

# Philosophy and Transformative Learning: Lessons in Natural Resource Management from Cordillera Communities\*

JULIUS D. MENDOZA

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES BAGUIO

LORELEI C. MENDOZA

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES BAGUIO

## **Abstract**

In this paper, the objects of philosophical reflection are the important lessons learned from a participatory action research program conducted by the Cordillera Studies Center of UP Baguio in Sagada, Mountain Province, in Northern Luzon, Philippines, which ran from March 1997 to February 2001. This research program used the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) approach. Concepts of philosophy are made to re-describe “second order” concepts of theory, as well as “first order” concepts of community-based natural resource management research, planning, testing, implementation, and monitoring. Concepts used in the context of field work are given philosophical re-descriptions in the form of the ontology of societal totality and nature, ethical thinking applied to land rights and to collective action of marginalized groups, and in the form of epistemological assertions concerning the interaction of indigenous knowledge and the conduct of scientific research itself on community-based natural resource management.

**Key terms** *community based natural resource management, participatory action research, poverty and environment, social ontology, philosophy of development*

---

\* An earlier version of this paper presented at the annual conference of the Asian Association of Christian Philosophers, Ateneo de Manila University, April 10–11, 2013. We wish to acknowledge the insightful comments of Villia Jefremovas on this paper.

One singular challenge of philosophy is to make itself *useful*. If one refuses to confront the challenge of usefulness, philosophizing runs the risk of becoming utterly unintelligible.<sup>1</sup> It will meander in endless horizons. Hume once said that the task of philosophy is to tame the mind that has the natural tendency to fabricate ideas, resulting in a discourse in constant danger of going beyond the bounds of sense. “Nothing, at first sight, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality.”<sup>2</sup> In a similar vein, Kant speaks of *metaphysica naturalis*.<sup>3</sup> Modern philosophy itself can be understood as a struggle with this question, and Hume’s empiricism and naturalism, as well as Kant’s critique of pure reason were serious attempts to figure out *metaphysica naturalis* and its limits.

In its effort to become pertinent, nothing has been more therapeutic for philosophy than the words that come from those who, in the social sciences, engage in disciplined and responsible *inquiry about the particular*. But philosophy can be “therapeutic” for social science too. The study of the history of the social sciences reveals that the practice of social science incorporates philosophy in the form of *meta-theory*.<sup>4</sup> In fact, says Brian Fay, “one of the recurrent themes throughout the history of social science is the aggressive metatheoretical self-consciousness on the part of many important social theorists.”<sup>5</sup> This paper testifies to the mutual nourishment, rather than to mutual animosity, in the actual development

<sup>1</sup> Francis Gevers, “The Use of Philosophy” (talk, University of the Philippines Baguio City, June 1976).

<sup>2</sup> David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding, and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3rd ed., ed. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 18.

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1933), 56.

<sup>4</sup> See Brian Fay, “Theory and Metatheory in Social Science—or, Why the Philosophy of Social Science is so Hard,” *Metaphilosophy* 16, nos. 2 and 3 (April/July 1985): 150–57. See also Julius D. Mendoza, “Some Remarks on Metatheory and the Philosophy Of Social Science” (paper delivered at the annual convention of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, July 25, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Fay, “Theory and Metatheory in Social Science,” 151.

of both intellectual achievements. One may then notice not only the “sociologization” or the “historicizing” of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, but likewise, “the philosophization of the sciences of man.”

This paper aims to demonstrate one avenue through which philosophizing may be animated and made relevant: metatheoretical reflection on social theory and on the application of social-scientific knowledge to development work. In this paper, the objects of philosophical reflection are the important lessons learned from a participatory action research program conducted by the Cordillera Studies Center of UP Baguio in Sagada, Mountain Province, in Northern Luzon, Philippines, which ran from March 1997 to February 2001.<sup>6</sup>

This research program used the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) approach. In what follows, concepts of philosophy are made to re-describe “second order” concepts of theory, as well as “first order” concepts of community-based natural resource management research, planning, testing, implementation, and monitoring. We wish to demonstrate how lessons learned in the field provide the material for reconceptualization in social ontology and the philosophy of social science. Accounts of the CBNRM projects repeatedly use the term “learning” to describe the process of understanding and transformative action that the participants underwent. In this paper, we assert that the process of learning itself in the generation of usable knowledge and best practices involves the continual reexamination of the theoretical and philosophical presuppositions of research and transformative action.

The “mutual nourishment” of social-scientific activity and philosophical reflection, which this paper endeavors to instantiate, is reflected in the way the paper itself is structured: the voices of the authors, whose initials are indicated at the beginning of every portion each of them contributed, alternate in the shared task of articulation.

---

<sup>6</sup> The discussion of Lessons 1 to 6 appeared in the first part of Lorelei C. Mendoza, *Research Report 5: Narrative Report, Ancestral Domain and Natural Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines, Natural Resource Management Program, NRMP 2* (Baguio City, Philippines: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, December 2006), 1–12.

## The Research Program

**LCM:** The “disciplined and responsible inquiry about the particular” that informs this paper outlines *important lessons* from a participatory action research program that ran from March 1997 to February 2001, with the objective of discovering an appropriate design of a management mechanism over natural resources.

In 1996, the municipality of Sagada, Mountain Province, in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines, was granted a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC). The CADC was an important victory in the long struggle of Philippine indigenous cultural communities to compel the Philippine state to recognize *native* title.<sup>7</sup> Since the Cordillera Studies Center (CSC) of the UP Baguio had worked for some time on these issues of customary land tenure and ancestral domain,<sup>8</sup> “this policy change provided an opportunity to look more closely at the implementation of natural resource management devolution to customary community-based institutions.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See the following for a discussion of the legal context for the change in the Philippine state’s attitude toward indigenous people’s land rights: Steven Rood and Athena Lydia Casambre, “State Policy, Indigenous Community Practice, and Sustainability in the Cordillera, Northern Philippines” (Cordillera Studies Center working paper no. 23, University of the Philippines Baguio, March 1994); June Prill-Brett, “Indigenous Land Rights and Legal Pluralism among Philippine Highlanders,” *Law and Society in Southeast Asia: Law and Society Review* 28, no. 3 (1994): 687–97; and June Prill-Brett, “Concepts of Ancestral Domain in the Cordillera Region from Indigenous Perspectives,” in *Research Report 1: Perspectives on Resource Management in the Cordillera Region, Ancestral Domain and Natural Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines* (Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, February 2001), 1–21..

<sup>8</sup> See June Prill-Brett, “Preliminary Perspectives on Local Territorial Boundaries and Resource Control” (Cordillera Studies Center working paper no. 6, University of the Philippines College Baguio, 1988) and Prill-Brett, “Concepts of Ancestral Domain”; Lorelei C. Mendoza, ed., *Building Local Administrative Capability for Regional Autonomy in the Cordillera* (Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, December 1992); Rood and Casambre, “State Policy, Indigenous Community Practice, and Sustainability”; and Steven Rood, *Protecting Ancestral Land Rights in the Cordillera*, Peace, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights Research Report 94-001 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press and the Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Lorelei C. Mendoza et al., “Harmonizing Ancestral Domain with Local Governance in the Cordillera of Northern Philippines,” in *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources: Action Research and Policy Change in Asia*, ed. Stephen R. Tyler (Ottawa: ITDG Publishing and International Development Research Centre, 2006), 232.

