THE RHETORIC OF CO-MANAGEMENT IN PHILIPPINE FISHERIES

by

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<td>Bureau of Agricultural Statistics</td>
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<td>BFAR</td>
<td>Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources</td>
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<td>BFARMC</td>
<td>Barangay Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council</td>
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<td>LFARMC</td>
<td>Lakewide Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council</td>
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<td>LGU</td>
<td>Local Government Unit</td>
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<td>NFARMC</td>
<td>National Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council</td>
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<td>CBCRM</td>
<td>Community based Coastal Resources Management</td>
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<td>CRM</td>
<td>Coastal Resources Management</td>
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<td>CRMP</td>
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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the development of fisheries co-management in the Philippines. In the Philippines, the concept of co-management was first brought to the attention of local people by development agencies through their projects on community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM). After the legislation of the Local Government Code in 1991 and the Fisheries Code in 1998, co-management has not only directed the daily operation of local governments units but the daily life of local people, as well. CBCRM projects operated with the implicit aim to educate fishers about the physical environment. They also transferred technical skills to divert activities away from the sea to land (a vision of development highly influenced by scientific claims to reduce fishing efforts). Here lies the paradox. Co-management assumes decisions taken by local people emanate from “local voices,” yet CBCRM projects have been working hard under prescribed set of ideas. The academic literature is not different. Students of social institutions surrounding property, for example, are also engaged in the rhetorical use of the concept ‘community’ to advance the idea of co-management. Based on field research on a fishing island in Central Philippines, this thesis illustrates how economic policies of the government have forced inhabitants to shift from farming to fishing. The result is the current intensification of fishing efforts. This situation directs attention to the possible harm that the combination of Western or science-derived principles and government’s power to legislate might bring. Issues raised are discussed in light of emerging perspective from students of indigenous knowledge.
Introduction

Solutions to crisis in world fisheries now emphasize local organization, participation, and empowerment under the framework of co-management. Fisheries co-management is defined as a dynamic partnership between the government and the fishers where the fishers' interests and capacities are complemented by the government's legislative powers (Pinkerton 1989; Berkes and Pomeroy 1997). In the Philippines, the concept of co-management was first brought to the attention of local people by development agencies in their use of phrases “tri-sectoral approach” and “collaborative project.” Fisheries co-management, specifically, has evolved from community-based coastal resources management projects (CBCRM) where approximately one hundred were operating between 1984 to 1994 (Pomeroy and Carlos 1997). After the legislation of the Local Government Code in 1991 and the Fisheries Code in 1998, the framework of co-management has not only directed the daily operation of local governments but the daily life of local people, as well.

Scientific assessments conducted on the Philippine waters claim that fishing effort must be reduced. To meet this target requires the elimination of about 12 per cent commercial fishers (38,392 fishers) and 40 per cent small-scale fishers (158,865 fishers) (Israel and Banzon 1997). The coordinators of CBCRM projects were mostly biologists and development agencies and, as a result, CBCRM efforts were directed towards resource conservation, rehabilitation, environmental education, and the provision of livelihood. Here lies the paradox. Co-management presupposes that decisions taken by local people emanate from the crystallization of “local voices,” yet CBCRM projects have been working hard under prescribed set of ideas to divert activity away from sea to land. The general aim of this thesis is to trace the development of co-management in the
Philippines. Here, I discuss fisheries co-management and CBCRM together, as part of the same process. I argue that they cannot be separated because the other half of co-management, which is about the empowerment of “local voices,” solely rests upon CBCRM principles. Based on interviews conducted on one tiny island in Central Philippines, this thesis also illustrates how government policies have influenced the inhabitants’ shift from farming to fishing, which resulted in the increased of fishing efforts. This particular situation directs attention to possible harm that the combination of government policies and Western or science-derived principles might bring.

The fisheries have a significant contribution to the national economy of the Philippines, contributing about five per cent to the Gross National Product. They provide approximately two-thirds of the country’s demand for animal protein (Bureau of Agricultural Research 1991). Categories of fishing differ worldwide, but the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 clearly classifies municipal fishers to be those operating within waters 15 kilometers from the coastline using fishing vessels of three gross tons or less, or those not requiring the use of fishing vessels. In the literature, municipal fishers are also known as ‘small scale,’ ‘artisanal,’ ‘subsistence,’ and ‘traditional.’ While commercial fishing is divided into three categories depending on technical attributes. The Philippines is classified a Third World country in Southeast Asia with a population close to 70 million in 1996. Out of the one million Filipino people engaged in fisheries, 36 per cent are in municipal fisheries, 29 per cent in commercial fisheries, 27 per cent in aquaculture, and eight per cent in inland fisheries (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources 1991).

After the Second World War, the Philippine government embarked in an intensive campaign to develop the fisheries, particularly hoping that small-scale fishers use
motorized boats, instead of canoes. With financial support from developed countries, there was massive construction of fish ports and markets. The dramatic increase of people dependent on the sea since then, both for income and food, is captured in the annual statistics published by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR). Similar statistical data about the Philippine fisheries has been used by CBCRM projects now to base the assumption that Philippine fisheries are, indeed, overexploited. To enhance their argument, bio-economic indexes, such as “increasing population” and “depressed economy” are often added. This reductionist method reflects a common Western practice that separates livelihood from social life, labour from household, and ‘nature’ from ‘culture.’ It is not my intention to deconstruct the enthusiasm now shared among policy makers, development agencies, scientists, and local people in the Philippines. Rather, I highlight the constructed concept of fisheries degradation and the rhetoric of local participation and the ways they are carried into the co-management framework. Here, I argue that studies with direct impact to local people’s lives must take into consideration the oceanic divide between rhetoric and practice. By not doing so will certainly bring more danger than opportunities.

My thesis follows this outline: I begin with the field data. To clearly illustrate the shift from farming to fishing and the consequent intensification of fishing efforts, I included a fairly detailed description on how these activities were conducted. I divided this section into three parts: first, squid fishing at present; second, corn farming and short-term farm labour in the mainland from the early 1900s to around late 1960s and; third, the proliferation of commercial fishing that started in the 1960s. The second section is about the materials produced by students of social institutions, particularly surrounding the issue of property rights. Anthropologists active in this work have
argued against Garrett Hardin’s (1968) idea of privatization but their arguments seem to follow the same path. This stems, I argue, from their adherence to a rigid identification of ‘community,’ as basis for co-management and good fisheries management. This section also contains an analysis of co-management principles following a discussion of the recent legislation of the Local Government Code and the Fisheries Code. Similar to anthropologists, the work of development agencies is about the construction of communities from which to frame the concept of development. Finally, a discussion of larger issues confronting the project of fisheries management. This section is more than a summary where I explore the possibility of incorporating local knowledge in the educational curriculum as one possible strategy to start the project on fisheries management. This section is likewise informed by my case study.

Research Context

From 1994 to 1996, I undertook intermittent fieldwork on one tiny island located on the northeast part of Panay, Central Philippines. With a land area of about 50 hectares, the island often goes unnoticed amidst the other tiny islands that dot the Visayan Sea (Map 1). The Visayan Sea is famous for its fishing grounds and has been a consistent top fish producer in the Philippines. It is predominantly coralline and, therefore, characterized by a high degree of species diversity, which to scientists suggest sensitivity to stress and human activity. Geographically, the research site is divided into two sections: the baryu ‘main’ and the sitio ‘a part of.’ Due to their distance from one another, I decided to limit my interviews in the baryu where there are 55 houses. The sitio is much smaller with 38 houses and only one dominant family. There are nine, sometimes fifteen, convenience stores, three drinking wells, a basketball court, a
primary school, and lots of coconut trees. Inhabitants grow a few fruit trees and rootcrops for consumption.

I had the chance to first visit this island in 1992 when I worked as research assistant in the project Visayas Maritime Anthropological Studies. In 1994, I took a job in the Aquaculture Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, which funded me to do some more interviews on this island. Working for an institution requires more than just diligence. I tried to collect as much statistical data as I could. Together with the household survey, I sought secondary materials from the municipal office. The municipal assessor’s office has a birth registry dating from 1908 which contains information about the parents of the child, their occupations, and number of live siblings. Recent entries, however, are not as detailed as the earlier ones. The municipal agriculture office is supposed to conduct an inventory of fish catch within its administrative jurisdiction. But numbers in its records are not consistent, with the phrase, “same as last year’s” written all over. Indeed, monitoring fish catch is a rigorous task, especially for the understaffed and under-funded municipal offices. In these particular instances, the quantitative work of counting seems senseless.

