and service users construct meanings and possibilities together, though such discourses arise within a context of internalised oppression and external power relations across society.

Epistemologically, therefore, this thesis must address notions of objectivism *and* constructivism: its methodology was designed to shed light upon human, professional and social policy 'realities' *and* to engage with the subjective and culturally-mediated nature of perspectives based in experience (Flick, 2009).

Focusing on the international development and nature of social work and, in part, the process and outcomes of transition between cultures, the thesis is neither relativist nor universalist:

*"Understanding international social work requires that we identify and address a core contradiction, that of the relationship between universalism and localism (relativism grounded in national and cultural differences) in the definition of social work and its theories, methods and values"* (Hugman, 2010 p152-3).

It is argued that social work does *not* exist as one entity, one field, across the world but *nor* is it an entirely local or situated construct. Discussion is offered of dimensions of social work that may be 'constant', though the thesis in part concludes that social work is 'created' in response to context (political priorities, socio-economic conditions, professional and academic preoccupations, demands from the wider population and so on).

Critical realist ontology integrates psychological and structural mechanisms, starting from participants' own accounts but alert to professional ideologies, institutional structures and social divisions (Robson, 2011; Williams & May, 1996). A critical realist approach appreciates that, *"practice validity is a contested area and one that is dynamically evolving, multi-faceted and subject to the exigencies (and vagaries) of social trends, political whims and international influences"* (Houston, 2001, p. 857). It also encourages the identification of oppressive mechanisms including racism, gender-expectations and the marginalisation of 'alternative' professional perspectives. In his account of Bhaskar's critical realist social science, Collier (1994, p. 167) highlights the researcher's role in questioning the perspectives of participants. Whilst what participants in this research said has been analysed from a critical perspective, to dismiss their expertise or the validity of their perspectives (particularly as a 'cultural outsider') would be entirely wrong. However, the interview schedule and process was sufficiently flexible both for the researcher to engage in a critical dialogue with participants in response to particular comments made and for emerging themes (notably a concern about anti-oppressive practice in the Philippines) to be raised in subsequent interviews.

Research methodology – and the theories of knowledge and of being which underpin it - must be 'fit for purpose'. This study draws themes from the stories of social workers, educators and policy makers in the Philippines and attempts to place them in structural and cultural context. It also draws upon the perspectives of Filipino social workers in England, again considering what they are trying to achieve, how they go about doing this and the "enabling and disabling mechanisms" (Robson, 2002, p63) they perceive. Their perspectives prompted further thinking about the meaning of – and potential for – more critical forms of social work. Theoretically, therefore, the thesis draws upon critical realism and the conceptual frameworks of Bourdieu and is also informed by the critical inquiry and 'conscientisation' of Paulo Freire (1970). It seeks to contribute to international debates about the purpose of social work and what a more critical practice might look like. In essence, its ambition echoes that described by Bourdieu (1980, p2) as that of, *"...reconciling theoretical and practical intentions, bringing together the scientific and the ethical or political vocation..."*

Humphries (2008, p119) acknowledges that critical social research is sometimes criticised for being *"partisan and lacking objectivity"* but goes on to identify as core features that it, *"is concerned with dominant social interests... is aligned with oppositional social movements... is engaged in the project of social transformation [and] insists on an examination of the historical context of any topic studied."* Finally, and of most significance for this section, Humphries comments that the methods used in such research are, *"plural and wide-ranging".*

The data used in this research came from a range of sources and methods (interview, observation, academic and policy literatures), which reflects efforts to draw appropriately on several methodological strands *and* determination to place this research within a critical historical context and reduce the potential for cultural misunderstandings on the part of the researcher (Blaikie, 2007). Thus, for example, elements of ethnography informed the research, in design and implementation, but a full ethnographic study was neither feasible nor suited to the 'critical lens' through which data was to be considered. From the outset, the researcher viewed his observations, interviews and readings as part of what Guba and Lincoln call the *"value-determined nature of inquiry"* (1994, p109): to name concerns about social

work and the society it 'serves' and engage reflexively with the research findings. The approach to the research is post-positivist (Schratz & Walker, 1995; Ryan, 2006), to the extent that it locates the researcher as co-creator of the findings and acknowledges the fluidity of meaning and power relations, yet it is also philosophically grounded in a critical realist worldview. Maintaining a single methodological stance in relation to all dimensions of the research felt neither appropriate for a cross-cultural study nor necessarily the most effective way of assembling or making 'sense' of data.

A flexible rather than strictly linear or prescriptive research design was employed. The method and process is presented below in separate sections, considering aspects of the study undertaken in England and the Philippines. Interviews were digitally recorded and data transcribed into text by the researcher, with administrative assistance. Data was analysed by the researcher using a combination of documentary analysis, ethnographic explanation and more detailed analysis of interviews using a thematic approach. The use of multiple sources offered the potential for data triangulation and, though the complexity of manipulating and analysing quite disparate data should not be underestimated, is felt to have improved the validity and rigour of the study (Robson, 2011). Rubin & Babbie, cited in Tripodi & Potocky-Tripodi (2007), draw attention to the need for international or cross-cultural social work research to make use of multiple sources and voices, to engage with literature which sheds light on particular cultures and to undertake observation in naturalistic settings. Attention is drawn to the need for alertness to the dangers in research of ethnocentrism and of essentialising through the homogenisation of all members of a 'cultural grouping'. It is for these reasons that the research design incorporated interviews in both countries; observation of social work services; meetings within agencies and with academics and policy makers; and the accessing within the Philippines of 'local' documentary evidence and published literature. The chapter now turns to a discussion of research methods.

## 4.6 Reviewing the Literature

The rationale for selecting particular areas of literature has been discussed in earlier chapters. However, the literature review is a central part of the method through which the Research Questions and Objectives were devised and approached. In the earlier phases of the study, an exploratory literature review sensitised the researcher to existing research which had a bearing upon the area of enquiry, some of which (such as Nimmagadda & Cowger, 1999) had a formative impact upon how the research process was conceptualised. In addition to helping the researcher 'position' this study within the broader area of 'international social work', the literature review also underlay the search for a conceptual framework, as discussed in Chapter 2. Thus, to some extent, this study was able to *"adopt the descriptive/analytic language and categories used by other researchers"* (Gibson & Brown, 2009). As an example, articles relating the work of Bourdieu to study of the professions (Artaraz, 2006; Garrett, 2007) impacted upon the theoretical orientation of this study.

The literature search took traditional and pragmatic form. Thus, in sourcing literature relevant to, for example, the international definition of social work or the application of Bourdieu to the professions and to social work in particular (Research Objectives 5 and 6), a range of key term combinations were entered into online databases and journal sites, supplemented by manual searches of reference lists from key articles (Stogdon & Kiteley, 2010; Robson, 2011). However, the search for literature relating to social work in the Philippines was somewhat different. Though published research was evident with regard to some related areas, notably the phenomenon of Filipino Workers Overseas, the search relating to social work yielded a relatively small number of resources. One of the reasons for undertaking the study visit to the Philippines was, therefore, to access local social work and related resources, many of which are unavailable elsewhere. This was successfully achieved, both by purchasing texts in Manila and making notes from journals and books in university libraries there.

Overall, engagement with the literature involved exploratory and more focused literature reviews, as areas of interest and themes from the data became clearer.

## 4.7 Primary Research Process

The primary research process was designed to elicit insights into the field of social work in the Philippines, the habitus of workers there and those who had travelled to England, and the extent to which workers actually reflected upon field and habitus (Bourdieu, 1997). The intention was to reveal thoughts on orientation to social work (Payne, 2014) at the personal, cultural and structural levels (Thompson, 2012). Attempts were made (for example in designing and implementing interview schedules) to provide space for explanations to emerge which were both structural and constructivist in nature, with deliberate efforts made to bring to the surface critical realist accounts and interpretations within the analysis.

What follows is a reflective account of the processes through which data was collected. For clarity, this is divided initially into sections on those elements undertaken in the Philippines and England. Presenting the research process in this way has some chronological accuracy, at least in relation to the initial gathering of primary data. In May 2010, the researcher spent five weeks in the Philippines, before returning to the UK to undertake interviews (mostly in July and August 2010) with social workers from the Philippines based in England. In both countries, interviews were undertaken to elicit thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of practice, motivations and purpose. Since then, as the data and developing responses to the data became increasingly intertwined, this division felt somewhat simplistic and artificial. Nonetheless, it is intended that the following section will provide sufficient detail of method and process that the reader may judge it credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Throughout, there has been a reflexive engagement with Bourdieu's notions of field, habitus and capital and with the models introduced in Chapter 2.

## 4.8 Research in the Philippines

Central to this study was primary research carried out in the Philippines. This was mostly undertaken in Manila but involved visits to, and interviews with, social workers and academics from other parts of the country. A detailed journal was written throughout the visit, as a tool for reflexive practice (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004; Bryman, 2012) and source of additional data. Writers have acknowledged the strengths and limitations of diary-use in research (Johnson & Bytheway, 2001) and the status of the journal should not be over-stated. Full field-notes were not produced, in the form that ethnographers might gather detailed data (Fielding, 2001). The journal is largely unstructured, though does distinguish between observation and reflection. Having said this, the journal became a vital tool in particular during the study visit, not only in the sense that it became important for the researcher, on a daily basis, to record and comment upon experiences and reactions but also because the process 'brought life' to the ongoing data collection. The researcher stayed alone in the Philippines for 5 weeks, providing ample time to record occurrences and thoughts in hand-written form. The journal was then taken to Taiwan, for reasons touched upon later. This afforded opportunities to re-read its contents and begin to articulate – both in the journal and for a presentation to Taiwanese social work students – tentative reactions to experiences in the Philippines. Finally, these initial thoughts formed the basis of a 'work in progress' presentation at the Joint World Conference on Social Work & Social Development in Hong Kong in June 2010. The journal continued to serve as a reflective space throughout the conference (and a further journal has been maintained throughout the research process). The discussion that follows draws, in part, upon contemporaneous notes made in the journal.

### 4.8.1 Purpose & Methodological Approach (Philippines)

The researcher's own perspectives on social work are shaped by training and practice in England, experience as a social work lecturer in England and by a life mostly spent in that country. The study visit was an excellent opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of social policies, welfare systems and social work education, organisation and practices in the Philippines.

Elements of the research undertaken in the Philippines drew upon ethnographic approaches. However, it was concluded early on that a full ethnographic approach (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; O'Leary, 2005) would require a degree of direct engagement and observation that was neither feasible nor appropriate. Having said this, principles such as the centrality of shared cultural meanings, in this case national and professional, and the notion of an evolving fieldwork (Punch, 2005) *did* shape the study. Similarly, methods common in ethnography (notably observation and, as discussed, the use of a journal) formed a core part of the research. It is, however, acknowledged that in seeking to adopt principles and methods from ethnography, there is a danger of the researcher perceiving – or being seen to perceive - the Philippines as 'other' and England as somehow familiar or known. It is true that the researcher has a much fuller understanding of cultural practices and of social work education and practice in England than the Philippines. However, that part of the primary research undertaken in the Philippines was an explicit effort to address this imbalance. Social work has a developed literature around cultural competence (Charnley & Langley, 2007; Laird, 2008) which also shaped the researcher's reflection on these tensions and which features again later in this thesis.

### 4.8.2 Interviews in the Philippines

Preparation for visiting the Philippines took place over a period of a year. After several exchanges of emails with the Philippine Association of Social Workers, Inc (PASWI), the Association showed considerable interest in the study and agreed to assist in accessing participants. Potential participants were also sought by the researcher making direct use of the PASWI Yahoo Group. Access was then initiated by email, using a Recruitment Flyer (Appendix 1) and potential participants were invited to contact the researcher directly.

Early in the process a structured set of 'stakeholders' was identified for interview. These originally fell into two categories: Filipino social workers in the Philippines who had previously practised in England; and other participants who would help me to

contextualise social issues and social work in the Philippines. However, as the process of accessing participants proceeded, it became clear that there were very few, if any, known social workers in the Philippines with practice experience in England. The decision was therefore taken to access these perspectives through social workers currently *in* England and to concentrate, whilst in the Philippines, on interviewing persons who fell into the 'other' category. Prior to the study visit, contact was made by email with social workers, policy makers, educators, academics and representatives of other key social welfare agencies in the Philippines. Access was in part facilitated by PASWI, in advance and during the study visit. However, an online search of agencies and universities also yielded a good number of participants, as did word-of-mouth suggestions when in Manila. Indeed, when in the Philippines, PASWI members assisted in accessing a wider range of interviewees. Thus, the sampling strategy was a realistic combination of convenience and snowballing (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2011) with clear categories from which it was anticipated that interviewees would be drawn (social work academics and educators, social workers in practice and other persons engaged in welfare policy development).

Interviews were ultimately conducted with a sample of 24 people in the Philippines. More details are contained in the Participant Details at Appendix 8 but the sample might briefly be described as follows:

- 19 were female and five male
- all but two (senior staff of an International NGO) identified as Filipino
- nine participants might be described predominantly as practising social workers, six as social work academics, five as holding welfare policy and planning positions, two as current social work students and two others (the aforementioned INGO staff): there was, however, some 'overlap' between these categories

Data was gathered in individual, recorded semi-structured interviews, lasting around two hours. However, in one case sound recording was not possible and a post-hoc record of key points was typed up by the researcher and passed to the relevant agency for approval/comments. Also, on two occasions (involving four participants),

interviews were held simultaneously with two participants rather than on an individual basis, for reasons of their convenience and time availability. Here, the same Interview Schedules were employed as for the one-to-one interviews. Whilst there was inevitably some discussion between the two participants in each of these joint interviews (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2006), each person was encouraged to address the questions separately. In both cases, they were people who knew each other well and had work connections. There was no indication of any participants being inhibited by the joint process on the two occasions that this happened (and, indeed, at times the interviews took on some of the more positive dimensions of focus group methods (Merton, 1987), with one participant prompting a related response from the other). On both occasions, the participants themselves suggested a joint interview. The researcher acknowledged with them that this had implications for confidentiality and they were very happy to continue. Whilst the joint interviews inevitably introduced a different dynamic to the data collection process (McLeod & Thompson, 2009; Merton, 1987; Merton & Kendall, 1946; Stewart Shamdasani & Rook, 2006) and may have impacted upon what participants felt able to say, the interviewees were undoubtedly comfortable to undertake the process in this way.

The participants in the Philippines (and England) were considered appropriate for the study. The predominant voices were of Filipino people, which was essential to the study. All had experience to contribute which was relevant to the Research Questions and Objectives and a good balance was achieved of roles, length and types of experience. Indeed, though participants were predominantly female, several were male (broadly mirroring gender representation in the profession).

### 4.8.3 Eligibility for Participants (Philippines)

It was a requirement that participants interviewed as qualified social workers in the Philippines must: have been born and trained in the Philippines; be appropriately registered; and be practising currently as a social worker. It was not possible or desirable to set such boundaries around other participants in the Philippines, as they were selected because of their position or role and willingness to be interviewed. A

conscious decision was taken (in consultation with the research supervisors) that – as this was to be the only visit to the Philippines as part of the research – as many offers as possibly would be taken to listen to, observe and engage with people involved in social work in the country. On a daily basis, however, options and possibilities were monitored, considering which participants might best 'fit' the research needs and seeking/confirming appointments accordingly.

When designing the research, and within applications for ethical approval, it was acknowledged that methods of data collection in the Philippines would need to be flexible and might include:

(a) Gathering copies of written materials such as policy documents, organisational structures and curricula for social work training. It was intended that these would provide background and contextual information, rather than be the subject of formal content analysis

(b) Attending provider-agencies and meetings (non-participant observation)

(c) Discussion with social workers who have not practised outside the Philippines

All of these forms of data collection were actually employed. In particular, the opportunity was taken to acquire some 40 or more local journals and texts (including indigenous social work, community development, sociology and psychology books), which are used extensively throughout this thesis.

### 4.8.4 Further Considerations: Research in the Philippines

All research in the Philippines was conducted following endorsement by the Philippine Association of Social Workers Incorporated. Approval was gained, as required, from individual agencies, although a general observation would be that the ethical approval processes were more limited in scope in the Philippines. It was, therefore, considered all the more important to adhere to the ethical procedures for which approval had been received from the University of Brighton in the UK. Hence,

for example, all interviews commenced with a clear focus on the Participant Information Sheets and Informed Consent Forms.

### 4.8.5 Developing a Research Approach in the Philippines

The decision to use semi-structured interviews was a sound one, when undertaking research within the dynamic and evolving context of the Philippines. Opportunities arose at very short notice, schedules changed on an almost daily basis and it was essential that maximum use was made of the time available. Many participants had experience both as social work practitioners and as academics, policy makers and so on, which meant it was more meaningful to select questions from the Interview Schedules prepared for both groups ('Social Workers Based In the Philippines' and 'Other Participants based in the Philippines': see Appendix 6). Structured interviews would not have allowed for the necessary flexibility and responsiveness. Consideration was given to the possibility of unstructured interviews but the idea was not pursued due to uncertainty about cultural expectations and appropriateness for use with people for whom English was not first language. Semi-structured interviews provided a better chance of collecting sufficient data within the constraints of a 'one-chance' visit to the Philippines and interviews in various locations in England. Use of the journal to record observations after interviews meant emergent themes or ideas could be further explored in subsequent interviews whilst retaining the overall structure and integrity of the Interview Schedules and ensuring, again in the context of a one-off visit to the Philippines, that discussion was sufficiently focused.

The following examples offer a flavour of the reflexive process, as recorded in the research journal whilst in the Philippines:

> 5.5.10:
> "Not sure responses to my questions are providing enough detail – ask for example of a piece of practice they are particularly proud of or what's frustrating/positive about their job?"

"Question asking about Filipino culture – too abstract? How would *I* describe the impact of British culture on *my* practice?"

13.5.10:
"Things people say that annoy me may be at least as pertinent to my research!"

"Am I mostly accessing committed, passionate, well-trained, interested social workers? Would that be true in the UK too?"

25.5.10:
"Understandable emphasis on poverty... scant discussion of social divisions... no AOP [Anti-Oppressive Practice] focus?"

These shorthand comments, typical of those in the journal, record reactions to particular events and comments but more particularly are indicative of an iterative process of engaging with the primary research before any of the data was transcribed.

One particular Filipino social work academic had been approached prior to the study visit and had agreed to act as a mentor and contact point. More than one meeting took place but on the final occasion – at the very end of the visit –the opportunity was taken to raise some of the tentative ideas and hypotheses which had emerged. This was a particularly helpful part of the process and, again, one to which the semi-structured interview was well suited.

### 4.8.6 Hong Kong Conference

After leaving the Philippines, the researcher attended an international social work conference and presented ideas and questions the study visit had raised. This was an initial attempt to connect the data to issues of transition and social work purpose in a Philippines-UK context. The data had not yet been transcribed or analysed and interviews were yet to be conducted with workers in England, so these were raw

conceptualisations at a midway point. Nonetheless, it has been fruitful to return to those thoughts as the research progressed and feels important to record them below. At that stage, thoughts were presented, as below, in terms of (1) areas where a Filipino social worker might need to adjust to the English context; and (2) strengths or perspectives which a worker might bring to England. These brief 'lists' (of what were really initial questions for the researcher) are included here to convey a sense of 'work in progress' and of the reflexive and iterative nature of the process:

**Potential areas for adjustment** - and thus indicative of 'difference' between the 2 countries - were: the nature of power relations in society and workplace; a possibly-limited understanding of and attention to Anti-Oppressive Practice; the need to 'learn' different 'specialisms' in a context of largely generic practice in the Philippines but with specialist skills such as those for working with street children or natural disaster; issues around transferring knowledge and methods across cultures; what appeared to be less concern in the Philippines with 'professional distance'; a different interpretation of confidentiality in the practice context; a dramatic shift from community to individualised social work; making sense of the relative nature of poverty in the UK; adjusting to possibly more formal and procedural modes of practice; detailed use of different law; the secular nature of society and social work intervention; and differing forms of engagement with colleagues and clients, such as in relation to directness and confrontation.

Some ideas around areas of **possible strength/difference** suggested at the conference were: professional resilience in the face of political dilemmas and ever-present human suffering; creativity in under-resourced circumstances; commitment to social work; some (perceived) commonality of value base; adaptability; a propensity to use of self; challenging perspectives, for example in terms of community engagement and the place of faith.

Preparation for and attendance at this Conference was a significant point in the development of thinking for this thesis. A number of enduring themes and questions took embryonic form at this point and the use of a journal contributed hugely to this, at the time and beyond.

## 4.9 Research in England

Data was collected in England over a 3 month period, during which individual interviews took place with 9 participants: 8 of these were working in (statutory) social work positions across 4 English local authorities but 1 had decided to retrain as a nurse and not practised as a social worker in the UK. Her perspectives have been analysed and incorporated with caution into the findings, where not discussing social work. One in-depth semi-structured interview, lasting up to 2 hours, was conducted with each worker.

### 4.9.1 Participants & Recruitment (England)

The original research design intended that, in England, interviews would be undertaken with a sample of 10 people with experience, as social work practitioners, of transition from the Philippines to England. It was made clear that participants must: have been born and trained in the Philippines; have practiced in the Philippines for at least 1 year post-qualification and before undertaking work outside the Philippines; be appropriately registered in the Philippines and with the GSCC (ensuring they held a recognised social work qualification); and currently be engaged in social work practice in England, for at least 15 hours per week, or have previously occupied such a position. Consideration was given as to whether workers should be required to have been practicing in England for a minimum period. It was, however, considered that equally rich data would be provided by a worker adjusting to a recent move to the country. The Philippine Association of Social Workers Incorporated (PASWI) and individuals met whilst in the Philippines played some part in facilitating the accessing of workers in England. They circulated a Recruitment Flyer (Appendix 1) to all members of the Association and potential participants in England were invited to contact the researcher directly. Response was, however, limited and accessing participants in England became a slow process of snowballing.

In all aspects of the research, demographic variation among participants (for example, in terms of ethnicity, age and gender) was sought as much as possible, though it must be acknowledged that convenience sampling was the dominant

driver. More selection was possible in the Philippines, where conscious efforts were made, for example, to interview people from rural and urban areas, from different regions and islands and also people who identified as Christian, Muslim and having no religious beliefs.

### 4.9.2 Other Comments on Process: England & the Philippines

Attached at Appendix 6 are the interview schedules used in the primary interviews. Separate schedules were employed for interviews with social workers in England and the Philippines. A further, broader-based and more open interview schedule was used for interviews with other participants (social work educators, students and policy makers) in the Philippines. This latter schedule offered prompts for dialogue, mostly about evolving and current issues in Philippine social welfare and social work education. Meanwhile, the interview schedules used with social workers in the Philippines provided mostly open questions encouraging participants to describe their roles and tasks in particular settings but also triggering reflexive discussions about individual motivation, values and conceptualisations of social need and appropriate responses. For workers in England, the interview schedule additionally sought reflective comments on the process and impact of transition and the meaning and purpose of social work in the light of this experience.

Interviews were typically conducted in quiet settings away from the workplace of the participant, though again sometimes interviews of necessity happened in noisier settings (such as hotel foyers) or participants chose the convenience of meeting at their place of work (in which case, they were asked to identify a separate room away from direct colleagues). Flexibility was required in terms of selection of setting, as this was driven by the geographical location of individual participants. In England, participants were located in what might broadly be described as the South and interviewed in locations of their choice. In the Philippines, appropriate interview rooms and facilities were identified with the assistance of the Philippine Association of Social Workers Incorporated, University contacts and the participants themselves. Other meetings/ observations (undertaken to enhance the researcher's understanding of social work structures, practice and education) took place

throughout the study visit to the Philippines, for example in private and state hospitals, non-governmental organisations and industrial social work settings. Recording equipment and stationery were supplied by University of Brighton and its use complied with University Health and Safety Regulations.

To conclude, the decision to use semi-structured interviews was a positive one. The researcher carried out interviews very much in the way Gibson & Brown put it (2009, p48):

*"Researchers try to fit their pre-defined interests into the unfolding topics being discussed, rather than forcing the interviewees to fit their ideas into the interviewer's pre-defined question order… and even to explore topics that may emerge that were not included in the interview schedule."*

## 4.10 Language and Meaning

Throughout the research process (when reviewing Philippine literature; interviewing Filipino participants; and analysing the data), I reflected often upon the potential for meaning to be 'lost in translation' (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010), even though nothing was translated in the formal sense. All data employed was in the English language. This did not mean that the position was by any means straightforward. A particular issue was that of an English-speaking researcher conducting interviews with participants for whom English was not their first Language (Liamputtong, 2010). As has been said, the common usage of English in the Philippines was a factor in selecting the country for study, as this reduced the potential for misunderstanding or misrepresentation. Thought was given early in the project to the use of interpreters for interviews but the research facilitator at the Philippine Association of Social Workers was clear that interviews in English would be entirely appropriate. The use of interpreters in itself would have raised a number of real issues for qualitative research (Alexander, et al, 2004; Venuti, 1995) and was likely to be, practically, very difficult to organise and verify 'on the ground' in the Philippines (and in the UK).

The need to ensure that questions were understood and to 'check out' my understandings *during* interviews was at the forefront of my mind. The excerpt from a transcript set out at Appendix 10 illustrates this at a basic level, thus:

*"75 And do you think most Filipino people would be the same?*

*76 P*

*77 Yes I think so*

*78 I*

*79 So they're not quiet?*

*80 P*

*81 No, they're not"*

This transcript was chosen as it exemplifies an interview where the person's spoken English was less strong than that of most participants. As Seidman acknowledges, the *"issue of finding the right word in English or any other language"* is a very significant one (2006, p104). Attempts were always made to clarify during the interview and the process of reading and re-reading the data subsequently has acted as a further stage in verifying the data. Time – and other problems with access - did not permit the submission of transcripts to participants for review, but the decision was taken to not use data where there was any doubt around meaning. It should also be said that, whilst there were particular language-related issues for this thesis, the potential for words to convey different meanings is common to all qualitative research. Meanings are constructed throughout the research process (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997) and the researcher must remain reflexive in this regard:

*"Language differences may have consequences, because concepts in one language may be understood differently in another language. This is in particular relevant for qualitative research, because it works with words; language is central in all phases ranging from data collection to analysis and representation of the textual data in publications."* (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010, p313).

Finally, it is hoped that the extensive inclusion of direct quotations from participants in the chapters which follow goes some way towards corroborating or mitigating any

issues of interpretation by the researcher. To some degree, the reader can 'interpret' the participants' comments for themselves.

## 4.11 Ethical Dimensions & Considerations

The researcher is a registered social worker, subject at the start of the project to the General Social Care Council Code of Practice for Social Care Workers (GSCC, 2004) and latterly to the HCPC (2012) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. The study was designed and implemented (and any subsequent dissemination will also be) in accordance with the British Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and in particular the provisions concerning social work research (BASW, 2012). This section considers ethical issues raised by the study and steps taken to respond to those issues. Ethical approval was received from the Research Ethics and Governance Committee of the Faculty of Health and Social Science (FREGC) at University of Brighton in June 2009 Subsequent approvals were received in England from the employing authorities for all research participants. Social workers from the Philippines were, to some extent, 'clustered' in particular parts of England but the process of identifying and seeking approval from employers was a considerable one. In the Philippines, approval was received from the Philippine Association of Social Workers Inc. We now examine key areas of ethical concern and how those issues were addressed.