In March 1997, the Center began the research project that was formally called “The Ancestral Domain and Natural Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines.” It was a participatory action research using the community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) approach to the study of the state of biodiversity and resource utilization practices in varied property regimes and ecosystems of the locality. With funding support mainly from the International Development Research Center in Ottawa, Canada, and additional funding for community mobilization activities from the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), the CSC project was undertaken until February 2001. The project was referred to as Natural Resource Management Program (NRMP 2)

NRMP 2 was part of a group of CBNRM Projects funded by the IDRC in Asia at about the same period. These projects were located in Southeast Asia, like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and the Philippines; in Central Asia, like Bhutan and Mongolia; and in Ghuizou Province of China. These projects used the CBNRM approach to the study of the specific resource management issues in their project sites.

IDRC’s CBNRM research programme started from a set of principles which distinguished its work from that of other researchers and practitioners, . . . . The foundation of the research programme was its focus on poor people and on strengthening their livelihoods. Enquiry was oriented to the natural resources, but from the outset the goal of the work was aimed at improving the conditions of poor men and women, where the quality of the resource base was a prime element in their well-being. In this respect, the approach of CBNRM departed from one of the antecedents of this research programme, that of community-based conservation.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Stephen R. Tyler, ed., *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources: Action Research and Policy Change in Asia* (Ottawa: ITDG Publishing and International Development Research Center, 2006), 18.

The research question of NRMP 2 was, “How do institutional arrangements affect the behavior of resource users and their incentives to coordinate, cooperate, and contribute to the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of management regimes?”

NRMP 2 was a follow-up project to NRMP 1,<sup>11</sup> also funded by the IDRC from June 1992 to December 1994, called “Indigenous Practices and State Policy in the Sustainable Management of Agricultural Lands and Forests in the Cordillera.” The general research problem addressed was how the patterns of natural resource use are defined in local practices in the community, how these local practices are affected by policy and activities of groups interested in the resource, and what these interactions imply for sustainability as indicated by the quality of life and the environment.

### **Local Institutional Analysis and Communities**

**LCM:** The research program uses a *local institutional analysis approach* to the problem of natural resource management. This approach focuses on an understanding of the social, political, economic, and legal arrangements that provided the context for the access, use, and control of natural resources. Let us briefly describe this approach.

The approach is premised on the assertion that the condition of *common-pool resources* results from the interaction of the community members with the natural environment in their locale. The nature of this interaction is primarily determined by the *institutional* arrangements of the local community. Common-pool resources are natural resources such as fisheries, wildlife, forests, irrigation water, and pasture lands, which may be owned by individuals but are shared by a community or group of users. Common pool resources are natural or man-made, and from which one

---

<sup>11</sup> The study covered six communities: Ambassador, Tublay, Paoay, Atok, and Mount Data in Benguet; Patay and Suyoy, Sagada in Mt. Province; and Cudog, Lagawe in Ifugao.

person's use subtracts units not available to others. It is difficult to exclude or limit users of common-pool resources once the resource is provided by nature or produced by humans.<sup>12</sup>

**JDM:** A fruitful notion has many sources. One of the sources of the notion of local institutional analysis is the insight, borne from experience, that nature does not give to human beings in and of itself. Human beings must take care of nature so that nature can give to human beings. This is probably true of any object that can serve people's needs.<sup>13</sup> Institutions can be understood as practices that make nature into something that is useful for human beings. What is called, "the forest," for instance, with all its wood, berries, and bees, as well as its mysteries, is not pristine nature waiting there for people to enjoy it. It is "there" because people take care of it, manage it.<sup>14</sup> According to the "duality of structure," resources are both the condition as well as the outcome of practices.<sup>15</sup>

Another justification for local institutional analysis, which focuses on the social, political, economic, and legal arrangements that provide the context for the access, use, and control of natural resources rather than pristine nature as such, is that the ecological problems that we confront are problems of *ecosocial* systems wherein we could hardly disentangle those that come from human agency and those that come from nature. Moral judgments and decisions regarding the environment cannot be guided by a simple appeal to nature. For this reason, questions of

<sup>12</sup> Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker (1994), cited in Amy R. Poteete, Marco A. Janssen, and Elinor Ostrom, *Working Together: Collective Action, the Commons, and Multiple Methods in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 150–51.

<sup>13</sup> Car owners would point out in Ilocano: "No kayatmo nga i-serbisnaka ti luganmo, masapul nga i-serbismo met." (If you want your car to serve you well, you must have it serviced too.)

<sup>14</sup> See James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, "Contested Forests: Modern Conservation and Historical Land Use in Guinea's Ziama Reserve," *African Affairs* 93 (1994): 481–512, for a discussion of how the forest—its establishment and growth—is closely interlinked with the history of land use of local inhabitants in neighboring villages bordering the forest reserve in Guinea.

<sup>15</sup> See Julius D. Mendoza, "The Duality of Structure," in *Anthony Giddens: Critical Assessment*, ed. Christopher Bryant and David Jary, Routledge Critical Assessments Series, vol. 2, sec. 4, (London: Routledge, 1997).

resource use and resource management cannot be decided without examining institutional arrangements that condition human interaction with nature.

**LCM:** Among the institutional arrangements that shape interaction with the natural environment are *property regimes* that govern the access and acquisition of resources, the maintenance of rights over resources, and the manner by which one may devolve or lose such resources. There are also socially governed ways of providing for the community's necessities. All these affect the patterns of local resource use. Hence, the study of local practices is critical to understanding the manner in which community members utilize resources.

Aside from the community, there are *external groups* that may compete for the control of the resources. They can be private corporate interests, line agencies of the national government, development projects, and non-government organizations. The presence of these groups and their activities may give rise to conflict with local people's use of local resources. The overly extractive orientation of certain strangers who enter the local scene is deleterious to the management that makes these resources available in the first place. (This remark does not apply to resources of mining such as minerals and gas and similar resources that are non-renewable. The notions of "renewable" and "non-renewable" are, of course, relative terms and are contextual.)

In the analysis, there is focus on *practices* and the *sets of rights and rules* by which a group of users and other agents, like the government, organize resource governance, management, and use. All groups with an interest in a particular resource—such as the national government agencies, the local government units, non-government organizations, business groups, tourists, mountaineers, and local households—are viewed as *stakeholders*. Attention is paid to whether individual incentives exist in a given situation for these groups to cooperate, coordinate, or participate in collective action for the management of a common-pool resource.



Effective natural resource management requires collective action as well as individual incentives. Institutional analysis emphasizes the need to understand *how collective action can come about*. Therefore, close attention is paid to whether there are incentives for individuals to undertake the desired collective action.

The “fiction” of a homogenous community with a consensus on the use of their resources is useful in the struggle against state control over ancestral domains. However, in designing a mechanism for the appropriate distribution of benefits from the use of common pool resources located in the ancestral domain, the community must recognize and weigh the differential claims among its members.

