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PHILIPPINE SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDY IN THE 1990s: STATUS, METHODOLOGY AND RELEVANCE

**REFLECTIONS
ON PHILIPPINE SOCIOLOGY IN THE 1990s**

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This paper in honor of Dr. Gelia T. Castillo, one of the pillars of Philippine social science, shares initial reflections on Philippine sociology in the 1990s. It takes off from previous assessments of the state of the social sciences as well as from observations regarding the current involvement of Filipino sociologists and the substantive and methodological developments in their discipline.¹

The paper revolves around three points.

First, compared to the 1970s and the early 1980s, there is, in the 1990s, greater pluralism or convergence of theoretical perspectives and more common elements in the stance which sociologists have taken vis-a-vis development concerns.

1. The assessments are contained in Castillo (1994), Talledo (1993), Madigan (1987), Miralao (1986), Abad and Eviota (1982), and Panopio and Bennagen (n.d.). Castillo, Gelia T. "The Social Sciences in the UP System: A Commentary on Mission, Vision Goals and Objectives." In *UP In Search of Academic Excellence*, edited by G. Abad et al., Quezon City: UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, College of Public Administration and UP Press, 1994. Talledo, Tomas. "Philippine Sociology in the 1980s." Masteral thesis, Department of Sociology, University of the Philippines, 1993. Madigan, Francis, S.J. "Problems of Research in Provincial Colleges and Universities." Paper presented at the Workshop on the Role and Challenge of Regional Academic Institutions in Meeting Regional Research Needs, Philippine Social Science Council, December 8-9, 1987. Miralao, Jean. "Research Trends in Contemporary Philippine Society." *Philippine Studies Newsletter* 14 (February 1986). Abad, Ricardo, and Elizabeth Eviota. "Philippine Sociology in the Seventies: Trends and Prospects." *Philippine Sociological Review* 30 (1982). Panopio, Isabel, and Ponciano Bennagen. "The Status of Sociology and Anthropology in the Philippines." Report submitted to the UNESCO Regional Office, Bangkok, Thailand. Typscript.

Second, Philippine sociology in this decade is characterized by an increasingly interdisciplinary framework, a broader definition of what constitutes sociological problems, and a blurring of the distinction and hierarchy between basic and applied fields.

Third, the final decade of the century highlights the imperative to mobilize sociologists to aggressively fill the gaps in our understanding of Philippine society, critically review existing paradigms in light of empirical realities, and incorporate disparate findings, insights and developments into more conceptual or theoretical publications which elaborate on existing models or advance alternative perspectives.

It is important to note that some of the observations which constituted those reflections are manifested in Dr. Castillo's writings and lectures.

FROM POLARIZATION TO PLURALISM AND CONVERGENCE

Sociology as an academic discipline emerged in the West as a specific response to concrete social problems generated by the formative and maturation phases of capitalism. Its purpose was to understand the chaos and disorder wrought by the Industrial Revolution and trace the sources of human progress and misery. Some of its forefathers also spelled out a range of means to improve the human condition.

In their assessment of the state of Philippine sociology in the 1970s, Abad and Eviota (1982) asserted that while Western sociology was rooted in the concrete problems of the societies which engendered the discipline, Philippine sociology was a colonial implant. From a social philosophy course instituted in the latter part of the Spanish colonial period, sociology developed as an academic discipline during the American period. The biggest boost to its growth occurred, however, after World War II when a substantial number of foreign-trained sociologists returned from the United States. The theories and perspectives disseminated to Filipino students

constituted a rich body of knowledge that was somehow alien to the concrete realities that confronted the country then.²

Although conscious efforts to break out of the colonial mold were more apparent in the 1970s, the early sociologists were equally interested in making themselves relevant to what they perceived to be the needs of Philippine society. They were concerned not only with generating Philippine data to substantiate the ideas learned abroad but, more importantly, to ground the impressionistic assessments of Philippine realities on systematic empirical research.

In response to the destruction brought about by World War II, for instance, sociologists in the 1950s highlighted the contributions of the discipline to social planning and reconstruction. As for the generation of Philippine data, sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s focused, among others, on the areas of ethnic relations, social institutions like religion and the family, community studies, and the norms and values of Filipinos. These thematic foci and the obvious silence with regard to the Huk Rebellion and peasant unrest reflected the concerns of American sociology during the period and the dominance of functionalism, empiricism, and the view that sociology's role in the academic division of labor is the separation of the economic from the social sphere.