### 4.11.1 Vulnerability & Harm

Participants in England were professional people engaged (with one exception) in social work practice. In the Philippines, participants were qualified social workers, academics and educators, people in employed in welfare policy positions and students on approved social work courses. No users of services participated in the research. Having said this, it would be absolutely wrong to assume participants were therefore free from vulnerability or oppression. Indeed, for Filipino workers in England, the very process of being far from one's 'home country' clearly gave rise, for some, to emotional issues, economic and practical struggles and feelings of

marginalisation. Parrenas (2001) discusses the impact of transnational caring relationships, commenting powerfully upon the family separation leading to very strong emotional responses. The interplay of gender, 'race' and social class in this context was not underestimated, nor was the location of the researcher as a white British male.

Protection from harm was, therefore, a core principle throughout. This was in part addressed by acknowledging potential emotional impact before consent was given and allowing time for potential participants to decide whether they wished to take part. There were always opportunities to raise questions before deciding. Participants were offered a debriefing session with the researcher, who is a qualified social worker. This provided an opportunity to check out how the participant had experienced the interview and whether it raised any difficult issues for them. Participants were provided also with information about potential sources of support (Appendix 7).

A study conducted in English with participants from the Philippines could in itself be considered oppressive. The researcher was alert to this dynamic throughout and, again, participants were made aware prior to engagement that interviews would be conducted in English. Having said this, English and Filipino are both recognised as official languages in the Philippines and English predominates as the language of education and government. Furthermore, social workers practicing in England needed to have met the English language proficiency requirements of the GSCC and employers. Nonetheless, care was taken in devising all written materials and interview schedules and the researcher reflected upon use of language throughout. Participants were informed of their absolute right to decline to take part in the research or to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons. The researcher was clear that they did not have to answer any questions or lines of enquiry with which they felt uncomfortable. In relation to the writing-up of findings, no specific concerns have arisen about potential harm to participants.

### 4.11.2 Risk to Researcher

No significant potential risks for the researcher were identified. Personal safety was addressed by undertaking all interviews in public spaces and by always informing another person of location. There was a small possibility that participants might see the researcher as a source of ongoing support, so this was addressed in advance by explaining the boundaries to the researcher's role and discussing other sources of support. The researcher did not disclose any personal contact information and all correspondence was conducted through University email and postal addresses.

Careful planning and preparation was undertaken in advance of visiting the Philippines, in order to ensure that only meetings/visits the researcher and his supervisors considered 'legitimate' and 'safe' took place. The researcher checked with the British Consulate for travel advice periodically and immediately before travelling. The Supervisors for the study were briefed on a regular basis during the course of the fieldwork, particularly when overseas. The supervisors for the study also appointed a liaison person in the Philippines, who acted on their behalf to ensure the research was conducted within local governance arrangements, facilitated the researcher as necessary and liaised with the supervisory team in the UK.

### 4.11.3 Transparency & Consent

Although the BASW Code of Ethics for Social Work was revised and republished in 2012, it was the 2002 version that informed the earlier stages of this research. It stated that researchers have a duty to, *"inform every participant of all features of the research which might be expected to influence willingness to participate"* (BASW, 2002, para 4.4.4.4). This process began during recruitment, by clearly setting out the nature of the study in the Recruitment Flyer. To avoid concealment or deception, all potential participants were asked to read the Participant Information Sheet and (if choosing to take part) required to sign an Informed Consent Form (Appendix 4). The purpose and potential use of the research, along with the procedures involved, were made clear from the outset. A copy of both documents was provided to potential

participants in advance. At the interview stage, the researcher talked through the points on the Information Sheet with the participant and answered questions. Participants were then asked to give written consent.

Before commencing interviews (or other meetings/groups), all participants were asked if they were willing to be digitally recorded. Such approval was given in every instance. Once the interview was completed, participants were reminded that: they could withdraw any data from their interview, should they wish, within the stated timeframe; the researcher could be contacted during the next 6 months with any questions about the research process; and that a short summary of findings would be made available to them once analysis was complete. It was made clear that it would not be possible for participants to withdraw their data once they had been aggregated into other data. A date was therefore given to each participant, by which data could be withdrawn, in the information sheet and consent forms.

As has been stated, social work participants were accessed through their professional association in the Philippines, who distributed an open invitation to its members, and through word-of-mouth. Importantly, this also meant that the potential for coercion was minimised, as no social workers (and, indeed, no participants) were recruited via their employing agencies or line managers.

### 4.11.4 Confidentiality, Anonymity & Privacy

All possible steps were taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity at every stage of the research process. Participants were advised of the following procedures at the outset:

- All hard data (tapes and any paper copies of transcripts) will be retained and locked in the researcher's desk at the University of Brighton. Electronic transcripts and associated documents will be stored on the researcher's password-protected computer;

- At the conclusion of the study, data will be kept in the SASS archives for 5 years, after which they will be destroyed. This is in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998;
- A system of codes will be used to ensure that participants' names do not appear either in electronic media or paper transcripts. A list of participants' names, with codes, will be kept separately in a locked drawer (Note: for writing-up this thesis, participants have been assigned names which are not their actual names);
- Participants themselves, and the agencies and locations in which they currently undertake and/or previously undertook social work, will not be named in the thesis and any subsequent papers (pseudonyms are used);
- Professional colleagues and users of services/those around them will not be named or detail included which might make it possible for them to be identified in the thesis or subsequent papers;
- Other information that may make participants identifiable will be removed from the thesis and subsequent papers, subject to the limitations acknowledged below in relation to the nature of the study.

Importantly, all names attributed to research participants in this thesis are pseudonyms. In brackets after the pseudonym is a short code which provides some demographic details, as explained at Appendix 8.

### 4.11.5 Limits to Confidentiality

Given the nature of the study, particularly where only small numbers of social workers move to England, absolute anonymity could not be guaranteed. Participants were advised that ethical approval in England would be sought from employing agencies and therefore that they would be aware that an unnamed member of their staff may take part in the research. Participants were also informed that broad demographic descriptions in relation to individual participants (eg gender, ethnicity, age) may also be included in this thesis and any subsequent publications. Participants were made fully aware of the following issues in relation to disclosure.

Practicing social work participants were specifically requested not to refer to the detail of individual cases or practice situations or to name clients or colleagues. Also, they were advised of circumstances in which disclosures might require the researcher to breach confidentiality. These circumstances were as follows: that she or he might present a risk of harm to self or others; that a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of harm; or that criminal activity may occur or have occurred. No participants revealed anything which could have fallen into the above categories, though participants were advised that, had this happened, the researcher would keep a written record of the disclosure, inform their supervisors within 24 hours and, if considered necessary, take action to report the concern.

### 4.11.6 Additional Ethical Considerations

Reference is also made to interviews with policy makers, academics, students and representatives of other agencies in the Philippines. This, at times, involved attending meetings and observing service providers in community and institutional settings. No service users participated in the research although they were, on rare occasions, present as in user-led organisations or when observing agency settings. On each occasion, the researcher asked that consent to his presence be gained. These principles enabled the researcher to respond appropriately to potential data collection opportunities when they arose.

As has been said, a hand-written journal was kept, which is considered a legitimate research tool. It was primarily used for reflective commentary and any individuals or agencies were referred to using initials/descriptive terms, in order to ensure confidentiality was not compromised.

Finally, we should consider the extent to which this research may have benefited those who took part. The research develops existing understanding of Philippine and international social work and offers an original contribution to knowledge around the process of transition between countries and the purpose and practice of social work. It is, however, with caution that one comments on the potential benefits for participants.

Those taking part reported that they found the process of sharing their perspectives a worthwhile opportunity to reflect on personal and professional issues. Some spoke of satisfaction derived from the opportunity to contribute to the development of research considering the experiences and contributions made by Filipino social workers to the profession internationally. The researcher hopes that the research process felt collaborative for all involved and believes that mutually-beneficial contacts have been forged with practitioners and academics in the Philippines. It is not felt that broader claims can be made in terms of possible benefits to participants in the research.

## 4.12 Data Analysis

*"Data analysis in social work research usually involves both inductive and deductive reasoning within the same process... but, at its heart, tends to begin with an inductive, general approach – open to exploring and understanding the range of activity and complexity that is unfolding before it."* (Hardwick & Worsley, 2011, p115-6).

As has been said, the use of a detailed reflective journal and presentation of initial 'findings' on more than one occasion meant that reflection upon feelings and emergent meanings, understandings and uncertainties, was ongoing. Whilst mindful of potential pitfalls in such a process, it was a fruitful and reflexive component of the endeavour. Where commonalities or particular points of difference arose in interviews, these were recorded in the Research Journal as 'analytical memos' (Coleman & Unrau, 2008) and sometimes introduced into subsequent interviews. As the researcher returned to full time work shortly after completing the data collection 'stage', ongoing engagement with the slow process of transcription and analysis was essential. All interviews were transcribed verbatim: the researcher was uncomfortable with the notion of selective transcription, which could conceal the process through which ideas emerged in interviews and also because the ordering of questions varied across individual interviews and the opportunity was regularly taken to pursue points raised outside of the schedule. It was, for example, important to

know if points were raised and/or pursued by the interviewee or researcher. A short excerpt from a transcribed interview is attached as Appendix 10.

Humphries (2008, p193-4) maintains that, *"Social work researchers need to take sides consciously, not with 'movements' per se, but in embracing particular ethical values towards a more just society… Surely such values must include an opposition to injustice and a commitment to alleviating and even preventing suffering?"* It has been a core intention throughout this research to maintain such an explicit critical stance and the data analysis process needed, therefore, to incorporate frameworks and space for critical engagement. A pure 'grounded' approach to data analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1994) was inconsistent with this. The research did not, as grounded theory requires, maintain that theory would emerge solely from the data. There was a component of 'testing' the data against hypothesised models based on existing social work theory (as set out in Chapter 2). Grounded theory has, however, influenced a good deal of sociological and social research. The notion of an ongoing interplay between the collection and analysis of data, already commented upon, was emphasised in grounded approaches, as was the need for a process of refinement of response to the data through coding, categorisation and comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Charmaz (2006) and others continue to develop the fundamental principles of Grounded Theory beyond the dispassionate positivism and inductive process of Glaser and Strauss, in particular by forging connections with social constructionism and acknowledging that all researchers bring pre-existing worldviews and experiences. However, for this particular research study, the sheer quantity of transcribed data and explicit intention to approach that data from a position 'grounded' in structural, radical and critical perspectives, meant that a robust thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 2008; Gomm, 2004; Grinnell & Unrau, 2008) was considered most appropriate.

All transcripts were imported into NVivo 8. The programme was, however, used primarily as a convenient location for storing and accessing data and much of the data analysis process used paper copies of transcripts and data sorted into themes. NVivo was found to be helpful for organising data into nodes and 'node hierarchies' and for the convenience of printing out summary documents and themed chunks of data. However, the decision was taken early on to make only limited use of the

programme and, instead, to engage with the data in a more organic and traditional way.

The analysis included both inductive and deductive coding and theme development, with some codes being more 'theory-driven' and others 'data-driven' (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). As data collection came to a close, a first attempt was made to produce a coding scheme, an impressionistic attempt to capture early reactions to the conversations of which I had been a part. After transcription, each transcript was read several times, at least once whilst simultaneously listening to the original recording. In the initial readings, notes were made on possible themes or points to pursue and also contemporaneous comments were reviewed from the research journal. These were used to extend, develop and amend the coding scheme. In other words, the coding scheme (an early example of which is attached as Appendix 9) emerged, *"both deductively from pre-existing concerns, questions and hypotheses, and inductively from the data itself."* (Seale, 2004, p313). Some 'apriori' codes had been established before analysis (linked to the research questions and areas in the Interview Guides) but many more empirical codes were generated during the data analysis itself. Thus, the research used, *"… a balance of deductive coding (derived from the philosophical framework) and inductive coding (themes emerging from participant's discussions)"* (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p9). As one would expect, the coding became cumbersome and very detailed at this stage. Organising the data again and again into comparative categories (or code families) led to the development of provisional conceptual interpretations (Holliday, 2007). The analysis focused on commonality and difference: within interviews; between interviews; and in relation to emerging categories and themes. The second-level coding process, where data categories were analysed *"away from any association with the person"* (Coleman & Unrau, 2008, p399) led to the abstraction of themes and theories. Thus, the thematic analysis took the form of an iterative *"process of data reduction"* which focused variously upon themes from the literature review, feelings noted in the research journal, repeated phrases or issues raised in the interviews and, of course, the content of answers to each question (Grbich, 2007, p31).

Most recently, opportunities to co-write a journal article (Price and Artaraz, 2013) and to write a chapter on the Philippines for a book examining social work across East Asia (Price, 2014) provided further opportunities to revisit and refocus the research. These writing tasks, along with the writing-up of this thesis, were very much part of the research process and in particular of the development of theoretical explanations. The act of writing required that the focus return to the Research Questions and Objectives and to the applicability of the models (including Bourdieu's critical framework) introduced earlier in this thesis to the data collected.

This section has hopefully begun to demonstrate that the researcher has undertaken a non-linear approach to the project, including what Gibson and Brown call 'contextualized analysis', which is *"about the relationship between data and conceptual problems"* (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p6). They expand upon this holistic and fluid definition as follows:

*"The situated approach to analysis helps to show, for example, how research problems are developed through data work; how literature is used to construct research problems and to think about and even work with data; how research plans and designs are produced and worked through in relation to data and the analytic work it is supposed to do; how 'gathering' data through research always involves a simultaneous analysis of that data. When viewed like this, 'data' and 'analysis' becomes much less abstract, and more tightly integrated into research as a whole."*
(Gibson & Brown, 2009, p6)

Thus, for example, in this project the scope and focus of the literature review developed as analytic themes became apparent and the content of interviews was amended to incorporate ideas arising from discussion with previous participants. This fluidity has continued into the writing of the thesis.

## 4.13 Research Methodology & Process: Concluding Comments

Gibson & Brown (2009, p33) suggest that researchers must, *"… productively engage with literature in their own field in order to develop their own analytic ideas and*

*position their research in relation to other research and writing."* It is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated such an approach. A comment made by a social worker in the Philippines stayed with me throughout this process:

*"… how many authors really would give their stuff away? Yes and that's actually one thing that I would like to bring up in the international scene… you work so hard to make the information because it makes sense to you, why not give it free to those of us who cannot afford it?"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

It is intended that findings from this project will be made available in the Philippines, by sharing copies of the thesis wherever possible and appropriate, offering articles for publication there and hopefully contributing to conferences and university based learning on return visits or via online opportunities. This will, no doubt, lead to further reflection on notions of professional and academic imperialism and around supporting indigenous knowledge and approaches.

This chapter has explored the methodology and process of the research on which this thesis is based. Returning to the Research Objectives, it is evident that the researcher's core interest was in the purpose and tasks of social work in an international context. It is argued that *what* social workers do and *who* they do it 'to' or 'with' is (in part) a product of political process and structural inequality. The rationale for - and meaning of - a critical realist approach was therefore explored. The design and implementation of a research project concerned with issues of transferability, difference and similarity in social work was discussed, as were some of the ethical considerations and efforts made to do 'good research'. Finally, the data analysis process was explained and justified. It is acknowledged that the data-coding and identification of themes was undertaken solely by the researcher, which might be considered an unavoidable limitation of doctoral research. However, the analysis of data was discussed with supervisors throughout. The following quotation has particular resonance in this respect:

*"Even with thematic analysis there comes a point at which the analyst imposes a structure on the data. It will only be one of many structures he or she might have*

*imposed"* (Gomm, 2004).

The following chapter begins to introduce some of the results of this process. It is very much intended that the next three chapters will provide what the anthropologist Geertz (1973) called 'thick description'. When presenting the perspectives of people with very different cultural backgrounds to that of the researcher, it feels all the more necessary that the reader can see how participants explained their motivations and practice in their own words.

# Chapter 5: Fieldwork Findings in the Philippines: The Field of Social Work in Historical, Cultural and International Context

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two presenting findings concerning social work *in* the Philippines. It analyses perspectives on the history of, and forms of external influence upon, social work in the Philippines and efforts made to indigenise practice in this context. The chapter explores what social workers do, making connections to consideration in Chapter 2 of typologies of social work orientation and purpose. Also discussed are participants' characterisations of service users and 'Filipino traits' more generally. Although it mostly draws upon data collected in the Philippines, judicious use is made of reflections offered by Filipino workers living and working in England. Substantial use is made of direct quotations in the 'data chapters', with the intention that they are 'data rich' and that the voices of Filipino participants are given appropriate space in the thesis. Whilst there is considerable interplay between the themes developed through the thesis, this chapter focuses primarily upon Research Question 1: How have historical and international processes shaped social work in the Philippines?

All names attributed to participants are pseudonyms. Appendix 8 sets out and explains the interview codes used throughout Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

It feels helpful at the outset to provide an example to illustrate practice in the Philippines. Whilst forms of practice of course vary, the following quote (about implementing the 4Ps programme) offers a good introductory picture of social work as practiced on the ground. Interestingly, whilst conceived as community development, the 'way in' is through families:

*"Some you cannot reach if you don't ride a helicopter… these are the most depressed… the social worker… has to start mobilising volunteers in the community… they have to train some of the current leaders and she will be the link with the teachers and with the health centres because the condition is that we were targeting poor families with children… they have to be in school 85% of the time… the mother who is pregnant must have all the necessary protocol to give birth to a healthy child and the child 0-5 must have all these vaccinations... So that was her job… co-ordinating the health sector, the education sector and the different organisations in the community. She is also expected to work very closely with the local, with the municipal department of social welfare, because… we sign something with the mayor so he supports the project…"*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

The chapter now considers what participants said about historical factors affecting the shape and nature of social work in the Philippines.

## 5.2 Historical Development of Social Work in the Philippines

Participants conveyed a sense of a received history of their country and of social work, which offered insights into their individual and professional habitus and resonated with the literature discussed in Chapter 3.

### 5.2.1 The US and Spanish Legacies

All research participants, though sometimes only when prompted, offered perspectives on the legacies of Spanish and US rule, with many commenting on the ongoing influence of external powers. With few exceptions (as was the case in most of the indigenous social work literature) there was an absence of critical perspective and, if anything, a perception of imperialist interventions as benign or, indeed, positive for the country, for social welfare and social work:

*"We are so blessed that Americans came… because, see, we are English speaking."*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

One might, of course, question whether participants felt *able* to criticise 'western' influence when talking with an interviewer from the Global North (see Manilili below), though the following person did offer a critical voice:

*"And of course we do have a glorified vision of what the West is, you know. In fact, I have to really explain to the people that not everything in the West is good…"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Several participants suggested that the periods of Spanish and American domination had made the Filipino people resilient:

*"Yeah and then colonisation arrived … and Filipino basically developed a high level of resilience… it's only a portion of these people who are fighting for their own rights because some of them developed that 'no, I don't want to get involved' and basically, in time… they don't know their rights, whether they have rights… Filipinos… if they could just basically sacrifice… they will just leave it like that, even though they are being used, being oppressed."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

In other words, strength (but not necessarily resistance) in the face of oppression was presented as a national trait. A social work academic offered a related interpretation of 'resilience', in the context of describing Filipinos as tolerant people:

*"Oh yes, resilient. Resiliency is such like poverty."*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

So, it seems, resilience means to keep going in the face of adversity, poverty and oppression. In Bourdieusian terms, one might expect that internalised dispositions such as those illustrated above must impact upon what social work students learn and how qualified workers practise. The next section offers statements made about faith typical of the many made.

### 5.2.2 International Influence and Faith

Faith (for most Roman Catholicism) was an unquestioned dimension of social welfare and social work, with its roots in the long period of Spanish occupation:

*"A lot of the beginnings of social work, like in most countries, has been faith based, came out of the church… and it still is really largely motivated by faith. A lot of our NGOs are really Catholic-based; we are a faith-based organisation ourselves."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

As we have seen, Christianity came to the Philippines with the Spanish occupation. Some interviewees reflected on the impact of this:

*"We were under Spanish for three hundred years. They were bringing the religion, converting the Filipinos to Christianity because history was that Philippines is a Muslim country. It is the only Christian in Asia."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

This participant explained the roots of Philippine social work from her perspective and experience:

*"Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, they are French but he was really, he started the, it's charity work… he organised the Ladies of Charity and the Daughters of Charity… which is considered the forerunners of social workers… my School is run by the Daughters of Charity and Saint Vincent's teachings… love for the poor, respecting the dignity and welfare of the person, you know, humility, compassionate service, etcetera…"*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

Arlene made connections with the roots of social work in the Global North:

*"Well, historically it's really church based, isn't it? In a lot of ways it was faith based. A lot of the beginnings of social work, like in most countries, has been faith based,*

*came out of the church. Umm… and it still is, really, largely motivated by faith. A lot of our NGOs are really Catholic based; we are a faith based organization ourselves."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Arlene was one of the few who expressed concerns about the imposed form of Christianity:

*"We are being defined by our history… for over 300 years under the Spanish, and that kind of Christianity wasn't a fair Christianity… it was… oppressive and the… corruption that happened then is still really being pursued now… Our politicians, for instance, they come from dynasties… and a lot of the poor also still look at themselves as serfs… and so the helping profession is still very impeded by that as well; because when you help, they think you've got it all and all they have to do is receive… it's always externalized rather than internalised and blame is always projected rather than accepted and owned… Really, there's no need for projects like ours if the rich really did redistribute their wealth quite well… It seems like spirituality is contained in a salt shaker and never shaken out of it… they belong to the Church and the four walls of that and never shaken out of that and really if they sprinkled a little bit more wealth, we should not be in this predicament, really."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Grace, who continues to practise as a Roman Catholic in England, added further critical comment (though did not feel that her opinions were typical):

*"I am a devoted… I graduated from a Catholic School but we don't like the system of Catholicism in the Philippines… it's wrong the way the Church is managing the people… I really appreciate more the Catholic, you know, the Catholic here. You know, you can talk to the priest… they're like a normal, ordinary person but back home, what is the priest? You know, they are like a God and they are the oppressive, they are abusers… Yeah and sometimes it's not good because that can be the cause of this problem with the poverty, you know the reproductive health and all the issues in the Philippines… the faith and, you know, how powerful it is, people just follow without thinking. It's so sad, really sad."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Once again, structure shapes practice, here in terms of service user expectation. Many qualifying courses are delivered by 'Catholic Schools' and some saw benefits to this:

*"We have many schools of social work now who are run by religious orders… almost all of them, who are enrolled in this school are on a scholarship. They belong to the poor family, they stayed in the university or the college. They work and at the same time they get the scholarship."*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

For this person, Catholicism was not emphasised within her social work learning:

*"… my university is a, is a missionary… but our religion subjects is just separate from the teaching of social work. It's just we have Religion 1, 2, 3, 4 and we just basically cover everything: Islam, Christianity but it isn't ever had any impact or any connection with… but I suppose it just give the understanding that, if you go in the community, like in the South it's a Muslim community…"*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

The above quote suggests that the central tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church were not taught within the social work specific aspects of training, although there were a number of 'separate' modules which focused on religion, perhaps emphasising the need for cultural competence and awareness of different faiths. However, the following comment (made by a relatively young social worker about his social work training) offers a different perspective:

*"My school is run by nuns, no? So they're very strict… You have to do this, you have to do that, you have to follow your [pauses]… you always have to look the hierarchy… and then before, I think, my last semester in social work I think I was not attending my class anymore because I was rebelling… I did not attend the dawn rosary, I did not attend masses..."*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

While differing attitudes towards religion were, therefore, evident in the data, the predominant view among people within the field of Philippine social work was largely uncritical, seeing faith as a key motivation (or vocation) and aspect of social work identity. The thesis will return to the place of religion but the above responses leave one in no doubt that the historical process of conversion to a (mostly) Christian country had profound and ongoing implications for social work.

### 5.2.3 Did Charity Begin at Home?

Social welfare generally and social work in particular have a number of close relationships with charity in the Philippines. As the literature indicated, even national government relies on 'handouts', however large scale and formalised those might be:

*"… most of the NGOs, even the Government… rely with foreign donors, ok, so that's very limited and because of that reason we cannot really provide a better service."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Even within private hospitals, charitable sources are tapped to fund care for poor patients:

*"Yeah, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office… that's an agency who are really, is very generous in helping out people who have medical needs…"*

Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC)

The same participant discussed a previous social work job within a NGO:

*"I worked, based primarily with the street children. All the money comes from the devotees, from donations and the church."*

Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC)

Not only do social workers engage with processes of charitable donation to meet need but some donors call themselves social workers:

*"We have what we call pseudo social workers. These are the charity, the rich, erm, wives of… they're not really volunteers but they are really more charitable working. But when you say religion and how does the practice, let's put it this way and I'm talking in the now, this is one area where we, it's very much involved."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Hence, religion and charity are intertwined and powerful. It is, however, a fact of life and in many instances a matter of life or death. Arguably, charity in much of the Global North is now de-personalised: donors give money to an organisation which then decides how best to spend that money, not usually on an individual basis. The act of giving is less direct than it would appear to be in the Philippines. Nonetheless, a key skill for many workers in the Philippines is the ability to persuade donors and advocate for service users in charitable contexts, as the following exchange between two academics suggests:

*"In a poverty situation, the social worker should be good enough to be able to deal with the rich because, first, you'll have to use them as a resource in terms of community work and all this and that's the reason I think why many social workers, they're very good in working with the elite and they also end up marrying doctors (laughs)."*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

So, even in a 'community work' context, dependence on the 'upper classes' is real and direct. Skills in tapping the resources of those with greater capital resources are essential:

*"… the role of social worker as resource mobiliser and resource developer is really working with the rich, working with those economically blessed."*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

*"I have a student, she works in a Chinese school, which is really all the rich Chinese kids and parents and the parents decided that they will have a social outreach but… Chinese is a closed culture… so the social worker says like 'well if you want to go*

*ahead then you go ahead but I'm not going to work with you'… If you want a community then I will find a community… and you're not going there to just dole out, you have to let them propose, to let them participate…"*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

As in all contexts, social workers operate in imperfect situations. The above example is of social work practice seeking to assert its values in terms of social justice and empowerment whilst endeavouring to 'keep funders happy', a familiar tension for social workers internationally. The realities of operating between maintenance and social change, resulting perhaps in a 'collectivist-reformist' form of practice, are very evident.

### 5.2.4 Historical Processes and Language

The Philippine national language, Filipino, is based upon Tagalog, which grew in usage in the post-war period. Marcos encouraged the development of a national language and debates ensued about the extent to which words of Spanish and English origin (in common usage) should form part of this language. The Constitution allows areas to retain their first languages but expects that Filipino is taught in schools as the national language. Many participants commented upon the dominance of the English language within social work education and practice (an issue discussed also in this thesis in relation to research methods). Qualifying learning was delivered predominantly in English and texts were mostly (though not exclusively) of American/European origin or written by Filipino academics in English:

*"If I work with community, with my clients, with my groups, I obviously speak to them with the Tagalog. Umm… with your colleagues it's more on a professional level, it's more like English. And I think there's some good books about community organising authored by Filipinos, so we use that language as well, which is obviously more appropriate… Most of the books, definitely the books are in English …"*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

Tessa, reflecting on her practice in the Philippines, identified a process of 'cultural translation' when working with service users:

*"I would try and translate it in the regional language but it is difficult… You have English in your mind but the way to explain is, the way to deliver and interpret is you have to make sure that it's understood by the people."*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

A social work academic acknowledged that the process of recording (a key social work skill) presented difficulties for some social workers, due to expectations that recording is in English:

*"Because you do the interview in Filipino but then we require our students and our workers to record in English."*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

One might question the reasons for such policies and the underlying power relations and assumptions but it seems very possible that the accuracy and meaning of recording could be affected. The interviewee did, however, state that some NGOs were now accepting recording in the national language.

Having begun to consider some issues raised in the data about the macro and micro determinants of what social workers do, the thesis turns next to look at findings related to the role played by international aid and international NGOs.