*Lesson 1. Assume a heterogeneous rather than a homogenous community, consisting of individuals and groups with different interests in resources; this leads to the presumption of the difficulty of reaching a consensus on the directions and actions with regard to resource management.*

If the assumption of a homogenous community is problematic, so is the assumption that it is unproblematic to identify a group of people or homogenous societies using the definition found under Section 3h of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (referred to as IPRA) as indigenous cultural communities or indigenous peoples. Let us quote:

a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and

cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos.

In the matter of identifying the territory of ICCs, the rich definition provides no guidance. It does not enable us to distinguish whether the politico-administrative units, such as the *barangay* or the *municipality*, are the uniquely defined territories for specific indigenous cultural communities. It is noted that Certificates of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADCs) were in fact awarded to *municipalities*, as in the case of Sagada, Besao, and Kabayan in the Cordillera Region. It is possible to contend that the definition refers to the socio-political “unit” like the *ili* as Prill-Brett would argue:

The defense of one’s domain each time that outsiders intrude was one method of asserting and reinforcing prior rights to natural resources within a perceived territory. Each of the communities, called *ili*, an autonomous socio-political unit, which traditionally controls their own decision making through the council of elders regarding village welfare and the control of their common property resources.<sup>16</sup>

As a further indication of the seriousness of the problem of identifying social totalities, one can mention that some would even contend that the term, “ICCs” should refer to the major ethnolinguistic groups like the Ibalois, the Kankana-eyes, or the Bontoks. The delineation of a piece of territory as ancestral domain is as problematic as the identification of the indigenous cultural community with rightful claims to the ancestral domain. The action research shows that it is better to think of a “mutual implication” that underlies the right of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains: people imply the ancestral domain as much as ancestral domain implies the people.

---

<sup>16</sup> See Prill-Brett, “Preliminary Perspectives on Local Territorial Boundaries and Resource Control,” 7.

### Societal Totality as a Fiction

**JDM:** To ask, “how is societal totality possible?” seems too presumptuous. It presumes that the societal totality is a reality out there. The remaining problem consists only in knowing how it comes about. This research problematizes this common assumption. The very notion of “societal totality” or “community” (e.g., “homogenous community”), specially the one that brings in also the notion of “locality,” can be seen as a “fiction” (in the sense of Hume). It can be used heuristically. (It seems wise not to treat the word “fiction” here employed as readily to be associated with “false.”) In some research questions, not all, it might prove useful to think “as if” a societal whole exists. Where, for instance, one tries to make sense of the struggle between state control over ancestral domains, the “fiction” seems useful. Politically, the “fiction” of group homogeneity among marginalized indigenous peoples may prove crucial for the assertion of their rights.<sup>17</sup> But, as the ADNRM report says, “it is useless fiction in the discernment of a just and equitable distribution of rights between and among members of indigenous cultural communities.”<sup>18</sup> Even the *delineation* of a piece of territory, or perhaps, even identity over time or over the historical dimension, must be treated in each case as problematic. The picture of *fences* is also a fiction. The “territory” of fishing, hunting, and gathering societies does not have the same sense as the “territory” of agricultural societies.

Having said this, on the other hand, what the CBNRM Projects show is that the local communities that were involved in the projects have *become* themselves the *product* of the CBNRM Projects. They can be properly called, “CBNRM Communities,” says Peter Vandergeest<sup>19</sup> People

<sup>17</sup> See Benedict R. Anderson, “Nationalism and Cultural Survival in Our Time: A Sketch,” in *At the Risk of Being Heard: Identity, Indigenous Rights, and Postcolonial States*, ed. Bartholomew Dean and Jerome M. Levi (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> L. Mendoza, *Research Report 5*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Vandergeest, “CBNRM Communities in Action,” in Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 322 and 326ff.

rediscover themselves not only as a group but as a community, precisely because they were made to act together around common projects. They become “collective action” communities. Peter Vandergeest, however, is quick to add that he is not trying to suggest that the notion of community as a collective action is the correct one; “only that it is a particularly useful one when thinking about CBNRM communities.”<sup>20</sup>

### Resource Tenure

**LCM:** Central to the effective management of natural resources by indigenous communities is the recognition of *land rights* that have been historically established through customary law. Through national legislation and land policy, the Philippine State has moved closer to recognizing land rights of indigenous communities culminating in the passage of IPRA in 1997.<sup>21</sup>

The 1987 Philippine Constitution has already previously provided for the recognition and protection of the rights of indigenous communities and their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order No. 3 of 1993 identified and recognized ancestral land and ancestral domain claims through the issuance of the CADC (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim) and the CALC, (Certificate of Ancestral Land Claim). The grant of such Certificates was seen as an important milestone in the recognition of land rights of indigenous

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>21</sup> The petition questioning the constitutionality of several provisions of the IPRA and its implementing rules by Isagani Cruz and Ceasar Europa in September 1988 seriously delayed IPRA's implementation. The Supreme Court dismissed the petition on December 7, 2000 by a vote of 7-7. Since the votes were equally divided, the case was re-deliberated. After a re-deliberation, the voting outcome remained the same (Carlos Aquino and Eugene Tecson, “Indigenous Peoples Rights Act: Is the Long Wait Finally Over?,” *Farm News and Views* 1 and 2 [2001]: 13). Hence the ruling stands. This Supreme Court ruling defends the legitimate rights of the indigenous peoples/indigenous cultural communities but it does not foreclose the possibility that these rights may be revoked once more (Mani Thess Q. Peña, “The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act: Under the Test of Constitutionality,” *Human Rights Agenda* 6, no. 1 [2001]: 9). This legal issue is out of the way, for now.

peoples. This was an achievement after decades of policy conflicts between national law and customary law, between state control and local control over local resources. In 1995, R.A. 7586, National Protected Areas System, gave due recognition to ancestral domain and customary rights in designated protected areas, and stressed the importance of the role of indigenous cultural communities in biodiversity protection.

But more than the recognition of land rights by the state for indigenous cultural communities, the action-research program has seen that there is need to pay special attention to tenure of another sort, one that attaches itself not to land but to *specific resources*. For example, in forest lands, there are different forest products—timber, fuel, fruits, and herbs among others—with different user groups exercising rights over each forest product. The forest lands function not only as “forest” but also as grazing lands for the community members’ livestock, as hunting ground for game and fowl, and as sacred ground for rituals.

We often interpret the tenure over land to also provide the derivative rights to all the resources obtainable in a designated territory or to all the uses to which the land is put. In fact, that is why the term “territory” is sometimes preferred to the term “land tenure,” in order to reflect this all-encompassing right to land and its resources. However, the action research recommends that not only should there be distinctions among different types of resources within a particular territory, there must also be a specification and identification of the different *property rights over specific resources*.

Property rights refer to different actions an agent may take in relation to other agents with regard to some property or thing. As Agrawal and Ostrom<sup>22</sup> suggest, the property rights most relevant for common-pool resources of the ancestral domain are:

---

<sup>22</sup> Arun Agrawal and Elinor Ostrom, “Collective Action, Property Rights, and Devolution of Forest and Protected Area Management” (paper presented at CAPRI Workshop, “Devolution, Property Rights, and Collective Action,” Puerto Azul, Philippines, June 21–25, 1999). Available online, <http://www.capri.cgiar.org/pdf/agrawal.pdf>.