The situation is much different in the field where I found myself drifting, if not drowning, with numerous interesting, yet conflicting, accounts from informants. The initial period of fieldwork was surely the most exciting and the most difficult. It was so hard for me at first to elicit information, even about the number of household members. On the island, I stayed in the house of Tio Gavino and Tia Auring, a couple both in their 60s. A faculty member from a local college of fisheries in the mainland, where I affiliated myself, introduced me to them. Later on, I did not have a problem with the household survey but, at the same time, informants directed my attention away from it.
to "more important" issues in the village. After I finished collecting the household survey, I learned to listen attentively to what my informants said about certain events. Other than the household survey that I zealously conducted for a month, the case study is largely based on long conversations with a few inhabitants on the island.

**Squid fishers**

Based on my household survey, 32 male household heads, out of 55, consider themselves to be solely engaged in squid fishing. The other 23 fishers engage in squid fishing together with other forms of fishing, such as crab fishing or crewing in trawler boats. The number of fishers rises during weekends when teen-age boys undertake nearshore fishing using baited hooks to add to their school allowance.

All men on the island now own a canoe while one of four fishers owns an inboard engine boat. The main catch, a neritic type of squid (*Loligo*), dwells inshore so getting oneself a motorized boat is not really a priority. Squid fishing is operated simultaneously with hook-and-line fishing for demersals. There are also crab fishers but very few, as it requires more capital. Squid has been a permanent feature of the island's resources but dry squid did not have buyer until 1985. Some fishers have observed that there has been a recent outburst of squid in their waters, but other fishers believe that the recent shift to squid fishing is a consequence of the proliferation of traders. Based on fish catch data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), worldwide demand for cephalopods has dramatically increased since the early 1980s. Cephalopods rank the third among marine species for export.

Most fishers prefer squid fishing because of its minimal cost and, furthermore, it does not entail much hard work as other forms of fishing. A squid can be caught using
a scoop net or a jig line. An average of 25 kilograms of squid could be baited in a day during the *kuchicha* 'peak season,' lasting from August to mid-October and then April until the first weeks of June. But squid has its low season, too, the time when they migrate offshore for colder waters. On the island, this season is referred to as *taggurutom* "period of hunger."

During the first three months of the lean season, only demersals can be caught near the island. However, in three hours time, a fisher is lucky if he could get one piece of *bansa,* a large demersal. But a variety of fishing techniques appears at this time and women, too, engage in other activities for added income. Lean season is the time when women have to be creative and wise with regards to household budget. A few employ themselves as housemaids in the mainland. Other women collect seaweed that grows in the rocky portions of the coast. A housewife in her mid 30s with two young children, Nelia said that it is her responsibility to feed her family three times a day even if the husband arrives home empty-handed from fishing. Convenience stores do provide loans but only after some time. In particular, it is the woman’s responsibility to place cooked rice on the dining table every mealtime. Having rice is enough to assure the family that everything is well. A woman who can provide rice on the table throughout the lean season is considered a good housewife.

Generally, women do not engage in fishing. But they accompany their husbands when fish and squid are plenty. More than helping their husbands, women say that they do it out of fun. But they do numerous tasks related to fishing. The task of a woman married to a squid fisher starts right after the husband hands his catch to her. Sometimes, she helps the husband carry the canoe ashore. Houses on the island are asymmetrically lined facing the sea and, in this way, women can easily spot their
approaching husbands. Likewise, it is the wife’s responsibility to do the tedious task of cleaning fresh squid, sun-dry them, as well as guard them from hungry cats roaming around. Dry squid are stored for about a week, before they are sold to the trader.

While there is so much work for women in squid fishing, there is almost none in crab fishing and, to a lesser degree, in trawler fishing. In crab fishing, where there is usually a crew of three, the crew themselves carry their catch and boats ashore. In the case of trawlers, the whole village meets the crew members to ask for a piece or two of fish for consumption.

One can hardly find fishers on the island during the lean season. In the first month of this season, they make a sojourn to an island offshore in pursuit of squid. Motorized boats are used in this trip. But since the number of motorized boats are limited on the island, fishers form themselves into a group of four or five around one who owns a boat. Canoes are attached to the boat and this is called tabid ‘tow.’ The boat owner takes a third of the catch of every canoe that is attached to it. Most often, teen-age girls go with fishers in this sojourn to sell tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and cooked food. It is rare for fishers to stay in sojourn for more than two weeks even if squid is known to be plentiful for at least three months. Life on the flat island where they camp is miserable. The island does not have a source for drinking water and fishers sleep under makeshift huts. On top of these complaints, anxiety is heightened both for fishers and their families that are left behind. Fishers harbor fears that their homes will be looted. Only women, old folks, and children are home at this time.

There are times when the lean season extends for another month. When this happens, men are left with no other option but enlist themselves in trawler boats. Generally, fishers on the island do not like to work for a boat-owner for various reasons.
They say working under a “boss” is difficult. Moreover, they find the sharing system unfair and claim that the boat-owner exploits them by taking advantage of the lean season.

Women, during lean times, would go to nearby farming villages in the mainland to exchange their dry fish with rice, root crops, and vegetables. They sell them too, but since these fish are of inferior quality, based on market standards, that women prefer to exchange. Such exchanges are confined in villages where they have close relatives. Most marriages on the island are virilocal with women coming from nearby farming villages on the mainland. Inhabitants use the English word ‘barter’ for this practice and sometimes the Hiligaynon baylo ‘to exchange with.’ My interviews reveal that it is not a new practice but engaged in at the time of the first settlers.

**Changing livelihood**

Despite the importance of the fisheries to the economy of the Philippines, a larger percentage of historical documents talk about farmers and landowners, with fishers relegated to the background. There are, however, several excellent discussions about inter-island migration in the country that reveal certain historical attention to fishing (Echaúz 1978; Spoehr 1980; McCoy 1982; Veloro 1994). The island is only 50 hectares in area, but in the past, two-storey houses were needed to accommodate the surplus in corn harvest. Corn is harvested around August, the period of slack in the mainland, when rice has to wait for two more months to be ready for harvest. During the first four to five months when the rice plant is maturing, there is practically no work in the fields so that many farmers go to upland areas where the harvest is done earlier. Tio Gavino
remembers that when he was young his father conscripted extra labor to help them to harvest their corn. Their relatives from mainland would usually come to help.

In the Philippines, rice is the staple but corn is consumed part of the year in some places due to the shortage of rice. However corn farming ceased to be the main livelihood on the island just after the Second World War. Responding to the tremendous demand for copra in the export market, the government in the 1950s embarked on a series of development programs to grow coconut. An enterprising young man from the capital city came to live on the island and bought almost a quarter of the island. He planted coconuts on the beach and on the hill. Tia Didi, who is in her early 80s now, said "ginpatay niya ang mais" "it killed the corn," referring to the planting of coconuts. For those who have a large land area, the transformation did not seem radical and even sometimes praised. Tio Jose remembers his regular trips to Iloilo City, the province's capital, after every three months to sell his copra to a Chinese buyer there. The construction of the coastal road from the northeast part of Panay to the capital city has been started by then and the trips never burdened Tio Jose. The income from copra is very good, he said, but it is frustrating that its price has never been steady since he shifted to coconut.

The loss of corn has affected the supply of rice for inhabitants on the island. But there were still other sources of rice. Tia Auring remembers the time when, together with other women, she would harvest rice in the mainland. This happened before the Green Revolution in the 1960s. Generally, a overseer kabo of a large farm in the mainland recruits women, such as Tia Auring. If these women have proven themselves to be hardworking, they are promised work for the next harvest season. In one trip, Tia Auring harvested for seven consecutive days and earned six libon of rice for her
labour. To complement this income, she brought with her dry fish from her husband’s catch to sell or exchange with rice. Very few men on the island have once tried this work. The work employs *kayug* ‘handknife’ that, if one is not adept, is dangerous.

Before her marriage, *Tia* Auring lived in a farming village in the neighboring province of Capiz and very well knows how to use a handknife. With Green Revolution and its semi-dwarf hybrid rice varieties, the harvest tool is changed to sickle.