Up until the 1960s, there were no marked rifts among sociologists. By the 1970s, however, significant sources of polarization became evident within the discipline. Reflecting the substantial developments of sociology in other parts of the world, the dominance of functionalism was challenged by the acceptance of Marxist traditions (i.e., the Critical School of Sociology or the Frankfurt School, the humanism of Lucian Goldman and, later, the structuralism of Louis Althusser) in the field.³ Thus, students were exposed

2. Bennagen and Panopio (1981) claimed that US-educated sociologists who returned to the Philippines in the 1950s and the 1960s were influenced by the neopositivism of George Lundberg, the functional theories of Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, and the sociopsychological theories of George Mead.

3. The shifts in the thematic focus of Frankfurt School theorists and Goldman to the realm of culture and consciousness facilitated the acceptance of their Marxist works within Western mainstream sociology.

to the functionalist consensus model, on the one hand, and the Marxist-inspired conflict model of society, on the other. These polar models had their counterparts in the areas of Development Sociology and Rural Sociology. For instance, the dependency theory, which was latter replaced by various models of articulation of modes of production, was poised against growth and modernization theories.

The inroads of Marxism in the discipline brought to the fore the charge that sociology as a discipline had an ideological character. By systematically focusing on the social and cultural aspects of Philippine life without establishing their links to the wider socioeconomic and political structure, sociologists were said to mask the structural roots of social ills and contradictions. Their studies were deemed to have contributed to more efficient means of social control by power wielders. This position lay at the heart of the critique of the Institute of Philippine Culture's studies of values and modernization.⁴

The polarization extended to methodological positions. Just as the positivist tradition that demanded the rigorous training of sociologists in survey methods and statistics was becoming dominant in universities, its ontological and methodological claims were questioned.⁵ The interpretive and phenomenological schools of thought stressed the significance of language and meaning in the social construction of reality rather than the search for generalizations. Thus, quantitative methods were counterposed to ethnography and other qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis. The methodological distinction between sociology and social anthropology at the height of the dominance of positivism began to blur at this time:

Perhaps the most evident division within the ranks of sociologists in the 1970s was in the stance taken towards policy research and planning under the Marcos regime. Many professional sociologists were absorbed by the expansion of bureaucratic activity, and researches were commissioned

4. See David (1982) for a Marxist-inspired perspective on the study of values in research as well as Samsom (1981).

5. In the University of the Philippines, undergraduate sociology majors in the first half of the 1970s were required to take 18 units of mathematics and statistics.

within the technocratic framework of the period. Government agencies like the National Economic and Development Authority recruited sociologists to aid in the formulation of national plans. New agencies such as the Development Academy of the Philippines and the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies became employers of sociology majors (Makil and Hunt 1981). Furthermore, evaluation and family planning research conducted in conjunction with government projects became the vogue, accounting in part for the significant share (42 percent) of articles published in the *Philippine Sociological Review* in the areas of development/social change (including evaluation research) and population/family planning (Abad and Eviota 1982: 143).

The active participation of professional sociologists including those in academe in policy research and planning during the Marcos regime was severely criticized by their colleagues in academe.⁶ In serving as technocrats, consultants, and researchers, they were seen not only to have taken for granted the predefined standard of rationality and value assumptions of the powerful but to have also legitimized the structure of domination by providing a scientific aura to the courses of state action.⁷ The Marcos regime's rapid loss of credibility in the late 1970s and especially in the wake of Senator Benigno Aquino's assassination further mobilized nonpartisan sociologists and other members of the social science community to support the mounting protest against the regime.

The downfall of authoritarian rule in the aftermath of the successful EDSA uprising in 1986 increased public awareness of the economic, social, cultural and ecological problems at the historical juncture of the mid-1980s.

6. For a discussion of the positions of Filipino social scientists during Martial Law, see Cariño, Ledivina. "Research Under Martial Law: The Tasks and Risks of the Filipino Social Scientists." *Philippine Sociological Review* 28 (1980).