1. The right of *Access*: the rights to enter a defined physical area and enjoy non-subtractive benefits like hiking;
2. The right of *Withdrawal*: the right to obtain resource units or products of a resource system like pine cones, lumber, mushrooms from a forest;
3. The right of *Management*: the right to regulate internal use patterns and transform the resource by making improvements like reforestation;
4. The right of *Exclusion*: the right to determine who have an access right, and how that right may be transferred; and
5. The right of *Alienation*: the right to sell or lease management, and exclusion rights.

Different property rights holders over common-pool resources exercise combinations of rights within this bundle. An owner enjoys all the above-mentioned rights. A proprietor has no right of alienation, while an authorized claimant has no right of alienation as well as no right of exclusion. An authorized user enjoys only the rights of access and withdrawal. An authorized entrant enjoys only the right of access.

*Lesson 2. Recognize that the right to ancestral domains encompasses a broad concept of resource tenure, which includes bundles of property rights instead of a narrow and limited notion of tenure in land.*

## The Issue of Rights

**JDM:** Resource tenure pertains to rights of local marginalized groups: land rights, rights to specific resources, and property rights over these.

One of the most compelling criteria for identifying who or what have rights—by no means the only criteria considered by rights advocates—is the *capacity to suffer*. The possession of this capacity, Jeremy Bentham declared, makes a being *worthy of moral response*.

What . . . should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?<sup>23</sup>

The capacity to suffer “suggests that rights are passive claims against the infliction of pain by others.”<sup>24</sup> On this basis, the appeal to rights privileges the point of view of the victim or the oppressed. Frederick Douglass, as quoted by Brenda Almond, says, “the man who has *suffered the wrong* is the man to *demand redress* . . . the man STRUCK is the man to CRY OUT.”<sup>25</sup>

Rights discourse is part of an outlook that upholds the *primacy of the ethical* in human affairs. Furthermore, it asserts that what human beings have in common, such as common needs and capacities, is *more important* than their differences. Rights are understood as transcending boundaries of societal collectivities. As Almond puts it, “Appeal to rights is widely understood and accepted everywhere in the world under all types of political regimes. It is no small advantage to a moral notion that it should be regarded as valid across many nations and cultures, and that it should have at least the potential for binding governments to the observation of important moral constraints.”<sup>26</sup> When rights are asserted, the intention is that it should be recognized by anybody and by all. The ultimate justification of the assertion of rights is not that they are in fact universally accepted. Rather, it lies in the contribution it can make to the realization of

---

<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. Wilfred Harrison (1789; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), 283.

<sup>24</sup> Brenda Almond, “Rights,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 264.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 263–64.

human hopes and aspirations. When it springs from those oppressed or who suffer, because rights discourse is accompanied by the effort of persuasion and argument, it has the potential for securing just that kind of widespread acknowledgement it seeks. To reach that point, it would seem that the discourse of rights cannot rest on the establishing of matter of fact, whether legal, political, or scientific, for its impulse precisely originates from a factuality of privation or wrong which it strives to redress.

Based on the foregoing, a pro-poor research can be defended. Pro-poor research is not primarily a thesis about the nature of research, one waiting to be assessed from an epistemological point of view. A research's being pro-poor is not guaranteed by its epistemological characteristic. What makes a research pro-poor is the ethical injunction addressed to the researcher, the agent who generates knowledge, as to the kinds of questions and problems s/he should be asking and addressing as a matter of priority. Since every research starts with a problem, knowledge production is guided beforehand by the problem it asks at the beginning. In the CBNRM projects, "there was a deliberate choice about a problem-focused and people-centred research framework."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, "in terms of site selection for their research, case study teams specifically targeted poor and marginalized communities."<sup>28</sup>

### Pro-Poor Research<sup>29</sup>

**JDM:** Pro-poor research can be characterized as follows:

(1) Pro-poor research is not to be judged solely on its impact on poverty. It must be judged by its *approach*. The approach of research itself, research as a process of knowledge-production, includes a "dialogue" with

<sup>27</sup> Julian Gonsalves and Lorelei C. Mendoza, "Creating Options for the Poor through Participatory Research," in Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 279.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>29</sup> This section on pro-poor research was inspired by Gonsalves and Mendoza, "Creating Options for the Poor."



the poor. This is so because “science is not a thing but a social activity.”<sup>30</sup> Social science is itself a social relationship with its “subject-matter.” We shall show presently that this “dialogue” itself is a process of learning for the participants engaged in the process of research.

(2) Pro-poor research has a pragmatic-hermeneutic metatheory. “Knowledge claims arise from situation-based action and consequences.”<sup>31</sup> In focusing on practices and conventions, local institutional analysis tries to understand the knowledge, practical and discursive, that are drawn upon by local actors in the access, use, and control of natural resources. Ordinary social agents are not “judgmental dopes” but knowledgeable agents whose knowledge concerns precisely the workings of the routine life they live and constitute. This knowledge is a condition of possibility for the constitution of social life itself. It is constitutive of the interactions that agents bring about in their routine activities and constitutive of the manner in which they relate to and draw on their natural environment. The understanding of the condition of poor communities therefore must necessarily employ interpretive methods (passing through “the double-hermeneutic”<sup>32</sup>) to capture precisely this local knowledge. This can only be done by listening to the voice and the wisdom of the agents whose knowledge the research itself ought to capture, the local knowledge they have about forests, water, fisheries, and coasts, etc., as well as the knowledge incorporated in their institutions and conventions that they draw upon to manage their resources.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Sayer, *Method and Social Science: A Realist Approach* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), 19–20.

<sup>31</sup> Gonsalves and Mendoza, “Creating Options for the Poor,” 281.

<sup>32</sup> Even the natural sciences are not exempted from interpretation. They are caught in a “single hermeneutic.” The understanding of institutions must pass through a “double-hermeneutic,” “relating both to entering and grasping the frames of meaning involved in the production of social life by lay actors, and to reconstitute these within the new frames of meaning involved in technical conceptual schemes.” (Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993), 86.

<sup>33</sup> Vandergeest, “CBNRM Communities in Action,” 322.

(3) The poor then are not the objects of research but subjects and agents, as much as the social or resource scientists are. For this reason, pro-poor research employs participatory methods.<sup>34</sup> “Practitioners of these methods argue that the subjects who will be affected by research should also be responsible for its design. . . .”

Participatory methods uphold a worldview that sees human beings as co-creating their reality through participation: experience, imagination and intuition, reflection and action. The knowledge and experience of people, including those who are often marginalized or oppressed, is directly honoured and valued.<sup>35</sup>

(4) Pro-poor research acknowledges the intimate bond between knowledge, the possession of information, and power. This is based on the very nature of human agency itself. Human agency is transformative capacity. Transformative capacity is guided by possibility, the feasible options open and available for it. The acquisition of knowledge expands possibility and increases lucidity, thereby illuminating transformative capacity. A variety of metatheories abound basically asserting that the power over knowledge is held by members of dominant class, sex, ethnicity, or nation. Pro-poor research contends that the poor and marginalized groups regain power over knowledge when they understand themselves as researchers and learners.