## 5.3 International Aid and the Role of NGOs

As we saw in the literature review, much Philippine welfare is funded by overseas aid, whether through agencies like the WHO and UNICEF, international charities or private sector donors. This was a given for many participants, with the concomitant implication that funding agendas are significantly driven from the Global North. In relation to government programmes, for example, this participant was unsure whether the kind of social work they wished to practice would be funded:

*"Yeah, most of our partners are UN agencies, World Food Programme… in fact we are scheduling a forum… we hope we can sell what we have now, especially our social protection programme on conditional cash transfer and community-driven development…"*

Yvonne (FPOL P 50-59 F RC)

Similarly, in the non-governmental sector, workers spoke of being funded by business:

*"Yes, it's an international NGO and our funding agencies are corporations, FedEx."*

Evelyn (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

A social worker in England made the following observation when asked about frustrations when working for government and NGOs in the Philippines:

*"I should say lack of resources… So, every year… we call it, umm, planning, programme review and planning because we need to evidence that we are spending the money on what it should be…"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

She went on to discuss how the limited availability of funds required social workers to be resourceful (*"tapping different agencies"*) suggesting that this was a skill much less called upon in England. There was a matter-of-factness when a worker talked about having worked for a foundation set up by the American Chamber of Commerce to provide *"financial support to street children"* (an organisation whose mission is, *"to serve the interests of U.S. businesses through the participation of members in promoting their long-term objectives, while contributing to the civic and economic development of the Philippines"* http://www.amchamphilippines.com). The participant is not named here to further protect confidentiality.

One participant working for an NGO talked about the pressure applied by funding agencies like the UN:

*"If you want the funding… you suit your proposal according to their values, not necessarily our values, and then we just try and make the join with our values when you implement it."*

Janice (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

However, a participant based within an international NGO was very clear that they would negotiate with donor partners before accepting money:

*"I think sometimes it's… some donor partners come with language, processes, procedures, standards from abroad or from the international arena, many of which fit, some of which don't fit… If there's strings attached that we don't, will* compromise how we are able to work, we just don't take those funds."

Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C)

Though responses differed, therefore, what came across strongly was the ever-present need to engage with the structural realities of international aid requirements, again suggesting layers of 'fields within fields'.

## 5.4 Indigenisation or Reconceptualisation

The data offered various perspectives on attempts to make imported models relevant and develop home-grown theories and approaches. Some questioned this process, suggesting the Philippines had much to learn from adopting 'western' approaches. However, this participant was typical of many responses:

*"What we found was that the imported Philippine model, which is mature, I haven't heard anybody say 'oh that's too American for us'. Philippines have developed their own way of working as social workers and it's culturally quite comfortable…*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

The above quote is indicative of how participants mostly described the implanting of US social work in the Philippines: that it has evolved over time, drawing heavily on American models but also influenced by distinctly Philippine social formations and

'ways of being' (as well as the demands and expectations of international aid). The ways in which this happened were often, as Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999) found elsewhere, pragmatic. Indeed, most participants struggled to provide examples of how they adapted models to local contexts, often referring to sensitivity to traits attributed to Filipino people:

*"Maybe not change but maybe to, to enhance… for example doing family casework… it's not stated directly in the book on how you will relate to a family given that you're in this country… That's why one of the subjects that we have is the Philippine communities and… the Filipino psychology, wherein we discuss all the Filipino traits, how a Filipino thinks, how Filipino acts."*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

So, for Hope, indigenisation entailed the adaptation of practice methods to perceived Filipino behaviours and cultural expectations. Indeed, many participants in the Philippines and England suggested that Filipino people possess common traits. For the researcher, the acceptance of such 'traits' raised questions (discussed further in Chapter 6) about the operation of cultural stereotypes, assumptions of homogeneity and the potential implications for anti-oppressive social work practice.

One indicator of indigenisation and, as Weiss & Welbourne (2007) suggest, of professionalisation, would be the growth of a Philippine knowledge base. Social work everywhere draws on social work-specific theory and research *and* an applied knowledge base. One participant, discussing the national curriculum for qualifying courses, commented as follows:

*"Yes, there were certain subjects that we really focused… we had to consider the Filipino family. Our sociology is almost all Filipino, okay… we do a lot of rural sociology."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Karen, a Filipino social work academic, highlighted what she saw as indigenous contributions to knowledge in the area of sociology and community organisation, referencing the work of Canadian writer Murray Ross (Ross, M. & Lappin, B, 1967)

and American Saul Alinsky (1971). She cited Manalili (1990), a Filipino writer on community organising, whom she saw as critiquing the perceived limited understandings of American social anthropologist and sociologist Frank Lynch (2004), who lived and worked in Philippine academia and was, indeed, also a priest:

*"… there is this American Jesuit priest, Father Lynch… a foreigner writing about Filipino values on pakikisama… although he has been here for a long time in the Philippines…when you enter a community or any interpersonal relationship, you are first an outsider and the highest point that you can reach is pakikisama, so that's what he experienced… he entitled it smooth interpersonal relationship… he was saying that Filipinos have the tendency to always adjust so that there will be no conflict… Filipino social scientists are saying, no, he saw that because he is a foreigner, he was not able to enter the next part, so I use that because I'm teaching community organisation I'm saying that if you are only in the pakikisama level you are at the superficial level… so that is an indigenous, you know, principle. So Manalili was able to come up with the steps in organizing, uhm, which is a different, different way from, from Ross, from Alinsky, so uhm I think so far we are able to come up with indigenous, you know, literature…"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

Manalili was, therefore, presented as a Philippine academic challenging the observations of others from a Philippine and broadly critical perspective. Indigenisation is conceptualised as cultural adaptation rather than, say, wholesale development of Philippine social work. It also points to the potential, within the research for this thesis, for misunderstanding (discussed in Chapter 4). Another social work academic commented as follows:

*"So we have to test out everything that the text book is saying, we have to be always aware what is the implication of these theories in our setting… and we want to come up with case studies that are Filipinised… Before, the cases are all about New York, San Francisco (laughs)… so we are trying to come up with… resource books that are local."*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

Here, a social worker recalls the process of learning, pointing out the difficulty in cultural translation:

*"You can teach it theoretically but there's no reality to it… They've read about it but then again case studies can be very deceiving too, you know, and the terminologies that we use… some of it is contextualised use of terms that cannot be understood by Filipinos not really travelled…and let alone the students who have never stepped outside the provinces that they come from… sometimes they just get mesmerised with words…"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Whilst specific examples of indigenisation at the practice level proved somewhat elusive, there was acknowledgement of a process of moving away from a 'western' model in terms of overall orientation to social work. As a senior policy maker put it:

*"… it was very distinct in terms of policy for all the schools of social work to break the casework-group work-community organising kind of thinking, which was very, erm, very western, okay? And what we were looking to was a generic, we wanted social workers who could practice in a generic way."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Camile went on to describe a process of change within national government from the 1990s and developments attributed to a Secretary of the DSWD, named Corazon "Dinky" Juliano-Soliman, a social worker with a background in campaigning organisations:

*""…she is a community organising person and she's an activist, okay? And she could see that we were all social workers…so she brought in two men who were not social workers and that really shook… these two men really were more in development, okay? Remember we are Department of Social Welfare and Development, okay?"*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

This link with development (economic and community) raises concerns *and* offers insights for social work elsewhere. Might, for example, an engagement with broader social development aims be a way forward for social work in England? We return to such questions later in the thesis. However, in the Philippines as (though in very different circumstances) in England, welfare and development can be uneasy partners, where the 'right' to support comes with conditions and human growth is calculated in terms of economic contribution and self-sufficiency, independence rather than weakness. In the Philippines, the main focus has been on the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Programme, which (as seen in Chapter 3) is described as poverty alleviation but seeks to achieve this by training 'beneficiaries' for sustainable livelihoods. The above participant went on to acknowledge a growing diversity of professional perspectives within DSWD:

*"… it's not just social workers anymore in the DSWD. We started to get people who were graduates of other professions… Community Development, Agriculture, anybody especially involved in development work in rural areas… because this programme was practically all, we targeted the poorest provinces in the poorest municipalities, okay? It's a big, big programme from World Bank."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Another participant working in policy development within DSWD was very clear that international donors/providers of loans were interested only in development aims:

*"The donor agencies, the international donor organisations, the projects they would like to engage with the DSWD are community based programmes. So, seldom do you find these organisations engaging in interfamily programmes…"*

Bea (FPOL P 40-49 F RC)

Thus, just as welfare benefits (or 'dole out') come with conditions, so the international funding which underpins the system comes with strings attached and 'indigenous' generic/community approaches to social work are not free from such strings. Indigenous social work in the Philippines, to the extent that it exists, appears to involve contextualising external theories and models and a shift away from received North American approaches to a generalist and community focused

practice. The latter was not generated within the Philippines, however, but rather through a process where one-to-one forms of social work were considered unachievable in contexts of extreme and broad-based poverty and where the 'development' goals of the international community held sway.

One participant was especially committed to using approaches and methods from overseas, which he conceptualised in terms of a necessary shift *away* from generic social work towards more specialised services and openness to best practice from abroad:

*"… you need to get some specialisations from other countries. For example, the issue of dementia is… a worldwide concern… for me we, the social work profession, is not basically on the western side… but it's a universal model… you would adopt the best programmes or services or teaching or models that would supply the needs of your clients here…"*

Joel (FPOL P 30-39 M RC)

An academic picked up on a similar theme, placing it in historical context:

*"That's one of the topics… in some of the conferences… the children, the abused neglected children, persons with disabilities and, of course, the mental health related problems… I would really want a change in the curriculum to address that… because clinical social work is really something that is, I think UP (University of the Philippines) had it before but then when they revisited the curriculum… they wanted to focus more on social policies."*

Joel (FPOL P 30-39 M RC)

As discussed within the literature, the development of more specialised or clinical forms of knowledge and practice may be seen as evidence of 'professionalisation', typically in more 'developed' countries. The above participants appeared to consider that such skills and understandings, indigenous or otherwise, represent progress.

When asked to offer examples of indigenisation, some participants drew attention to issues of cultural sensitivity. For example:

*"Ok, if the client is a Muslim [woman] and you are, a social worker is a guy, you're not allowed to interview."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Whilst important to be alert to such dimensions, it is suggested that such areas of awareness and competence should be part of practice whether or not in a context of seeking to indigenise 'foreign' approaches. 'Cultural competence' or 'Anti-Oppressive Practice' is arguably conflated, here, with notions of indigenisation. In re-fashioning ideas developed in the Global North, adaptation for cultural difference was discussed by several participants. The following participant saw the use of proverbs as one such approach. Thus, although introduced in the context of working with Muslim service users, it was suggested that proverbs were a culturally accepted way of engaging also with persons of the Roman Catholic faith:

*"We use them because… sometimes there are teachings which we cannot say directly, so we use proverbs…because of shame, you know."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Indigenisation is, clearly, a more nuanced, pragmatic and imperfect process than the term might suggest.

## 5.5 The Social Work Profession in the Philippines

Within the literature review chapters, attention was drawn to insights gained from the sociology of the professions. Indeed, professionalisation is one process associated commonly with the development of collective and individual capital, both cultural and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1989). Some participants, including this social worker now in a senior policy role, spoke from personal experience of the development of the profession:

*"I was in the second group of social workers who took the board exams… that was the time when they were really professionalising social work… we were upgrading*

*the education of social workers and local governments were starting to put up their own social work department… and UNICEF was offering a lot of scholarships… because many of those doing social work in many of those positions were not professional social workers, okay?"*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Another social worker, again now in a senior policy role, spoke of a further time of development of the profession in the 1990s:

*"I was involved with… drafting the Magna Carta for social workers… the first draft that hopefully would cover all social workers, be it in government or private or NGOs but… now, yes, covers only the public one because it's difficult really to, erm, for the non-government organisations and private organisations to comply with the requirements."*

Yvonne (FPOL P 50-59 F RC)

This participant also described a process of seeking to prescribe environments in which the presence of registered social workers should be required:

*"And that's one regulation that… the DSWD is implementing. A non-government organisation should have a licensed social worker… so that's how the standard is regularised… and the Magna Carta of social work also states that the LGU [Local Government Unit] should have the person who has the social welfare office should be a registered social worker."*

Yvonne (FPOL P 50-59 F RC)

The fact that there were social workers holding senior policy positions within national government is telling of the breadth of roles considered 'social work' in the Philippines. For many, the statutory basis of the title of 'social worker' and the early establishment of key bodies were important foundations for professional recognition and for relative academic rigour. As one academic put it:

*"Our predecessors were mostly trained abroad and… as early as 1966 the social work profession had already a licensure... we are grateful to the first social workers*

*because they ensured that we have the association, we have the standards… they saw to it that we have the necessary structure to ensure that the profession will really be a profession…"*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

The collective professional habitus, a sense of historical continuity and pride in the profession, came across strongly when gathering data in the Philippines. Another worker suggested that decentralisation and the shift to community-focused practice had a positive impact on the profession:

*"They were all struggling. They were selling pies on the side… and they were very demoralised. Well, since then there's been an almost complete turnaround. Yeah, I think there were two reasons for it. One was the Local Government Code, which decentralised things… and their focus over the last ten years, maybe twelve, has been poverty alleviation. And that has changed them dramatically because the approach is community driven development."*

Wendy (USSW P NGO 60+ F C)

Many participants spoke of the aforementioned breadth of social work roles and locations in the Philippines. One worker in England said:

*"It's more of the variety, it's not a monotonous kind of job like here, alright. If you get cases you know what you're expected to do. To complete the initial assessment within the timescale… but in the Philippines… we don't only work with a child, we work with a whole family, we work with extended family members…"*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

The picture which emerged, therefore, was one of a profession forged in the image of social work promulgated by the US but also one which continues to seek further professional recognition and to embrace practice across a broad range of sectors and approaches (as with the most recent attempts to define social work internationally).

## 5.6 Faith and Professional Identity

When asked if Christian values underlie social work in the Philippines, Marissa commented as follows:

*"… not just Christian teaching but it's universal values about human life and like… our colleague in social work, she is Muslim and in their own context, the situation in Mindanao, they are also human beings. They have the concept of whose responsibility is welfare and I would like to respect them and I think that what is good about Filipino social workers… we understand that culture as well…"*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

This response does suggest a desire to deliver social work which is appropriate to all groups within society but also raises concerns. The notion of pakikisama, of respecting everyone, could serve to veil the complexities of human interaction and even leave processes such as racism or faith-based discrimination unstated or under-acknowledged. At best, the response to such issues felt simplistic and superficial:

*"It's not an issue for us, not really, not much. We have, umm, for example a Muslim social worker in Mindanao who, who works with even the Christians in Mindanao and it's not a problem with her and she works with… those people in the communities who are caught in armed conflict..."*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

The following comment, however, throws more light on the reality of social work in conflict zones in the Philippines and, perhaps, the space social workers occupy in relation to faith groups:

*"… you are safe because people will really just, whether they are Christians, Muslims, rebels or civilians, they recognize that you are doing something for the community and, therefore, they will respect you… So, I would think that is also*

*indicative of practice because, if a social worker is biased towards a certain religion, towards a certain group, then she will not be perceived that way."*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

There appears to be a limited conceptualisation of processes of oppression in the Philippines, among social workers and social work academics, at least. One might hypothesise that critical perspectives on power and anti-oppressive practice are not well-established. This Muslim social worker and academic interviewed as part of the study was less sanguine:

*"Sometimes our Christian brothers and sisters are not culture sensitive to the Muslims and so most NGOs would demand for, you know, a social worker who is a Muslim and we have a lot of them now who… the feeling of mistrust to one another is still, you know, the feeling of being discriminated…"*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Aisha stated that Muslims seeking employment faced discrimination and this, combined with poverty, created a form of multiple oppression which led to Muslims joining the large number of Filipinos working overseas. One is struck also by the gendered dimensions of oppression in what she says:

*"In Islam you're not supposed to go out of our house without a chaperone but, because of the necessity, because of poverty, then our women… would go abroad just to, as a domestic helper… Usually they go to Islamic countries like in Saudi, you know, Qatar, Egypt… because no job here in the Philippines and Muslims are also discriminated in terms of work."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Thus, a contradictory picture emerged of the relationship between Philippine social work and the position of the two most significant faith groups in the country. The social work identity, as expressed by workers themselves, conveyed little of what might be called 'Anti-Oppressive Practice'. Indeed, the propensity of Filipinos to

stereotype the national personality, discussed in the next section, offers further indication of this.

## 5.7 Characterising the Filipino People

This thesis is, in part, concerned with the identity and (learnt) behaviours of a particular professional sub-culture. However, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1984) practice reflects individual *and* collective habitus which itself reflects and interacts with cultural and structural 'realities'. Though aware of the limitations of asking participants to describe features of the 'Philippine culture', it was important (not least as an 'outsider') to do this. This section presents some core messages from the data which inform an understanding of how Philippine culture is perceived. These include thoughts about dominant (and 'minority') values; social conventions; religious practices and influence; and roles (including gender roles). What we see is evidence of participants describing service user groups (and Filipinos in general) in terms of perceived traits and constructing a picture of national culture.

### 5.7.1 Perceived Traits & Heterogeneity

While discussing a project to relocate disparate populations, this person highlighted the complexity and heterogeneity of 'culture' in the country:

*"The Philippines has 7107 islands. And then different cultures, dialects, different ways and putting them in a one sort of place as well, it's quite, you know, can be chaos… there's a group of Pilocanos, a group of Visayans, there's a group of Tagalogs… and Filipinos, when they are in my country, they can be quite clannish… when, for example, the Pilocanos talk in their own language, that's quite offending for the Tagalogs."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

This participant, an American based in the Philippines for many years and working for an International NGO also delivering training, suggested that Mindanao *was* culturally different but not only because of its Muslim majority:

*"There are some things that are very specific to being Muslim, for example the process to reach a decision, the sure process of really sitting down and working and working and working until we get a consensus… In the West… we try to be the top of the class… In the Mindanao context, be they Muslim or Christian, the idea is everybody is going to succeed and they work together day and night… to make sure that everybody completes the course… it's a very profound difference and each of the professors have picked up on that and that transcends the faith."*

Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C)

When asked about culture, participants often referred to *traits* commonly attributed to the Filipino personality. Indeed, this forms part of the national curriculum for social work qualifying programmes (CHED. 2010) and this worker had delivered teaching on the subject:

*"Actually, they gave me that, the Filipino Personality. Yeah, it's about the culture, the strengths and weaknesses of Filipinos."*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

From the perspective of a social work educator in England, it is surprising that students are engage (apparently uncritically) with the notion of a national 'personality'. This felt uncomfortable as social work should surely understand difference and individuality as well as commonalities.

### 5.7.2 Being Caring

Nonetheless, one can identify from the data a number of consistently held perspectives on the culture of the Philippines and 'typical personality' of its citizens

*and* service users. One seemingly accepted trait of the Filipino people was their 'caring' nature:

*"Filipinos are natural… counselors and care givers. They know how to listen… very important for them is good relationship… there is this respect for older persons which is very cultural and we take care of children in general… We really care! That's genuine."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Mark made connections with social work values:

*"Filipinos are caring people… we have the value of giving importance to every person and that's one of the values of social work…."*

Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC)

There was little evidence of a critical consideration of the idea of 'care'. It was something to be proud of. Shakespeare (2000) is among those who have pointed to processes of othering, dependency and infantilisation which paid and unpaid caring can create. Preferring the word 'help', he says,

*"At first sight, the imagery surrounding helpers in our society seems predominantly positive, focusing on ideas about altruistic sacrifice and beneficent professionalism"* (Shakespeare, 2000, p21).

However, Shakespeare (2000) maintains that 'care' can lead to lack of voice and that professional knowledge defines people and their needs, reducing these to individual deficits without recognising broader structural determinants of the position of service users. The characterisation of Filipino people as caring, therefore, raises issues for social workers and their practice, in the Philippines and abroad.

### 5.7.3 Anti-Oppressive Practice?

As stated in Chapter 4, questions were added to the Interview Schedule as emerging themes arose. This included a concern that social work in the Philippines appeared to have an under-developed awareness of the potential for society, social institutions and for social work to contribute to the oppression experienced by groups experiencing marginalisation or discrimination. The following excerpts from interviews with Filipino academics exemplify the responses received. On being asked whether the 'caring nature' of Filipino families and professionals could act to the detriment of service users, this academic *did* acknowledge some risks:

*"… it's more of the compassion and sympathy that is involved... when you're patronising then, you know, you're not empowering… Filipinos would be just surprised, what I'm trying to be and being generous, you know, you're thinking differently. It's like, I'm not being appreciated, you know, for being caring… yes, that is something that may be part of that cultural orientation."*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

With regard to anti-discriminatory practice, this academic made the following comments about racism in the Philippines:

*"… it's not a big thing about racism in the Philippines… sometimes umm Filipinos would be afraid of, let's say, the ones from Africa because they are so dark. That's the kind of thinking that if you are dark (laughs), oh this one looks like the criminal in the movie… something like that has to be… dealt with… but not really in terms of the racist kind… I think because parents would tell their children, if you go out… that man who's black, very dark is going to get you…"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

The above academic did, however, identify discrimination rather more than the following participant, who reduced it to a need for cultural sensitivity:

*"It's not an issue for us, not really not much. We have, umm, for example, a Muslim social worker in Mindanao who, who works with even the Christians in Mindanao and it's not a problem with her…"*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

Meanwhile, here the problem was presented as a rare slip in cultural competence on the part of a particular worker:

*"Once in a while there are problems… I had a case… the social worker insisted that the mother contacted her family, and the mother was a Muslim, contacted her family to help her decide on the adoption of her baby and this is… a no-no to the Muslim… and the mother might be killed by her family should they discover that she is unwed..."*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

Fiona's seemingly ambivalent responses on this area of inquiry were difficult to follow. At one point, saying:

*"… talking about the general picture of the Filipinos, do I think that Filipinos are racist or regionalistic, no."*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

Then, just a few sentences later commenting as follows:

*"… the blacks are not really seen as good people… They have a different… perception of who the blacks are and what they are. So these are things that generally may be present in the country but, again, social work is different…. I have been with so many social workers in their different areas of the country and one of the things that is highly, highly upheld principle is really respect for other ways, religion and all these things."*

Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C)

Few participants in the Philippines went beyond an analysis of poverty to discuss other social divisions or aspects of identity, such as race, disability or sexuality. This

example, provided by another academic, reinforced the sense of a desire to be sensitive and not treat people differently on the grounds of such 'characteristics' but little conceptualisation of such issues in terms of power inequality or professional role:

*"… a mother who discovered her son was gay and she was really upset… the social worker just tried to make her realise, like, look if you are the mother you get shocked, that's normal, but would you like to really totally let go of your son? … if you go over social workers' records and documentations… the more common words that you will see or read in the records are 'provided counseling', 'provided emotional support'."*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

There is no doubt that counseling could form part of an appropriate response to such a scenario but the lack of any anti-oppressive framework was striking (at the time of the interview and upon analysis).

### 5.7.4 How Filipinos Communicate

For many, Philippine culture is built upon direct, interpersonal communication rather than written communication and this shapes the form social work takes:

*"It's an indication or a symptom of the Filipino culture that Filipino social workers are not much into writing… Philippines is a very oral culture so, even social workers, really have to push them to write reports... but… when you're really out there holding hands, touching, really talking to people, getting foot on the ground, it's quite natural for them. I think it's part of the culture also because Filipinos are very interpersonal so… in one way it's taught but on the other hand it doesn't have to be."*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

One might make connections between this point and ideas of 'use of self', maintaining boundaries, appropriate emotional distance and self-protection. This participant raised an interesting point:

*"… we rely a lot on our professional use of self… because there's not so many resources to distribute, you know? A Filipino social worker will have an advantage because she has really, umm, enhanced maybe her professional use, that's her only tool, that is really fundamental."*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

So, being fundamentally 'caring' and possessing good inter-personal skills was considered by Filipino people central to their culture. This was typically related to social and family structures and relations.

### 5.7.5 Family

*"That's the good thing about the Filipino values, the culture, of people. The families usually keep their disabled, their, their elderlies in their home."*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

As one social worker, drawing comparisons with an imagined UK, put it:

*"… the very prominent value we have is how we are closely knitted as a family. Yeah, so I believe you guys out there, after reaching the age of something like that, you have to get out from the family, do your own thing… we live in one roof, up to the great grandchildren."*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

However, the following social worker saw the Philippine family as increasingly unpredictable:

*"Family is still very important, very much our anchor in terms of our definition of ourselves… parents still really depend on their children for… that's our welfare system, really. Umm, it has moved away a lot from that… for instance … although we go overseas for the family, we've killed our own family in some ways, too."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

When asked if care within families might mean the 'cared for' are less able to meet their potential or pursue their wishes, Mary commented as follows:

*"People are not that exposed, their mentality is just, I want to stay there with my family and that's it… to live and die there."*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

Social work did not appear to play a significant role in challenging such expectations, in terms of promoting individual rights and self-determination or eroding the internalised oppression people might have developed due to cultural and familial ways of thinking. Grace saw family as a source of mutual support and care:

*"… your culture there, you have to be strong, you have to be independent, mum is working so you have to… here, it's a sign of care if our mum fixes our clothes, she cooks food."*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

On being prompted to consider if and how families might be abusive, Grace reflected as follows:

*"… parents feel that they have authority over their kids… unlike your kids there, that they have, they have their rights, you shouldn't because if you do that let me dial something and then the police will come over…"*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

Overwhelmingly, family was described as a positive social structure, with few references to power relations within family units. However, the following participant deviated from this view of the family, albeit in somewhat deterministic tone:

*"… each family has its own values and usually these values are passed on from generation to generation. That's why, when we make our genogram, those things will appear, that's why we started from your family of origin."*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

A commonly-held and remarkably consistent 'habitus' in relation to the Philippine 'personality' was, therefore, identified, which (when combined with professional training and identity development) surely had implications for how service users were perceived and interventions implemented. Later in the thesis, we consider the impact of moving to England upon this national-personal-professional identity.

### 5.7.6 Optimism, Resilience & Religion

Positivity, often in the face of extreme adversity, was also considered a trait of Filipinos and something for social work to nurture, expressed by this participant as follows:

*"The strength, the positive view of Filipinos on dealing things, whatever problems are…"*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

The following quote begins by, again, referring to a perceived optimism:

*"Filipino… even though they are hungry, they can smile… it's already a problem, why should we problem the problem? … we just laugh at it, move on with our life… when you go to community they will just get the guitar, just play guitar and then they are happy… the following morning, they will try their best to look for another chance… to get food for their family, they are very optimistic that everything will change… all in all Filipinos are very hard working. You cannot say that they are poor because they are lazy, no. Imagine, you will sell cigarette for whole day… and then you will only have one hundred, less than one hundred pesos income for a day… you will also get your food with that one hundred pesos, you cannot save…"*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

Here, Michael also challenges the pathologising of the poor and describes a sense of hope and positivity, raised by many participants as characteristic of Filipino people and culture. Whilst gathering data in the Philippines, the apparent impact of the Roman Catholic Church in particular, and faith more generally, was striking. Any

optimism despite very difficult life circumstances must surely be considered in the context of prevailing religion. Such attitudes might demonstrate an impressive faith or the oppressive power of organised belief systems to justify and perpetuate inequality. Religion as a dominant social structure shapes lives and perceptions and sets the context within which social work orientates itself to the impoverished circumstances illustrated above.