7. As articulated, this criticism is woven out of the arguments in David (1977, 1978, 1982): "The Sociology of Poverty or the Poverty of Sociology: A Brief Note on Urban Poverty Research." *Philippine Sociological Review* 25 (1977); "The Use and Misuse of Social Research." *Philippine Sociological Review* 25 (1978); and "Sociology and Development in the Philippines." *Philippine Sociological Review* 30 (1982).

The Philippines was deeply indebted, and despite the number of Filipino social scientists who achieved recognition in international bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank, the country lagged behind other nations it once surpassed in terms of economic development and quality of life of its citizens. Dire poverty and the lack of employment opportunities resulted in the diaspora of Filipino migrant workers to all parts of the world. Furthermore, ecological degradation had reached alarming proportions with projections of the possible loss of forest cover by the 1990s if logging activities remained unabated.

The magnitude of the problems and the challenge of substantiating the process of democratization paved the way for a convergence of the polarized positions which sociologists took vis-a-vis policy research. Among those who produced studies within the technocratic framework of the authoritarian state, there was dissatisfaction with the impact of their work. Except for a few government agencies and nongovernment organizations (NGOs), other institutions had neither the interest nor the compulsion to seriously take their studies into account.

Several reasons accounted for the underutilization of those research studies: the ad hoc process of policy formulation that took many other considerations into accounts; the failure of some sociological studies to grapple with the complex problems on hand because of their inappropriate analytical tools and methodologies; and the poor links of researchers with popular organizations, people at the grassroots, the media, and different actors in government agencies.

In the latter half of the 1980s, prominent sociologist-technocrats of the 1970s began to articulate a growing interest in the conduct of research formulated and implemented in consultation with a wider network of actors including other government agencies, NGOs, and people's organizations. Among social critics of the 1970s, on the other hand, the challenge posed by the social context of the late 1980s and the 1990s was the testing of the validity of ideas drawn from theories and perspectives of social transformation for concrete alternative policies and programs. Several roles for critical

sociologists that were once unattractive during the Marcos years presented themselves with the demise of authoritarian rule in 1986.

From that time on, sociologists, together with other social scientists, could specify a range of alternative policies that help initiate, document, and analyze localized social and economic experiments and lend their expertise to help enhance the success of these experiments. These experiments, in turn, were viewed as mechanisms for strengthening the local political and economic organization as well as boosting the confidence of people at the grassroots so that they could pressure government to pay attention to ideas documented by field research and fed back by a more organized local constituency.

Apart from supporting, documenting and analyzing the process and results of creative social and economic experiments, the sociologists' contribution in the area of consciousness-raising has been suggested. Drawing from people's categories and definitions of the situation as gleaned both from field research and public opinion surveys, they helped to sharpen the public's awareness of problems, issues, and their possible resolution through vigorous intellectual debates and discussions disseminated in popular form.

The convergence in the activities of sociologists in the 1990s as they illuminate and address concrete problems at the macro and micro levels and as they link with other groups has drawn support. This probably reflects unprecedented global developments since the latter half of the 1980s. It is occurring at a historical conjuncture when the world witnessed two years ago the breakdown of the Soviet empire and is now seeing the intensification of ethnic conflicts, despite opportunities for erstwhile adversaries to resolve deep-seated antagonisms in the pursuit of negotiated peace --- a conjuncture where the balance between market forces and state intervention is also being sought.

The convergence also coincides with theoretical attempts to integrate opposing perspectives and different levels of analysis. The polemical debates in the late 1970s and 1980s between Marxism and Functionalism, Positivism and Phenomenology, Interpretive or Hermeneutic Sociology, Marxist Structuralism and Hegelian or Humanist Marxism, the different

variants of Marxism and modernization theory, and the macro level theorists and the theorists of small groups, albeit mirroring developments in Western sociology, had positive effects on the discipline. Sociology moved much closer to achieving at least partial integration of political economy and social analysis with each theoretical encounter. Concretely, the debates were the impetus which led to (1) Gidden's theory of structuration combining political economy's focus on structures with human agency; (2) attempts to constitute a Marx-Weber theory of society; and (3) the macro-micro nexus which brought together micro theories emphasizing the contingency of the social order and the centrality of individual negotiations, on the one hand, and macro theories that focus on structures, on the other.