The expansion of transformative capacity requires *learning*. Research is not only knowledge production; it is also a medium of education. This is especially true when the knowledge involved is practical knowledge, the sort that develops into a skill, the kind that transforms agency itself—e.g., learning a new technology like the one utilized in the green revolution.<sup>36</sup> It

---

<sup>34</sup> This goes by many names: action research (AR), practitioner research, participatory enquiry, participatory learning and action (PLA), participatory research and action. See Gonsalves and Mendoza, “Creating Options for the Poor,” 282.

<sup>35</sup> Gonsalves and Mendoza, “Creating Options for the Poor,” 282.

<sup>36</sup> The CBNRM itself has learned from the omissions of the green revolution.

is observed in the CBNRM projects that where the learning of new inventions and new technology is concerned, there is “limited uptake” by marginalized people and by the poor members of local communities.

The ability of poor households to utilize natural resources and enhance their livelihood strategies is influenced by scientific discoveries and technologies. Therefore, it is imperative that these are managed and directed with them in ongoing partnerships with research and scientific organizations. Otherwise, the benefits from innovative technologies leak to other groups and are not captured by poor and peripheral communities.<sup>37</sup>

In the participatory research method, both scientist and local actor learn. “Transformative learning” is “an approach whereby learners build a more integrated and inclusive perspective of the world together.”<sup>38</sup> Transformative learning requires a *developmental framework* rather than just a scientific one. It requires learning by doing, leading to skilled agency and adaptive management. Admittedly, this is a time-consuming and largely iterative process.

CBNRM projects are good examples of *institutional reflexivity*, the use of knowledge about situated social life in order to transform that same situated social life. The developmental framework extends the *learning* process to include the stakeholders among the learners. Learning transpires (1) in the empirical work of natural and social scientists, (2) in theorizing, (3) in the “uptake” of local actors of new knowledge, and (4) in the interested activity of stakeholders.<sup>39</sup> These interlocking learning

<sup>37</sup> Gonsalves and Mendoza, “Creating Options for the Poor,” 285.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. See also Ronnie Vernooy and Cynthia McDougall, “Principles for Good Practice in Participatory Research: Reflecting on Lessons from the Field,” in *Managing Natural Resources for Sustainable Livelihoods: Uniting Science and Participation*, ed. B. Pound, S. Snapp, C. McDougall, and A. Braun, (London: Earthscan Publications, 2003), 113–37.

<sup>39</sup> “For problem-oriented researchers, it becomes important not just to catalogue and categorize different types of knowledge, but to build understanding and interaction between them.” (Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 19.)

relationships require that the protagonists in the participatory research must familiarize themselves with the forestructures and background assumptions of all the others in a dialogical process, aimed at a common understanding of the context of the management of resources, and focused on the values of resource management and poverty alleviation, such as efficiency, sustainability, justice, and equity. These values translate into the objectives to “increase income, spread benefits, reduce risk and secure rights for the poorest of the poor.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Traditional Practices and Indigenous Knowledge**

**LCM:** Those who advocate that the indigenous cultural communities can manage their natural resources toward sustainable development often provide as evidence the existence of indigenous technical knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is knowledge of place, of milieu, and of the institutions that result from the interactions of community members with their natural environment and with each other. Numerous studies have documented the soundness and validity of indigenous technical knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

A local community has intimate knowledge of the characteristics of its specific ecological system. In a country with diverse ecological zones, it is difficult to master and to duplicate these local knowledge systems. The grant to IPs and ICCs of management rights over natural resources in their ancestral domain based on customary law is a clear recognition of the importance of local ecological knowledge in the sustainable management of natural resources. Scientific information may not be effectively used without the local knowledge about specific resource attributes that can then help to identify which scientific findings are relevant to a particular location or problem.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> See June Prill-Brett, “The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Management and Development,” in *Towards Understanding Peoples of the Cordillera: A Review of Research on History, Governance, Resources, Institutions and Living Traditions*, vol. 2 (Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, September 2001), 3–29.

<sup>42</sup> Agrawal and Ostrom, “Collective Action, Property Rights, and Devolution.”

We often act as if the elements of indigenous knowledge systems and practices were out there for us to find and capture in pristine form, unchanged from time immemorial. However, this assumption arises from a static view of indigenous communities and indigenous knowledge and practices. The world has rapidly become global, that is, the widespread use of various media of communication that bring images and messages from the most distant locations right into our homes. In this global order, we witness the dynamism of indigenous knowledge.<sup>43</sup> Indigenous knowledge continually changes itself according to the demands of new conditions. It can innovate from within and will adopt new external knowledge that suits the local conditions.

In a highland community where there is commercialization of agriculture and other livelihood activities of households, new uses of land and water resources have arisen. For example, in the research sites, forest depletion is a real threat.<sup>44</sup> First, there is a question of whether out-migrants will require too much lumber for building their homes outside the village. Second, there is internal pressure caused by the building of lodging facilities by residents to accommodate the burgeoning tourist trade. They utilize lumber from the forests to build a natural extension of their own houses. Nevertheless, these structures are usually larger than single-family houses, and thus more lumber is needed. Third, there is small-scale commercial exploitation of the forests by individual with chain saws, a tool non-existent in earlier times. There are no traditional practices that may be relied upon to govern individual actions encouraged by these new incentives that lead to more intensive exploitation of agricultural land, forest, or water resources.

---

<sup>43</sup> See Julius D. Mendoza, "The Condition of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) from a Structurationist Perspective," in *Towards Understanding Peoples of the Cordillera: A Review of Research on History, Governance, Resources, Institutions and Living Traditions*, vol. 2 (Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, September 2001), 47–67.

<sup>44</sup> See Gladys A. Cruz, "The Social Arrangements in Natural Resource Management: Demang, Sagada," in *Research Report 2: Community Studies in Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines* (Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, February 2001), 32–52.

*Lesson 3. Acknowledge the dynamism and evolution of traditional practices and indigenous knowledge.*

### **Participation and Partnerships, Negotiation and Conciliation in the ADSDPP**

**LCM:** Rule VIII, Part II, Section 1 of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the IPRA state:

The ICCs/IPs shall formulate and pursue their own plans for the sustainable management and development of the land and natural resources as well as human resources within their ancestral domains based on their indigenous knowledge systems and practices and on the principle of self-determination. Such plans may be consolidated into an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP).

In the issuance of the CADC/CADT, it is required that the community submits an Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP). The ADSDP Plan is not simply a *planning* document of a bureaucracy. It must be viewed as a social contract among stakeholders of specific natural resources located in the ancestral domain. The complexity and multi-faceted dimensions of rights exercised over any one specific resource necessitate that the stakeholders are made to come together and negotiate their differential claims over the resources. Hence, the planning process needs to become a forum (1) to recognize rights by multiple users of diverse resources, (2) to enable negotiations among stake holders, and (3) to bridge community interests and bureaucratic agenda.

New mechanisms are sought by community members in partnership with government and/or other agencies to deal with new needs. For example, people request for assistance for water impounding projects and water harvesting techniques, to ensure adequate water supply not only for their farms but also for the growing tourist trade.

*Lesson 4. Create partnerships between government and non-government agencies and the local communities, to develop technological capacities complementary to indigenous scientific knowledge appropriate to the diversity of local conditions.*

The arguments for preferring management only by indigenous cultural communities often assume the existence of strong community consensus towards natural resource management issues. This is a wrong assumption. The stakeholders have varying, if not conflicting, objectives. Therefore, attention should be paid to installing negotiation and conciliation mechanisms among stakeholders in natural resource management planning and the ADSDPP process.