Harvesters from the island are not skilled in the use of the sickle and, again, deprived of rice. But the period is not solely remembered by inhabitants for what it took away from them. Relations among harvesters are not confined to the harvest period but sustained throughout the year. For example, harvesters would visit each other during the celebration of the annual *fiesta*. In the Philippines, a young lady is usually crowned the *fiesta* queen to culminate the event. In small villages, selection is conducted by raising money. The contestant who raises the most amount gets to be crowned. Without a large network, the competition would not be as exciting as how informants would narrate it. Competitors are drawn from other places where harvesting usually takes place, as well as the money to support them.

My interest in the island revolved around its fisheries and my interviews were all about it. My informants, on the other hand, answered all my inquiries about fishing by telling me about farming. In the same manner that when I asked one housewife how she survived the lean season, she explained to me the value of rice. Takao Yano (1994) has incorporated this particular insight in his model of small-scale fisheries in Panay. Yano believes that farming and fishing in this region are both conducted in a peasant-like manner and, therefore, any discussion of fishing must certainly take farming into account.
Intensification of fishing effort

Alexander Spoehr (1980) has cogently discussed the historic past of the rise of fishing towns, and later fishing ports, in the Philippines. He has shown that, historically, there have been distinct fishing grounds in the country that small-scale fishers make sojourn to in particular periods of the year. Spoehr has marveled at how the Visayan fishers have made technical innovations that enabled them to travel throughout the country in search for better fishing grounds. The back-and-forth sojourn to these fishing grounds has resulted in the rise of fishing towns, which David Szanton (1971) and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (1982) have documented in the case of Estancia, fondly referred to as Alaska of the Philippines.

My research site has been one of the many favorite places to which Visayan fishers travel. It was given the independent status of a barangay 'village' in 1968. After it became a permanent settlement, around early 1900s, the number of sojourns dwindled. I once met a group of pearl divers from Cebu Province, a place of some distance from this island, who said that their parents used to tell stories about this tiny island close to Pan de Azucar\(^\text{17}\) where fishing camps were set. The area was said to be rich in demersal species.\(^\text{18}\) This is corroborated by the stories of my host, Tio Gavino, who remembers that, as a young boy he witnessed groups of sojourners from Cebu that frequented the island. Pearl divers form Mindanao, further South, also used to come. But Tio Gavino has not seen them anymore and, when he was growing, saw more the coming of large commercial fishing vessels. The waters that surround the island are ideal for the operation of medium-sized trawlers (Flores 1974). Convenience stores mushroomed in the 1970s, for example, to supply the needs of the crew in these trawlers, mostly liquor.
and tobacco. At that time, an average of ten to fifteen trawlers would dock on the island in a week’s time. But the fisheries of the island have not developed into what the Bureau of Fisheries calls commercial. However inhabitants talk of their waters to be “pasadero sa isda” or “rich in fish.”

With the shift of livelihood from farming to fishing, a dramatic increase in fishing effort is evident. Furthermore, the lucrative price of dry squid in the market now has kept squid fishers busy. Nonetheless, fishers and their households are actively involved in making choices and allocating their labour power even if this occurs within a context that is tightly controlled and structured by government policy. My argument is that the government has gradually diminished coastal people’s access to sources of rice, which then left them little opportunity but to turn to the sea to support their need both for food and income. This has had the result of making fishers more vulnerable to external forces, such as government policy or global market forces. In the past coastal people both could rely on both the land and sea to sustain them. Now, they are locked more tightly to the sea and thus with the increasing price of rice in the market the necessarily have to catch more squid to survive.

Fishers place great hope on the chance of getting lucky. A good catch may be attributed to the fisher’s in-depth knowledge of fishing grounds and skill but it is also attributed to his luck. Luck or swerte, however, does not just spring out of nowhere but must be worked out. Some fishers believe that by tearing a tiny piece of the clothing worn by the wooden images of Catholic saints, those that are paraded during Catholic ceremonies, would bring them good catch. Other than this, I have noticed small stones, tree barks, and other indistinguishable items that fishers place inside a bottle and tuck on one corner of the canoe. Fishing has always been based on chance or patsamba
tsamba as fishers would describe it. Tsamba is the local term for being lucky. It is this single feature of fishing, I think, that makes fishers more sensitive to their environment.

A magic charm does not have power if the fisher himself does not show respect to life forms that live on the sea. Fishers believe that a poor catch is an indication of fish getting accustomed to the bait that they could not be fooled anymore. Human attributes are projected to marine life forms. Sometimes, fishers explain their poor catch in a joking manner, such as the fish may be shy, hiding, or simply tired. More interesting to me is the comment once made by a fisher of his continuing poor catch that he might have done something wrong not just to the fish but other people as well. It is common for fishers to accept their bad luck, but this is an acceptance coupled with personal recollection. The story of Tio Gavino seems apt to end this section. The island, according Tio Gavino is named after a bivalve, which they call botlog. This shell used to be abundant on the island before a teenage girl tried to gather more than what his basket could carry. Her greediness has caused its disappearance. This is a myth that Tio Gavino introduces with the usual sang una “before,” sang waay pa ako natawu “when I was not yet born,” and continues it with one event, one of those rare moments when God sets the low tide to remain for days.

It was one of those days when God gives coast-people the chance to gather all kinds of fish, seaweed, and shells such as botlog. There was this young girl who tirelessly gathered all these on the first, second, and the days that followed. Tio Gavino is not certain as to the exact number of days that the low tide has remained but, after a few days, it seems evident that God has decided to end it and told the villagers to get ready for soon the tide will surge. The people having filled their baskets, one by one, followed the order and returned home. But this young girl, now far from the coast and obviously has noticed the tide coming in, kept on saying to herself “isa na lang, isa na lang” “this is the last, this is the last.” Finally she decided to stop but it was too late, even if she runs. The water moves fast and in a split second swallowed the girl. After the incident, the people stopped experiencing prolonged low tides and were not again given the chance to gather fish and shells as much as they could.
Several marine species have been rare to find since then, and one of them is the *botlog* shell.

This story is not unique to *botlog* shell and to this island. I have heard a similar story from a lady shaman in another province on the mainland.

**Constructing community**

So far, students of social institutions surrounding property have been the most enthusiastic about fisheries management. Initially interested in traditional resource management systems and then in the transformation of communal property rights to open access, they now emphasize issues of resiliency and sustainability. Particularly, they try to determine “why some communities succeed in preventing or ameliorating problems in the use and management of common resources and others do not” (McCay and Jentoft 1998:25; see also Pinkerton 1989; Ostrom 1990; Jentoft and McCay 1995; Jentoft *et al.* 1998; Jentoft 2000). The shift in interest among students of social institutions has left a void in the study of indigenous knowledge in fisheries (Johannes and Jentoft 1998:25; see also Pinkerton 1989; Ostrom 1990; Jentoft and McCay 1995; Jentoft *et al.* 1998; Jentoft 2000). The shift in interest among students of social institutions has left a void in the study of indigenous knowledge in fisheries (Johannes *et al.* 2000). Furthermore, students of social institutions argue for a more complex perspective on human-environment relations grounded in ethnography that underscores careful specification of property rights and systems of resource use.

Now consider what this list of characteristics leaves out. The most obvious omission is the simple fact that social life is not calculated, premeditated, or bounded. Students of social institutions argue that community values must be emphasized as well as the power of historical analysis to understand processes that have led to what they call ‘community failure.’ Finding clear boundaries that enclose a community is not easy and, again, social life is not calculated. Anthony Cohen (1986) argues that communities
are symbolically constructed where boundaries, such as ‘we’ versus ‘them’ shift constantly. In my interviews, I learned that the idea of community is situationally defined and constantly re-negotiated. As Mark Nuttal (1992) has shown, researchers usually have a different image of a community from that of local people. Students of social institutions seem to have found rhetorical value in the concept of community. They tend to use it as object of analysis whose form and processes produce facts and data for social researchers to analyze the causes of community failure and success, or at least a telling index of it.