In the realm of methodology, the criticisms which phenomenologists hurled against positivism sensitized the new breed of sociologists to people's taken-for-granted meanings and prodded them to use ethnography and qualitative techniques for the analysis of texts, songs, and other products of popular culture. The ideas of the Critical or Frankfurt School of Sociology as translated into a critique of the discipline as a mode of thought, further weakened the hegemony of quantitative methods and legitimized the use of the once "inferior, soft, and unscientific" qualitative methods. In short, by the 1990s, the limits of sociology as a scientific enterprise began to widen and a pluralism of methods prevailed.

Quite apart from the polemical theoretical debates, the new sentiments which moved sociologists to reconsider old theories and methods of research emanated from the practical experience of more applied sociologists. The failure of development efforts in the 1960s and the 1970s, for instance, gave rise to a more participatory development paradigm and, with it, participatory modes of research that creatively combined traditional and new methods (i.e., censuses or surveys, long interviews, process documentation, focused group discussion) in the spirit of enhancing people's participation in their own development. That empirical findings comparing participatory and nonparticipatory projects revealed achievements that ex-

ceeded expectations further reinforced participatory projects and research evaluation strategies.⁸

The need to integrate different methodologies as reflected in the liberal use of the concept of triangulation or the multiple-strategy approach among sociologists in the regions derives from the problem of issue-orientation of many researches conducted from the mid-1980s to the 1990s. Traditional and new funding sources that supported many of the studies during this period were not as concerned with academic understanding alone as with specifying concrete alternatives for alleviating suffering based on sound research. This trend emphasized the need for sustained and intensive field-based research, the immersion of the researcher in the issue, and the establishment of links with actors in the field.

**BROADER DEFINITION OF SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
AND THE BLURRING OF LINES
BETWEEN BASIC AND APPLIED FIELDS**

The confluence of the following factors — the need to understand and address concrete issues and problems at the macro or micro level; the thrust of funding agencies toward research that have concrete applications for development and those that require linkages with various actors in the field; and the new openness to the substantiation of theoretical claims — not only highlighted the need for theoretical and methodological triangulation but also undermined the artificial boundaries which set academic disciplines apart from one another.⁹

8. In the National Irrigation Administration's experiment on participatory communal irrigation, for instance, the participatory method resulted in larger irrigated areas, greater productivity, stronger associations, improved water distribution, and better compliance with government policy, among others (De los Reyes and Jopillo 1986). De los Reyes, Romana and Sylvia Ma. Jopillo. *An Evaluation of the Philippine Participatory Communal Program*. Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University, 1986.

9. The use of intensive case studies, historical material and ethnographic data, together with one-shot surveys and other quantitative techniques and interdisciplinary trends, was noted

While a specific substantive problem may be within the traditional purview of one discipline, the understanding of something concrete entails a more holistic, albeit interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, framework. The essentially interdisciplinary character of the sociological perspective is deemed useful in the 1990s when academe is pressured to confront concrete issues and areas of concern relevant to the multiple sectoral and regional demands of transforming the economy and society.

Sociologists generally do not make major adjustments when heeding the demand for inter- or multidisciplinary. The discipline, as envisioned by its forefathers and practiced by professional sociologists, is claimed to be a general science of society. As such, sociologists venture into the study of the most diverse phenomena, focusing on their various aspects including the economic, political, and social psychological, making use of historical, anthropological and survey data, and constantly engaging in philosophical debates about the theoretical and methodological foundations of the discipline.

The loose boundaries and increasing pluralism of the discipline make it more likely for sociologists to transgress the turfs of other social sciences while allowing other social scientists into their areas of interest. This explains why, for instance, the specialized areas of the discipline have grown alongside theoretical and methodological developments. In the Department of Sociology of the University of the Philippines, for instance, the research work of the faculty and the theses of students cluster around a variety of concerns: sociology of health and medicine, sociology of agriculture and technology transfer, overseas migration, sociology of institutions (law, media, the family), sociology of deviance, sociology of popular culture, ergonomics and industrial sociology, sociology of science, political sociology, development sociology, sociology of newly industrializing countries, environmental sociology/human ecology, demography, and sociology of women, each with subfields of its own.