The ADSDPP should make possible agreements on governance procedures for resource management:

- between the DENR and the *ili*/community
- between politico-administrative units and socio-cultural settlements, that is, barangay, municipality and the *ili*
- among households, kinship groups, and *dap-ays*/wards
- among competing resource user groups
- among government agencies, non-government organizations, and community groups

To achieve what the governance procedures for resource management that are anchored on an ADSDPP intend, it is necessary that customary management structures are “harmonized” with the state’s governmental system, whether vested in national administrative agencies or in local government units.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See Mendoza et al., “Harmonizing Ancestral Domain with Local Governance,” for a complete discussion of the governance issues pertinent to this matter.

*Lesson 5. Establish mechanisms for the conciliation of interests of various stakeholders, and the negotiation and settlement of conflicts arising from the access to, use, and control of resources in the ancestral domain.*

Mapping and delineating activities that are not clearly tied to management plans and the discussion of activities by stakeholders over the use of resources can be seen as identifying territories and staking claims by individual households and clans. This exercise is perceived as stressing ownership and thereby is seen as excluding others from the use of resources. These lead to re-opening of old historical conflicts and inter-village wars over resources.

Instead, the mapping and delineating activities should highlight the intention to identify *common domains* of communities for their common use and shared management. When these activities focus on detailing resource use and management, and not on identifying boundaries, these old conflicts need not become insurmountable obstacles. Hence, there must be mechanisms for dialogue not only among stakeholders of an ancestral domain, but also across management units of different ancestral domains.

*Lesson 6. Incorporate structures and processes for dialogue among management units of different ancestral domains.*

## Perspectives

### *The Locale*

**JDM:** As Stephen R. Tyler says, “At the beginning of the 21st century, it is evident that the destinies of our planet’s diverse peoples are closely intertwined.”<sup>46</sup> In an interdependent world, the issues become “global

---

<sup>46</sup> Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 3.



issues”: “trade policy, biodiversity conservation, land mines, greenhouse gas emissions, peacekeeping, security and others.”<sup>47</sup> The “global issues” of the CBNRM are those of *poverty* and *environment*.

Yet, the *actions* that address and implement these “global issues” mostly fall to *local* decisions made by governments, individuals, business, and other organizations.<sup>48</sup> As Tyler puts it, “It is precisely when it comes to local action that so many well-intentioned global efforts fail.”<sup>49</sup>

We know that though societal totalities are typically associated with definite forms of locale, societies are not necessarily clearly delimited. They are not closed systems. Societal totalities are found only within the context of intersocietal systems. Local communities are parts of larger social systems. In today’s conditions however (sometimes called conditions of “second phase modernization,”) the relationships, interactions and influences that go into the workings of intersocietal systems have drastically transmuted since the advent of satellite communication and faster means of transportation that move masses of people across the globe every day. The destinies of local communities are drawn more and more into an ever-expanding whole which spans no less than the globe. In order to survive, it has become imperative for local communities to confront new rules and contingencies of the larger societal systems that have become the context of these local communities. They have to confront new problems that do not necessarily arise from the local scene, problems that do not respect the borders of nations and locales—e.g. ecological risks, fluctuations in the global economy and financial markets, global technological change. That the vegetable industry of Benguet is affected by China’s production, or that weather patterns that used to be relied upon by local farmers can no longer be relied upon due to climate change, or that the value of the peso is appraised in terms of foreign currencies like the American dollar, are connections that the ordinary actor

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

in local marginalized communities are making. More and more, “nobody stands outside” the reach of influences that spring from the global intersocietal system of which every locale is now a part. In the words of Anthony Giddens, “We now all live in one world.”<sup>50</sup>

What has become a household word, namely, “globalization,” is best understood not as an “out there” but an “in here” phenomenon, one that the phenomenal world displays and one which local actors experience as their day-to-day familiar life. When the faces of Lady Gaga, President Obama, and Pope Francis are more readily recognizable to the ordinary indigenous agent than his/her own next-door neighbor, then something very drastic indeed has happened to the local community. Far-flung influences infiltrate the local scene and vice-versa. David Held says that:

Globalization denotes a shift in the spatial form of human organization and activity to transcontinental or inter-regional patterns of activity, interaction and the exercise of power. It involves a stretching and deepening of social relations and institutions across space and time such that, on the one hand, day-to-day activities are increasingly influenced by events happening on the other side of the globe and, on the other, the practices and decisions of local groups or communities can have significant global reverberations.<sup>51</sup>

To understand societies today, we can no longer rely on conceptions of social formation or “society” as a “bounded” whole or system, or on conceptions premised on the Hobbesian “problem of order” (because this already presumes a “bounded system” of social relations.) The problem of collective life in today’s world must now be formulated in terms of “how social life is ordered across time and space.”<sup>52</sup> As Giddens notes, “The ‘problem of order’ should be reconceptualized as concerning the

---

<sup>50</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives* (1999; New York: Routledge, 2000), 25.

<sup>51</sup> David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996), 340.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 64.

constitution of social systems across time space. In other words, it is a problem of how ‘presence’ and ‘absence’ become interconnected in the tissue of human social life.”<sup>53</sup> Our analysis must direct its attention “to the complex relations between *local involvements* (circumstances of co-presence) and *interaction across distance* (the connections of presence and absence).”<sup>54</sup> This conception of the constitution of social life brings together “locality-based” understanding of “community” and network approaches.”<sup>55</sup>

### *Nature*

**JDM:** What we call “one world” is also Nature, one biosphere, also referred to under the heading of “the planet.” From the point of view of the local, “environmental and resource degradation has been widely recognized as a crucial constraint to reducing poverty among the most disadvantaged and marginalized populations in the world, who remain largely rural.”<sup>56</sup> At stake and at risk are “common property resources”: water, forests, arable land, pasture, fisheries, etc.

The dramatic extension of the reach of agency and influences that virtually affect all corners of the world today requires a reexamination of our conceptions of nature itself:

(1) Nature is nature no longer. It makes sense to speak of nature as “given” and pristine when nature was presumed to be long-lasting or everlasting, untouched by human activity. Now, no part of nature is untouched by human activity. Every flower in the vicinity of cities, when examined close range, has tiny black particles on its petals caused by smog and fumes.

<sup>53</sup> Anthony Giddens, letter to Julius D. Mendoza, January 24, 1989. In other words, “the ‘problem of order’ is seen here as one of time-space distanciation—the conditions under which time and space are organized so as to connect presence and absence.” (Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 14.)

<sup>54</sup> Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 64.

<sup>55</sup> Vandergest, “CBNRM Communities in Action,” 325.

<sup>56</sup> UN Millenium Project (2005), cited in Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 4.

(2) Nature used to be the model as well as the reference for long-lastingness. People will disappear like a blade of grass but not nature. But nature is changing faster than originally expected by indigenous peoples. When there are more landslides and storms than usual, is this nature's way or are these consequences of human activity? Of course, the debate rages on. Some argue that at least 50 percent of greenhouse gases that cause global warming come from nature itself.