The enterprise of constructing a community does not come out of nowhere and can be traced to earlier sociological discourse about the term ‘society.’ In social sciences, there persists the evolutionary idea that community becomes more complex, to follow Ferdinand Tönnies, the *gemeinschaft* and *gesselschaft*. Even until now, anthropological discussions seem reluctant to give up this particular insight and continue to analyze capitalism, modernization, and money as the driving forces for change that nourished the historical separation between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ (Parry and Bloch 1989). In a recent article, Svein Jentoft (2000) has raised concerns that ‘community’ is the ‘missing link’ in fisheries management. At the heart of Jentoft’s comment is the assertion that, compared with economists and biologists, anthropologists are late comers to studies of fisheries management that obviously neglect ideas of community. Canadian resource economist H. Scott Gordon tried to incorporate human activity in his bio-economic theory that first appeared in the *Journal of Political Economy* in 1954. Particularly interested in the overexploitation of common-property resources, such as fisheries, he claims to have been the first to bring economic principles to fisheries biology. Before the 1950s, fisheries management has been the sole concern of biologists where
economic methods have been roughly employed. However, Gordon’s imagination of human fishers is limited to his rhetorical use of them as the source of exploitation.

Over the years, discussions about fisheries management have remained the domain of economists and biologists and no dramatic addition to Gordon’s theory was made until American biologist Garrett Hardin wrote his paper “The Tragedy of the Commons” in *Science* in 1968. The six-page article illustrates the Malthusian view that unrestricted freedom to produce children eventually will result in population explosion and overexploitation of limited resources. Other than adding the economic insight of marginal utility, Hardin has not really offered fresh perspectives about fisheries management from that of Gordon’s work. The importance of this work, however, rests on the debate that it actively drew from critics, particularly addressing the social institutions of property. Furthermore, environmentalism or ‘green talk’ started to gain worldwide support in the 1970s. This broader social movement has created the context within which theories such as Hardin’s came to be supported by many governments, particularly in the West.\(^{20}\)

Hardin’s thesis popularized the notion that privatization is the key solution to environmental problems. Students of social institutions have blamed Hardin for not recognizing the social nature of property relations (McCay and Acheson 1987).\(^{21}\) But they acknowledge his insightful move to highlight individual values from societal concerns. But social theorists are not satisfied and criticized Hardin for failure to consider the ‘social contract’ that binds individuals (Collings 1997:16). Cultural ecologists in the past, such as Julian Steward (1955), Roy Rappaport (1968) and Marvin Harris (1977) have discussed relations between social systems and the environment. But as Gísli Pálsson (1991) has suggested, overemphasis on this connection removes social
life from the center of inquiry. Pálsson, on the other hand, has cogently emphasized the historical context of social relations. Dismantling all forms of boundary, Tim Ingold’s criticism of social anthropology, in general, is that it has,

explicitly defined the person as its object of study, but only by setting itself up in opposition to a biology of organisms, thereby driving a wedge into the human being, splitting it irrevocably into two mutually exclusive parts – the one individual – the other social. The result has been to perpetuate a separation between humanity and nature that has had fateful consequences in the history of western civilization. The most urgent task for contemporary anthropology is to overcome this separation, and to re-embed the human subject within the continuum of organic life (1990:224).

There is an emerging body of work now that prefers to analyze social life as part of the ‘organic life’ that Ingold alluded to. In North America and Europe, ethnographic work in recent years focus on the study of indigenous knowledge using the theory of practice to frame understanding and analysis (Ellen et al. 2000; Cruikshank 1998; Sillitoe 1998; Scott 1998; Wynne 1996; Fairhead and Leach 1996). These works share the insight that only in acknowledging indigenous or local people and their knowledge of the physical environment can we learn more about human-animal or human-environmental relations, a salient point to consider if discussions in fisheries management will prosper. Furthermore, this perspective promises a smoother path to empowerment (Fienup-Riordan 1996).

While claims to tradition and cultural identity are common in North America now, the national situation in the Philippine fisheries has not reached the stage where local people magnify tradition and culture to bargain with the government. 22 There have been small and scattered, yet excellent, cases though, such as the case of milkfish fry gatherers whose livelihood has been seriously jeopardized by the government’s policy to place all coastal waters under individual milkfish fry concessionaire. 23 Milkfish fry gatherers in Antique, Central Philippines struggled for almost three decades where they
staged public demonstrations and filed court cases for the government to open the coastal waters. But before the legal battles took place, milkfish fry gatherers had regular clashes with armed guards hired by the concessionaire to oversee the gathering operation. Similar to the cornerstone ideas of CBCRM and co-management, the government's move to place coastal waters under the *de jure* ownership of a concessionaire has also been based on the ethic of conservation and increased revenue for the local government. This case poses a good lesson and reminder to the government.

**Facts and Rhetoric: the development of CBCRM**

After the United Nations' Convention in 1992 that produced the *Agenda 21*, national and international forums have been formed to implement its call for sustainable development. One recent survey reveals that in 1993 alone 56 coastal nations and states worldwide initiated coastal management, up from 13 in 1974 (Sorensen 1997 in Olsen and Christie 2000). Like previous documents produced by multilateral development organizations, the *Agenda 21* is just a means to institutionalize what has already been done.

The Philippine government may be previously unaware of the phrase sustainable development but its prior development programs shared the same vision. For example, the 1975 Presidential Decree 704 contains basic guidelines on the conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries. But weak enforcement has always been its nagging problem. The lack of political will by previous governments has always been the source of irritation to those involved in fisheries projects. According to Theodore Panayotou (1985), studies of Philippine fisheries prior to 1980s are limited to its technical and
economic attributes, and lack any serious effort to develop a management scheme. As early as the 1960s, local scientists have already been made aware of the degradation problem (Pomeroy and Carlos 1997). However, the government continued to view the fisheries as source of economic revenue and research, until the mid 1980s, that were financed by the government was mostly to determine yield potentials of major seas within the country's 200-mile exclusive economic zone. For the Philippines now to host the largest number of recorded CBCRM initiatives throughout the world is, indeed, dramatic. A short discussion of the first CBCRM conducted in the Philippines – the Silliman University project is pertinent at this point.

The origin of contemporary fisheries management in the Philippines is usually attributed to a small project based in the Visayas that was started in 1974 by the Marine Laboratory of the Silliman University (Ferrer and Nozawa 1997). There were other institutions in the country interested in coastal resources management (CRM) at that time, such as the Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines (UPMSI) and International Center for Living Aquatic and Resource Management (ICLARM). Like the other projects, the Silliman project was conceived by biologists, particularly a biological and ecological study on coral reefs. While the other projects aimed to construct models about the reef fisheries, such as ICLARM, and enhancement of reef stocks in the case of UPMSI, the Silliman research team got involved with the local government and local community to realize their objectives (White 1979; Savina and White 1986; White 1989). Funding support from the Asia Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was secured in the early 1980s and replications to other islands were made by the Silliman project. In their later projects, community organization was given more importance and, here, NGOs
participated and came to work with the original members who were mainly from the biological sciences.

The most important lesson that came out of the Silliman project is that any effort toward fisheries management would never succeed until local communities are engaged (Savina and White 1986; Tobin and White 1992; White et al. 1994). In the case of the Silliman project, local participation has been gauged by the involvement of inhabitants in the fishers association, the Marine Management Committee, whose core group is described to be ‘fast learners’ and respected members of the community (Flores 1994:36). By the mid-1980s, the phrase community-based was added to CRM, the common title given to early projects on fisheries management. CBCRM as defined by Gary Newkirk and Rebecca Rivera is,

an integrated approach to area development. It is holistic in the sense that it responds to resolving conflicts over multiple resource use (and) attempts to integrate the sociopolitical and the economic aspects with the biophysical elements (1997:196).

Elmer Ferrer (1992:11) argues that it,

starts from the basic premise that people, the basic masses have the innate capacity to improve their quality of life and the problems confronting them can be overcome through their own efforts with some support from government and non-government development agencies.