To return to the centrality of family within the Philippines, this participant alluded to the potential for families, in a context of poverty, to stifle ambition:

*"… the cultural practices and customs of our region contributes to that, like the principle of familyism where they most prefer to have and keep their children by way of just forcing them to look for livelihood within their area… for social workers, they encourage… a longer visioning of what life is…"*

Cherry (FAC P 50-59 F C)

### 5.7.7 Utang na loob

'*Utang na loob*', is also considered, by Filipinos, to be an aspect of their national 'personality'… embedded in cultural practices. Writers such as Hechanova,, Franco & Reyes (2007) see 'utang na loob' as a reciprocal obligation to those who help us or treat us well. It runs deeper than a debt in practical or financial terms. A further behavior which Filipinos themselves commonly associate with their culture is described as follows:

*"The crab mentality… when you put the crab in the basket, when one of the crab wants to go out, the other crabs will pull them down…"*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

Jay described this 'trait' as being:

*"… jealous of someone's achievement, what you are going to do is you pull them down… so, that's one thing in a social work job, in a community organisation…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

### 5.7.8 Faith & Fatalism

Several participants spoke of fatalism among Filipino people, sometimes connecting to faith:

*"… just a few, they just let everything… this is what God wants and I won't do anything."*

Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC)

Arlene expressed a similar view thus:

*"Well, poverty in more a holistic sense… poverty of the mind, poverty of the soul, poverty of the spirit… if you do believe in your God, who does provide and he has given your hands, you will work, you will sweat, whereas a lot of people here tend to just say 'oh well, this is God's will' and they are fatalistic about it."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

A similar tendency in some to 'accept their lot' was identified, in this case discussing social work models and referring to some within the Muslim population:

*"… the problem-solving model is applicable to any clientele system, Muslim, Christian or Buddhist… but in terms of the crisis intervention model, you have to modify… it's like crisis in Islam is not a crisis… for a Muslim they say this is just a test, this is just a test from the Lord, maybe because he just wants to teach me to be faithful to him, that is why I am in crisis."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Karen, in a related point, suggested that Filipinos look to social workers for direction:

*"What is self-determination… we want the client to identify the problem, you know? So they would say… 'if you were in my position, what would you do?' And then the*

*farmers will say 'look, what are you asking us really… why couldn't you just tell us what you want to know?'"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

### 5.7.9 Saving Face

As with all perceived cultural mores, there are inherent contradictions. Philippine society and people are described as caring and optimistic and yet entrenched, competitive, fatalistic and resenting the success of others. Filipinos also described their culture as one in which people avoid public disagreement and value calm interaction:

*"… we are not confrontational or direct… We say yes when really we mean no… keeping nice and friendly appearances even if it's not true… we avoid tension, we avoid conflicts. At work and in the family. Especially at work."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Pakikisama is a cultural expectation in the Philippines which means people should be polite, try to get on well with others and avoid aggression or directness:

*"… we have to say it in the manner that is acceptable… you have to beat around the bush a little bit (laughs)… there are certain cultural protocols that you have to observe."*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

Whilst calmness can be positive, it could lead to social workers or service users not expressing their feelings or doing things to please others. The following participant, speculating about working overseas on the basis of having worked in an international NGO, raised a question that the data analysis also generated:

*"For a Filipino who is trained in a culture of politeness… how do you handle clients who are upfront, you know, blunt, frank?"*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

However, Evelyn suggested that Filipinos *do* speak their mind but in a polite and respectful manner:

*"We will always tell you that in a good manner… so that he will not get angry with you and at least there will be a win-win solution."*

Evelyn (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

Again, we return to this area when considering transition to England, in relation both to service users and professional colleagues having a more direct and perhaps assertive approach. For now, however, attention is drawn to the processes by which culturally-acceptable ways of being are integrated with social work values and methods, many of which emerged in the Global North. This suggests, again, that indigenisation often happens through subtle shifts at the level of individual practice (albeit in the context of dominant cultural expectations).

## 5.8 An Outsider's Perspective

An interview was undertaken in the Philippines with two representatives of an international NGO, both of whom were social work qualified and of North American origin. The following exchange is included in some detail, as it offers thoughts on Philippine culture' through an experienced but, in some ways, detached lens:

*"Resilience, hard work, capacity to overcome any kind of disaster, be it personal or collective. Can-do spirit, enormous flexibility, tremendous creativity, throw anything you can at them and they will stand up and rise up and overcome it…"*

Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C)

*"And as a commodity, which the government is very cynical about, they are brave. They take on new situations with courage and some flexibility and sensitivity and manners…"*

Wendy (USSW P NGO 60+ F C)

*"Yeah, they will give you the last thing in their refrigerator or on their skillet, even if it means they don't eat… they go borrow from the neighbours even if they know they can't, it will take a while to pay it back… and they're often asked to be the chair of conferences… because they have an ability to make everybody feel welcome and appreciated and they kind of smooth ruffled feathers"*

Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C)

## 5.9 Community & Collectivity

Workers in England spoke of missing the more collective culture of the Philippines though were able to identify some drawbacks of this:

*"I think that's something that, you know, we miss… when you go out of your house, everybody will say 'Hello, Good Morning, How are you?', just a short talk and, you know, that connection is already there.."*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

The same worker considered the Philippines a more 'laid back' place to live and work:

*"Laid back in terms of… for example, during working hours, we're working but we can still, you know, we have still fun... but here… if I'm working, I'm working. If I'm doing my report, I don't have time to, you know, chat…"*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

However, this worker (also in England) questioned the benefits of a co-dependent culture:

*"… community help each other but the other side they're not actually helping each other… there's no government that you can rely on, so you rely on the community… so that becomes your family and… social worker would come to visit the house, old ladies will come to… and they will butt in…"*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

## 5.10 The Field of Social Work in the Philippines: Concluding Comments

Analysis of what the data suggested about Filipino culture(s) yielded, unsurprisingly, conflicting themes. There are expectations around behaviour and social interaction, with institutions like family and religions taking on particular significance. Interestingly, Filipinos saw themselves as flexible and accepting of difference, although this is very much open to critique. This concluding section begins with Filipinos describing themselves as culturally adaptable:

*"There's nothing strictly Filipino… we've a melting pot of different cultures."*

Cherry (FAC P 50-59 F C)

*"… Filipinos are so, are good in acculturation… unlike Indians, you know, even in foreign countries even, well they have all this, so they look different, turban etcetera but Filipinos, you know, umm, we can easily adapt to different cultures. Why? Because in the Philippines we have also indigenous subcultures, very many here… if you can deal with the cultures, subcultures here, how much more dealing with the global?"*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

Another social work academic made similar suggestions:

*"… maybe one reason why they can go to other countries and work… I mean, it's never an issue for me that people are talking different language because here, when you take the jeepney… they speak different dialects, you know, so it's no deal…"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

The chapter has identified themes from the data which shed light upon the field of social work in the Philippines. As detected during the review of Philippine social work literature, there was a tendency to see the imperial legacy as positive, though some participants questioned this. Similarly, faith (which clearly also influences the field of social work) was commonly seen to be a positive thing, with a minority of

voices questioning the potentially oppressive power of organised religion or the related reliance upon charitable donation to fund much social welfare. As we saw, several participants suggested that the struggle of life in the Philippines and of supporting clients with their very difficult circumstances led to a kind of 'professional resilience':

*"… because of the resilience of poverty and hard work we are able to… be stronger in terms of dealing with stress, in dealing with our employers, because there is always a backbone there that's supporting us."*

Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC)

Comments such as this leave one wondering what Philippine society and social work think of the 'weak', of those unable or even unwilling to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. The field of social work is also shaped significantly by the expectations of the international development machinery. Though there is, in many ways, a strong social work profession in the Philippines, it appeared mostly to have adapted received approaches to local culture rather than developed indigenous models. The shift to a social and community development approach did signify a shift away from the imposed US orientation but for reasons driven significantly by the demands of aid agencies.

Finally, the field of social work in the Philippines was also seen to reflect the culture of the country and its people: phrases arose repeatedly which characterised Filipinos as caring; compassionate; community-oriented; optimistic; and resilient. As we shall see, some of these perceived traits were tested when Filipino social workers started living and practising in England. Furthermore, whilst perceived as strengths, the same list of characteristics and behaviours might be considered indicative of a culture in which self-determination is sacrificed to family and community; in which poverty reflects God's Plan or a lack of moral fibre; and in which the poor feel the need to be grateful for whatever support is dispensed in their direction. However one interprets the 'traits' attributed by Filipino participants to themselves, what is clear is that they shape the field of social work in the Philippines and also have a bearing upon the habitus of individual workers. The next chapter, in looking at social

work motivation and identity in the Philippines, helps us to consider habitus in more detail.

# Chapter 6: Fieldwork Findings in the Philippines: Social Work Motivation, Purpose and Identity

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter identified themes shedding light on the *field* of social work in the Philippines and upon practice situated within profession and international context. This chapter concerns itself with what it is to *be* a social worker in the Philippines, looking in particular at issues of motivation and identity and public perception of the profession. It's primary focus, therefore, is upon themes from the data relating most directly to Research Question 2. The chapter seeks to consider those 'macro' and 'micro' factors which impact upon professional *habitus*. In other words, it asks how individual social work identities and motivations reflect social structures, cultural expectations and understandings and the field of social work more broadly.

## 6.2 Professional Identity, Status and Public Perception

This section considers messages from the data concerning the 'macro' identity of the social work profession in the Philippines and factors that influence and shape this. It addresses dominant and resistant discourses, which reflect and constitute the interplay between the field of social welfare and the symbolic capital of various stakeholders within that field. After this, the chapter will turn to consider social work practice and motivation in the Philippines at the more micro or individual level, as revealed in the data analysis. As a way into considering the 'macro' dimensions of purpose and identity, the first section now looks at perspectives upon public perception of social work in the Philippines.

### 6.2.1 Public Perception

Much was said by participants about the public image of the profession, a theme revisited in the next chapter when considering the perspectives of Filipino workers in England. For now, it is salient to highlight some key points raised in relation to the popular perception and understanding of social work in the Philippines.

Several commented on the respect given more generally in the country to those who had undergone education to gain qualifications. Thus,

*"I think in Philippines education is very valuable… people, I think, respect every profession. I mean lots of engineers, lots of nurses and social workers and it's more and more becoming popular."*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse)

One participant put a very particular interpretation on the respect accorded to education in the Philippines:

*"…the common belief is that education is at the very top and… a doorway out of poverty. So, it's important for parents and never mind that they get sick because they do too much work but they have to put their kids through school, in the hope that the children will get jobs and they will somehow pull the family up."*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

However, a particular form of respect was identified with regard to those who had qualified as social workers:

*"In the Philippines, they see you as a saviour…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

*"They thought you are just like a Good Samaritan or a nun…"*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

The following participant, also based in England, again drew religious comparisons with the social work role but connected this to previously mentioned perceptions about 'dole out'. Social workers are viewed positively, even if the breadth and depth of their roles are not fully understood:

*"… we are I think in the same level as the philanthropists and the same level as the priests… People say 'oh, you're a social worker, that means you're a good man'. So, basically, you're helping people but when you say helping people, you're giving dole out. You're not helping people because you're doing care planning, they're not seeing that a social worker is based in the hospital doing assessments as well of their needs… So, that's basically the stigma but, you know, not a big part of what we call, I would say, social change, that we are an agent of change…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

So, this participant felt the public perhaps saw social workers as helping at times of crisis but not seeking longer term change. It is notable, however, that social change was defined in terms of individual growth rather than anything more societal or collective. This social worker in a policy-planning role agreed that public understanding remained narrow:

*"I think there's still a need… to inform people about social work, more intense information dissemination… because social work is sometimes seen as helping, as giving dole outs, just limited to that. And there are people who I talk to saying that social work is related to cleaning canals."*

Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC)

So, there was unease about social work being seen as purely practical. This suggests much about the desire for symbolic capital or professional recognition, for an appreciation of the 'added value' a social worker can contribute. It is striking that the very thing workers find almost professionally demeaning is that aspect of their real or perceived practice that appears to make them popular. In some instances, the reluctance to engage in 'dole out' might be interpreted as blaming the poor for their circumstances or for their 'unwillingness' to claw their way out of poverty (echoing debates about the deserving and undeserving poor):

*"… social worker will teach you how to be socially functional… how to be productive, how to learn, how to be the source of your family if you are the sole provider… We want that way that people see us not professionals who give things and then get out… If you need something, you go to the social worker. Now it's different."*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

As we saw earlier, social workers in the Philippines were increasingly involved in implementing programmes offering financial benefits in return for behavioural change (conditional cash transfer). The following participant expressed doubts about such policies, though not because of their coercive or non-universal nature. She suggests that the 'respect' given to social workers might only be offered in anticipation of receiving something:

*"… you introduce yourself as a social worker, they will always expect something to be given to them… to me, I mean, maybe it's not that good, no? Because you will always be expecting that if you do something for somebody, you will have something in return."*

Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC)

This worker suggests 'respect' is grounded in professional power over access to resources. Respect is undoubtedly a problematic dynamic in professional relationships:

*"… the majority of people here in the Philippines are poor and they look at social workers as somebody who could help them, so that's why they usually say thank you and they appreciate those social workers."*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

The connection between poverty and compliance was raised also by this academic:

*"Because the clients are poor, they cannot demand… most of them are very compliant really because of respect for persons in authority."*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

The following participant developed this notion of respect being closely linked to power relations:

*"Philippines is, it is more respectful like, you know, they say Ma'am or Sir… they're quite deferential, they would even feel that you're doing them a favour when, in fact, you know, if you're a government social worker, it's your job… or, if I work in an NGO… a client would feel that 'oh we're so privileged, we're so blessed that you are here... we are very grateful. I would be embarrassed to ask of something but I am desperate, so please this is what I need.'"*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

'Michael', whose arguably functionalist perspective was described earlier, went on, however, to highlight another reason why the Filipino people valued and respected social workers. This was their ordinariness and visibility within local communities:

*"They really respect social workers here because they know [they] don't have enough salary… social workers are the one who fight for the rights, even though overtime they were not paid… and usually social worker here they don't wear classy shirts… you will not be afraid to come near to the social worker because she was wearing tuxedo…"*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

The majority of Filipino workers conveyed a sense of being valued and those based in England talked about not being respected:

*"That's why it's different there than here. They show respect to social workers, they even call you Mum when you see them. It's more fulfilling in the Philippines..."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

The notion of feeling appreciated in one's role troubled the researcher whilst in the Philippines and appears in the research journal thus: 'What is wrong with being thanked or feeling valued by service users?' In much of the Global North, the social work habitus is one in which professionals are paid to provide a service and should

not expect service users to be grateful. It may be that such boundaries contribute to dehumanised forms of practice.

This academic felt that public appreciation of the breadth of social work roles was increasing:

*"… because of this reporting in the media, about a child being abused, a raped child, a victim of incest… they see the importance of the social work profession because these are the people that we have to go to… When we are poor, they are the one helping us. So it's being promoted…"*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

Though the above participant did, in common with most in the Philippines, portray social work as supporting the poor, she suggests that its profile was improving as it becomes more involved in one-to-one practice and even in those forms of social work which might be described as safeguarding or protection. This may, of course, be the area of practice on which the media are more likely to focus. Stories which, at best, might be considered 'human interest' or, at worst, sensationalist, may be more attractive to television and newspapers than, say, community organising or groupwork. Alternatively, one could argue that such 'specialist' practice demonstrates that social work is much more than a 'dole out' activity. It is also worth noting that safeguarding and protection are often characterised in the UK, at least, as those aspects of social work which most alienate service users and shape a poor public image.

A Filipino worker in England drew interesting conclusions about the connections between the nature of intervention and relationship with service users and the wider public perception:

*"In the Philippines, you deal with families… but here you don't have that… if it's a mental health issue, then you have the… mental health social worker… it's very, how do you call it, compartmentalised… I like this model but then I find it difficult as well because your role is not, is not seen as, as a helping person… your role is like managing the case… in the Philippines it's different because you are there, you help*

*them, you talk to them, you go to this, you take them there… here, you become, you are managing the case and, umm, tapping all these resources… every time they ask after we did assessment, did your social worker help you? And they said no because they will not see your role clearly, because they don't know that when I ask somebody to help them, that's my role, that I'm helping them…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Many spoke about the phenomenon of 'Filipino Workers Overseas' and the associated 'brain drain'. One worker in England spoke of the dangers of moving away from home and, despite best intentions, not returning to share the things learned overseas practice:

*"They… will go blind, basically, and crippled of the opportunity here and that would leave my country… brain dead because of, of not getting a new breed of well experienced social workers who had explored the other elements of social work outside the Philippines."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

The same worker felt, ironically, that public perception of the profession and the esteem in which it was held in the Philippines grew if it was considered 'marketable' overseas:

*"It will give the Filipino public, erm, the same impression that they have about the nurses… engineers… young Filipino that will go to this profession as their first choice, rather than, what happened to me, as an accident."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

The notion of public perception is discussed again in the next chapter, where practice in England brought the matter into clearer focus. This section closes with a Filipino worker making a more pragmatic point, equally applicable to social work internationally, that it is a relatively 'young' profession and has not had time to establish fuller understanding:

*"Ok, can I add why we are not famous? Actually, we are not that old, compared to their profession."*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

We have seen, therefore, that notions of respect and of being akin to a 'saviour' or 'mother' permeate public perceptions of social workers. This appears, in part at least, to reflect both the dominance of faith within the Philippines and the reliance of an often-compliant and dependent poor upon aid and practical relief. This is discussed further in the next section.

### 6.2.2 On Belonging to a Profession

It is acknowledged that the snowball approach to sampling meant that those workers accessed in the Philippines were probably especially active in their profession. Nonetheless, there was evidence of a strong sense of professional community. A participant in England said:

*"Yes, yes, we celebrate it… we have conventions where… it's the time for social workers to really meet up. It's like a socialisation opportunity for social workers."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

The 'dole out' issue arose frequently in relation to the status of social work in the Philippines:

*"… it's not a profession. It's something that, you know, people who are nice and kind who offer rice and sardines… in a calamity. That is social work in the Philippines, it comes from, you know, humanitarian work."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Many spoke of the need to move beyond this perception in order to 'be' a profession:

*"… they see social workers as just somebody who gives relief goods but now the association is more aggressive in trying to tell the people that we are professionals…*

*we have a licence, we studied for it, we know what we're doing… and we're not just basically like a philanthropist who gives out money."*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

It is interesting, in this context, that workers in the Philippines spoke often of feeling 'valued' and, again, attributed this to being a 'gateway' to resources:

*"The public… give a high regard to social workers. They are like teachers, they are like nurses … because they're looking for a social worker when the patient are about to discharge… they know that the social workers are in school because they are looking for a scholarship programme… and they know that the social worker are women who are offering assistance like in disaster…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Popular perception and expectations of social workers clearly, therefore, formed part of a process of shaping professional sense of self. Social workers had considerable power over access to resources and, in a context both of absolute poverty and cultural expectations of calm interaction, this power appears to manifest itself in relations interpreted as grateful and respectful but which could equally be characterised as dependent and oppressive. Before examining some of the impact that dominant social structures, such as family and religion, appeared to have upon the motivations and identities of individual workers, we return to some of the debates around the orientation and purpose of social work, as manifested in the data gathered from Filipinos about practice in their country. In doing this, we look first at the relationship of social work to direct 'help', returning initially to the debate about 'dole out'.

## 6.3 Purpose and Orientation of Practice

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that social workers (in this case, a Filipino worker in England) often saw their 'mission' as being to make a difference and acknowledged the satisfaction this can bring to the social worker:

*"Probably, for me personally, it's a personal reward. You're helping people, making a difference, if I make a difference to their lives."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

### 6.3.1 To Dole-Out or Not to Dole-Out?

A near-universal message when talking with social workers, policy makers and academics in the Philippines was that of social work striving to be seen as more than just 'dole out'. This was motivated primarily by a wish to be taken more seriously as a profession with specialist contributions to offer (but also, for some, a desire to empower rather than perpetuate dependency). This – though in a context sometimes of providing rice and blankets rather than 'dole' as this is now understood in the UK – highlights the importance for social work identity of the *"relationship between the income maintenance system and the functions of social services departments"* or between 'cash' and 'care' (Dowling, 1999, p5). For Bourdieu, this could be conceptualised as a drive to accumulate symbolic capital. A worker in the Philippines said:

*"… it's more on trying to help other people in a very professional way and a more systematic way and… empowering them… trying to let them recognise what skills they have so they can utilise it with their day to day life and not just trying to, like, spoon feeding them…"*

Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC)

Another social worker in the Philippines was typical of all participants there in observing that:

*"The primary premise of the work in a developing country is basically on poverty reduction… DSWD and other social workers at the local government units and most of the NGOs here are focused on poverty reduction."*

Joel (FPOL P 30-39 M RC)

However, this worker (who believed strongly in the need for specialist skills and knowledge) saw the focus on poverty alone as problematic, suggesting it restricts the vision of social work and leaves it unable to respond to specific need:

*"… Are the social workers prepared to respond to the issue of increasing numbers of degenerative diseases like dementia… are we ready enough to respond to the issue of child abuse...? … if your thinking is quite limited, that your profession is just there to provide this cash assistance… and provide this immediate assistance, we have been conditioned that the services is basically to augment the needs of the clients especially in working in anti-poverty…"*

Joel (FPOL P 30-39 M RC)

So, the field of Philippine social work (and the professional habitus it generates) was seen as restricted and unsophisticated. The international focus on development underpins much of this field and habitus. Interviews with social workers in private and state hospitals shed light upon this dilemma. Both of the following workers described a typical day as involving counseling, support to other professionals around patient issues and working with patients and their families/communities to arrange financial and practical support. In many ways, these dimensions of practice would be familiar to a hospital social worker in England. However, the directness of the relationship with patients and families around financial support would be much less familiar:

*"… I usually do my rounds, visit them in their rooms and make a follow up on what happened… if they were already able to talk with anybody who could possibly help them out and then… I give out the referral letters, the letters that they need to ask for assistance [from] the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office… And most of the time I end up doing counseling… they're asking for medical assistance to cover for the hospital payment but at the same time they're having emotional problems…"*

Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC)

Meanwhile, this participant (working for a foundation in a private hospital) also acknowledged the significant role of seeking financial support but added that:

*"It's very usual for us to, if we have a problem, to go to our relatives who have more income… The doctor would advise them to undergo such procedure and then the patient would express that he has not enough resources… so the doctor then would refer it to the foundation… they need assistance like how do they get there or how they approach that NGO… and then at the same time among family members…"*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

Here, a worker in England commented on 'going beyond dole-out' as follows, making links to perceived processes of empowerment:

*"Social work is not just… giving dole-out. It's like a scientific method of helping people… you need to make a robust assessment and then from the assessment you need to do a care plan… from there you need to look at what services…and then how can you know… that you achieve the outcome, there are some changes within the family… It's more of also empowering the parent… you're still aiming that you can leave them on their own... that they would be able to survive as a family with minimal support..."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

There was evidence, therefore, of struggles within the field of Philippine social work around orientation and approach, which relate directly to the discussions about a typology for practice in Chapter 2 but which, importantly, shape the individual habitus and professional sense of self. Despite understandable reservations about social work being equated with 'dole out', having visible connections to tangible forms of support can be a positive thing for social work. Though one might feel uncomfortable with the reliance upon informal or charitable support, social work *is* engaged in direct 'anti-poverty' strategies. Yet, as we have heard, the profession in the Philippines wanted to be – and seen to be – much more than 'dole out' operatives. As Jordan and Drakeford (2012, p167) put it:

*"Part of the answer seems to lie in social work's quest for recognition as a profession. It has been more anxious to establish its credentials as an exclusive expertise in solving specific problems or ameliorating specific conflicts, rather than*

*allowing itself to become associated with movements for social change, or with developments in society at large."*

In the Philippines, some social workers are very involved in macro forms of practice and it may be that continued links with direct forms of welfare are part of a picture of positive public recognition and a clearer anti-poverty stance.

### 6.3.2 Orientation and Approach to Practice

Participants revealed a good deal about their own orientations to practice (for example, as community or individualised endeavours) and how this reflected or clashed with the orientations of agencies for whom they worked. For this academic, the emphasis on community as social work orientation was a pragmatic response to the scale of difficulties and limited resources:

*"The problem is so enormous and if we do it on a one-to-one, it's very expensive, so it is always community approach, and that's the difference between the Philippines and United States, because they are more clinical one-to-one and in the Philippines it's more on the, you know, bigger approach."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

#### 6.3.2.1 Power & Politics

One participant, who characterised himself as atypical, suggested that, in the Philippines, social work had two streams:

*"One stream is very much political taking into account, you know the history of a colony… resistance to oppression… so that's bred a kind of social work that is very political and sometimes polemic… this is… most evident rather at the community level… I think in the early seventies or eighties there was a split between the more macro and community oriented social workers and the social workers who were more, I guess clinical or, umm, you know, care oriented… Community development,*

*at its core, really is social work, you know, the kind of social work that works with communities, with groups, you know not just individuals... all that advocacy, you know, speaking to power… challenging the status quo and on the other hand there is the mainstream social workers, largely like a mirror of American social work."*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

This quote raises a number of points: the rare use of language of power and making of critical connections with history; the linking of community with radical and casework with the status quo (in turn, identified as part of the American legacy); and the casting of advocacy not in terms of individualised support but as a process of questioning the way things are and championing the rights of oppressed groups.

A social worker in England had worked for an NGO engaging with poor communities (fishermen, farmers and squatters) in the Philippines whose aims and objectives he described as overtly anti-oppressive, indeed radical, stating that the organisation:

*"…promoted anti-oppressive… training I would say. We called it training for information dissemination to marginalised people."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

However, for Jay, the tactics employed by the organisation (funded by international development monies and overseas charitable donations) were uncomfortable:

*"… it was quite sensational because they're more a political base, they wanted always to be on TV… I wasn't happy because every now and then I think I felt like, you know, these people are just being used… They were teaching these people to rebel against the government rather than persuading them that this is what we need to do to uplift your livelihood."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

So, Jay (who described himself as *"politically inclined"*) did not find his role in facilitating activist mobilisation a meaningful one:

*"My job was basically a secretary. We're going to meet up, we're doing this, we're doing that."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

The above example demonstrates where one orientation or approach within the social work field 'clashes' with the value base and habitus of an individual worker. Where social work efforts are directed to conscientisation and direct action, dilemmas arise for workers (and service users) who do not see or agree with those aims. Having said that, social work in all forms is inherently political: the nature of possibilities (Payne, 2014) is shaped by those with greater access to economic, cultural and symbolic capital. One worker in the Philippines led the researcher to question a developing 'rose-tinted' impression of a politically engaged and critical form of social work:

*"I actually would like it to be a lot more progressive and a lot more aggressive. It's not quite like that, it's very placid. A lot of our social workers… they can be vocal but when they go to the practice they can be placid… because there's a lot more threat to us in terms of the politics of things, you can be removed from office by the mayor, so you're defined by who the mayor is, by their agenda…"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

It is certainly the case that, since devolution, there is a much more direct link between social workers in the Philippines and local politicians, which places particular pressures on workers and has serious implications for those they seek to empower (Yu, 2013). This brings us to the notion of 'empowerment', a term which can be interpreted in many ways and was cited many participants.