(3) The problems we now have about the natural environment really *have their roots in the way we think individually*. We think that nature lasts forever and that it is enormously huge. As Bill McKibben points out, "Nature, we believe, takes forever. It moves with infinite slowness through the many periods of its history, whose names we dimly recall from high school biology—the Devonian, the Triassic, the Cretaceous, the Pleistocene."<sup>57</sup> We speak of "the wilderness" and the "virgin forest" as being the product of millions of years. Because we are surrounded by its *longue durée*, the same one that we presume surrounded our ancestors, nature has given us a sense of "ontological security." Nothing is farther from the truth. Enormous events can happen quickly. Since Hiroshima and Chernobyl, and recently, Sendai, most of humanity now know this is true. But though we may consider catastrophes like these to be highly possible, we spontaneously think of ourselves as exempted from these. The result is that we are shocked when it happens to us. Typhoons like Ondoy in Central Luzon, and Pepeng in Northern Luzon, and just last year, Typhoon Pablo in Compostela Valley, tell us that nature can change all of a sudden. The two most recent typhoons in Mindanao in Southern Philippines—Sendong in 2011, and Pablo in 2012—devastated local communities normally not visited by typhoons. And yet, Typhoon Pablo was one of the most destructive typhoons to hit the Philippines, with

---

<sup>57</sup> Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 3. Compare Bill McKibben's insight with the discussion of "environmental values" in Peter Singer, *Writings on an Ethical Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2000), especially 90ff.

estimated damages totaling US\$964 million, according to UNICEF, and affecting around 6.2 million people, 2.6 million or more than a third of which were children.

Further, as McKibben notes, “in much the same comforting way that we think of time as imponderably long, we consider the earth to be inconceivably large.”<sup>58</sup> But this is not so. A mile beyond Mt. Everest, the air is too thin to breathe without artificial assistance. Into the tight space below, and the layer of ozone just above Mt. Everest, is crammed all that is life and all that maintains life.

Because we think of cosmic time as infinitely long, and space as infinitely large, we think that our actions hardly cause any dent on nature. So we think we can go on with our habitual ways. The problems we now confront about the environment, I just said, really *have their roots in the way we think individually*. Not too long ago, I arrived at my house from work shocked to find out two bulldozers already digging their way on the lot adjoining mine, and that they have dug dangerously close to the foundation of my house. I hurried to the City Engineers Office to complain. “Is there a crack on your floor anywhere in your house?” That was the question addressed to me by the engineer. In the meantime, the bulldozers were busy scraping away the earth beneath my house. If I waited until the cracks on my floor appeared, it would have been too late, because the *future* that is in question that becomes visible in the *present*, namely, the cracks on my floor, is identical to my house’s doom.

Not a few environmentalists and activists have warned that the condition of the biosphere is analogous to the cracks on my floor. The end of nature, the point of no return, has already come. Giddens says that “people find it hard to give the same level of reality to the future as they do to the present.”<sup>59</sup> We can mention one basic reason: people do not see the connection. How can there be a connection between my intention of working day-to-day for my children and the fast rate at which the polar ice

---

<sup>58</sup> McKibben, *The End of Nature*, 5–6.

<sup>59</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Politics of Climate Change* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2009), 2.

caps are melting? Or, how can there be a connection between my driving my SUV and the high incidence of asthma in my neighborhood? But phrased in this way, this would be a problem which nobody can do anything about. How can one be intentional about something that lies outside the reach of one's knowledge or awareness? And so, I continue to drive my SUV. The SUV is a metaphor. We are all SUV drivers, because for the great majority of us, the profundity of the threats we face, the apocalyptic future of climate chaos, has not sunk in. The politics of climate change and transformative action has to deal with the "Giddens's Paradox":

It states that, since the danger posed by global warming aren't tangible, immediate or visible in the course of day-to-day life, however awesome they appear, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature about them. Yet waiting until they become visible and acute before being stirred to serious action will, by definition, be too late.<sup>60</sup>

The real problem is the one which we can do something about. I know, for instance, the consequences of the bulldozer's action right beside my wall. If I procrastinated and dwelt in what psychologists call, "future discounting," that crack on my floor most certainly would have appeared. This brings me to the "environmental skeptic." The polar ice caps, he points out, are not the ones causing the flooding of our streets and neighborhood. The future is much closer: they are the debris that clog our waterways. Still, there is an undeniable connection between the "Giddens Paradox" and the environmental skeptic. Both have to do with how our actions are connected to the future that seems far removed and remote from the present. Should we not in fact revive a new "metaphysics of presence," one that makes the abstract future as real (*wirklich*) and as consequential as the presence, not of consciousness, but of *action*?

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

We know of the debate between an Ethics that stress intention (Kantian varieties) and consequentialism (Utilitarianism for instance). Environmental ethics is a kind of consequentialism, but of a special sort. It is not only because the consequences of our action have global reach. More than this, the consequences of our actions can undermine the conditions that make them possible, especially resources, nature. Because our own action threatens and undermines the ground on which we stand, Environmental ethics is not consequentialist but an interrogation of the *very intention*—and hence information—that *every* action acts with. It questions the reflexive monitoring of action—everyday, routine life and the knowledge that it applies—and the rationalization of action, the process by which human actors select and use the grounds of the actions that make their daily lives. More of the same would do no longer. “What comes natural” to us is not what is truly best for Nature—and we must be quick to add— not what is truly best for people. What comes under interrogation is ontological security,<sup>61</sup> the “taken-for-grantedness” that underlies the routine life of the majority of ordinary social actors today. What comes under interrogation is industrialism, consumerism, individualism. These are questioned for *new reasons*, which all past ethics and ideology never dreamt of, new reasons which can only spring from a new *global consciousness*—which still has not sunk in—that we now all live in one world, and that in this world, nobody lies outside, a world that is short-lived and tiny.

The last lesson is one that we must learn from CBNRM communities. The CBNRM Projects are living contemporary testimonies that people do have the capacity to constitute themselves into a CBNRM community, a community that arises *only* when people mobilize themselves in voluntary collective action, to manage resources and to achieve collective goals. As

---

<sup>61</sup> See Julius D. Mendoza, “Ontological Security, Routine, Social Reproduction,” in *Anthony Giddens: Critical Assessment*, ed. Christopher Bryant and David Jary, Routledge Critical Assessments Series, vol. 2, sec. 4 (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

Vandergeest puts it, “It is through collective action that groups of people become community-based actors.”<sup>62</sup> We today can be guided by the “fiction” of a CBNRM community.

*Lesson 7. The enlarged contexts of action today require collective, long-term action organized around shared values.*

## Conclusion

We cannot deny that the question, “Why has research failed to reach the poor?” continues to haunt development workers. The CBNRM is a response to this question.<sup>63</sup> We think that we can reformulate the problem of community-based natural resource management in most general, philosophical terms as one concerning *linking knowledge to value*. All peoples have values in that they want things to be better, more perfect, and hence different.<sup>64</sup> The search for knowledge is tied to the desire to make things better. But how does one get there for the targets of development, especially the poor? This seems to require that research itself must adopt a *developmental framework* rather than the conventional scientific, detached one. The CBNRM conjectures that the targets of developmental work, local actors, the poor, marginalized groups, must themselves be involved in the diagnosis of problems and the testing of solutions. Research or the generation of knowledge itself must be participatory. Participation requires a *learning process* on the part of scientists, development workers, stakeholders, and local actors. Knowledge arises from the dialogue of participants themselves and this knowledge is thereby chronic in transforming agency itself and its own self-understanding. Dialogue is a

<sup>62</sup> Vandergeest, “CBNRM Communities in Action,” 327.