That CBCRM is an interdisciplinary effort and sensitive to various aspects of the fisheries, not just scientific, is clear in these statements. There is also the overt intention to incorporate ‘local voices.’ But what has been oftentimes missed is the degree of external support that Elmer Ferrer alluded to in relation to the incorporation of these local voices. The work of NGOs has been particularly crucial in this regard. Philippine NGOs, by the way, are the third largest in the world (Clarke 1995). Working closely
with scientists, especially after the phrase community-based was added to CRM, NGOs have been tasked to educate local communities about the environment but they later metamorphosed into a more active engagement with local people. NGOs at this time advocated for a people-centered development of local control and self-reliance.\textsuperscript{28} David Korten (1987) has referred to present-day NGOs as ‘third generation,’ for distinctly working toward the attainment of ‘micro-policy reforms,’ greater autonomy for local people, and increased local participation in governance. Taking a historical and political science perspective, Gerald Clarke (1996:7) analyzes their work in the Philippines as a search for a ‘root and branch’ change in political institutions or ‘organizing the unorganized,’ a general characteristic of NGOs working in countries with very weak political parties and trade unions. Clarke’s claim is dubious considering that NGOs now seem to be comfortable working with the government.

In a recent collection of case studies about CBCRM projects, it has been noted that the scientific work of resource rehabilitation and conservation do not make sense to local people until coupled with community organizing (Ferrer \textit{et al.} 1997), a ‘knowledge-based’ approach (Newkirk and Rivera 1997:198). Following their close collaboration with scientists, NGO work was firmly rooted in the conservationist ethic of scientific management. Consequently, environmental education clearly identifies a legal fishing activity from its illegal counterpart.

While CBCRM is generally taken to follow the premise of local participation and empowerment, it likewise rests on a solid scientific argument that the fisheries are exploited to the point of collapse (Gomez 1980; Silvestre \textit{et al.} 1986; Dalzell \textit{et al.} 1987). Hence, subsequent economic studies have recommended a reduction in fishing effort by 12 per cent in the commercial fisheries (about 38,392 fishers) and 40 per cent
in the municipal fisheries (about 158,865 fishers) (Israel and Banzon 1997). As a result, most CBCRM projects seriously recommended a shift, drastic it may be, from fisheries-related to land-based livelihood programs to minimize further degradation. Interestingly, there was no serious attempt to question the authority of the Western objectivist view of reality.

**Alternative Livelihood Projects**

Upon entry to their area of work, it is common for CBCRM projects to inform local people about the possibilities of providing them with alternative livelihood projects. Based on the review of Pomeroy and Carlos (1997) of CBCRM from 1984 to 1994, scientific resource assessments, resource rehabilitation, and conservation are more popular with development agencies followed by the introduction of ‘non-extractive’ livelihood opportunities, also referred to as enterprise development in the NGO literature. These livelihood projects are interesting because they clearly manifest an outsider perspective and not one based on what local people wants.

The CBCRM literature has not been very clear with regards to the role of alternative livelihood projects in its overall agenda. There have been testimonies that local communities would not cooperate unless provided with financial support (Ferrer et al. 1997). Income diversification projects, in this case, are means to initiate local participation, a come-on for local people to get excited over the project. But the intention to educate them about scientific fisheries management is theoretically integrated in the provision of livelihood projects. With regards to environmental education, some research projects believe that they did succeed in this particular objective (Agbayani et al. 2000), though the real score has to wait for some years. The
project of income diversification perfectly matches the very general intention to initiate a shift from fisheries-related to land-based sources of income, which makes livelihood projects the end and not just the means.\textsuperscript{31}

In the case of the Silliman project, their preserved fish sanctuary has generated huge revenues. With the proliferation of CBCRM projects in the country years later, visits to the Silliman project called ‘exposure trips’ have tremendously increased. In almost all CBCRM projects, the conservation and preservation of fisheries resources have been packaged in this manner and, at the same time, highlighting the potential for tourism. The other more common alternative forms of livelihood are sea-ranching or coastal aquaculture, fish vending and cottage industries, such as mat weaving, where development agencies provide community members with seed money to start the project. For aquaculture projects, the species most often recommended by the aquaculture specialists are those with very high export value, such as crab, seaweed, abalone, and prawn. Aquaculture projects in the Philippines are based upon economic feasibility study where local production is matched with international demand. At the moment, research is being conducted on ways of finding indigenous feeds to these cultured species but effort to bolster scientific research on so-called diet replacement from other sources, such as protein, is as well high.

Unfortunately, project sites have problems keeping pace with the erratic market prices as well as demand of cultured species. Furthermore, they do not possess a sizeable amount of capital, for instance, unlike big financiers to store products when its price is low and wait for the proper timing when the demand is high. Furthermore, there are losses to investments that local communities cannot accommodate (Agbayani \textit{et al.} 2000:23). Cooperatives are ideal, but finding ways to make it work in the Philippines is
still a problem. The low income, if not loss, generated from these community-based efforts often results in frustration by community members.

**Local participation in co-management**

Following the legislation of the Local Government Code in 1991 and the Fisheries Code in 1998, fisheries co-management is now more than just a palliative measure to the problem of environmental degradation. Significantly, Filipino people do not yet fully understand key terms that such arrangement brings, such as ‘decentralization’ and ‘devolution’ after almost a decade (Villarin 1996). But the framework of co-management still bristles with difficulties both to national and local governments (Edwards and Hulme 1992). In the Philippines, local governments have set strict rules of compliance for NGOs and village-based people’s organizations (POs) before such arrangement can be accorded a legal status (Clarke 1995; Villarin 1991; Harland 1991; Korten 1987). Official pronouncements about co-management, however, have been full of wonderful promises. The principal author of the Local Government Code, Senator Aquilino Pimentel said,

> Since NGOs and POs are now considered partners of the local government units, the communities now possess a voice in the corridors of government, where decisions on socioeconomic planning are taken (in Villarin 1996:v).

The idea of a local government, particularly the rhetoric of getting to hear ‘local voices’ is not new in the Philippines and dates back to the time when the Americans colonized it. From early 1600s until 1898, the Philippines was a colony to Spain and, years later, was colonized again by the Americans. During the Second World War, the Philippines came under the Japanese Army. According to Gerald Clarke (1995:134), the idea of local governance emerged out of the American’s attempt to weaken the power of
the Spanish central state. Benedict Anderson (1988) believes that local government has also played a central role in the development of *cacique* or landlord democracy in the Philippines. Concretely, the legislation of the 1955 Barrio Council Law and the 1958 Barrio Charter Law, which consolidated the system of elite political domination.  

Similarly, the idea of local participation permeated the numerous publications of Ferdinand Marcos, Philippine president from 1965 to 1986. Marcos clearly laid this out in his vision of “The New Society,” and at the same time installed a military government. This is a common point that he emphasized throughout his numerous publications,

what is of paramount importance is the advent of participatory democracy. The masses will no longer wait until the controversies and issues of the day are crystallized for them. They crystallize the issues themselves, their opinions and sentiments are directly felt by the political authority (Marcos 1974:78 emphasis in the original).

Needless to say, attention is needed to know how the rhetoric of co-management is translated to practice. Present-day co-management promises a more people-centered framework, particularly with the involvement of NGOs. NGOs are expected to oversee and prevent the rise of another authoritarian government, such as that of Marcos'. Because of their reported success in educating, organizing, and empowering local people, NGO strategies are now recognized by the Local Government Code where they are given formal participation in Local Development Councils (LDCs) of every local government in the Philippines. Local Development Councils are consultative and advisory bodies that seat in the municipal council and, here, NGOs comprise one-fourth of the membership. All these structural arrangements are not really new in the Philippines (Villarin 1996) and have been going on since late 1976 (Tapales 1993), but
the costly campaign by development agencies, mostly foreign, to make them work is worthy of notice.\textsuperscript{33}

Political analysts in the Philippines all seem to agree that the Local Government Code is a product of the ‘democratic space’ created by the \textit{People’s Power Revolution} in 1986 that overthrew President Marcos (Brillantes and Tigno 1993) and installed Corazon Aquino as the first female president of the country. Governments after Marcos’ used the \textit{People’s Power Revolution} that lasted for four days to advance their political agenda. President Fidel Ramos who succeeded Corazon Aquino, for example, framed his structural reforms, which he called “Philippines 2000!” under the rhetoric of ‘people empowerment’ together with the two thumbs up sign. It was in 1995 during Ramos’ presidency, when the Social Reform Agenda (SRA) was enacted. This Social Reform Agenda created the village level Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (FARMC), which is an advisory body to the local government. FARMC is said to have set the stage for local people to become more active in the project of fisheries management and claim for more participation to matters that concern them. The elected village council together with the fishers composes the FARMC. Three years later with the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, a national-level FARMC has been created to serve as recommendatory and advisory body to the Department of Agriculture. Seventy five per cent of the regular members of the FARMCs are local fishers.