### 6.3.2.2 Empowerment as Individualised or Collective?

Participants in the Philippines tended to define empowerment in collective terms, whereas those in England described it more as a one-to-one process. So, for Nina (UK-based):

*"I think what's the purpose of social work, that's the first thing that came into my mind is empowerment… try to empower people to do something to make their life better or to make the situation, to change their situation and what makes it difficult…."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Thus, to empower means to promote self-sufficiency, help people to help themselves or create responsibility (things which are also valued and encouraged by some manifestations of religious faith). Another worker in England commented that:

*"It's supposed to be helping an individual to become… self-protective? So they can reach the level of their full potential with the help of the social work skills… I think that's what social worker is because when they, at the time, feel weak, maybe low self-esteem, maybe in crisis financially, emotionally or whatever… I think a social worker is there to help them."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

By contrast, participants in the Philippines, aligned empowerment more with community:

*"Considering the culture here in the Philippines, I think the principle of organising is, will remain the, let the people decide and start where they are but don't end where they are."*

Janice (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

Similarly, an academic commented as follows:

*"Empowering strategies also like… not just focusing on addressing the material needs but they have to ensure that… they will be able to articulate their needs... what the social work students did was not just link them up to the resources, they told them… the larger government, not just the Barangay has a resource but you have to request for it and you have to do it, we're not going to do it for you. So the group of mothers, they went... really making people empowered to manage their lives eventually when you leave…"*

Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC)

This policy maker was clear what social work in her country was:

*"It's still focused on enhancing the social functioning of the individual in the family, in the group, in the community. Empowering them, because we are dealing with, we are dealing with poverty, we are dealing with hunger, for us in social work when you look at what we are doing, it's really empowering the poor."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Social workers may well, therefore, allude to transferable values and approaches, notably 'empowering practice' but appear (Lee-Mendoza, 2008) to place significantly different meanings upon such terms. National and professional cultures will, of course, influence such interpretations and attempts to define social work internationally (though it is important that they take place) can only hope to set some sort of parameters. By considering the meanings attributed to a term such as empowerment, we begin to see how habitus appears to be influenced by 'space' (Huegler, Lyons and Pawar, 2012).

### 6.3.2.3 Empowerment as Maintenance or Social Functioning

Although therefore seen in the Philippines as operating at the community level, there was only occasional evidence of *critical* notions of empowerment, with most participants seeing it as the promotion of better functioning – individually or collectively - in society. This participant made a connection to Biblical teaching:

*"In a way, we can teach you how to do it but we will not teach you how to get something from us, like, umm, like in the Bible says teach the people how to fish, don't give them fish, right?"*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

As has been seen, Philippine social work shifted predominantly towards a social development mode over time and yet workers often used the language of 'social

functioning', or what Davies (1994) refers to as 'maintenance'. A worker in England said:

*"I believe the social work's role is to restore the social functioning of an individual, family and the community."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

### 6.3.2.4 Promoting Dignity

Many participants saw social work as valuing human dignity and bringing this belief into practice. This academic said:

*"… we believe that people, persons have worth and dignity … I tell my students, if you cannot believe that, you cannot be a social worker, you can, you can, pack your things and say goodbye to social work because that's where we're coming from and it's a lifetime struggle. It is very difficult, you just have to see that this person you do not like has worth and dignity…"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

Similarly, for this participant in the Philippines,

*"It's a person and when I start off with that statement it allows me to explain to other people that this is why social work is a contribution to society… you know, you can have progress, you can have wealth or prosperity, but not at the cost of human dignity."*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

### 6.3.2.5 On Being Critical

This section concludes with the thoughts of a social work student (also working with and international NGO) in the Philippines:

*"… I'm becoming more of a generalist but I tend to be more on the political side… I think the core mission of social work is really to change the status quo… A status quo could be an individual status quo for a person, a person experiencing a particular problem, or a family or a group or a community but ultimately there's the status quo that has to be changed… If people are hungry, feed them, but again the bigger question is why did they get hungry in the first place?"*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

When asked what was common to different modes of intervention, Ryan said:

*"You help them to turn their situation around but it's them that actually do it. We're just facilitating that change… social workers, we can't all be the same. We can't all be doing casework, we can't all be doing macro advocacy or, you know, we can't all be radical social workers but I think, you know, really down that continuum… it depends on where you are as a person, what your strengths are, your competencies, so there are social workers who are really excellent at doing casework and they should continue to do that. They make a difference in the lives of people on an individual basis and that's important… the beauty of the profession is this diversity, different points of intervention…"*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

Of course, qualitative research such as this is ultimately working with the perspectives of different people. In any country, one could interview individuals who identify more with Payne's (2014) 'social change' orientation and others who might be defined as 'problem-solving'. The above section has included such disparate voices, which, for this thesis, represent struggles for credence (or for symbolic power) within the field of social work in the Philippines and within international debates around defining social work purpose.

### 6.3.3 Dilemmas in Practice

It became apparent during data analysis that perceived ethical dilemmas can tell us a good deal about orientation and approach to practice. Social workers in the

Philippines discussed the omnipresent issue of achieving a balance between self-determination and protection or care. This participant gives an example that illustrates also the impact of faith upon a profession seeking to empower and be non-judgmental:

*"I think respecting the rights even to the detriment of that person sometimes is a real dilemma… especially when we are faith based… You know it's detrimental but it is their right to decide for themselves. Umm, a woman getting pregnant out of wedlock, you know it's not going to be good and you know that the child can be better off maybe adopted but can you force her to adopt? That's a dilemma in a lot of ways."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

The notion of working within *and* against systems, and of using professional authority, was raised by several participants:

*"… the bureaucracy of going to this person, to this person, to this person kind of has an impact, as well as how you are working as an advocate… you have to fight the system… the doctor would rather probably recognise to meet with you as a social worker… rather than someone who is from the community. So obviously your profession has a value in that point… so, if I go and make a consultation with the mayor, I also need more support from my office, more people, more pressure…that's our strategy… the more we pressure them and the more they get embarrassed… a lot of street demonstration which is a lot in the news."*

Tessa (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

This worker, therefore, conceptualised her authority individually and in terms of collective strength. The power of local politicians, within the context of devolution of DSWD responsibilities to local units, was acknowledged at a high level in the Department:

*"… it all depends now on what kind of relationship the mayor has established with the social workers and also because the head of that unit, the law doesn't say that*

*this person must be a social worker until recently, some mayors have designated a non-social worker in that position."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

Importantly, therefore, direct political influence plays an important part in Philippine social work. Another person engaged in policy planning put it as follows:

*"some of the social workers that we, whom we talked to, said that they have to… advocate and explain the necessity of giving these social services to the people but sometimes local chief executives have other priorities."*

Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC)

Part of the discussion above related to location within government or non-governmental settings, both of which were seen to offer potentials and limitations. The following two quotations concern NGOs:

*"… you can do things faster when you are working with an NGO. Okay? The scope was small… very focused, okay, but you can go deep and you can do things fast."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

*"The main concern is the sustainability of the organisation, the sustainability of the leaders, the sustainability of the volunteers."*

Janice (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

Though this was partly attributed to the fact that the 'leaders' and 'volunteers' were older people, where frailty and illness could become an issue, this participant was also talking about the need, as a key part of her social work role, to motivate and support others. The relationship of social work to leadership is an interesting one. In the Philippines, social workers are typically employed to lead projects within NGOs, sometimes collaboratively with service users themselves. Meanwhile, in the statutory sector, social workers often supervise and oversee the implementation of staff by 'para professionals':

*"… you've got your day carers under you, you've got your youth workers… how to make policy activated at the client level is always a challenge on the public sector. So, as a social worker, I think you are the key person…"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

The demarcation between statutory and non-statutory provision would appear less clear in the Philippines than in, say, the UK. Notes in the research journal from a visit to a state hospital record my shock at the day-to-day realities and practices within the social work team (SWT) in meeting the needs of individual patients:

*"Donors included private individuals and agencies. Some donors provided an amount of money which SWT could allocate without consulting them… Other donors would come regularly to the hospital and meet with the team, to hear about cases and decide whether to fund. Where funds were made available, this was often for medicines, which would be purchased and usually presented directly by the donor to the patient/family. The SWT as a whole receives some government funding but relies also on charity, such as the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and also on individual donations from politicians, senators' wives and so on. Certain items might be sponsored by individual politicians, such as ambulances bearing the name and picture of a particular politician."*

Notes from Visit to State Hospital (Research Journal)

The chapter so far has considered 'macro' factors such as public perception and competing perspectives on social work orientation (within the international and local fields of welfare, social development and social work), as revealed in comments of individual workers upon their own identity and purpose and that of the agencies for whom they worked. This draws our attention to the interplay between the field of social work and habitus, collective and individual. The chapter now turns to look at findings on motivation for social work which, again, speaks of habitus and the influences upon it.

## 6.4 Individual Motivation for Social Work

Participants were asked about their decision to train as a social worker and also their ongoing motivation for the role. For many, social work was not something they chose actively: participants spoke of not knowing what social work entailed and 'falling into it by accident', of social work being one of few options available. Some qualified as social workers because of family expectation or tradition, whilst others did so despite the resistance of family. Personal exposure to positive (and negative) practice was also cited as a reason for entering the profession. One can also identify participants for whom social work was (or rapidly became) a positive choice, in many cases linked to faith or 'calling'. This section considers responses made by Filipino workers about their initial and developing motivation, which resonate with the previously-mentioned work of Fargion (2001) around, for some, pragmatic motivation evolving into a 'love' for the profession and, for others, faith as prime motivator (Gilligan and Furness, 2006).

### 6.4.1 Entering the Profession 'by Accident'

A common theme in the Philippines was a sense that, for many, entering the field was not an ambition or even a considered choice. Subsequent analysis uncovered a more complex range of motivating factors, as we shall see. However, this section begins with examples of those expressing ambivalence about entering the profession:

*"… by accident really… I'm taking a Bachelor Degree in Management. So when we were… on our second year, they offered a hybrid course which they called Bachelor of Science in Management and Social Work."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

*"I wanted to study computer science… it was quite difficult for me… I went to social work and I found out that most people in the class are also from other courses… I did hear that it's kind of a dumping course…"*

Tessa (FSW Re-Training as Nurse in UK]

*"I said, I'll try social work because, if I don't like it, I can try something else."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

*"Actually, I have no idea on what course I am going to enrol… I took up the course without knowing what's this all about…"*

Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC)

Moving on to consider further dimensions of motivation, there was a very noticeable connection to dominant social structures (in particular, economic factors, family and community and religion). This first section considers economic or financial motivators.

### 6.4.2 Economy

Thus, for a good number of participants, there was no burning desire to become social workers. As one would expect, the hope of gaining paid employment was a motivation for some:

*"… in the Philippines, if you're going to take a course you need to think that you're going to have a job… Although by nature already I am people oriented."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

For this participant, who was set on a medical career, the decision to enter social work was pragmatic and based upon an intention to gain a scholarship and then switch courses after one year:

*"… I just said, you know, even to the Chairperson, can I just have a stepping stone… It's a full scholarship… so, it's really an opportunity to get into that university… it's going to be a big help for my family."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

However, financial remuneration (or 'economic capital') was not mostly cited as the primary reason for entering the social work profession:

*"We are probably one of the lowest paid professionals in the country… together with teachers… but some people are just in love with the profession, you see."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

A second social structure cited as part of the patchwork of motivations for social work identified by participants was that of family, which is considered in the next section.

### 6.4.3 Family & Community

Here, participants indicate a positive orientation towards social work, beginning with the one person who simply felt that social work was 'right for them':

*"I was already active… getting involved with community development… as a teenager I already started offering advice or listening… and eventually, when I went to college, honestly I don't know that there's a social work course… but… when I read the curriculum and everything and that's how, you know."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

For some, the decision to become social workers was in part due to positive role models:

*"… we have a neighbour who is a social worker and she's working in the court and … because I would often see her with some young people … so, I said oh I want a job, you know, helping young people."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

*"I am a student of social work… in addition, I'm… working in a social welfare agency, specifically a humanitarian organisation… many of our key management people and key staff who are working with clients and users are social workers. So there are*

*lots of social workers in the agency and honestly most of them convinced me to take up social work."*

Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious)

This participant saw the social and political circumstances around her as a primary motivation:

*"I was inspired to take up social work because of the social problems during the time. There was war… I graduated in 1972. This was the birth of martial law… on my second year… there was armed conflict… so we were sent there… this was our deciding factor… for us to make some decisions whether to take social work… I went there and then it's just one week after the bombing of the island, of the place where a lot of Muslims were victims, some died, properties lost, you know… so I stayed there for a month as a practicum..."*

Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim)

For this participant, a key motivation was to 'do better' than some of those social workers of whom he had personal experience as a service user when younger:

*"…I realised that when I was a child… the first social worker I met sent me back to my uncle, I told myself… that when I grow up I want to be a social worker and I will not send the children to go back to hell."*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

For others, studying social work was something their parents wanted, either for financial reasons or because they considered it a worthwhile and ethical profession:

*"I want to be a lawyer but my parents told me, no, we don't have enough money…"*

Janice (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

In some cases, parents urged their children to become social workers:

*"I grew up with my grandmother, so she chose that course for me to take. I wanted to take another, a computer programmer. At that time I just said ok I'll do this and,*

*after I finish, I'll do another course of my choice. I don't want her to be heartbroken… because in my family we have generations of social workers."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Here, a participant speaks of her mother's own struggle against poverty and her father's work in the area of social justice as influencing her decision to train:

*"… my mother was the inspiration. She was grade five and my father was very well educated but then… because he became disabled we lost our business and so we became poor… My dad was a defender of the tenants of the land so… it's not a new thing to actually help because I've grown up seeing tenants come to our house to get free legal advice from my dad and that sort of thing and my mum comes from a very poor background, she was orphaned at three."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Likewise, this person was very influenced by a parent, despite wanting to go into nursing:

*"It's my mother's idea. She's one of the… members of a women's organisation in our locality, an organisation helping women, those who have low income. So I am accompanying with my mother… and then my mother asked 'what do you want in college?' and I said 'Mother, I want to take nursing'. 'Oh, you should not take that, you should take social work..."*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

Here, a parent wanted their child to become a social worker to 'give something back':

*"… my dad died when I was young and… every time I asked my mum 'What do I want to do? … my mum had a very significant experience with a social worker at the hospital when my dad has a cancer… she said it would be good to just give it back, because my dad died, to give it back to people who need some, some help."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Here, the worldview and activities of parents were influential, although they did not want her to become a social worker:

*"… my father is a lawyer and then my mother is a midwife, rural midwife… the community people approach them and seek for assistance… I wanted… a profession that only helps… At first, my parent doesn't want me to become a social worker… because it's too risky. They see that social workers go to the slum areas, yes, and… they go to rallies… so they said…we don't want to finance your education… I enrolled and I took up a scholarship…"*

Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC)

The extent to which 'family' arose when discussing motivation for social work is telling in itself, in a culture where families have such significant influence. It is suggested that this is not only about the influence of individual families but also about the emphasis placed upon family within Philippine culture and by governments dependent on family and community to meet social needs. The place of family cannot be understood, of course, in isolation from the doctrines promoted by dominant religions in the Philippines.

### 6.4.4 Religion and Faith

A final theme around becoming a social worker was that of faith. Given the extent to which this arose as a dominant theme in the data, this section will explore the area, beginning with faith as motivation. Faith was, for this worker, a core dimension of practice and of the NGO she set up. She linked faith to a strengths-based model for social work:

*"… because we're faith based I'm developing a redemptive model of helping people and that's starting from seeing them as victorious people rather than defeated people and that's a bit of a different thing sometimes as seeing them as clients."*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Here, social work was an alternative route to follow a religious calling:

*"I'd been wanting to go to… a religious organisation, so I said I can still serve without going to that road… so probably that's my ultimate purpose…"*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

Jay also spoke of vocation:

*"… I started using the word 'God's Plan' every time I was asked why you were in the social work field because it is my calling … I don't know what was my course on the first day… it's like something that came into my life that I've learnt to love…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

This participant had a similar motivation:

*"Personally, I enrolled in social work because of my faith."*

Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC)

There was no doubt that faith was a key motivating factor for most participants. The section now considers what the data said around faith and religion more generally. The majority of Filipinos identify as Christian and most as Roman Catholic. There are significant numbers of Muslims, particularly in the southern islands. All participants said they were Christian (predominantly Roman Catholic), apart from one who was Muslim and one who described himself as 'irreligious'. As we have seen, religion is a core aspect of Philippine culture and many saw their faith as an ongoing motivation for practice:

*"… the fact that… I have this religious upbringing, is there and you cannot set aside about fate, about God's plan… So I was growing up thinking that sometimes you are not the one who is manoeuvring your life. There is always someone up there, a supreme being or a God basically leading your way."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

This worker explained how faith was central to her practice:

*"In helping you are walking, going to paradise, in God… our priests, so they teach us or they are helping me to be more effective and be more responsive to people. So it guides me to do what God wants me to do… in the Bible there are lots of readings that where God helped different… the blind, the poor, the disabled..."*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

When asked if most of her colleagues would respond similarly, however, Leah said:

*"Oh no, they're not… I don't know because of their religion or their training but… they help people maybe in different ways."*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

Finally, this participant reflected on the importance of faith to service users:

*"… in doing our helping process the spiritual aspect is also included like what we did in our youth, in our street children. We basically teach them the values, they're… learning how to call God in times of crisis, so that they may know the right and wrong… how to follow their parents, how to follow the rule of God so that they may be a good person. Yes and also that in crisis, one of our, maybe many of our clients are losing their faith because of their problem and we try to let them back the faith…"*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

This academic questioned the meaning of faith in a society that inflicts and condones such inequality and the role played by faith-based colleges:

*"… how many Catholic and Christian schools are there? And we teach, you know, about being fair, about loving our… if all those rich people would just, you know, get rid of their 5 extra houses… These are excesses, you know… most of the businesses here… what they do is… hire so for five months only and then you cut… and so they don't pay… what is required by law… why don't they pay these people fairly so that we lessen poverty and the, who are the managers, the exec, the CEOs there, they're graduates of Ateneo, that is the Jesuits, no? The Society of Jesus, the*

*priests, La Salle, the La Salle brothers… there are so many schools but where are the values of the people?"*

Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC)

A worker tellingly based in England reflected upon the acceptability of 'overt' reference to religious practice within social work:

*"In my country, if they have a problem, why don't you pray? … You can't do it here… it's a no-no… although I did it once when a person was really, really down and she had no hopes at all this mum and I said maybe it's time for you to pray? I did it once but I was scared to do that at the time."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

The data analysis pointed, therefore, to intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for entering social work, which included pragmatic and economic reasons along with vocation in its truest sense. The influence of dominant social structures, such as economy, family and religion, was a core theme identified within participants' accounts of motivation.

## 6.5 Social Work Motivation, Purpose and Identity in the Philippines: Concluding Comments

This chapter has begun to consider professional purpose and sense of self in Filipino social workers. Importantly, the research process can be seen as having encouraged workers to reflect upon their own habitus and those factors which have impacted upon it, at structural, cultural and more personal levels. Though some dimensions of individual habitus appeared to have commonalities, one can also identify significant differences among participants. The ability or desire to look beyond social maintenance and aim for some form of social change certainly varied, though satisfaction was undoubtedly derived from practice whatever its orientation.

The chapter highlighted those 'external' factors (such as public perception and professional pride) impacting upon professional identity among social workers in the

Philippines and also the particular motivations which people cited as reasons for entering, staying in and learning to love the profession. These often could be traced back to dominant social structures and institutions such as religion and family. Also evident were some factors contributing to the accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital, not least public recognition and professional connections and identity. The chapter also acknowledged some of the ways in which struggles within the field of social work (such as those relating to professional mission beyond dole-out, genericism versus specialism and the empowerment of individuals or communities) filtered down into individual sense of self.

Something very evident was the evolving nature of professional habitus, albeit in response to varying triggers and influences. Thus, childhood and family experiences were cited, along with the influence of social work educators, socialisation into the profession (and the importance of professional identity) and the process of coming to love that profession. The next chapter considers how personal and professional sense of self might be seen to both develop and retain some characteristics when Filipino workers relocated to practise in England.

# Chapter 7: Fieldwork Findings: Filipino Social Workers' Perceptions of Society & Social Work in England

## 7.1 Introduction

This third 'data chapter' seeks to address Research Question 3: What do Filipino social workers' accounts of moving to and practising in England contribute to an understanding of the purpose and transferability of social work in an international context? In doing this, it very much builds upon the discussion of field and habitus within social work in the Philippines. The first part of this chapter returns to the notion of motivation, looking at reasons for travelling overseas and discussing initial reactions to England. It goes on, echoing themes discussed in relation to the Philippines, to consider what it means to be a social worker and to do social work but this time in a different country. Consideration is given to whether participants are describing a different field or a variant or iteration of a core, international field of social work? The impact of transition upon professional identity and habitus is also discussed. In other words, the chapter examines the construction of social work and identity by Filipino workers in England and offers thoughts on the cultural and structural contexts in which this happens. The aim is to begin to identify findings from data gathered in England, where these relate to themes already developed in the thesis. To address this question, in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 Filipino social workers in England. They were asked first to reflect upon their entry into the profession and then to discuss their reactions to England and to social work in England. Finally, participants discussed their feelings about social work in both countries and described what they now saw as the purpose of social work.

It should be acknowledged at the outset that the UK-based Social Care Workforce Research Unit have published a series of reports and articles discussing the findings of research into international social care workers in England (Hussein, Manthorpe and Stevens, 2009 and 2010; Hussein, Stevens and Manthorpe, 2010; Manthorpe, et al 2010). The reports provide rich data though, significantly, looked at the experiences of care workers rather than just social workers and at people from many

countries in the world. It is, therefore, difficult to make detailed comparisons with the findings of this smaller scale study. However, as will be shown, many of the messages from the Social Care Workforce Research Unit (SCWRU) studies felt very familiar. Thus, international workers had been surprised by the poor image and status of care work in the UK; had needed to adapt to cultural differences; and, disappointingly, said they had experienced racism from service users and colleagues. The Final Report of the project stated (Hussein, Stevens and Manthorpe, 2009, p96) that, *"… financial motives remained a top influence for those from the Philippines…"* which, again, echoed the findings of this study. This thesis sought to focus on social work identity and purpose in the Philippines and the impact of moving to England, which are very different aims from those of the SCWRU but it is important to note the apparent comparability of findings.

## 7.2 Views from Outside

Some participants in the Philippines speculated as to those aspects of British culture to which Filipinos would need to adjust. This senior policy maker wondered how the work setting and orientation might impact on Filipino workers:

*"If you give them training, good training for clinical work, sure they can do that… but they may not want to do it because they are used to being in the community… most social workers here feel, umm, cooped-up when they stay in, they have to go out."*

Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C)

The following exchange makes a similar point, linking it to notions of individualism:

*"Surmountable but difficult would be the individualism. The fact that a lot happens indoor rather than outdoor in the community… The privacy, the confidentiality, that's difficult because there's not much of either here."*

Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C)

*"British formality and insularity… but they can surmount these things, very quick cultural learners… And never present themselves as threatening or superior..."*

Wendy (USSW P NGO 60+ F C)

The chapter now reflects upon findings derived from the comments of those who had taken the step of moving to England.

## 7.3 Reasons for Going Overseas

As has been seen, motivation (initial and ongoing) was a significant theme within the accounts given in the Philippines. We now consider what motivated Filipino workers to move to England. Most of the data reflects the perspectives of social workers who had made this journey but, where pertinent, the comments of participants in the Philippines are incorporated. This social worker says why he hoped to work oversees in the future:

*"For all my life, I haven't had a house… my dream is to have my own house, a simple, very simple house that I can live with my family… I don't want them to be one of the client of the social workers asking for a bag of rice… I want also to at least five or seven years work abroad, make sure that when I go back here I have my own house, and then I will go back to the community, fight for their rights… I'm, umm, practicing my profession for almost eight years… I only have one thousand pesos in my pocket."*

Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C)

[Note: at the time of writing, 1000 pesos equates to less than £15]

This participant had not worked overseas but was clear about his reason for doing this *and* about his determination to return to the Philippines. We will look at both of these things but, firstly, consider what the data suggested about financial motivation.

### 7.3.1 Economic Migration

Above all other factors, Filipino social workers went abroad to support their (often extended) families. Some brought their immediate family with them to England,

others came alone but the drivers of relative poverty and unemployment in the Philippines were very evident.

*"I think a lot of social workers want to work elsewhere anyway because, I mean, in Philippines there's lots of unemployment…"*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

*"For a year, I don't have a job… there are social workers who end up working in call centres."*

Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC)

The following participant in the Philippines provided a vivid account of the reasons she hoped to work abroad:

*"… our salary is not that enough to pay our house, to pay our children expenses and to provide our food… the Filipinos are very much, what's this, close family ties. We're looking for our parents… and we are helping their needs, his niece and nephew to study… so, that's the reason why sometimes I say maybe I can work in overseas…"*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

Whereas economic considerations (or the accumulation of economic capital) were not often cited as reasons for *becoming* a social worker, they were the most commonly identified motivation for working overseas. The following person made an additional observation:

*"… I think there's a certain stage in my life where… I just think… maybe I can, you know, I can retire early and then do, you know, other things."*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

For some, the dream (expressed above by Michael) had not become a reality:

*"… we thought, the pound signs, we will get richer in one year (laughs). But … we didn't anticipate you know we have to pay all the bills… all the taxes..."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Another worker in England commented as follows on her motivation and future hopes:

*"So, the first thing is about the money and… well, probably financial security would be good and then go back to the Philippines and do the same work that we love to do…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

She, too, expected to be substantially better-off but had found this not to be the case. Several conveyed a sense of being financially trapped in another country:

*"If they offer me, say, £20,000 a year, then you convert it immediately. Wow, that's a big money… you have to pay this and this and this and that at the end sometimes you only have this much."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

So, again, for Grace the cost of living in England was problematic:

*"You know, you earn a lot but you spend it here, as well. The kind of life there is difficult but you're happy there…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

So, the accumulation of 'economic capital' was a core driver, though present in most accounts was an intention – but for some a difficulty – to return home. As Hussein, Manthorpe and Stevens (2010, p1005) point out:

*"Social work remains a comparatively privileged occupation when compared to the wider social care workforce. There is no evidence that international social workers in the UK receive lower pay or worse conditions."*

The situation is not so positive for Filipinos in the UK (and many other parts of the Global North), typically women, who work as caregivers and nannies.

### 7.3.2 Status and Professional Development

Motivations were rarely purely financial. Something about gaining cultural capital within the field of social work internationally appealed to many participants. The following worker in the Philippines echoed the financial reasons but suggested the following additional motivating factor:

*"And also it's because of pride, you know… if you're qualified to other country, to most developed country, as a social worker you will gain a lot of respect for yourself, confidence as a social worker."*

Evelyn (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)

So, Evelyn introduced the idea of status, personal worth and growth as reasons for travelling abroad. The following participant was persuaded to move to England partly for new challenges:

*"I was saying this is a new opportunity for me, a new adventure… I was thinking oh since I'm still young so I can still go and explore."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Elements of a search for personal development are evident here, too:

*"I said to myself… I need to get out of the shadows of my parents, basically, because I don't even know myself… and I will tell you honestly, my purpose was not to be a social worker when I went abroad. Any Filipino would say that, though… They probably prefer professional but they will go on different things."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

A key difference, here, was that the participant was a single male. The majority of participants in England (female, with children and partners) only wanted to work in the country when clear that their families could join them:

*"I said, can I bring my family and they said 'yes'… They said 'you don't have to spend money but you will be given, umm, initial relocation they call it'."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Sheila was adamant she would not be separated from her immediate family:

*"I would not apply here if I know that I am going to leave my family there."*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

This interviewee gave personal reasons for not wanting to be separated from her family:

*"I grew up in a situation like that. That's why I don't want it to happen to my kids… That's why my grandmother looking after me because my parents work abroad and I don't like it."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

It seemed, therefore, that participants were able to identify motivating factors beyond the understandable financial drivers. These resonate with notions from the sociology of work (introduced in Chapter 2) of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and of work as a source of meaning, identity and symbolic capital. However, these motivations to leave the Philippines would not, it seems, have over-ridden the importance of being with one's immediate family. This may not, however, appear to be an option to Filipinos from the poorest sections of society (Aguilaret al., 2009; Castles & Miller, 2008; Parrenas, 2001b).