It is interesting to note that development in the discipline's areas of specialization have coincided with the greater participation of sociologists in multidisciplinary projects involving other social scientists and natural

scientists within and outside the university. In the aftermath of the EDSA uprising, they have also been active in tripartite experiments composed of representatives of academe, government, and nongovernmental and people's organizations. The theoretical and methodological insights from these multidisciplinary and multisectoral exchanges, however, have not fed back systematically to the discipline.

The loose boundaries and increasing pluralism also explain why the *Philippine Sociological Review*, the official journal of the Philippine Sociological Society, and the society itself have opened their doors to nonsociologists. In the 1980s, Talledo (1993) noted the significant contributions of nonsociologists who employed the analytical tools of phenomenology, semiotics, and critical literary theory.¹⁰

The increasing looseness of the boundaries of sociology with respect to other disciplines is matched by the blurring of lines demarcating basic from applied sociology. The sociologists' immersion in concrete issues and problems has undermined the distinction and hierarchy between the two. It has also called into question the implicit assumption that an applied social science is one which applies the principles of the pure or basic disciplines like sociology to practical concerns. There is a growing realization that sociology and the other basic social science disciplines in their current state can hardly provide the theoretical or conceptual systems needed by those who grapple with concrete and changing realities. They are as yet unable to constitute some of the findings of those in the field into raw materials for theory construction and methodological innovations.

The blurring of the division between basic and applied sociology has been facilitated by the existence of institutional links among sociologists. In the University of the Philippines, for instance, sociologists in the more

10. See, for instance, Iletto (1984), Contreras (1989), and San Juan (1987, 1989). Iletto, R. "Bonifacio, the Text, and the Social Scientist." *Philippine Sociological Review* 32 (1984). Contreras, A. "The Discourse of Development: Some Implications Local Power/Knowledge in the Philippine Uplands." *Philippine Sociological Review* 37 (1989). San Juan, E. Jr. "Western Sociological Literary Theory: A Historical Survey." *Philippine Sociological Review* 35 (1987), and "Making Filipino History in a Damaged Culture." *Philippine Sociological Review* 37 (1989).

applied fields such as demography, public administration, mass communications, and social work and community development have participated in graduate school teaching and thesis advising. While such links are in place, the enriching contributions of the different fields to the discipline need to be further enhanced by regular exchanges and dialogues among sociologists.

THE CHALLENGE FACING PHILIPPINE SOCIOLOGY IN THE 1990S

Convergence, on the one hand, and the theoretical and methodological pluralism within sociology, on the other, have pushed the frontiers of the discipline in the 1990s, linking it not only to the basic and applied social sciences whose boundaries it has traditionally traversed but to both the natural and engineering sciences as well. It is noteworthy, however, that as far as sociology is concerned, the refinement or development of theories anchored on Philippine realities preferably expressed in Filipino has been exceedingly slow.

This is not primarily because of the lack of raw materials to stimulate theoretical production. The experiences since the 1980s of sociologists based in the universities, NGOs and government agencies regarding concrete problems and issues they have worked with are rich in insights although many of these remain undocumented. For instance, there may be preliminary material for reconceptualizing the nature and forms of Filipino families—from the single-parent families created by separation and overseas employment, to the gypsy families without homes, to families led by homosexuals, down to the families of siblings formed by street children. There are also initial materials for rethinking the nature of Philippine cities and of urban poor squatter communities in the Philippines, the social psychology of urban violence in these communities, the process of technology transfer in agriculture, leadership and Filipino organizations, the social mobilization of communities, the role of the informal sector in waste disposal and management, and even the politics of the weak and the strong at the local level.

Quite apart from raw materials for initial theorizing on substantive topics, there are also some leads which call for shifts in perspectives or paradigms. It is interesting to note, for instance, that urban sociology continues to be counterpoised to rural sociology despite the increasing urbanization of rural communities and the transformations in the agricultural sector.

In the testimony presented to the Independent Commission on Population and the Quality of Life, Dr. Mary Racelis argued eloquently for a change in the paradigms of urban society.¹¹ Urban problems have generally been relegated to the background because of the assumption that life in the urban areas is generally better than in rural places and the emphasis on rural areas in development models. This emphasis is bolstered by the fact that existing "pockets of affluence" in urban areas where 46 percent of the urban population live below the poverty line have affected the overall estimation of urban poverty.¹²

While there are initial raw materials for conceptual and theoretical work in areas such as those mentioned above, the process of thinking and theorizing will have to be continuously stimulated by new insights from the available literature, from discussions with those immersed in the field, from actual field exposure, and from the collection of additional materials to validate initial insights.