NGOs have been instrumental in the formation of village-level FARMCs. Their CBCRM work in villages, particularly empowering local people. The core group being the fishers’ association, but there are others, such as women’s group and fish traders’ association. Following the co-management framework, the FARMC must be carved out from the \textit{barangay} ‘village’ council where it is headed by the village captain. Under the
captain are seven councilmen. All of them are elected and each one holds a three-year term. Their function is mainly advisory but, recently, with passage of the Fisheries Code of 1998, they have other deputized tasks from the local government, such as policing coastal waters adjacent their village. The primary function of the village-level FARMC is to prepare and recommend plans and programs for integration into the local development plan, and recommend fisheries policies. But legislation still rests on the municipal head, the mayor. FARMCs can also be deputized to help in the enforcement of fishery laws. Based on Section 389 of the Fisheries Code of 1998, the village council members are permitted to carry handguns as licensed fish wardens to aid the provincial Bantay Dagat ‘Sea Guards.’

Behind massive campaigns for local participation and empowerment, it is interesting to know how far development agencies used rhetoric to advance their agenda. This is clearly illustrated by the responsibilities of FARMC,

Recognizing their familiarity with their fishing areas, (they) shall be consulted by the LGUs in the designation/establishment of zones for the construction of fish pen, fish cage, fish trap and other structures for the culture of fish and other products; in the determination of defined migration paths of migratory fish species and in the establishment and designation of areas for fishery refuge and sanctuaries, or for special or limited use for educational, research and/or special management purposes and in the determination of overfished areas or areas in danger of being overfished or in need of regeneration (Capricho et al. 2000:7)

Section 2, Article D of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 contains the same lame point. In one of its sections, for example, it acknowledges its responsibility,

to protect the right of fisherfolk, especially of the local community in the preferential use of the municipal waters. Such preferential use shall be based on, but not limited to, maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and total allowable catch (TAC) on the basis of resources and ecological conditions.
What development agencies call ‘local knowledge’ lies at the heart of all fisheries and development management plan. Several manuals and handbooks have been published to guide community organizers, people’s organizations, and amateur local researchers with regards to the collection of information using participatory methods (Walters et al. 1998; Pido et al 1996). A written fisheries management plan is generally the index used to determine the capacity of local communities to enter into co-management with the government and their ability for long-term planning. For this plan to succeed, it must rest on what local people know, planned, transcribed, and enforced (Berkes and Pomeroy 1997; Jentoft et al. 1998). This insight does not spring out of nowhere and partly informed by growing worldwide literature on indigenous knowledge (Usher 2000; Sillitoe 1998; Warren et al. 1996). But what for is the fisheries management plan?

First and foremost, it secures the national government that they are dealing with informed, knowledgeable local people with a definite plan on what to do and, more important of all, aware of the international call for sustainable development. However the most definitive output of the management plan is the rigid definition of territorial waters. The most crucial, but fiercely debated, section of the Philippine Fisheries Code is the rigid identification of the municipal waters. The Fisheries Code of 1998 expanded the municipal waters from seven kilometers as stipulated in the 1975 Presidential Decree 704 to fifteen kilometers from the shoreline. Local governments, however, are given the discretion to decide whether to proclaim the whole 15 kilometers as municipal waters or only up to 10.1 kilometers. Policy makers argue that some coastal waters in the Philippines are too deep for coastal fishers to utilize fully, an insight that was aired
during the deliberation of the Fisheries Code in the House of the Congress. Municipal waters,

include not only streams, lakes, inland bodies of water and tidal waters within the municipality, public forest, timber lands, forests reserves or fishery reserves, but also marine waters included between two (2) lines perpendicular to the general coastline from points where the boundary lines of the municipality touch the sea at low tide and a third line parallel with the general coastline including offshore islands and fifteen (15) kilometers from such coastline (Section 4, Article 58 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998).

I have witnessed numerous occasions where this technical definition of municipal waters has caused serious and heated debates among fishers. Coastal fishers argue both with commercial fishers and among themselves, particularly those from adjacent municipalities who share the same fishing grounds. NGOs have been very helpful in defining the boundaries within their sphere of activity. Competing claims of traditional use-rights are adjudicated by NGOs and local governments but what seems to be the most difficult to resolve is the allegation that fishers from competing villages have of each other’s illegal fishing activities, such as the use of dynamite, fine-mesh net, and cyanide poisoning. Both NGOs and scientists involved in CBCRM projects tend to condemn instantly such practices, perhaps the reason why it is a common argument among local fishers from which to frame their claims.

**Summary and Discussion**

This thesis is framed by my readings about community-based coastal resources management (CBCRM) projects in the Philippines and their call for *sustainable development*. This is complemented by a series of interviews that I conducted on a fishing island in the Visayas, Central Philippines. Worldwide interest in co-management
now propelled me to return to those fieldnotes. Here, my primary project was to show the paradox that lies in the frameworks of CBCRM and fisheries co-management. CBCRM projects focused their work in empowering communities while co-management refers to a framework of partnership between communities and the government. In theory, both of these enterprises recognize local participation and local knowledge as a means to sustainable development. But in practice, their act follows a well-defined program of action that limits active engagement from local people. The paradox lies in the oceanic divide between the rhetoric of co-management and the practice of CBCRM.

The legislation of the Local Government Code of 1991 and the Fisheries Code of 1998 introduced the global rhetoric of *sustainable development* to the smallest political unit in the Philippines, the *barangay* ‘village.’ Based on the scientific notion of natural resource management, and later addition of more rhetoric such as participatory and empowerment, sustainable development now lies at the heart of all local development programs in the country. After the legislation of the Local Government Code in 1991, one Philippine senator said, “communities now possess a voice in the corridors of the government (Pimentel in Villarin 1996:v). Section 384 of the Local Government Code, specifically outlines the crucial and distinctive role of the village, as the forum for local people to “express, crystallize” their collective views.

In the co-management framework, the community takes a solid form and with boundaries that are technically defined. The work of CBCRM has been all about the construction of community, clearly illustrated in several handbooks on participatory resource assessment that came out in the mid 1990s. These handbooks contain instructions necessary to assemble a neat illustration of a community and its resource
systems. Mapping is a common technique used that, evidently, caters to the need of scientists and CBCRM workers and not the local people whose knowledge of the environment is not derived by drawing what they perceived to be their physical environment but a product of their active engagement with it.

The academic literature is not really different. Students of social institutions surrounding property, for example, also invest their energy in this enterprise. And while they have energetically argued against Garrett Hardin’s idea of privatization, their arguments seem to direct readers to the same point. The danger of translation, from theory to practice, has already manifested in the CBCRM projects, where local people are advised to write a fisheries management plan where a particular village’s land and water boundaries are clearly delineated from its neighbours.

CBCRM projects have been vocal and clear with regards to their aim of diverting local people’s source of income from sea to land. Three years ago, the Philippine government launched a national project, Fisheries Resource Management Project (FRMP), funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), whose aim is to educate fishers about the environment and divert their attention from fishing to land-based activities in order to reduce fishing effort. Coastal aquaculture, for example, has been embraced by many CBCRM projects. The paper by Danilo Israel and Cezar Banzon (1997) has quantified reduction and suggests that fishing effort must be reduced by 12 per cent in the commercial fisheries (38,392 fishers) and 40 per cent in the small-scale fisheries (158,865 fishers).

My analysis of co-management and CBCRM is informed by field research that I conducted on one tiny island in Central Philippines. Tiny as it is but the stories that inhabitants there have shared with me about fishing, sojourn, and livelihood have
connection to basic ideas behind CBCRM and co-management. The manner that households on this island are maintained clearly suggest their poor status, and captured so well by one fisher when he said to me that “ang kabuhi ginalagas” or “life is pursued.” I have laid this out here in this work by showing, historically, how livelihood changes from farming to fishing, particularly emphasizing the distinct but complementary roles of husband and wife.