## 7.4 Adjusting to England

The field of social work (both in terms of roles and broader sense of purpose) was 'felt' to be different from the Philippines in many ways. Given how interviewees *in* the Philippines conceptualised national traits and culture, it is important to consider initial reactions to English culture and 'traits'. Interestingly, participants focused on cultural and behavioural factors raised in the Philippines: family; respect; community;

being grateful; aversion to directness. Here, we explore observations about culture (Thompson, 2012) and their relevance to social work.

### 7.4.1 Initial Impressions

In line with the model of the 'professional journey' proposed in Chapter 2 (Figure 2, p33), we look first at the initial process of adjustment to a new country and professional field, before reflecting on implications for professional habitus and sense of identity.

### 7.4.2 Poverty

The following is typical of the reactions participants recalled on arrival in England, namely a feeling that they had left poverty behind. Given the overwhelming emphasis on working with people in poverty in the Philippines, this meant their sense of professional self – their habitus - was already being challenged:

*"… I struggle when I came here. They were saying, 'oh we needed this or we don't have…' and I could not believe it because they have this TV… on the first instance I could not see any poverty. Like, when I visit the family… they could access the same food maybe just different brand… we come and visit the family as well, like for example state of the flat they are saying 'oh it's chaotic'… and when we arrive there if you're a Filipino social worker at first… no, it's alright... You need to learn, you need to adjust yourself what is the standard, what is acceptable..."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Grace conveyed a sense of amazement at perceived wealth:

*"I think there's no poor in this country because you cannot see slums and… every house is big and I knew that one house, one family… I was really amazed…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

This interviewee also remembered feeling that poverty did not exist in England but now had a different perspective:

*"I felt like everybody's rich…. it's totally different now… in terms of this country, instead of progressing it is regressing, especially in terms of economy, in terms of the high inflation rate, unemployment and in terms of people's attitude as well… dependent to the social system… I could not comprehend whether it's cultural or whether it's about the economy or whether it's about people just being lazy."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Jay names an unease with welfare benefits that was raised by many participants. Indeed, most of those interviewed in England had mixed feelings about the impact of welfare upon aspiration, which at times fell uncomfortably close to *"blaming and stigmatising the poor…"* (Dowling, 1999, p8). The chapter now looks at a further theme around initial reactions to England.

### 7.4.3 Feeling Deskilled

A common thread in the data was that of feeling deskilled, despite typically having a good deal of social work experience, and also of needing to do more than indigenous social workers to demonstrate professional 'worth':

*"My supervisor was really good… I did say to her 'do you know what, I just feel deskilled here'…. I'm a social worker back home but it's a different setting legislation wise, you know, procedures, being employed by a local authority. It was really, really like I know nothing… So, you know, that feeling of 'I need to prove something here', you know, not only for myself but also for my colleagues because I know they will be looking… what can you bring with yourself here?"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

A number of workers were anxious about acknowledging how they were feeling or things they did not understand, as this person acknowledged:

*"I'm not afraid to ask my manager… and even cried during my supervision… but my colleagues, because they, they felt that if they will do that it, the manager would say 'oh you are this and that'… so they keep it for themselves…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

The process of adjustment was, therefore, by no means smooth. Participants 'felt' hysteresis 'in action' and its impact in terms of loss of cultural capital at the practice level. Language (a consistent theme in this thesis) understandably also emerged in the context of 'culture shock'.

### 7.4.4 Language

Many identified language as problematic. They knew they could speak and read English well and yet struggled with accents and British rather than American usage:

*"Language is the first problem… we thought that we can speak the language but when we came here we don't understand the language (laughs)."*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

The following person was in a team with colleagues from other countries but detected a difference:

*""…I'm the only one who was American accent and American background education. The rest are Pakistan, India, they are all Commonwealth countries. Malaysia. So they have the English, umm, culture with them."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Those who arrived in England as part of recruitment drives had more organised induction programmes, including English classes:

*"We had, like an orientation, one month orientation. We went to English class as well… because of the accent, the colloquial words that we need to know… and swear words…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Whilst difficulties with language are unsurprising when moving to a different country, one might ask how they impact upon perception of professional self and roles (and of service users and their needs) in such circumstances. Language, after all, conveys and constructs meaning, in ways discussed earlier in relation to the interviews undertaken for this research project. This theme is explored further in the next session, looking at orientation to social work in England.

### 7.4.5 Orientation

Participants acknowledged that language was a struggle and was very conscious of not being a 'burden' on colleagues but of needing to gain capital within a new social work culture. As Jay puts it:

*"I read… every single thing on the wall. Sometimes people were asking 'what are you doing there?' and I said 'I'm just… familiarising, you know, the working environment. There are symbols, like… when I see a folder… and there's a label of triangle… that's a child in need case… I don't want to, umm, for people to think that I will be a burden to them… I struggled with communication as well… they have a very strong accent…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Jay saw the orientation sessions as valuable, though conceptualised them as part of a process of professional *adjustment* rather than wholesale change:

*"We talked about… social work history in the UK… we went back all the way to Elizabethan period and dole-out and, umm, we use apparently the same curriculum in the Philippines… I think what I gained there is… about the statutory responsibilities of social workers and our power and accountability, umm, but that hasn't changed my whole professional and personal view… the way I am practicing now is still as a Filipino."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Thus, Jay remains committed to practicing 'as a Filipino', whilst recognising and operating within a field which has different expectations and processes. This social worker spoke powerfully about her feelings as she tried to orientate quickly to life and work in England:

*"… you can see how the social workers do the visit, how it is done in this country… but… will they accept me because I'm from a different country? That's all the things that's going into your mind… I had an incident with… she's a doctor and she was reporting something and… I don't know how to spell that name. 'Can you spell it for me please?' 'Is there anybody that I can talk to?' 'Why?' 'Because you don't seem to understand…' 'Can you spell the name, so that I can look at it on the internet?' 'Oh, never mind'. They just hang up the phone… even professionals, they don't seem to have patience and understanding…"*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Most participants in England spoke of 'culture shock' around directness of communication, making implicit connections to the Filipino 'trait' of pakikisama. This worker has not adopted more confrontational or direct approaches but sees strengths in 'Philippine' ways of communicating:

*"I cannot be like my British colleagues who say 'that is crap'… I would not say that but I know how to do it in another way… my manager knows that… if we have a case with a really difficult family… she can give that to me so I can use the other way and it's more warm and supportive, listening…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Recollections of the process of making fresh sense of social work in a different place, therefore, picked up on previously identified arguments around Philippine culture, with participants trying to identify commonalities and transferable skills and understandings in very different (and sometimes, as we shall see again later, hostile) situations.

### 7.4.6 An Individualised Society

Many participants spoke of a culture which felt less sociable and, perhaps, less sharing or collaborative than the Philippines:

*"When we arrived in the airport, we were collected by the contact person… and then he went to stop in a petrol station… and then he came back with chocolate and drinks. He didn't offer us, if we were hungry… he started eating without asking us…and then you, when you first came into the office you can still see that because everybody just started to eat without asking 'Do you want some?'"*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

This worker in the Philippines, who had lived and work in 'western' countries, offered the following suggestions for welcoming a Filipino person into a workplace in another country:

*"I think it would be great if, you know, like within an agency, if they can invite those Filipinos in their homes… and they can ask them to bring food, the Filipino food, and talk about those things… it's great to encourage the Filipinos to open up their homes to invite others to go in… westerners anywhere are very individualised and when I met my husband… I slowly pushed salt shakers, pepper shakers, everything towards his side. I was wanting to find out how much personal space would he allow me to invade…"*

Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian)

Though it is easy to idealise a sense of community within the Philippines, the data indicated clearly that this was felt very real among (and missed by) participants on moving to England. An area that arose significantly in interviews with Filipino workers in England was that of racist reactions. Some examples are set out in the next section.

### 7.4.7 Facing Discrimination

Racism in England was raised, though not always named, by many of the workers. This first quote is from someone unsure how service users saw her:

*"The only thing that I can't really guarantee is that how they look at me as being, you know, coming from another country… how they look at us as overseas workers."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Angel found discrimination from other professionals more upsetting than that from service users:

*"Some professionals they, I think there is some kind of discrimination… they cannot tell you it verbally but you can feel it and see it… it's ok with service users but, with professionals… One professional… requested me to write a letter. So I wrote a letter and asked my senior practitioner to correct my letter and … my senior practitioner umm made some comments on the letter… and then she came back to my senior practitioner and changed the letter."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

Angel went on to discuss racist behaviour from a service user:

*"… she's very, very racist… 'you have an accent, how come you can work with me?' … I already reported to my team manager so… if I encounter again tomorrow a problem with her… I request that I need to take off the case… I don't usually visit her with, on my own… and then I had another service user, he said… 'oh why all the foreigners come here, they get a house?... It's like telling me 'you're foreigners, why are you getting council houses here? I'm not having a council house here so I just didn't… and sometimes during training… or… in the meeting, they don't look at you, their eyes just focus on the other people in the meeting. So you can feel it."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

This person recounted a story from her Filipino friend:

*"… she had a home visit and they just told her off. I mean, what are you doing in my country? You go back to your own country, why are you working here? You know, and she said her tyre, her car tyre was attacked by youths… those are the fears… how would you protect yourself professionally and personally as well?"*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

Ella was very clear about the impact of racism:

*"… sometimes… I feel the racist, if I feel this cultural barrier, sometimes I feel, oh no, I just feel hopeless, I just feel I can't do anything, it's just like sinking in a boat."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

One is left angered if not surprised by such stories. The extent to which agencies challenged such behaviour was unclear and one cannot help but question those in the Philippines who suggested it would be easy for Filipinos to integrate. As we have seen, however, some workers were able to raise concerns with their managers about racist behaviour. Given these experiences of discrimination, along with the desire for 'sociability' and perceived pressure to create a good impression in different work cultures, one might anticipate that sources of support were important to Filipinos arriving in England. The following section looks at themes from the data in this regard.

## 7.5 The Importance of Support

Unsurprisingly, support networks, within and outside of the work context, had particular significance in the early stages of moving to England. This could be divided into support from colleagues in the employing agency and workplace; from fellow Filipino Workers Overseas; from other migrant workers with some commonality of experience; and from the Filipino community in England. Support in all these forms helped maintain motivation for social work and for living in England and to promote a sense of identity in a context of change.

Most UK-based participants spoke of camaraderie with other Filipinos moving at the same or a similar time, usually as part of specific recruitment drives:

*"… there was moral support… I think it was really, really very difficult because it was my first time to be away from the family and my children… so I think it was really good that we were together… we live in the same place…"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

The same worker had a largely positive experience in terms of the team she started work in:

*"The good thing with my team is that it's a multicultural team… I have a colleague who came from Romania… from Tanzania and then from the Caribbean although they've been here for ages but at least it helps that they are not all white… I tend to… spend more time talking to them… maybe because I just felt they would share my, you know, the same kind of feeling."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Emily added that her manager and some English colleagues had also been supportive. Indeed, most participants were positive about how they were 'received' in their new workplaces:

*"So, they have been very kind of, umm, accommodating to us… yes, they were very welcoming, yeah."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Nina spoke of similar experiences:

*"I'm lucky because I was seated next to one of the senior social workers and… she was saying '… you can always ask me if you need some help because I know it's difficult for you coming from another country'."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

By contrast, Angel did not feel well supported by her manager but felt the team could be supportive:

*"Initially, I tried to speak to my manager but because I didn't get the kind of answer or response from her so I just decided… yeah, just to accept… Unfortunately, because of the nature of the work… you hardly see each other… But I quite liked my team because they're quite supportive... If you need help they will, or even if you don't ask for it, they will offer you help."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

One worker stated that, collectively, the newly recruited Filipino workers did not rule out returning to the Philippines in the early months of employment in England. The practical implications of a return, however, were considerable:

*"… we just said… let's see after six months. If we feel that we can't really, you know, we can't really cope then we have to be honest, open and honest to them and say we want to go home. Although, on the contract it says that we need to pay back whatever expenses we had… so I was thinking how will we pay that back?"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Most of the workers also spoke of support from the wider Filipino community:

*"There's a Filipino shop… we set up supportive networks as well there because they're the one who is facilitating like Filipino group, association… they are older than us so they gave us some tips…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Most participants in England considered supervision to be a positive system. Some saw it as a source of emotional support, which is often thought to be a more neglected aspect of supervision in England. Supervision was certainly seen to be better in England than in the Philippines:

*"… one good thing that I should say, supervision is regular here… [In the Philippines] I don't have any one to one supervision. It's more of like… weekly we do case presentation…"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Ella made a similar contrast between the two countries:

*"… supervision is very good here, very supportive. You really have at least… monthly supervision… and it's also written… recorded… I don't think we do it in the Philippines…"*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

This participant, who arrived alone in England, felt lonely and unhappy but unable to say this to his parents:

*"I start to feel homesick… I don't want to say it to my parents… all I'm giving them is the story of what good things happen here, so it's a façade…"*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Ella did not consider the culture in England welcoming:

*"Of course, we have enquiries with colleagues but they say 'ok, you can look in the Yellow Pages'… in the Philippines, 'oh this is the best company… come on, let's go and we'll take you there and you can get a phone… I recommend you to this garage… and this ASDA is open 24 hours so you can buy your food there'."*

Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Though participants, therefore, valued formally-offered types of support (especially supervision) as part of the process of adaptation to a 'new' social work field, they also needed support from those who understood Philippine culture or at least identified with their feelings as migrant workers. This was, again, situated within a society which they perceived as unhelpful or, at best, expecting them to be independent.

## 7.6 Community and Orientation to Practice

The theme of community, identified also in the Philippines, arose among workers in England:

*"… maybe people here are more reserved… they don't smile back at you (laughs). You try to invite them… like, in the Philippines if your neighbour is being helpful or nosy, you take that… they're your community, it's your family. Here, it's like your community… it's against you… it's like, here you always call the police, even if it is a simple argument… it's like you cannot settle things amicably…"*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

It should be acknowledged that social workers typically see the most troubled of social contexts, which will affect how they see society. However, they also live in communities, which makes the above observations valid and powerful. This worker commented on closeness within communities and a perceived work-centred culture that distracts people from thinking about the wider community. Thus, in discussing culture shock, she reveals also something about alternative approaches to social work:

*"… maybe because of the high standard of living or the high cost of living, the people here need to work, work and work… and like in the Philippines… maybe because we're all in the economic level of the people… they have one goal in life which is to help one another… and here because you need to try… to meet your needs every day… you will not think… what do I do for my community."*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Tessa offers her own reflections on this oft-cited area of difference:

*"I think in Philippines… there's attachments to each other… I know my neighbours… twenty families… but here I don't even know my neighbour… there's so much seclusion… bayanihan is… the culture of helping each other but the resource is within you, within the community… we are poor but you get the satisfaction out of,*

*you know, you are not alone… the kind of warmth of being with each other, of supporting each other…"*

Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC)

Participants in England repeatedly commented on this perceived fundamental difference:

*"It is the community that you need to develop and empower… I'll just give you an example. There was a child raped basically and the child died opposite my apartment and I don't even know what happened… I don't know who is the family."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Jay went on to make connections to social work approaches in the Philippines and speculated about their appropriateness in England:

*"… this model that was basically developed in the Philippines, which is what we call cluster or Barangay, is basically empowering the people to… get involved with the problem… what is the strength of their community… and progress that strength… But again there's always this dilemma about English culture… That's your business. I don't mind because that's basically your own business."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

The above comments allude to individualisation and independence within 'English' culture. The following quote develops this idea:

*"I was surprised here that any young people at the age of sixteen could leave home… I don't know if I could allow my eldest son to leave on his own when he turned sixteen… how can he manage his own life? … I could see that it could be a way of introducing independence to them… so I was thinking it might be good but in terms of… you know, the foundation, umm, you know, the respect. Respect with elderly, with parents… I don't see it here. The way they talk to their parents… just like speaking to their mates..."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

This participant did acknowledge that reliance upon family may not always be a good thing, hinting at tensions between independence and inter-dependence in relation to empowerment and choice:

*"In the Philippines… like, in one house you could find that there's cousins and aunts… but here, no… Just the immediate family… although in a way it's negative, as well, because the dependency among the family…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Participants in England linked comments on community and co-dependence to thoughts on professional boundaries and confidentiality, thus commenting upon different orientations to practice. As Bridget put it:

*"… even if I remove the child, the sibling, if I see them on the street they still talk to me. So they would tell me what's happening inside the house. I just 'yes, yes'… I cannot offer any advices because they can quote me… I've learnt that I have to be cautious."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Grace also picked up on this area of difference:

*"Social work in the Philippines is always personal… Here it's very defined role and relationship… you can just do this and this is your limit and you know you cannot go beyond that because that is not a good practice. But back home I don't think you have a, really, a boundaries of your profession and become so personal and… the client/social worker role is blurred… Because it becomes a personal one, then you become so committed… but then I can see that as well as a negative… that means even if there's abuses… you don't see that or you don't take it as an abuse…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

For Bridget, the form of social work reflects the type of community:

*"… in the Philippines, you can do collateral interviews… because, like, they know each other, like, if I go to one parent and she is not there, I can ask the neighbour…*

*Here, you cannot do that without client's permission… probably we can do that because of cultural… our clients, they don't take that against you… they will be upset 'oh my neighbour said de, de, de' but they don't take that very seriously as kind of something that would damage their reputation… because, anyway, they live in a very clustered community… you cannot really hide something and they support each other. It's like, your problem is the community's problem."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

The above quotations are illustrative of the many which made connections, explicit or otherwise, between social structures, cultural expectations and orientation to social work practice. Family and community reappeared strongly, as they had in data gathered in the Philippines, suggesting that participants gauged their world and understood their practice in terms of a habitus forged in the Philippines but at a point where some certainties and assumptions (as people and professionals) were being shaken.

## 7.7 Public Perception of and Attitude to Social Work in England

As we saw, those interviewed in the Philippines spoke often and at length about public perception and feeling valued but also about wanting to move away from their 'dole out' image. It was interesting to analyse responses from those in England touching upon similar themes.

### 7.7.1 Relationship with Service Users

Below, a worker in England discusses client gratefulness and positivity towards social work:

*"Here… they take it seriously instead of being grateful. They're rude, they make complaints against you… In the Philippines, if they know that social worker is coming you are most welcome."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Emily, discussing challenges in England, pulls together a number of issues already identified:

*"So now I'm more… careful with… not putting in my own belief in working with families…. in the Philippines… maybe because they're all Filipinos… I can speak straight to them… like a mum… but here… I just don't feel too confident to be, you know, saying those things… they would say you're… going beyond your boundary… I remember a family saying 'You don't tell me what to do with my family because it's my family' and I was thinking but you're asking for some help and I'm… just trying to give you the bigger picture… it's like giving them one of your arm and then they would still want more."*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

So, participants felt less able to be directive with service users and more constrained by boundaries and complaint processes, echoing some of the findings of Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999). She connected these observations to comments on client expectations and, for her, lack of gratefulness. Bridget picks up on the issue of boundaries:

*"If you see the clients outside your office, if you have a chat with them, that's kind of unprofessional… In the Philippines… it's alright if they ring you any time…"*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Again, a process of struggling with professional identity and practice expectations is conveyed which, in Bourdieusian terms might be conceptualised as the evolution of habitus (retaining what one can but absorbing new expectations) within a field of social work which appears to have few familiar dimensions and where, in particular, symbolic capital appeared to be derived far less from compliance or respect. It may, indeed, be the case that this professional culture shock forced workers to reflect upon the internalised dispositions which had, perhaps, previously been a 'natural' part of how they 'did' social work.

### 7.7.2 Poverty and Practice

Several participants spoke of a poverty of aspiration or ambition in England. They linked this, in part, to welfare benefits and implied that poverty in the Philippines acted as a motivator and source of resilience. Here, Angel sees 'vices' and absence of faith as part of the 'problem':

*"There is some families who are in the bottom of the economic, economic status but they're still managing… they can still afford to buy alcohol… with the benefits that they are receiving… Poverty probably in terms of… I don't know, faith in… I cannot say because they do not believe in the divine intervention… They don't have any target in life because they all, they already have what they wanted… they don't want to aspire more..."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

There was certainly evidence, therefore, of the 'moral evaluation' of service users manifesting itself, perhaps, as a form of poverty discrimination (Dowling, 1999, p24). Such judgments were evident but less so in the Philippines. Angel regrets the lack of resources (such as respite) available for disabled children in the Philippines but, then, presents this as in some ways positive in comparison to England:

*"… the parents as well as the children… they have become more resilient to stresses in life… if we don't have these kinds of resources, umm, the parents would try to find other ways and means and then the individual himself will, more often than not, they try to excel in what they are capable of… and I think that's positive, isn't it? That they can still manage in spite of the difficulty of coping or with having an autistic child or with learning difficulties."*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

The above comments resonate with those made by some participants in the Philippines about poverty and adversity leading to strength and determination, again indicating interplay between the familiar or taken-for-granted and the new.

### 7.7.3 Acculturation

This worker spoke of a gradual process of understanding English culture. Though no other participants expressed this process quite so clearly, it was implicit in what other interviewees said:

*"… now being here for nearly six years… my working relationship with the family has come to the next stage… it's more of a better understanding of what the family is… before, I was thinking… you're having these things… why do you still need some help? But I think… it's given to you in, like, golden spoon, so you don't have to really sweat out to get that, you know, that support… I would always still look at the family with the way that I look at the family back home… it's hard for them to be called clients and… pick up the phone and say we need help… no-one would want a social worker to be in their family home asking questions…"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC

## 7.8 Managerialism and Bureaucracy in England

The following quote encapsulates points made by many about bureaucracy and also working in contexts where your input may not be valued and you are seen as 'other':

*"Yes, it's more paperworks… less time spent with the family, which I really miss… I'm just one of those people that they met, there's nothing about the connection… the recognition of the work that I would be doing with them… I just felt that, you know, when you introduce yourself as a social worker, 'oh god, this is your work, you're removing children, you're just a pain in the arse, you're just coming to be nosy'. Unlike, in the Philippines… they thought they are lucky to… to have a social worker in their life…"*

Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Nina reiterates the point about less positive reactions from service users:

*"In the Philippines, because we are dealing with children in conflict with the law, with street children, and they see you as this angel… or saviour… you could see their smile when they see you in the street, they were running after you…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

To return to the idea of social work in England being more rule bound and bureaucratic, this comment is typical:

*"… oh my God, different forms, you have to do the initial assessment, court assessment, different forms that can be collapsed then… they review and although the same form you have to rewrite…"*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Nina identified paperwork (and consequent limited client contact) as the biggest difference between England and the Philippines:

*"The one that I felt that is more, most different is the statutory requirements. The paperworks, that you need to do that by this time… most of the time you're in the office… and in the Philippines… we are in the street; we are in the jails…if we felt that this clientele need, like, seminar about reproductive health, we do it as well. Unlike here, you need to do a referral for somebody to do it. Like, if you felt that this family needed, like, parenting skills and everything, you need to refer it… you're, like, broker… We're more direct work in the Philippines."*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

So, within a discussion of statutory timescales and paperwork, Nina referred to a preference for direct work with clients; the degree of specialisation and flexibility to respond creatively or holistically to needs; and the notion of arranging for others to meet needs rather than social workers carrying out the work themselves. She was, therefore, highlighting the scope of the role and professional discretion in deciding how best to meet needs. One might also question whether 'direct practice' in the Philippines offers satisfaction in part because of the mostly non-confrontational and grateful nature of interactions with service users, which were less common in

England. Thus, the impact of 'public image' discussed in the previous chapter reappears as significant for professional habitus and motivation.

One worker in England highlighted, importantly, the need to distinguish between bureaucracy and paperwork. She felt that the Philippines is a very bureaucratic place, in terms of process, but that there was less emphasis on recording and report writing:

*"Yes, it's more bureaucratic, actually… Every time you do something, you need to go to Barangay first… if you have a plan, you go to the Barangay, he will not approve it because there's no budget… the court paperwork we are doing is just basic, as well, like case situation and case summary…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

We now turn to look at broader attempts to challenge 'the way things are done' in social work.

## 7.9 Professional Discretion: Doing Social Work in Less Flexible Ways

The data provided evidence of Filipino workers seeking to practice in ways with which they felt more comfortable. Bridget provided the following example of her preferred approach and difficulties encountered:

*"Yes, like my first child protection… my manager said… 'when do you think we are going to remove this child?' … she has a chaotic substance misuse, lifestyle and everything… and I said 'But mum now is engaging… why don't we give her a chance?' I can work with them… enhancing the social functioning of mum… yes this baby needs protection… so focus on mum… My manager said… 'Alright but you need to have a timeframe'… It goes initially alright but she started undoing everything… so I just then have to say 'No I am not happy with what you are*

*doing'… To the point where I said, alright, if she doesn't meet this one then I would agree that we… remove the child."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Bridget's manager was clearly alert to statutory responsibilities and deadlines, which meant responses could not be as fluid as the social worker wanted:

*"… I was telling my senior practitioner… we normally do this like this… and she, she acknowledged that… It's different because it is very statutory… You don't have that flexibility as a worker… we are binded with what is statutory and what needs to be done…"*

Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC)

Angel talked of having greater freedom to make decisions in the Philippines:

*"… more freedom in terms of decision-making and that makes you more creative… if you have limited resources, it makes you more creative…"*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

So, for Angel, creativity is stifled by a regulated and proceduralised approach to practice. Meanwhile, looking for scarce resources in the Philippines also meant workers must seek more creative solutions. She saw this as absent in England, as suggested in this example of challenging 'normal' practice, based on her belief that 'dole out' was not always a positive thing:

*"… the allowance that we are giving to the young people are so much (laughs) and then I'd raise my concern to the service manager… the young person… I suggested that we should not be giving this to him because it's no longer helping him… they have so much money and discouraging from getting to work… it's ok if they want to attend education… but they don't want to do anything and just engaging with trouble…"*

Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F)

Again, we see examples of social workers having their sureties around what social work *is* challenged, leading them to reflect upon 'better' ways of practising. It is suggested that social work internationally has much to learn from this form of reflection.

## 7.10 Use of Self in New Contexts

Participants struggled to identify examples of drawing on approaches or values from the Philippines to suggest alternative ways of working in England. However, the tone of responses suggested a subtler integration of Philippine approaches into practice overseas. So, what did Filipino social workers think they were able to bring *from the Philippines* to social work in England? The following quotes offer a flavour of typical responses in this regard.

*"I think, in terms of the code of ethics that we have, you know, it's similar to here and, umm, I think just the commitment… giving your best in every task."*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

*"I don't think there's a lot of things that we can bring… Aside from myself and myself is enough… my social work experience back home… it's totally different… it's very difficult to say 'Back home we can do this and I think we can try to do this' but I remember going back to my manager and having that conversation and she said… it's you as an international social worker… you're exposed to different cultures and you can work well with people who… are in a different culture, and also share to other British service users… my manager said 'Look, you know, I don't expect you to be like a British social worker because you're not… I want you to be a different one, who can bring a different culture to others and I did…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

So, Filipino workers spoke of bringing *themselves* as a resource, as people committed to similar values but with different ways of looking at issues grounded in different cultural backgrounds. In response to a question about how being Filipino affected his practice, Jay responded as follows:

*"I am very much more sensitive… of a child's needs… of the impact of, for the family … as long as it will not jeopardise the whole investigation, will not put the child in a significant risk, I will negotiate with the families… I remove children, don't get me wrong… but sometimes, umm, others, I would say, not all, they tend to exaggerate the situation, rather than… give the family a chance... At the end of the day, the end result is basically returning this child a couple of days after. You know, you've already made the damage for the children… I would say, umm, poverty is rampant in the Philippines. and we go to families… they're not seeing the needs of their own children and… you can see that in some of the families here, as well… parents are losing those kinds of priorities sometimes and then you are there as an agent, basically of, of, of telling them what they need to do..."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

So, for this participant, his cultural background made him alert to the human impact of decisions and helped him understand why people might not prioritise their children, all of which led him to a position of always seeking to engage in dialogue.