Apart from the refining or building of theories anchored in Philippine realities, the challenge posed by the 1990s is to continue to understand and address concrete issues and problems at the macro and micro levels. One way of responding to this challenge is to undertake what sociologists who are armed with intellectual curiosity and an investigative mind, an arsenal

11. The testimony was given during the Southeast Asian Regional Consultation on Urbanization and Threats to Human Security and Survival held at the Hotel Nikko Manila Garden on September 21, 1994.

12. The estimates are based on the testimony of Cecille Joaquin-Yasay, Executive Director, Commission on Population. The testimony was presented in the Southeast Asian Regional Consultation on Urbanization and Threats to Human Security and Survival held at the Hotel Nikko Manila Garden on September 21, 1994.

of theories and innovative methodologies, a willingness to be immersed in the field, an openness to listen to people and shift gears, and a basic commitment to improve the human condition especially of the marginalized segment in Philippine society, do best — sound, field-based research.

There are presently many gaps in the sociologists' understanding of society which, when filled, may enable those in the discipline to participate more actively and meaningfully in public discussions and debates. These gaps include the need for more basic research to reconceptualize Philippine social institutions in the fast changing world of the 1990s — the family, media, church and religion, political institutions, economic organizations/sectors, and the NGOs.

If, indeed, the Philippines is a center of creative organizing, successful social innovations in the country will have to be documented and analyzed. It is also necessary to generate a social map of industries — their structure and social organization, level of technology, labor arrangements, and the links between the formal and informal sectors. Against the backdrop of satellite television and overseas migration, it is time to take stock of the changes in Filipino values, world-views, and consciousness. Despite rapid urbanization and the projection that by the next century a half of the country's population will be living in cities, sociologists have yet to understand the urban phenomena. This list, which can go on and on, can best be drawn up by various communities of sociologists.

One can argue, of course, that lists such as this have been with us for decades. Since those concerns should have been addressed long ago, one of the challenges of the 1990s is the speeding up and intensification of the research process by organizing teams of sociologists or social scientists with ties to various groups, informants and other actors in the field. While each one may be pursuing a different angle of the problem, the team can process insights and build their expertise together.

There are proven advantages in working as teams in a collective research or in study groups, with leeway and respect for individual styles of scholarship. In the research process, approaches and methods can be modified by the inputs of colleagues. Teamwork can also provide leads

which may be quickly relayed to the appropriate member who could then observe the dynamics of a relevant process which an individual scholar working single-handedly may take time to comprehend. In addition, a team can more easily implement and capture the benefits of theory and data triangulation.

It is important for teams of sociologists to include graduate and undergraduate students whose interests and commitment to their research project and the discipline can be sustained. Inclusion of these students through a system of apprenticeship will contribute immensely to the training of a new generation of sociologists.

Thus far, training in sociology has been confined to academic discourses involving readings, most of which are removed from Philippine realities. Actual student involvement in field-based research with mentors can provide the opportunity to translate abstractions to reality and to reconstruct abstractions. For the full-fledged sociologist, direct involvement in research in conjunction with others provides an excellent training opportunity for regearing perspectives.

In conclusion, the 1990s pose three major challenges for sociologists, especially those based in academe: (1) to undertake solid research which will expose and physically link sociologists to actors and other social scientists in the field and enable them to help address concrete issues and problems; (2) to process, codify, analyze and transform experiences and empirical findings into raw materials for theoretical production; and (3) to translate the shifts in mental gears and the theoretical and methodological developments achieved so far into a training program which will stimulate and sustain the interest of the next generation.

While there are communities of sociologists like those that comprise the Department of Sociology of the University of the Philippines who are ready to take on the challenge, there are institutional constraints to be surmounted. The infrastructure for field-based research, theorizing, collective discussion, and more intensive training has yet to be set up. As it is, those who are training the next generation hardly have time to be exposed while those who have such exposure have no time to integrate their insights

into their teaching and writings, much less develop conceptual or theoretical innovations (Madigan 1987). For now, it is noteworthy that university-based sociologists are beginning to cluster along significant areas of research to discuss with social scientists in other universities, NGOs, and in government and to see the value of linking with other actors in the field. More importantly, they are now beginning to conceptualize new modes of organizing teaching and research in the university and are pressing for much needed changes.