The government’s campaign for more copra production in the 1950s has changed the landscape of the island from corn to coconut. Before that corn was exchanged with rice from the mainland. The system of exchange that existed between those from the mainland and the island has ceased because of the government’s campaign. Another campaign by the government that most women on the island can hardly forget is the Green Revolution, the program of agricultural development, from the 1960s to 1970s. The larger project of mechanization, which is the highly debated aspect of the Green Revolution in the literature is not included in the narratives of these women. What they remembered most is the change of the harvesting tool from scythe to sickle. Sickle is used to cut long grass before, which women on the island are not comfortable using. It became the harvest tool later because of the long leaves of so-called ‘miracle rice’ or high-yielding rice varieties that came with Green Revolution. Once again, relation with people from the mainland was cut and, likewise, the island’s source of rice.

Gradually, inhabitants of the island turned to sea for food and income. The dramatic increase of fishing effort is not simply a result of the Philippines’ depressed economy, growing population, and the low capital needed in this activity. To a large extent, government policies have influenced it. The rise of fish markets in the Philippines also contributed to this, which the government actively endorsed by funding the construction
of numerous fish ports. This may be a lame point to dwell on considering that the
government is now willing to compromise its penchant for fisheries as a source of
revenue to the ethic of conservation for the sake of sustainable development.

Scientists have concluded that fishers are rapacious or irrational resource users
based on their scientific models and calculations. Proponents of co-management argue
that boundaries must be clearly identified to minimize rapacity. But this is not a usual
manner of interaction among fishers, an idea that may sound simplistic and close to
romanticism. But I have heard and observed fishers in sojourn vacate a productive
fishing site. Fishers in sojourn, especially those married, said that leaving their families
for a prolonged period of time is dangerous. Single fishers that are within the productive
ages of 21 to 40 say that they characterize their fishing similar to a hampang 'a game.'
For example, they fish only once a day. On the other hand, married fishers generally
fish three times a day, an ethic of fishing referred to as pangabuhi 'life.' The biological
behaviour of the fish stocks, combined with the type of gear employed, also set limits to
how much and when fish can be caught. Indigenous fishers, in particular, seem to be
conscious of the detailed local movements and behaviours of local fish stocks. This is
an insight that students of indigenous knowledge in fisheries have clearly documented
(it has also contributed to the proliferation of studies about traditional forms of fisheries
management in the 1980s). The collection of indigenous knowledge comprises a large
part of this body of work (see Johannes et al. 2000).

The popularity of indigenous knowledge in recent years has been immense (Ellen et
al. 2000). Ethnographic data has been published documenting that indigenous as well as
local people have a significant contribution to make with respect to minimizing resource
degradation (Fairhead and Leach 1996; Wynne 1996; Fienup-Riordan 1990). However,
we cannot simply apply indigenous knowledge as one would a salve to a wound. To employ local knowledge as data or ‘brute facts,’ to follow Renato Rosaldo (1980) or for scientists to collect and archive indigenous knowledge as data banks to be mined has been carefully critiqued (see, for example Julie Cruikshank (1998). While there are general principles that emerge, the information would suggest that no one solution fits all cases.

The fishers that I interviewed showed excitement whenever they were asked about their knowledge about reefs, shoals, triangulation to locate good fishing grounds, the combination of different types of waters, the sound of winds, and the like. But this knowledge is tied directly to their practice as fishers. When they leave fisheries, they also leave behind the daily practice that reinforces and maintains their knowledge.

Issues surrounding the rhetoric of sustainable development are complex and solutions are not easy to find. But, it is worthwhile to explore the idea that local fishers have significant insights to contribute in discussions about fisheries management. Social theorists have shown that human-animal relation is not that of predator-prey but one of mutualism (Ingold 2000; see also Fienup-Riordan 1990). In the Philippines, traces of this insight can be found in the work of Alicia Magos (1992) and Ponciano Bennagen (1996) who have studied human-animal relations. In North America, many ethnographic studies focus on the concept of reciprocicy in which animals give themselves to the hunter or the fisher and in return receive gifts back from the humans (see, for example: Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1987; Cruikshank 1990).

When Garrett Hardin wrote the “Tragedy of the Commons” he argued that environmental problems cannot be fixed technically, but will require a tremendous effort to change “human values” and “ideas of morality.” While others are optimistic
and still working towards finding a technical fix to the problem of the environment, environmental education meanwhile can use the insights of local knowledge and oral tradition, particularly in the Philippines where orality is still the vehicle for the expression of ideas to move toward the change in values that Hardin advocates. Perhaps if we truly listened to the Philippine and other local or indigenous fishers we might actually move beyond the rhetoric of co-management.
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Endnotes

1 Non-governmental organizations used “tri sectoral approach” in their CBCRM projects, referring to the collaboration between NGOs, the local government, and the local people.

2 Local researchers in the Philippines draw a line between the two suggesting that CBCRM ended a few years ago, while co-management has just started (Pomeroy and Williams 1994; Pomeroy and Carlos 1997; Courtney and White 2000). This distinction rests on legislation regulating government and fishers in co-management (Pinkerton 1989), an arrangement that CBCRM supposedly lacks. This power-sharing attribute of co-management has brought great discomfort to development agencies, particularly when local communities are portrayed as powerless and feeble without the government assistance (Newkirk and Rivera 1997), as this runs counter to NGOs reports of success in empowering local people.

3 Passed in the midst of President Fidel Ramos’ campaign for economic development and local empowerment, The Philippine Local Government Code of 1991 provides for local autonomy to local government units (LGUs). LGUs at the municipal. City, and provincial levels were given more power to decide and make their own local development plans as well as to execute them. Budgets for these LGUs have also been increased. All forms of privatization, such as decentralization and devolution are present in the Philippine Local Government Code. The Executive Order 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code, on the other hand, replaced the 1975 Presidential Decree 704. The Fisheries Code views sustainable development in a very scientific manner. It recognizes the need to give more waters for local fishing communities to utilize provided that fishing effort not exceed scientific indexes, such as maximum sustainable yield (MSY) or total allowable catch (TAC).

4 Scientific models are now getting to be very sophisticated but those that are used in the Philippines still follow the maximum sustainable yield index or MSY. For a critique of MSY see Ludwig et al. 1993, Pauly 1986, and Pitcher et al. 1998. On the contrary, the paper of Pamela Mace “MSY Reborn” argues that MSY must be viewed as a limit to be avoided and not to be reached.

5 “Crystallize” appears in one section of the Local Government Code of 1991 and has been used by President Ferdinand Marcos before when he wrote his idea of local participation, which lies at the heart of his vision of a “New Society.” In 1986, through the People’s Power Revolution where both military and Filipino people staged a public protest that lasted for four days. The military government of Marcos ended in February 1986.

6 These categories are small- scale commercial 3.1 GT to 20 GT, medium- scale commercial 20.1 to 150 GT, and large scale commercial with more than 150 GT.

7 For recent ethnographic works about the Visayas, see the three volumes edited by Iwao Ushijima and Cynthia Neri Zayas: first, in 1994 entitled “Fishers of the Visayas,” second, “Visayan Life” that came out in 1997, and finally, the third volume “Bisayan Knowledge” that was published in 2000. The first two volumes were published by the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, while the third volume was published by the Third World Studies, University of the Philippines.

8 Since my very general intention was to interview fishers about the fisheries and, perhaps, construct a social history of their livelihood, I was armed with a camera and a tape recorder. But every time I brought out these technologies, particularly the tape recorder, informants would tell me that the interview could be done in an informal manner. Other informants were not direct in telling me this but would tell me events where tape recorders had been used in the past. One of these was the story of a man from the town who agreed to be interviewed using a tape recorder. Years later, this man was accused and imprisoned for saying something that was self-incriminating in a tape interview. I did not bother about the man in the story but, since then, I did not use a tape recorder but tried to record everything in my mind, write as fast I could in my fieldnotes, and check as soon as I got the chance.

9 Despite the fact that more Filipino women now are engaged in overseas contract working or OCW and hence earning more than their husbands but still the latter are the recognized household heads, a criticism raised by Jeanne Frances Illo (1997).

10 To follow the thesis of the ecopath model developed by Daniel Pauly and Villy Christensen (1990), which is based upon the food web model the predominance of squid over other larger forms of marine species indicates
that the waters surrounding the island has long been overfished. Following the food web model, demersal species subsist on lower forms of life forms such as squid.

11 According to Froese and Pauly (2001) demersal species are sinking to or lying on the bottom; lying on or near the bottom and feeding on benthic organisms.