## 7.11 Doing Social Work in England: Stress

The data gathered in the Philippines contained few references to 'stress' or feelings associated with stress. This is one of the few examples raising the emotional impact of practice:

*"… I sometimes just cry at night, just to let it out, all of those negative energies, hearing all their problems and how they cope."*

Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC)

Participants in England discussed stress much more. For Bridget, stress was work-related but also had to do with life outside of work:

*"Sometimes there are times when I feel so stressed and everything, sometimes what are we doing here? … it's like you work and work and the stress, you just have to learn how to enjoy your life in the UK."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

This worker had to take time off work in England due to stress:

*"I was one of the experienced ones and I'm getting all the difficult cases… the amount of responsibility is a lot… I thought I was just managing it. I'm struggling but, you know how Filipinos are… we don't say 'Oh, I'm struggling' but I did say to my manager 'I can't sleep now, I'm just thinking about all my cases' and my manager said 'I think you are stressed, I think you need to have a break'…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

The sensitivity and response of Grace's manager is to be commended. Later in the interview, Grace discussed work in the Philippines:

*"… we don't have TOIL [Time Off In Lieu] there, we don't have work-life balance there. We work from Monday to Saturday, from eight o'clock to seven o'clock in the evening… but it's, it's fun, it's really nice to work with people, umm, and you look forward to go to do work but here, if you can get away…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Thus, for Grace, stress levels did not relate to long hours but to the nature of work and working relationships. For the following participant, this has to do with timescales and paperwork:

*"I think I'm much pressured… it's different in the Philippines… you don't have time to do all the recordings and the paperworks… if that person needs to be referred to the hospital, yes you need to do the referral form or the case study… but we could not do all those things because of, you know, maybe for one social worker you will handle maybe 300 cases… I have fifteen foster carers at the moment and I'm doing… assessments but I just feel, you know, pressured… because you need to,*

*you know, to complete your recordings… telephone calls, responding to the emails …"*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Stress levels appeared to relate again to externally imposed requirements and the importance accorded managerially or organisationally to particular tasks. It would appear that the balance between office-based work and being available for service users is very different and that it is harder for workers in England to resist bureaucratic tasks in favour of direct work.

## 7.12 Positive Aspects of Work in England

All Filipino workers in England identified things that provided a sense of job fulfilment or professional worth:

*"I think the things that keep me going… probably there's a lot… there are times when, because I live locally as well… you come across your clients and you know, they tell you thank you very much for helping us… once that, umm, you've learnt that, umm, your biggest piece of work is to protect the child… that's a relief, that's a reward. Third… money. You know, I'm able to support my family back home, umm, I manage to assist my brother who basically graduated from a very prestigious university… I managed to build a house for my family."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Sheila was motivated to support people in thinking and talking through their difficulties:

*"I just feel that, at the end of the week when… for example I have a… single foster carer who needs to support her grandson because her daughter has been sectioned… so just liaising with the social worker, you know, talking about what is the problem, how can we support this… create good outcome… I think those kind of*

*… simple things… how they appreciate your work, you know, your effort in terms of helping them…"*

Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C)

Sheila, therefore conveyed satisfaction at using skills of engagement to achieve positive outcomes for people with whom she had developed a relatively trusting relationship. However, also present was a desire to be appreciated and valued. The following worker saw strengths in the approach to child protection in England and had shifted towards a position of deriving satisfaction from small outcomes:

*"…I can see my role now… appreciate my role… you don't expect a big results but you just appreciate what you can do at that time…"*

Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC)

Grace appeared, therefore, to have found value in work at a micro level, seeking small changes in behaviour. The following quote also indicates a growing understanding and appreciation of the often one-to-one and 'personalised' form of social work in England:

*"… if a child or a person has disability, they give a lot of attention, which is another difference… Here, I see, social workers they are committed to their work… I really admire their commitment and the other difference is… each child has different needs and they try to fit in and identify what kind of appropriate service you could offer them… an individual plan, which is really very good. In the Philippines, you know, we cannot… if we have children with severe disability and the parents cannot cope, we have an institution for that… That's why, when they say we lack resources, I cannot… oh my god, I cannot accept that."*

Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC)

Bridget, therefore, saw real positives in services tailored to individual need but suggested this simply could not be afforded in the Philippines, where families were forced either to 'manage' or 'abandon' their children.

## 7.13 Filipino Social Workers' Perceptions of Society & Social Work in England: Concluding Comments

Filipino social workers conveyed a strong sense of work as their mission and as a core aspect of their identity in the world. Such indications were, it has to be said, more evident in the data collected in the Philippines than in England. Nonetheless, the following quote from a worker in child protection in England, conveys some of the attachment felt by Filipino social workers to their profession:

*"Social work is everyday life and we are privileged… It is a profession that, I would say, that taught me basically what is life."*

Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC)

Filipino workers in England appeared to miss (and tried to continue to incorporate within their practice) those cultural behaviours described previously as 'kagandahang-loob', pakikisama and bayanihan. They mostly saw individualism and directness as problematic but retained what they saw as common professional values and a commitment to social work as a good thing (and a central part of their identity). They also found that adjustment and acculturation were more difficult than anticipated in the Philippines, reflecting Bourdieu's use of the term hysteresis (in this context, a kind of professional culture shock and adaptation).

This chapter has considered how the field(s) of social work (internationally, in the Philippines and in England) interact with and develop the habitus of individual workers. In many ways, Filipino social workers in England saw themselves as doing a very different job, suggesting that social work is much more a situated activity than a universal one. The data pointed to the realities of hysteresis, as workers looked for the familiar within their practice. What, for example, constitutes (or replaces, as a core professional motivation) poverty in England? How does one engage with service users perceived to have a sense of entitlement and little respect for one's title or education? And how does one adjust to a society in which family and community are less dependable and which, at times, feels openly hostile? Workers spoke of feeling deskilled, of having to learn very different ways of being and of

bringing only themselves (their values and ways of 'doing' social work) from the Philippines. One could argue that they faced a deficit of social and cultural capital (in England generally and in the workplace more specifically) and of symbolic capital in social work practice until they came to identify and use the different sources of such power within statutory social work in England. Nonetheless, for most of those interviewed, this evolving personal and professional sense of self (or habitus) was seen to offer both positive and negative outcomes. Many missed what was seen to be a more flexible, hands on and creative role in the Philippines but also appreciated the value of targeted and well-resourced support for individuals, of supervision and of structured processes for the protection of vulnerable individuals.

# Chapter 8: Further Discussion & Conclusions

*"The most striking feature of social work's current identity is the fragmentation of the profession and discipline, not just in an international context, where it presents a bewildering variety of professional titles and intellectual discourses, but also at national level, where in every country several professional profiles exist in parallel, sometimes contesting each other's territories."*
(Lorenz, 2004, p145)

## 8.1 The Scope of the Thesis

This thesis has explored the historical and ongoing development of the field of social work in the Philippines, focusing on the interplay between a range of structures and processes. The extent to which dimensions or manifestations of social work habitus could be identified, particularly from the perspectives of workers, educators and policy makers, was considered, leading into a discussion of perceived motivations and sense of purpose or identity. Elements of individual habitus, reflecting personal, cultural and structural factors and also the embracing of a professional habitus, were identified in the case of participants in the Philippines and England. All of this was considered in the light of broader insights into why and how people work. Whether at the level of individual practice or international social work definition and mission, one could identify struggles and tensions. These were highlighted further for social workers who travelled to England and sought to make sense of themselves and their practice in a different professional field and society.

At the outset, the impact of Nimmagadda and Cowger's (1999) article was acknowledged. The tentative hypothesis was one of a process of socialisation or co-option into a profession called social work and of layered processes of adaptation through a professional journey. The stories of social workers in the Philippines and England revealed this to be a helpful and realistic model. Social work education is influenced considerably by imported models and approaches but (partial) attempts had been made within the field of Philippine social work to indigenise or re-

conceptualise social work purpose and methods. However, significant dependence on the demands and expectations of international NGOs and aid-providers (and ultimately upon international capitalism) continues to shape the nature of possibilities (Payne, 2014), in contexts of poverty. This makes it all the more important that social workers and social work reflect on their sense of purpose:

*"Bourdieu's work emphasises how neoliberalism is more than an abstract consideration because on a daily basis it bites into social work practice… it is particularly important for social workers to defend the autonomy of the field… one of Bourdieu's main concerns was that a number of previously autonomous or quasi-autonomous fields may be corroded by rampant neoliberalism."*
(Garrett, 2013. P146).

Data revealed that agency is, indeed, restricted by structure, as well as cultural and personal factors (Thompson, 2012). Participants gave examples of attempts to make sense of received ideas and adapt them to local needs or culture, which can be conceptualised as the conscious and unconscious shaping of professional habitus. However, the influence of other countries on the orientation of practice was seen to be considerable, even where this involved a redirection towards a more macro, or community-based social development approach. Participants provided very clear illustrations of the struggle within Philippine social work between those seeking more specialised and individual-oriented forms of practice and those who valued community approaches. A significant difference between the social work field in the Philippines and England is that *both* of those orientations were commonly perceived to be valid forms of social work in the Philippines. Payne (2014) questions, as did the data analysis for this thesis, whether the aims (and outcomes) of macro, social development forms of practice are social change or social order (see Chapter 2). He suggests (2014, p216) that:

*"… theories focused on the social… have a broader perspective than individual change or therapeutic and clinical theories. However, macro and community work practice, social development and social pedagogy lean more towards an acceptance and maintenance of the existing social orders…"*

The implication, as research for this thesis found, is that 'macro practice' may be no more committed to social transformation than that operating at the 'personal' level.

To return to the notion of 'professional journey', participants in the research described an on-going process of identity formation. The interplay of dimensions of agency, motivation and structure were considered in this regard. The thesis went on to engage with the perspectives of workers who had moved overseas to pursue their career. Their motivations for doing this and expectations of social work in England were introduced. Workers spoke of negotiating culture shock (linking to Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis) at a social and professional level. There was an initial process of reorientation, of elements of re-education and induction into 'new' ways of doing social work. This involved further evolution of workers' professional habitus, raising a number of questions around whether social work has a transferable 'essence' internationally and the degree to which it is seen to be *situated practice*. This, in turn, has implications for attempts to define and develop a field of social work internationally (both academically and in practice).

The thesis identified and offered critical comments upon all of the above features of professional journeys. The literature review and primary data informed a discussion of how historical and international processes have shaped social work in the Philippines (Research Question 1). Dimensions of imperialism (including professional imperialism) were articulated in the literature and within the primary data, not least in the accounts of those older participants who were part of the early process of North American influence. There was, again in much of the literature and in the accounts of many interviewees, an ambivalence or even positivity towards both Spanish and US interference. Participants struggled to articulate how they indigenised the social work curriculum (beyond using local case material with overseas methods) or social work practice, though examples were given of the pragmatic 'bending' of imported social work terms and approaches to 'fit' local culture and expectations. The influence of overseas powers on social welfare and social work, not least through the social development focus of international aid, was identified and discussed. Where social work developed 'local' approaches, this was not necessarily for reasons initiated in the Philippines. The interviews undertaken in the Philippines did allow people to reflect upon the nature of, and factors (historical,

personal and structural) influencing their individual habitus. This in part reflected their own motivations – many of which were shaped by social structures such as family, economy and religion – and also suggested a collective professional habitus. Differences of orientation were identified among social workers, in terms of sense of purpose, echoing broader debates and struggles within the field internationally.

Given the quantity and richness of data gathered *in* the Philippines and a growing appreciation of the usefulness of Bourdieu's conceptual framework for analysis, the decision was taken to focus more than initially envisaged upon the field of social work and nature of professional habitus there. Thus, attention is paid to the development and characteristics of the profession (informed by an understanding of political and professional imperialism, attempts to resist through indigenisation and the forms such processes may continue to take), social work practice/practices, approaches and constructions of the traits of Filipino people. Dimensions of habitus explored included initial and on-going motivation and multiple forms of identity (including – to varying degrees - national, occupational, professional, personal, religious and gender-related dimensions). Through this process, attention was paid to structure and agency in Philippine social work.

A significant focus, therefore, is upon what it is to be a social worker and to 'do' social work *in* the Philippines, or with social work as *practice*. It was essential to explore practice in the Philippines thoroughly before considering the impact of practising in a different country. Thus, Research Question 2 (*How do social work practitioners, academics and policy makers describe social work purpose, motivation and identity in the Philippines?*) took on increasing significance, as a prerequisite for further understanding. Chapters 5 and 6 addressed those Research Objectives relating to the perspectives of social work practitioners, academics and policy makers in the Philippines on the *purpose* and *practice* of social work and to understanding motivation for social work and the dimensions of social work identity in the Philippines. The legacies of imperialism (including religious beliefs) and the ongoing interplay between received and homegrown approaches to welfare and social work were evident, explicitly and implicitly, in accounts of purpose and practice. Participants in the Philippines all identified an anti-poverty approach, though this (with a few exceptions) was typically seen to require personal growth or,

in macro form, social and economic development (rather than social transformation). Nonetheless, social work was seen to embrace practice which included social action, policy development and advocacy beyond the individual level. Descriptions of motivation and purpose introduced ideas such as optimism, resilience, care and faith into the emerging picture of social work in the Philippines. Debates around the desirability of specialisms and relative value of one-to-one or community based intervention were highlighted. These very much reflected the process identified by Olson (2007) whereby the drive towards professionalism has often involved a preference of micro theories and approaches (Hugman, 2009) and a distancing of social work from its social justice aims. This is not entirely the experience of the Philippines but some evidence of such tensions was identified. By contrast, it is important to acknowledge the potential of a profession to protect a commitment to a more critical macro vision (Briskman, 2013, p61):

*"Although there is some criticism of the professionalisation of social work, professional associations can be steered into taking a moral lead and there are examples of this occurring."*

In short, individual and collective social work identity is complex and contested, comprising international, historical and personal dimensions.

Chapter 7 set out findings from social workers whose 'professional journey' had brought them to England, focusing therefore upon Research Question 3. The data provided rich illustrations of the felt experience of adapting to a different cultural context, within which the field of social work was seen also to be very different. Whilst notions of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor were evident in the Philippines, they were stated more commonly and more strongly by Filipino workers in England. Workers spoke of trying to identify what they could 'hold on to' from their previous practice. Their sense of professional self was destabilised and the process of adjustment – along with the process of participating in this research project – required that workers acknowledged and reflected upon their existing and shifting professional habitus.

It would be inappropriate, in drawing the thesis to a conclusion, not to return to the ethical dilemmas associated with 'brain drain' and the pull of capital. As we saw, many research participants felt uneasy, for these reasons, about leaving the Philippines behind and most intended to return. Hussein, Manthorpe and Stevens (2010, p1009) quote the following manager of a recruitment agency employing international workers in the UK, who has reservations also about 'brain drain' from countries in the Global South, including the Philippines:

*"I try and avoid recruiting from India, Pakistan and one or two other developing countries. Not because I have anything against those countries but it's a UN thing and a Government thing. These countries are getting money (the Philippines is another one) to try and improve their living conditions and social conditions…"*

So, for this manager it would appear that there was a particular ethical dilemma around employing people from countries whose internal social and economic development s/he perceived as being supported through international aid. The complex and inequitable nature of relations between Global North and South has (though not a core focus) been ever present whilst researching and writing this thesis. Indeed, one *could* interpret the above quotation as using the term 'developing' in the sense which has led many to prefer the term 'Global South': in other words, because 'developing' implies an 'ideal' capitalist mode of development to which all countries should aspire (see comments on Terminology within Chapter 1). This is not something we could begin to hope to resolve or even address in any detail within this thesis but there is no doubt that financial pull factors (from the Philippines to England) were very evident.

Beyond those Research Questions and Objectives relating to the structural, cultural and personal influences upon the profession and individual professional journeys within and beyond the Philippines, two more overarching Research Objectives were set for the study. These were to consider:

- how the Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and capital might inform an understanding of what it is to be a social worker and to do social work

- the implications of this study for the field of international social work and, in particular, the definition and purpose of social work internationally

Overall, Bourdieu's work offered theoretical constructs through which one *could* understand connections and sources of dissonance between macro and micro dimensions of social work and consider the place of both structure and agency, as a critical realist approach to research requires. There was seen to be an appropriate and purposeful 'fit' between Bourdieu's notions (of field, habitus and capital) and the concern of social work theorists with the tensions and possibilities for professional practice. We saw, on the one hand, structural determinants of social work and the lives of service users and, on the other hand, the potential for (individual and collective) professional discretion and influence. This was found to reflect social work identity and sense of purpose at the micro level but forged within the academic and professional field(s) of social work at national and international levels. As suggested in Chapter 2 (Figure 6, p43) social work fields and habitus are developed and shape practice at the personal, cultural and structural levels (Thompson, 2012) and in forms that might be characterised as empowering, problem-solving and seeking social change (Payne, 2014). Bourdieusian understandings of capital (including symbolic capital, which relates to professional status in this context) were seen to operate in relation both to social work field and habitus. Though Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis spoke to that area of the thesis concerned with transition, it is suggested that his work offers less to a consideration of the *process* of professional journeys.

The thesis does not seek to underplay (as, for example, some social constructionism might) the potentially oppressive nature of structure, whether in the interrelated forms of neo-liberalism and North-South aid or the lived experience of absolute poverty on a Filipino farmer. Critical social work must expose and respond to such structural factors. However, the thesis also concerns itself with the place of identity, the individual orientation of the social worker and the significance of what writers in social work (Brookfield, 2009) term 'critical reflection'. For this thesis, this means the reflection of individual social workers and of social work internationally upon its professional habitus. The identity of a worker in the Philippines reflects multi-layered identities and processes (international, national, historical, professional and

personal) but is not an identity set in stone or which cannot be interpreted or operationalised in different ways.

The question of whether social work has some internationally transferable 'essence' is not one a thesis such as this could hope to answer in any comprehensive way but rather to offer glimpses into parts of an answer. Social workers in England spoke of doing a 'different job', suggesting that the situated nature of social work practice predominates (shaped by cultural and structural factors and more by the field of social work as local than global). Areas of professional commonality between countries were described in value base (though, as we saw, there was not always a shared understanding of values, with terms like 'empowerment' often attributed different meanings) and skills (such as communication and engagement). However, though Filipinos described transferable approaches in terms of being 'caring' and 'culturally adaptable', these did not always prove to be appreciated or realistic in England. Participants spoke mostly of adopting the professional traits and practices of the 'host' country: some aspects of the new social work field were seen to be positive (for example, professional supervision) but others (typically, the individualised, boundaried and inflexible nature of practice) were not. Many sought to retain something of what it is to be a Filipino social worker, to retain agency and identity in the face of institutional imperatives and cultural expectations. Just as in the Philippines (where the legacies of imperialism and the realities of poverty and dependence on aid set the parameters for practice), workers in England experienced a different but equally restricted field. Nonetheless, being a social worker was a significant aspect of participants' identities and they retained pride in their profession and commitment to perceived 'shared' objectives and values. Just as pragmatic efforts are made to indigenise methods from the Global North, so individual workers continue to see themselves as members of an international field and, it seems, adapt their professional habitus in conscious and unconscious ways. To some degree, the findings of this study support Webb's (2003) assertion that the contextualised nature of social work make it difficult to speak of an international profession. However, in the face of neoliberal and global forces, this is perhaps all the more reason why the profession *should* seek areas of commonality and unity.

So, what might be the implications of this study for the field of international social

work and the definition and purpose of international social work? Within the field of social work, in the Philippines as internationally, there are struggles between those with differing 'amounts' and forms of capital and different beliefs as to what social work should see as its mission. For Payne (2014), one might 'categorise' orientations to social work in three ways: the field of social work, groupings within that field and individual workers may advocate a practice which, for Payne, is broadly empowering, oriented to the maintenance of social order or transformational in tone and method. Something that became more evident in the Philippines was that forms of social work do not necessarily fit the ideal types Payne proposes. In particular, Payne distinguishes between the 'Problem-Solving' orientation (typically operating at the individualistic level and seeking to maintain social order) and the 'Social Change' orientation which sits within a socialist or more collectivist tradition. In the Philippines, where much of social work takes a social development form, community-based and collectivist approaches may serve *equally* to promote social order and may offer no more than one-to-one casework in terms of emancipatory outcomes or conscientisation. One might, therefore, add 'Collectivist-Reformist' orientations to a typology of social work, particularly when considering much social development practice in the Global South. To be fair, Payne (2014) acknowledges these complexities, which Mantle and Backwith (2010, p2382) report as follows:

*"Payne… examines the broad notions and expressions of social and community development and their connections with social work [and] concludes that while these perspectives offer a wider social focus for intervention with oppressed people than systems theory… they both serve to reproduce the existing social order."*

Whilst collective approaches are by no means automatically critical (and one participant struggled with the approach of a particular agency to social action), it remains more likely that consciousness of structural inequality will be engendered and acted upon collectively:

*"Collective action involves a recognition that individual needs are mainly met by transformed social relations undertaken through joint action with others (Leonard, 1984)." (Collins, 2009).*

The focus in the Philippines upon alleviating broad-based and absolute poverty (and the internationally-driven imperative of economic development) would appear to render 'community' responses the only affordable response. Just as the more individualist nature of society in many parts of the Global North seems to go hand-in-hand with more individualised forms of social work (with associated 'versions' of empowerment, interpretations of rights and notions of independence and choice), so it would appear that in the Philippines, where community remains a real (if sometimes idealised) way of characterising social structure, community-oriented social work retains a significant presence. In fact, the pressing demand for economic and social development underpinned a shift from casework to community development approaches, resulting in the poverty-focused orientation. However, it would seem that, in the Philippines, dimensions of oppression related to factors others than (or in tandem with) poverty, such as sexuality, gender, disability and 'race', *may* not be afforded the attention they otherwise might. Many social development schemes in the Philippines (such as the conditional cash transfer programme), though superficially appealing in terms of community rather than individual focus, have the potential to pathologise and offer little more than a 'sticking plaster'. Service users may feel they are being held responsible for their circumstances and for getting out of those circumstances, whether experiencing casework or community approaches. Having said this, social work in the Philippines (perhaps because it operates across statutory and non-statutory contexts) *is* more able – in some forms, at least – to promote purposeful alliances with those it supports, to be associated with tangible welfare (though many disliked the dole-out tag), to be involved in forms of political action and to see itself as having a role in challenging policy. The thesis has demonstrated ways in which the shape of social work (and experiences of service users) reflect actual and symbolic location, dominant and emerging forms of welfare and social work over time and perspectives and practice relating to difference and diversity within society (Huegler, Lyons and Pawar, 2012).

## 8.2 The Research Process, Core Contributions and Future Work

### 8.2.1 Core Contributions

In many ways, the *search* for 'international social work' is more important than reaching an end point. The process of reflecting upon purpose and contribution and gaining strength and inspiration from the international field is vital to a critically reflective practice. The in-depth study of social work in the Philippines and of Filipino workers in England suggested that social work is, mostly, situated practice. That practice, however, cannot be understood without an understanding of processes (notably imperialism and indigenisation) and structures (such as family and religion) *and* is increasingly shaped by global influences. Any attempt to acknowledge the structural must engage with the international. Furthermore, by considering social work as an international phenomenon, we stand a better chance of avoiding situated practice becoming 'blinkered' or stagnant.

This thesis has given voice to social workers in an oft-overlooked part of East Asia. It is one of the first attempts to use a Bourdieusian conceptual framework to look at the layered nature of social work identity and the journeys which professional fields and individuals within those fields undertake. The focus also upon experiences of transition suggests that there are multiple fields of social work and that habitus adjusts to different fields. There is, as I have suggested, much potential in urging social work students and practitioners to map out the fields in which they are situated and to identify those structural, collective and individual influences upon their own professional habitus. As Dunk-West and Verity suggest (2013, p49):

*Social work's relatively recent inclusion of Bourdieu's work [provides] an excellent framework to better understand and question the relationship of the social worker in her/his organisational setting – and the subsequent identity created through the symbiosis of the social worker's habitus within their field."*

It is hoped, in the face of an apparent march towards specialist training and practice in England, that the thesis has reiterated the importance of defining social work

broadly (with all its orientations and in all settings and sectors) and the potential strengths offered by generic forms of practice. This brings us back to the notion of struggles within and between fields and the need to consider the role played by capital in this context. In the Philippines, social work operates in personal, cultural, structural and spiritual domains (Moss, 2005; Thompson, 2012); it takes forms which may be empowering, problem-solving and some which seek social change through alliances with community and user organisations (Payne, 2014). Orientations towards practice reflect setting but also individual habitus, professional culture and the relative power of competing fields. What became clear was that an anti-poverty mission did not, in itself, translate into critical practice (Mullaly, 2007) and, indeed, there was a limited interpretation of the 'western' term 'Anti Oppressive Practice'. Those Filipino workers who had moved to the Global North were able to reflect upon their shifting habitus and mostly missed more collective and, arguably, creative forms of intervention. However, though they experienced struggles around identity and purpose, they mostly adapted to a different field with considerable success. They identified continuing intrinsic motivations for practice and all continued to see the profession as a positive one. However, with very few exceptions, among participants in the Philippines and in England, there was little evidence of a critical orientation to practice seeking to expose structural oppression (Ferguson and Woodward, 2009). Where this was seen to exist, it was predominantly in voluntary agencies in the Philippines with a campaigning focus. Such organisations of course exist in England and may even employ social workers but would not typically be seen as *doing* social work, something the profession in the UK needs to address.

### 8.2.2 Reflections on the Research and Impact on and of Self

Towards the start of the thesis, I stated that my prime motivation had been a desire to 'know more' about social work internationally. The process has undoubtedly achieved this aim and this has, in turn, informed my work with qualifying social work students in the UK. In particular, I have found that a commitment to developing international awareness is one way of fostering critically reflective practice. Qualified social workers returning for continuing professional development have valued the opportunity to reflect upon their agencies and practice through an international lens.

For this researcher, the study led to a questioning of assumptions about the relative potential of individualised and collective or community-oriented forms of practice to deliver social change and an interest in pursuing this area of inquiry.

I have learnt much also from the research process itself: transcribing recorded interviews of sometimes over *two hours* in length made me think again about the need to balance a desire to provide an open platform for Filipino participants with the pragmatic need to manipulate and analyse data. Interviewees were always reminded of the time and asked if they wished to draw sessions to a close but there was something about really wanting to share their perspectives for which I was grateful. In a sense, therefore, the data collection, transcription and analysis processes led me to reflect upon the meaning of 'semi' in semi-structured!

Another area for reflection has been around my own identity (professional and personal) and, in turn, upon the extent to which such factors were explored at interview and in the data analysis. I wonder if I could have done more to bring social divisions or aspects of identity to the surface. The small-scale nature of the study coupled with the range of participants in terms of gender, age, sexuality and religion meant that it was difficult to identify significant themes in this regard. As has been seen, poverty was the central stated focus of Filipino workers in the Philippines, with much less attention apparently paid to other potential areas of inequality. There was little evidence of this changing for workers in England, although they clearly saw their professional habitus shaken in a country where poverty takes a very different form. Overall, I think it must be acknowledged that anti-oppressive practice was not something discussed voluntarily by most participants. Given that notions of social class do not exist in the same ways as they might be applied in the UK, participants were not asked to identify in this way. Some gave an indication of their income but this was not found to yield any significant correlations. In the context of 'care', gender is perhaps the main area which, given more space, merits further attention and this may, indeed, form a future area of interest. As a male researcher, I am conscious that this will have impacted upon the process.