<sup>63</sup> Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 14ff.

<sup>64</sup> See Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, foreword by Onora O’Neill (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).



medium of education toward a common understanding of the context of resource management. Among participants, this learning process involves, among others, the posing of correct questions and the examination of their own presuppositions and pre-conceptions. The invention of questions and their proper formulation, and the examination of basic presuppositions and pre-conceptions are perennial characteristics of *philosophical thinking*. That a philosophical moment is required is definitely true in development work where typically, the worldviews of local actors, scientists and development workers, and the nation-state—or should we add to say, nation-states—are heterogeneous. And yet, most development work must bring all these actors together in order to focus their attention on a problem and direct their activities toward common values.

## Bibliography

- Agrawal, Arun and Elinor Ostrom. "Collective Action, Property Rights, and Devolution of Forest and Protected Area Management." Paper presented at CAPRI Workshop, "Devolution, Property Rights, and Collective Action," Puerto Azul, Philippines, June 21–25, 1999. Available online, <http://www.capri.cgiar.org/pdf/agrawal.pdf>.
- Almond, Brenda. "Rights." In *A Companion to Ethics*, edited by Peter Singer, 259–25. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.
- Anderson, Benedict R. "Nationalism and Cultural Survival in Our Time: A Sketch." In *At the Risk of Being Heard: Identity, Indigenous Rights, and Postcolonial States*, edited by Bartholomew Dean and Jerome M. Levi, 165–90. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Aquino, Carlos and Eugene Tecson. "Indigenous Peoples Rights Act: Is the Long Wait Finally Over?" *Farm News and Views* 1 and 2 (2001): 4–24.

- Bentham, Jeremy. *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Edited by Wilfred Harrison. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960. Originally published in 1789.
- Cruz, Gladys A. "The Social Arrangements in Natural Resource Management: Demang, Sagada." In *Research Report 2: Community Studies in Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines*, 32–52. Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, February 2001.
- Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. "Contested Forests: Modern Conservation and Historical Land Use in Guinea's Ziama Reserve." *African Affairs* 93 (1994): 481–512.
- Fay, Brian. "Theory and Metatheory in Social Science—or, Why the Philosophy of Social Science is so Hard." *Metaphilosophy* 16, nos. 2 and 3 (April/July 1985): 150–65. Gevers, Francis. "The Use of Philosophy." Talk, University of the Philippines Baguio City, June 1976.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- . Letter to Julius D. Mendoza. January 24, 1989.
- . *New Rules of Sociological Method*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993.
- . *The Politics of Climate Change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2009.
- . *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Originally published in 1999.
- Gonsalves, Julian and Lorelei C. Mendoza. "Creating Options for the Poor through Participatory Research." In Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 279–95.
- Held, David. *Models of Democracy*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1996.
- Hume, David. *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding, and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, 3rd ed. Edited by Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1933.
- Korsgaard, Christine M. *The Sources of Normativity*. Foreword by Onora O'Neill. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*. New York: Anchor Books, 1989.
- Mendoza, Julius D. "The Condition of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) from a Structurationist Perspective." In *Towards Understanding Peoples of the Cordillera: A Review of Research on History, Governance, Resources, Institutions and Living Traditions*, vol. 2, 47–67. Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, September 2001.

- . “The Duality of Structure.” In *Anthony Giddens: Critical Assessment*, edited by Christopher Bryant and David Jary, 219–70. Routledge Critical Assessments Series, vol. 2, sec. 4. London: Routledge, 1997.
- . “Ontological Security, Routine, Social Reproduction.” In *Anthony Giddens: Critical Assessment*, edited by Christopher Bryant and David Jary, 271–309. Routledge Critical Assessments Series, vol. 2, sec. 4. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.
- . “Some Remarks on Metatheory and the Philosophy Of Social Science.” Paper delivered at the annual convention of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, July 25, 1992.
- Mendoza, Lorelei C., ed. *Building Local Administrative Capability for Regional Autonomy in the Cordillera*. Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, December 1992.
- . *Research Report 5: Narrative Report, Ancestral Domain and Natural Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines, Natural Resource Management Program*, NRMP 2. Baguio City, Philippines: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, December 2006.
- Mendoza, Lorelei C., June Prill-Brett, Bienvenido P. Tapang, Gladys A. Cruz, Arellano A. Colongon, Jr., Victoria Lourdes C. Diaz, Ma. Cecilia San Luis, and Alicia G. Follosco. “Harmonizing Ancestral Domain with Local Governance in the Cordillera of Northern Philippines.” In Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 231–52.
- Peña, Mani Thess Q. “The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act: Under the Test of Constitutionality.” *Human Rights Agenda* 6, no. 1 (2001): 6–9.
- Poteete, Amy R., Marco A. Janssen, and Elinor Ostrom. *Working Together: Collective Action, the Commons, and Multiple Methods in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Prill-Brett, June. “Concepts of Ancestral Domain in the Cordillera Region from Indigenous Perspectives.” In *Research Report 1: Perspectives on Resource Management in the Cordillera Region, Ancestral Domain and Natural Resource Management in Sagada, Mountain Province, Northern Philippines*, 1–21. Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, February 2001.
- . “Indigenous Land Rights and Legal Pluralism among Philippine Highlanders.” *Law and Society in Southeast Asia: Law and Society Review* 28, no. 3 (1994): 687–97.
- . “Preliminary Perspectives on Local Territorial Boundaries and Resource Control.” Cordillera Studies Center working paper no. 6, University of the Philippines College Baguio, 1988.

- . “The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Management and Development.” In *Towards Understanding Peoples of the Cordillera: A Review of Research on History, Governance, Resources, Institutions and Living Traditions*, vol. 2, 3–29. Baguio City: Cordillera Studies Center, University of the Philippines Baguio, September 2001.
- Rood, Steven. *Protecting Ancestral Land Rights in the Cordillera*. Peace, Conflict Resolution and Human Rights Research Report 94-001. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press and the Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 1994.
- Rood, Steven and Athena Lydia Casambre. “State Policy, Indigenous Community Practice, and Sustainability in the Cordillera, Northern Philippines.” Cordillera Studies Center working paper no. 23, University of the Philippines Baguio, March 1994.
- Sayer, Andrew. *Method and Social Science: A Realist Approach*. London: Hutchinson, 1984.
- Singer, Peter. *Writings on an Ethical Life*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2000.
- Tyler, Stephen R., ed. *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources: Action Research and Policy Change in Asia*. Ottawa: ITDG Publishing and International Development Research Center, 2006.
- Vanderveest, Peter. “CBNRM Communities in Action.” In Tyler, *Communities, Livelihoods and Natural Resources*, 321–46.
- Vernooy, Ronnie and Cynthia McDougall. “Principles for Good Practice in Participatory Research: Reflecting on Lessons from the Field.” In *Managing Natural Resources for Sustainable Livelihoods: Uniting Science and Participation*, edited by B. Pound, S. Snapp, C. McDougall, and A. Braun, 113–37. London: Earthscan Publications, 2003.