Implicitly, the courses taught at the Department of Sociology of the University of the Philippines are gauged by their success in imparting a "sociological imagination" — that quality of mind which enables the possessor to see the interrelationships of biography, history, and the social structure and in moving easily from the micro to the macro levels and from the abstract to the concrete. The promise of the discipline which has sustained us has been lost among the more brilliant minds of the next generation.¹³ It is our fervent hope that the multiple research and theorizing projects of communities of sociologists in the 1990s will revitalize the discipline and fulfill its promise to the future sociologists who will carry the torch to the 21st century.

13. The survey of sociology teachers in 1985 revealed that teachers in all the regions considered poor quality students to be a major problem (*Philippine Sociological Review* 1987). The recent realization among graduates that sociology may after all be an excellent preparation for law school seems to be improving the situation.

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COMMENTS

Cynthia's [Dr. Cynthia Rose Bautista] reflections on Philippine sociology in the 1990s are perceptive and provocative. The first five pages of her paper trace the road travelled by sociology in the last two eventful decades — from the 1970s divisions and debates on the polar models in sociology; functionalism vs. conflict/Marxist model of society; dependency vs. modernization theories; to the greater pluralism and convergence of theoretical perspectives in the 1990s.

I like the broad sweep that Cynthia made. Of the three points she raised, five pages were devoted to the first point: on convergence. To me, her discussion was like going back to memory lane. Back in the 1970s, many of us had been participants in debates and had witnessed the divisions and polarization in the university's social science community in particular and in the country in general. How she traced the shift from sociologists' debates on models (conflict versus modernization models) in the past to greater pluralism and convergence of theoretical perspectives in the 1990s was very interesting.

I would like to add that the experiences gained by the community has also imbued Philippine social scientists with a more focused view of reality. I myself feel a renewed confidence in pursuing our new roles. The debates between the theoretician and the practitioner, and the researcher and the academician on whether the academician should be immersed in the realities of Philippine society or not have ended. There is now a convergence in terms of the role of sociologists and social scientists.

Cynthia discussed very briefly her second point, given her time constraints. I suggest that she further develop the key issues here, namely, the increasing interdisciplinary framework, the broader definition of sociological problems and the blurring of lines between basic and applied fields.

A discussion of the institutional structure of the sociology discipline in particular and the academic setting in general may help identify the obstacles that constrain effective operationalization of some of the suggestions found at the latter part of her paper. As Cynthia pointed out, a major challenge facing sociology is the issue of how to refine and develop the theories anchored on Philippine realities. She admitted that in this area, work has been increasingly slow. I realize that even within the University of the Philippines, academic sociologists are actually dispersed in various applied fields. For instance, you have sociologists in community development, public administration, population studies, women studies, communication, agricultural education and even nursing.

I do not know about the other fields at UP-Los Baños but during my student days, rural sociology as a subject was never called as such. It was offered as an agricultural education course. When I took my masteral degree in the university, we were taught about rural sociology, but the degree was in agricultural education.

This has to do with UP's so-called turf considerations. Within the academic setting itself, there are courses offered in other fields with different names but are really courses in sociology if we look at the content. To me, that will limit the access of students to some of these course offerings. But I think there is a rule in the university that says courses that are not in sociology cannot have a sociology title. We have been stuck with this rule over the last decades. It is time we look at these turf considerations because I feel that linkages are critical if we are to take on the challenges posed in Cynthia's paper. I do not think we can — what she says — “stimulate theoretical production” if we keep de-linking these communities of sociologists. We have to link the different fields of specialization because some of the experiences Cynthia mentioned and the raw data and materials are found in these other fields. In fact, these materials are in a variety of forms,

both oral and written. There are notes, diaries, minutes and proceedings waiting to be systematically transformed so that sociological theories can be refined and developed. In research on community development, for example, there are stocks of materials on participatory development culled from the experiences of the UP College of Social Work and Community Development in participatory research, political advocacy and community organizing. These experiences are a rich source for the development of sociological theories:

I would like to suggest some of the appropriate, realistic and creative forms of collaboration and linkages among sociologists within and outside the university. Let me outline these linkages:

1. within academe

- among sociologists in different specialized fields
- among social scientists across disciplines
- among sociologists and other social scientists across academic settings within and outside Metro Manila

2. between academic sociologists and practitioners in government, NGOs and grassroots or people's organizations

The Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC) provides the organizational umbrella to promote greater collaboration among social scientists. The Philippine Sociological Society can also facilitate the linkages between academic sociologists and practitioners so that the raw materials which abound in a variety of forms — diaries, proceedings of seminars and conferences, organizational records and other forms of NGO and PO documentation — can be analyzed and transformed systematically to advance societal theories.

Cynthia also talked about paradigm shifts and some of the emerging alternative paradigms. I feel that there is a need to further explore and advance the alternative paradigms, including those that were previously aborted such as the participatory development program and the people

program of the PSSC. Upcoming sociologists should be challenged to elaborate, test and validate some of these emerging alternatives.

A new form of theorizing has been suggested by a feminist sociologist. She opines that theorizing "is a continuous, conscientious process of collective thinking where the experiences of women are validated not as each one's individual phenomenon, but as a social one ... An important ingredient is participation in the women's movement where dialogue and systematic reflection in themselves are considered indispensable goals."

Finally, I congratulate Cynthia once more for her excellent paper and reflections.

Highlights of Discussion

PHILIPPINE SOCIOLOGY IN THE 1990s

There have been a lot of debates on development paradigms where sociologists figured significantly. Some might have thought that sociologists are “dabbling” in economics or other fields that are beyond their scope of expertise. This observation, however, is quite misplaced. There is certainly no need for “dabbling” since there are many opportunities for sociologists and economists and other social scientists to work together and learn from each other.

Economics is a possible source of enrichment for sociologists. There are new developments in economic theory that have substantial implications on sociology. The shift in economic theories from neoclassical to those involving transaction costs, for instance, may stir the structural bias of many, if not all, sociologists toward a more behavioralist view of social change and social responses to external disturbances. On the other hand, linking with sociologists would help economists get a better understanding of groups and communities. This would have a significant impact on economic policies.

For instance, economists view labor unions as organizations with bargaining tools. However, if we bring in sociologists into our inquiry, we begin to look at how individuals interact with one another and with the firm in order to internalize and smoothen the adjustment processes associated with change.

Sociology as a profession and field of study has undergone changes over the decades. Immediately after the second World War, the proponents of the empirical approach to research began to argue for its benefit. At that time, everyone was commenting on the society but was not bringing a

certain order or discipline in the analysis of society. The empiricists therefore argued that one cannot simply assume events to be true. Rather, one has to hypothesize, test the hypotheses and discover new ones in order to strengthen or debunk certain theories about society. Since the 1970s, there emerged some committed sociologists who moved toward the applied field in the micro level in their bid to effect social change. Meanwhile, in the 1980s, the dichotomy between applied and basic research, and the macro and micro analysts has somewhat blurred. Participatory research became a very promising alternative. Today in the 1990s, sociologists are also talking about the cluster concept whereby graduate programs in sociology could move from its traditional scope toward issue-oriented topics such as issues on family, environment, migration, and health, among others.

Those outside the purview of sociology find that the strength of sociologists lies in their appreciation of institutions and understanding of people. They can effect the needed change if they are able to strike a balance between fundamental research and applied research. Sociologists need to undertake fundamental basic research in order to know more so that they can come up with policy recommendations. However, the approach to basic research should not be the way it was done before, i.e., scientists ensconced in ivory towers. Instead, there ought to be a lot of institutional linkages and immersion. The sociologists should also pursue applied research for it is the stimulus for theorizing. They need to interact with people and get their feel about issues and policies, or at the very least, link with institutions like nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organization (POs) which often interact with people.

Finally, the dilemma of sociologists and other researchers with regard to the dichotomy between fundamental and applied research, between the theory-oriented and empirical approach seems to apply only to those based in Metro Manila. If one travels to provincial colleges and universities, the problem is much less. For there, the sociologists are really immersed in doing research. They provide research data and at the same time develop, to some extent, the theories for their areas of study.