12 I attempted once to meet Tio Gavino and Ti Auring, his wife, did not seem to like my helpful gesture.

13 Three kilograms of dry squid can be made out of one kilo in fresh form.

14 I went with a group of squid fishers to this island, Baligian. It lies in the middle of Panay an Negros Islands. It took us about five hours in a Fuso Canter boat to reach it. Perhaps it is a coral island, flat, planted with coconut trees and without a source of drinking water.

15 One libon is equal to twenty five rayna. One rayna is equal to one-half kilograms. Both libon and rayna are Hiligaynon words.

16 There are two seasons of harvest in the mainland: the makan ‘on the plain’ that starts every December in the towns of Sara, Ajuy, and San Dionisio producing rice varieties called kamuros, lubang, kabanay, kadidit. Working the plain Riceland is much preferred because rice varieties there do not have much rice leaves and, therefore, easier to harvest. The harvesters are paid on the following sharing systems: lima lima or 1/5, pito pito or 1/7 and tatlohan or 1/3. Under the first system, the fifth fistful or bundle of rice stalk goes to the harvester, with the land –owner getting the first four fistfuls. The same process works for the pito pito. The most desired system is the tresha. Antonio Ledesma (1982) reports that on one plain area in Iloilo Province, the sharing pattern used to be 1/3 then decreased to 1/5 and 1/7 until it reached 1/11. See the work of Antonio Ledesma (1982) about Philippine agriculture and W. Collier and others (1977) about Indonesia.

17 This is tall island near the island where I conducted the research. Early Spanish conquistadores called it Pan de Azucar, meaning bread and sugar.

18 Demersal species are sinking to or lying on the bottom; living on or near the bottom and feeding on benthic organisms (Froese and Pauly 2001).

19 Considerable literature on traditional fisheries management, particularly in 1980s, has been produced (Johannes 1981; Ruddle and Johannes 1985; Johannes 1986; Ruddle and Akimichi 1984; McCay and Acheson 1987; Feeny et al. 1990; Inglis 1993). Fikret Berkes (1985; also Ruddle 1993), for example, has identified four likely causes for this conversion: loss of community control, commercialization, rapid change in technology, and rapid growth of human population. They appear to be bland enough reasons but they have been taken as threats to the moral order in which discussions and analysis of the community are mostly based upon. Factors to ‘community failure’ are precisely specified in this perspective, which only justify development interventions. For many years, such perspective has dominated discussions related to sustainable development and fisheries management and has been applied to the study fragile resource systems in Asia and the Pacific (Ruddle 1995; Akimichi 1996). In the Philippines, parallel discussions are heard from ethnographers writing about development, invention, and the spread of fishing technology (Spoehr 1980), migration patterns among small-scale fishing bands (Szanton 1974), and the depletion of large pelagics (Palomares et al. 1997).

20 For example, the Canadian government has used it as part of its wildlife management policy (Freeman 1989) and to its Atlantic fisheries policy (Matthews 1988; Finlaysen 1994). The paradigm has also been applied to the fisheries of Iceland (Helgason and Pålsson 1998), and reindeer herding in Sweden (Beach 1997) and Norway (Bjorklund 1990).

21 David Feeny and others (1990:4) define ‘communal property’ as “the resource held by an identifiable community of interdependent users. These users exclude outsiders while regulating use by members of the local community. Within the community, rights to the resource are unlikely to be wither exclusive or transferable; they are often rights of equal access and use.”

22 The idea of using traditional use-rights in fisheries has been widely studied in the Philippines around the 1980s. And, once, policy-makers entertained the idea of using traditional use-rights in its conflicts with neighboring countries in Asia regarding maritime boundaries, fishing grounds, and illegal entry of fishers. The Philippine government’s conflict with Indonesia is particularly interesting. In Manado and Bitung, the two Indonesian cities closest to the Philippines, there are now compact groups of Filipino fishers, some married to Indonesian women, who have permanently settled there. On the other hand, a good number of Filipino fishers are serving jail sentenced for illegal fishing in what Indonesian coast
guards claim to be their waters. Filipino fishers, on the contrary, claim that it is their traditional fishing grounds.

27 Concessionaire is a common word used in the Philippines but, in North America, maybe closer to the word lease-holder. I did a short study about the milkfish fry gatherers of Antique, Central Philippines before. Milkfish is a herring-like fish that extensively thrives in Southeast Asia. Efforts to culture milkfish are, as well, high in this region. Following scientific classification, milkfish is under the family *Chanos chanos*.


25 The first reported community participation project by the Philippine government is the irrigation project by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) in the late 1970s (Boyce 1993:83).

26 Courtney and White (2000) attribute the success of coastal resources management efforts in the Philippines first to the presence of international donor programs. They also believe that the national government, so far, lacks a concrete stand with regards to CRM as manifested by the absence of one agency to coordinate local efforts. While Rondinelli (1987) strongly criticized USAID's approach to development assistance, particularly its campaign for decentralization in developing countries.

27 Participation has many qualities and is derived from different contexts. According to Majid Rahnema (1997) the word participation appeared for the first time in the development jargon in the 1950s.

28 Recently, NGOs have come under criticism. According to Majid Rahnema (1997:123), their work can obliterate "traditional and vernacular forms of power," a point that Steven Yearley (1996:137) takes as the adoption of the language of science. William Fischer (1997) however believes that criticisms of NGOs must be coupled with a detailed exposition of "what happens in specific places and at specific times" to improve their strategies. Fischer believes that NGOs are capable of other more important tasks.

29 See, for instance, the case studies written by CBCRM coordinators and workers in the book "Seeds of Hope," edited by Elmer Ferrer and others.

30 Alan White (1999 in Olsen and Christie 2000) has reported that in the Philippines an annual cost of $25 million is given to coastal management efforts, of which about 16% come from the national and local governments. Multilateral organizations have made huge contributions since the early 1990s. Gerald Clarke (1995) has traced the sources of Philippine NGO funding. A major source of funding, according to him, has been the Protestant and Catholic churches with international and local funding networks. For Catholics, the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) receives, evaluates and recommends projects to funding agencies like the Dutch Bishops Lenten Conference, OXFAM, CEBEMO, NOVIB and the Asia Partnership for Human Development. The Protestants have the "Bread for the World" and the ICCO as main sources. Another source of funding is derived from corporate profits out of so-called 'social responsibility theory' of big corporations. The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) contributes one per cent of net profits to assist NGO work. PSBP consists of some 150 top Philippine corporations. Big donor foundations like Ford, Asia and Rockefeller Foundations, Freidrich Ebert Stiftung, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Konrad Adenaeaur Foundations assist NGOs in terms of financial and technical support. Trade unions get direct financial assistance from so-called international trade secretariats and labor institutions in developed nations. But the biggest funding source comes from governmental aid programs given by developed countries, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and from the European Community (EC).

31 Related to the project of alternative livelihood in CBCRM projects is the great interest placed on projects specifically for women, stirred perhaps by recent debates on feministic theories. The United Nations Human Development has reported that the Philippines ranks 39th in terms of instituting gender empowerment measures and 70th, out of 104 member countries of UN, in its gender-related development index (Illo 1997). Projects on women are, generally, based on the perception that Filipino women have a subordinate position in
familial and societal structures than men (Eviota 1986) and whose domestic and economic efforts have been historically unrecognized because of the dominant culture of patriarchy that prevails (Mabunay 1995). Researches done on women focus as on how much time they spent working in relation to men. For example, it is has been noted that women devote 40 hours a week on household chores and men, on the contrary, invest 10 to 15 hours in the same tasks (Illo 1997:18). The record for actual time spent in doing household and non-household work may vary but the message remains that women work longer hours than men do (Eviota 1986). That women can be household heads, too, and garner income for their households similar to men is the usual thesis of most CBCRM projects on women. These studies form the basis of later campaigns to empower women. By why dichotomize gender roles?

32 The Barrio Charter Act (R.A. 2370) recognized barrios as the basic political unit and granted them legal status as quasi-municipal corporations governed by an elective council and given fiscal and administrative powers, later amended in 1963 by the Revised Barrio Charter Act or Republic Act 3590 (Villarin 1996:60).

33 Governmental aid programs, such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United States Agency for Internal Development (USAID) each generously funded projects on local governance in the Philippines.