In forming a view on the quality of this research project, Gould's standards for evaluating qualitative research (in Lovelock, Lyons and Powell, 2004, p140) were

found to be helpful. It is suggested that the semi-structured and evolving nature of the interview process (discussed elsewhere) meant it was responsive and sensitive to social context. The questions of 'adequate representation' within the sample and of 'typicality' are (as discussed above) interesting ones: it is considered that a good range of participants was accessed both in the Philippines and England, including representation by gender and faith which broadly reflects that in the field. However, the scope of the research was such that, for example, it is not possible to make claims about, for example, the particular experiences of Muslim social workers in the Philippines or, indeed, to identify comparative themes around, say, areas of practice (such as with children or in non-statutory settings). Similarly, it has not proved possible to identify any meaningful findings relating to ethnicities within the Philippines.

The shift in focus towards social work *in* the Philippines might be considered a strength or a weakness. The thesis presents much more than was anticipated in terms of the field of Philippine social work in international context and the practice and identity of social workers there. However, the decision to focus more upon these areas of data means that less is offered in relation to professional transition to England. I have, however, attempted to be transparent about the evolution of my own interests as the research process developed. A further limitation of the work (but in this case one that was evident from the outset) was the diverse nature of social work roles and settings in which participants were located. This was probably unavoidable, given relatively small numbers in England and the combination of a desire to understand the scope of social work in the Philippines and the snowball sampling there. It means, however, that the thesis does not 'compare like with like'. So, for example, it cannot compare the perspectives of hospital social workers in both countries. From the outset, it was acknowledged that this is not a comparative study in this sense. Indeed, one could argue that the range of variables internationally (for example, cultural, economic, policy-based) makes true comparative studies very difficult indeed.

To consider further 'measures' suggested by Gould (in Lovelock, Lyons and Powell, 2004), it is hoped that sufficient description of individual participants is included, whilst protecting anonymity, and that the 'data chapters' give due voice to the

subjective perceptions of participants. Furthermore, every effort has been made to offer clarity around how the data and the theoretical dimensions of the thesis (in particular, those provided by Bourdieu and Payne) speak to each other. Finally, it is suggested that the role of policy, and the consideration of all stakeholders especially in the Philippines, is a central feature of the thesis. Whilst one can, of course, evaluate research methods and findings against many criteria, Gould offered a productive reflective tool. I found, as suggested by Orme & Karvinen-Niinikoski (2012, p191) that,

*"Developing research approaches that are participatory and inclusive is challenging in an international context."*

On a positive note, connections with the Philippine Association of Social Workers and the University of the Philippines prior to and during the study visit to the country (and staying there for 5 weeks) meant that it *was* possible to seek views on potential areas of inquiry and to cross-validate findings as they began to arise. For ethical reasons and to limit the scope of the research, no interviews were undertaken with service users. Whilst this was appropriate to the study at hand, it does mean that the potentially very different perspectives of those who use the services of Filipino social workers are absent from the primary data used in this thesis. Indeed, the voices of service users were often not evident in the Philippine social work literature.

### 8.2.3 Thoughts on Future Developments

At this point, there are a number of areas for possible development of the work presented in this thesis. Firstly, there is potential for further interrogation of the data gathered from Filipino workers in England. Themes which have begun to emerge include use of self and of faith in social work; perspectives on professional conduct and 'distance'; and factors which support or inhibit positive professional identity and public perception. Another area for further research would concern perspectives of international and indigenous workers on the potential for community-oriented forms of social work (Mantle & Backwith, 2010) in the UK. The reflections of Filipino

workers upon perceived strengths and weaknesses of practice in both countries said much more than it has been possible to include in this thesis.

In terms of future research projects, it would be interesting also to apply some of the ideas and methods used for this research to look at professional transitions more generally (perhaps, for example, between local authorities or when promoted to a management position). However, the proposal which most appeals currently to the researcher is that of a longitudinal study, again looking at international transition of social work practitioners, but which engages with specific workers *prior* to departure and then tracks the experiences of those *same* workers through the process of migration and professional adaptation. Whilst the research for this thesis yielded rich data, an acknowledged limitation was its engagement with *different* people in the Philippines and England, which meant there was no possibility to analyse consistency or difference in individual narratives.

## 8.3 The International as Real

In November 2013, Typhoon Yolanda devastated parts of the Philippines and caused the deaths of around 10,000 people. An international aid effort, coordinated by the United Nations and World Health Organisation, brought together Filipinos and people from around the world in responding to the most basic of needs. In many ways, the power of international effort and cooperation was demonstrated. Filipino social workers (themselves survivors of the tragedy) played a significant part in relief efforts. Representatives of the IFSW visited, to offer their support and highlight the part social work was playing (Truell, 2014):

*"The social workers of Tacloban told our visiting delegation that their resilience and ability to continue practicing came from their cultural experience and their social work training."*

Therefore, the theme of resilience through adversity, bolstered by professional training, again came across. Social work was, again, engaging in the essential task of dole-out, though also assessing damage, liaising with other professionals and

offering counselling. This may not have constituted critical practice. Social work was not, in the moment, rejecting, *"… practice that accepts conservative, liberal, neo-liberal or social democratic political philosophies based on social policy"* (Payne, 2014, p319) but it was doing its very best alongside fellow human beings in hugely difficult circumstances. An email to members of the IFSW on 31st January 2014 (copy held by researcher) explained some of the 'added value' provided by social workers in the country:

*"The social workers attend to the social dynamics: the trauma; the grief; and another issue that potentially could victimize the survivors further for the rest of their lives – trafficking."*

The email went on to explain that the typhoon had left people more vulnerable to those wishing to force them into domestic work or prostitution in Europe or elsewhere. What further evidence might one need that all our lives, and especially the lives of those in poor countries, are affected by environmental and global factors *and* that social work must situate itself as *both* a local and international activity?

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## Appendix 1: Recruitment Flyer

……

Are you a qualified Social Worker?

Did you qualify in the Philippines?

And are you

- Practising as a Social Worker in England? or

- In the Philippines after a period of Social Work in England? or

- Considering practising as a Social Worker in England?

**If you are interested in talking to a researcher about your experiences and perspectives, we will be pleased to hear from you.**

**Interviews are planned both in England and the Philippines.**

**This research is kindly being supported by the Philippine Association of Social Workers Incorporated.**

……

**For further information, please contact:**

## Appendix 2:Participant Information Sheet – Social Workers

**(Note: Sheet originally intended for Filipino social workers working currently in England *or who had previously done so*. However, no participants were accessed who fell into the latter category).**

## Journeys between the Philippines and England: What do social workers think about the purpose and transferability of social work?

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it's important that you understand why the research is being done and what is involved.

Please read this carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if anything is unclear or if you want more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to be part of the project. Thank you very much.

**About the Project**

I am a qualified social worker and researcher from England. I am interested in what social work means in the Philippines and England and in how social workers transfer their knowledge and skills between the two countries.

**Why have I been chosen?**

I am inviting you to take part in the project because you are a Filipino social worker who qualified in the Philippines. I have also chosen you either because you are currently working in England or because you have previously done so.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form, a copy of which you will also receive. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

**What will happen if I take part?**

You will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview with me, lasting no more than 1 hour. I will then type up the interview and send you a copy. You will then be asked to undertake one further (shorter) interview by telephone or video link, to clarify or expand on any issues or for you to say anything you wish to add. The project itself is not due to be completed until 2012 but your contribution would be limited to these 2 contacts. All interviewees will be asked the same questions but there will be space also to expand on what is important to you. You will be free to withdraw anything you say in the interview for some time afterwards. However, you will be given a date after which your data cannot be withdrawn, so that the study as a whole can proceed.

**Possible benefits of taking part**

It is hoped that information from this project will help us to understand more about what it is like for people who qualify in the Philippines and then seek to transfer to a different country. You may also find that the process of sharing your perspectives gives you some space to reflect on your own personal and professional issues. I hope that the research process will feel collaborative and that positive contacts might be forged between the University of Brighton and social workers and academics from the Philippines. Any out-of-pocket travel expenses incurred by you in attending the interviews will be reimbursed.

**Possible disadvantages and risks of taking part**

It is possible that some topics discussed in the interview may be upsetting, although I have made every effort to minimise the chances of this happening. If this did happen, I would end the interview. Possible sources of support are given in a separate sheet, where people would be available to talk to you. My supervisor's contact details are also provided. Please note that all interviews will be in English.

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

Confidential information will be seen only by me and will not be revealed to anyone else. All information will be kept safely at the University of Brighton. At the end of the project, data will be kept in the University for 5 years, after which they will be destroyed. I will use a system of codes, which means your name will not appear in

computerised/paper transcripts. It is important to be clear that your employing agency is aware that social workers employed by them may be interviewed as part of the project. However, you and the agencies and locations in which you currently work or previously worked, will not be named in the final thesis or subsequent papers. Information such as gender, ethnicity, age, broad geographical location and area of practice may, however, be included. The only circumstances in which I may be required to breach confidentiality is if you were to disclose behaviour which suggests that you might present a risk of harm to yourself or others; or a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of harm; or criminal activity may occur or have occurred. I will send you a summary of the findings when the research is complete.

**What will happen to the results of the project?**

The results will be published in a doctoral thesis and will therefore be a public document. The thesis will be available online through the University of Brighton Repository. The results may be used for other reports, publications and presentations. You will not be identified in reports or publications, though the broad descriptors stated above may be used.

**Has this project been approved?**

This project has been approved by the relevant Research Ethics bodies of the University of Brighton and your employing authority.

**How to Contact Me**

Please feel free to contact me at any time over the next 6 months, if you have any queries about the research:

**If you have any concerns**

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact my supervisor, using the contact details below:

**Thank you very much for being part of this project.**

PartInfo1. 25/5/09

# Appendix 3: Information Sheet – Participants in the Philippines

## Journeys between the Philippines and England: What do social workers think about the purpose and transferability of social work?

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it's important that you understand why the research is being done and what is involved.

Please read this carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask if anything is unclear or if you want more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to be part of the project. Thank you very much.

**About the Project**

I am a qualified social worker and researcher from England. I am interested in what social work means in the Philippines and England and in how social workers transfer their knowledge and skills between the two countries. Whilst on a study visit to the Philippines, I am aiming to meet with policy makers, educators, academics and representatives of other key agencies.

**Why have I been chosen?**

I am inviting you to take part in the project because you have knowledge and perspectives which I feel would really help me to further understand social welfare and social work in the Philippines.

**Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form, a copy of which you will also receive. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

**What will happen if I take part?**

You will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview with me, lasting no more than 1 hour. I will then type up the interview and send you a copy. You will then be asked to undertake one further (shorter) interview by telephone or video link, to clarify or expand on any issues or for you to say anything you wish to add. The project itself is not due to be completed until 2012 but your contribution would be limited to these 2 contacts. You will be free to withdraw anything you say in the interview for some time afterwards. However, you will be given a date after which your data cannot be withdrawn, so that the study as a whole can proceed.

**Possible benefits of taking part**

It is hoped that information from this project will help us to understand more about what it is like for people who qualify in the Philippines and then seek to transfer to a different country. You may also find the process of sharing perspectives with a researcher from the UK interesting. I hope that the research process will feel collaborative and that positive contacts might be forged between the University of Brighton and those involved in social welfare and social work in the Philippines. Any out-of-pocket travel expenses incurred by you in attending the interviews will be reimbursed.

**Possible disadvantages and risks of taking part**

It is unlikely that topics discussed in the interview will cause distress and I have made every effort to minimise the chances of this happening. If this did happen, I would end the interview. My supervisor's contact details are also provided. Please note that all interviews will be in English.

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

Confidential information will be seen only by me and will not be revealed to anyone else. All information will be kept safely at the University of Brighton. At the end of the project, data will be kept in the University for 5 years, after which they will be destroyed. I will use a system of codes, which means your name will not appear in computerised/paper transcripts. It is important to be clear that your employing agency is aware that social workers employed by them may be interviewed as part of the project. However, you and the agencies and locations in which you currently

work or previously worked, will not be named in the final thesis or subsequent papers. Information such as gender, ethnicity, age, broad geographical location and area of practice may, however, be included. The only circumstances in which I may be required to breach confidentiality is if you were to disclose behaviour which suggests that you might present a risk of harm to yourself or others; or a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of harm; or criminal activity may occur or have occurred. I will send you a summary of the findings when the research is complete.

**What will happen to the results of the project?**

The results will be published in the UK in a doctoral thesis and will therefore be a public document. The thesis will be available online through the University of Brighton Repository. The results may be used for other reports, publications and presentations. You will not be identified in reports or publications, though the broad descriptors stated above may be used.

**Has this project been approved?**

This project has been approved by the relevant Research Ethics bodies of the University of Brighton and (where appropriate) your employing authority.

**How to Contact Me**

Please feel free to contact me at any time over the next 6 months, if you have any queries about the research:

**If you have any concerns**

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact my supervisor, using the contact details below:

**Thank you very much for being part of this project.**

PartInfo2. 25/5/09

## Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form – Social Workers

### Consent Form - Journeys between the Philippines and England: A study of social workers' perspectives on the purpose and transferability of social work

- I agree to take part in this research which is to explore the experiences and perspectives of social workers who qualify in the Philippines and have experience of moving to England to practice.

- The researcher, Jem Price, has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the study and the possible risks involved.

- I have had the procedure explained to me and I have also read the information sheet. I understand what is involved fully.

- I am aware that I will be required to answer questions about my experiences and perspectives.

- I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and will not be revealed to anyone else. However, I also understand that:

  - General descriptions, such as gender, ethnicity, age, broad geographical location and area of practice may be included in the thesis and subsequent publications;

  - Ethical approval has been given by my employing agency;

- I should not refer to the detail of individual cases or practice situations or name clients or colleagues;

- The researcher may be required to breach confidentiality if I disclose behaviour which suggests that I might present a risk of harm to myself or others; or a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of harm; or criminal activity may occur or have occurred

♦ I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason. I know I will not be able to withdraw my data after this date:

Name (please print) ..... Signed ..... Date …….

## Appendix 5: Informed Consent form – Other Participants in the Philippines

## Journeys between the Philippines and England: A study of social workers' perspectives on the purpose and transferability of social work

- I agree to take part in this research which is exploring the experiences of social workers who qualify in the Philippines and move to England to practice.

- The researcher, Jem Price, has explained to my satisfaction the purpose of the study and the possible risks involved.

- I have had the procedure explained to me and I have also read the information sheet. I understand what is involved fully.

- I am aware that I have been asked to participate because the researcher is meeting policy makers, educators, academics and representatives of other agencies and that I will be required to answer questions based on my own experiences and perspectives.

- I understand that any confidential information will be seen only by the researcher and will not be revealed to anyone else. However, I also understand that:

  - General descriptions, such as gender, ethnicity, age, broad geographical location and area of practice may be included in the thesis and subsequent publications;

  - Ethical approval has been given by my employing agency;

  - I should not refer to the detail of individual cases or practice situations or name clients or colleagues;

- The researcher may be required to breach confidentiality if I disclose behaviour which suggests that I might present a risk of harm to myself or others; or a child or vulnerable person may be at risk of harm; or criminal activity may occur or have occurred

♦ I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving any reason. I know I will not be able to withdraw my data after this date:

Name …… Signed ..... Date .....

# Appendix 6: Interview Schedules

## A. Interviews With Social Workers Based In England

1. **Can you tell me about how and why you became a social worker?**
   - What were you doing before you qualified as a social worker?
   - Was your decision shaped by any events or circumstances in your life?
   - What attracted you in particular to social work?

2. **Can you tell me about your social work training?**
   - When and where did you train?
   - What can you tell me about the content of your course?
   - How did your training help you to develop an identity as a social worker?

3. **Can you tell me about social work in the Philippines?**
   - What are your feelings about the profession there?
   - What roles do social workers undertake there?
   - For how long did you practise as a social worker there?

4. **Can you tell me about your decision to work in England?**
   - What factors or events shaped your decision?
   - Why did you come to England in particular?

5. **Can you tell me what you expected England to be like and what you anticipated social work would be like here?**
   - What did you understand social work to *be* before you came to England?
   - What did you see as the purpose of social work?
   - What did you anticipate about the social work profession and social work roles and tasks in England?

6. **Can you tell me about your reactions to social work in England?**
   - In what ways were things different?
   - What things were similar or the same?

- How did you adjust to social work overseas?

7. **Can you describe how you feel about social work now?**
   - Has/did this experience change your approach to practice?
   - What strengths and weaknesses do you see in social work in each country?
   - What do you now see as the purpose of social work?
   - What are your feelings about the profession here and there?
   - Do you feel that there are any core aspects or features of social work which you were able to transfer between countries?

8. **Is there anything else you want to tell me?**

9. **Can you tell me why you decided to take part in this study?**

## B. Interviews With Social Workers Based In The Philippines

1. **Can you tell me about how and why you became a social worker?**
   - What were you doing before you qualified as a social worker?
   - Was your decision shaped by any events or circumstances in your life?
   - What attracted you in particular to social work?

2. **Can you tell me about your social work training?**
   - When and where did you train?
   - What can you tell me about the content of your course?
   - How did your training help you to develop an identity as a social worker?

3. **Can you tell me about social work in the Philippines?**
   - What are your feelings about the profession there?
   - What roles do social workers undertake here?
   - For how long did you practise as a social worker here before going to England?
   - How long have you practised as a social worker here since returning from England?

4. **Have you ever worked overseas as a social worker?**
   - What factors or events shaped your decision?
   - Have you considered working in England?
   - Could you tell me about your experiences?
   - In what ways were things different from the Philippines?
   - What things were similar or the same?
   - How did you adjust to social work overseas?

5. **Can you describe how you feel about social work now?**
   - Did (any experience of working abroad) change your approach to practice?
   - What strengths and weaknesses do you see in social work in each country?

- What do you see as the purpose of social work?
- Do you feel that there are any core aspects or features of social work which might transfer between countries?

6. **Is there anything else you want to tell me?**

7. **Can you tell me why you decided to take part in this study?**

## C. Interviews With Others Based In The Philippines

NB: This schedule will need to be tailored to particular interviewees but possible areas to be addressed are shown below.

1. Can you tell me about the agency you work for and your own role?

2. In what ways do you, or your agency, connect to social welfare or social work in the Philippines?

3. What does social work try to achieve in the Philippines?

4. What are your perspectives on social work education and training in the Philippines?

5. What are your perspectives on the experiences of social workers or other care workers who move to England specifically or to work overseas more generally?

6. Have you ever been to England? What similarities and differences do you think might exist between social welfare and social work in the Philippines and England?

7. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

8. Can you tell me why you decided to take part in this study?

# Appendix 7: Some Sources of Support

*Note – this Information Sheet was tailored to individual agencies and contexts. However, an exemplar for UK-based participants is provided here.*

This Information Sheet provides details of potential sources of support in the UK.

**Your Employer**

Most statutory social work agencies in the UK provide confidential counselling for their employees. This would usually be accessed via the Human Resources or Personnel Department.

**Trade Unions**

If you are a member of a trade union, these normally offer personal advice, support and counselling services.

**The Centre for Filipinos**

This organisation, accredited by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner and the Community Legal Services, provides information and advice to Filipino nationals in the UK and can also refer people to a trained Filipino counsellor.

Address:
St. Albans Church Community Centre
2 Margravine Road
London
W6 8HJ
Tel: (020) 7381 2600
Email: enquiries@centreforfilipinos.org

**Citizen's Advice Bureau**

Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau may be able to offer advice, where this concerns financial, legal or employment matters. Local contact details may be accessed at:

http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

**Samaritans**

Confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair:

24-Hour Helpline: 08457 909090

Website: http://www.samaritans.org/

# Appendix 8: Participant Details

## NOTE: All names are pseudonyms.

## Key:

**FSW P =** Filipino Social Worker in the Philippines
**USSW P =** Social Worker from USA in the Philippines
**FSW UK =** Filipino Social Worker in the UK
**FStudentSW =** Filipino Social Worker in Training
**FAC =** Filipino Social Work Academic
**FPOL =** Filipino Policy Maker (all in Government positions)
**GOV =** Currently in Government social work role in the Philippines
**NGO =** Currently in NGO social work role in the Philippines
**PRIV =** Currently in private sector social work role in the Philippines

**Demographic Information:**

Also provided for each participant, based on their self-declaration, is an age range (eg 40 – 49); gender (M/F); and any religious affiliation (RC = Roman Catholic; C = Other Christian; M = Muslim).

continued

## Social Workers: Philippines

| |
|---|
| Mary (FSW P GOV 40-49 F RC) |
| Janice (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC) |
| Grace (FSW P PRIV 25-29 F RC) |
| Evelyn (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC) |
| Michael (FSW P NGO 30-39 M C) |
| Arlene (FSW P NGO 50-59 F Christian) |
| Joan (FSW P PRIV 30-39 F RC) |
| Leah (FSW P GOV 30-39 F RC) |
| Wendy (USSW P NGO 60+ F C) |
| Bill (USSW P NGO 50-59 M C) |
| Notes from Visit to State Hospital (Research Journal) |

## Social Workers in Training: Philippines

| |
|---|
| Ryan (FStudentSW P NGO 25-29 M Irreligious) |

## Social Work Academics: Philippines

| |
|---|
| Cherry (FAC P 50-59 F C) |
| Marissa (FAC P 50-59 F RC) |
| Karen (FAC P 60+ F RC) |
| Teresa (FAC P 60+ F RC) |
| Aisha (FAC P 50-59 F Muslim) |
| Fiona (FAC P 50-59 F C) |
| Hope (FAC P 60+ F RC) |

continued

## Policy Makers: Philippines

| |
|---|
| Joel (FPOL P 30-39 M RC) |
| Camile (FPOL P 60+ F C) |
| Mark (FPOL P 18-24 M RC) |
| Bea (FPOL P 40-49 F RC) |
| Yvonne (FPOL P 50-59 F RC) |

## Social Workers: England (all, with the exception of Tessa, were in statutory social work positions)

| |
|---|
| Angel (FSW UK 40-49 F) |
| Ella (FSW UK 40-49 F C) |
| Grace (FSW UK 30-39 F RC) |
| Nina (FSW UK 25-29 F RC) |
| Jay (FSW UK 30-39 M RC) |
| Sheila (FSW UK 40-49 F C) |
| Bridget (FSW UK 40-49 F RC) |
| Emily (FSW UK 40-49 F RC) |
| Tessa (FSW UK Retraining as Nurse 30-39 F RC) |

# Appendix 9: First-Level Coding

| | |
|---|---|
| SI: | Social Issues in the Philippines |
| D | Social Work Dilemmas |
| SP | Social Work Strategies |
| C | Cultural Considerations |
| FSW | Forms of Social Work |
| DSW | Dimensions of Social Work |
| UL | Use of Language |
| SUG | Service User Groups |
| DI | Areas of Difference/Divergence (Philippines/UK) |
| SWP | Social Work Profession |
| M | Motivation for Social Work |
| FWO | Filipino Workers Overseas |
| PI | Public Image of Social Work |
| SP | Social Policy |
| SWE | Social Work Education |

## Example of Sub-Categories:

**DSW Dimensions of Social Work**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DSWPSUP | Philippines | Supervision |
| DSWPM | Philippines | Managerialism/Monitoring |
| DSWPD | Philippines | Direct Work |
| DSWPU | Philippines | Unqualified/Para-Professionals |
| DSWPUS | Philippines | Use of Self |
| DSWPUP | Philippines | User Participation |
| DSWPC | Philippines | Creativity |

# Appendix 10: Excerpt from Transcribed Interview

**Evelyn (FSW P NGO 30-39 F RC)**

P
It's so easy, If you are a Filipino, It's easy for you to become a Social Worker
I
because?
P
because uhm because in our culture you should be, you always nice to other people
I
mmm
P
and being a Social Worker you should always be nice, ahh "*pati"*, be sympathetic, something like that, isn't it? And also {laughs} uhm being grateful also… I think when you're working with your boss
I
mmm
P
I will say that uhm being grateful if some… if your boss hire you
I
mmm
P
for the position
I
mmm
P
and sa… even though some, even times will come that you will not like the way she will treats or he will treats you, you, as if you are not uhh you are just putting aside the way he's treating or she's treating you because we're so grateful about the work that she's giving to you so I think uhh if I'm going to relate that in Social Work Practice in the country, most often than not uhh the experience of Social Workers
I
mmm
P
I think most of although, mmm, there are you know, what will I say? it's not.. Even though you don't like your boss
I
mmm
P
You have to be nice {laughs}
I
ok
And also with your co-workers and isn't it that right now also uhm most of the people they have no work

**Comment [JMS1]:** Sees SW as NATURAL for Filipinos; though implies SW is to be nice and sympathetic

**Comment [JMS2]:** Being grateful for work – even if unhappy with boss. Unchallenging? Uncritical? Accept poor behaviour? Speak out? What about in UK?

**Comment [JMS3]:** Same approach with co-workers – unchallenging?

I
Right
P
Yes, so, having work
I
Your grateful for it?
P
Yes, You're being grateful
I
Is that ever a bad thing?
P
Come again?
I
Is that ever difficult, that you, it sounds to me like you would never argue with your boss, you would never say hang on, shouldn't we do this?
P
Uhm ah actually, I agree with my boss
I
Ok
P
But, I'm a kind of a person that if you don't like, ok, I, I uhm I already told you what I want to tell, so if you don't like it, it's up to you
I
Ok
P
But
I
But you, so you would speak your mind?
P
Yes
I
You're not quiet and say nothing?
P
Yes, but if the program will affect… if your decision will affect, will affect the programs that I'm handling
I
Mmm
P
We will have a {laughs} you know
I
Will have a discussion at least
P
Yes, yes
I
And do you think most Filipino people would be the same?
P
Yes I think so
I
So they're not quiet?
P

81 No, they're not
82 I
83 You don't sort of say, oh I'll say nothing … you
84 P
85 But we will always say it in a good manner, in a good things
86 I
87 Mmm
88 P
89 Oh yeah, yeah, Always be polite and respectful
90 I
91 Uhuh, yes
92 P
93 Yes, We will always tell that in a good manner in a good thing, so that he will not get angry with you and at least there will be a win-win solution
94 I
95 Yes, how about clients? Or the people you work with, how does culture affect how you relate to them?
96 Are there…
97 Are there expectations or the way they react to you?
98 I
99 I remember when I was doing my direct practice in the church, in XXX Catholic Church because I also working then with crisis interventions,
100 ok
101 I'm also handling that, so I don't want my client to wait
102 I
103 To?
104 P
105 Wait
106 I
107 Ok
108 I don't like them to wait for me, yes
109 I
110 So you like to arrive on time? You mean or …
111 P
112 No when I see them waiting for me, I, even though I'm going to have a meeting or I always take time to discuss with them what and ask them what do they need from me, so sometimes, sometimes when I go to other places or other you know in other… you know when you go to mall and you buy something and the sales lady does not give you enough time and you're paying, I always tell to myself oh this lady doesn't know, you know, doesn't know how to handle people because for me, even how busy I am and how tired I was then, I always see to it that my client is the first for me, but,
113 I
114 Ok
115 P
116 on the contrary, when I go home, I don't want to be disturbed that time is for me, yes
117 I

**Comment [JMS4]:** Culture: clarified – Filipinos WILL say if unhappy but in a nice way; avoid conflict, perhaps; remain respectful; may just think 'I've told my view but it's your decision'

**Comment [JMS5]:** Not get angry – so avoid conflict?

**Comment [JMS6]:** Previous direct SW with church: client culture

**Comment [JMS7]:** SW as client-centred when direct practice

118 So when you were working you will devote your time to people you work with, but afterwards you relax and

119 P

120 Yes, and sometimes they will tell you, you know, they are so grateful about your assistance to them and I always tell them, no this is my work, and, you should not be grateful about this, this is err, I am being paid for this so,

**Comment [JMS8]:** Exception? Closer to UK view – professional job not grateful…COMMENT: perhaps reflected the missionaries' approach?