MANAGING COMPETING MANDATES

Social Work in Philippine Municipalities

by

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Glossary

AICS	Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations
APCMSWDOPI	Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Incorporated
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MSWD Office	Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office
MSWD Officer	Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer
PASW	Philippine Association of Social Workers
US	United States
WB	World Bank

Summary

This study set out to answer the question: In what ways do social work practitioners in Philippine municipalities manage competing mandates? The research question was informed by a number of theoretical propositions outlined in Chapter 1 and a particular construction of social work as described in Chapter 2. The approach taken was to ground the study in a particular practice setting, with the study participants being social workers serving as Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) Officers in Philippine municipalities.

A critical approach as explicated in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3) was used in this study in line with the structural construction of social work which serves as its analytical framework. The approach and analytical framework made it necessary to look into the larger political-economic context of the practitioners. An analysis of the political economy of Philippine social policy, the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare and the mainstream construction of social work as laid out in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively indicated that the dominant ideology and dominant constructions of social welfare and social work were at odds with a structural perspective. The analysis heightened the relevance of the research question by pointing out the broader institutional imperatives and ideological traditions, underpinned by dominant ideology, that inform the practice of social work within the specific practice setting of MSWD Officers. The findings (featured in Chapters 7 and 8) indicate that:

1. The policy and organisational practice environment of MSWD Officers can present challenges from a structural view of social work. The definition of the role and functions of MSWD Officers and the organisational culture prevailing in Philippine municipalities embody practices and prescriptions that are incongruent with structural social work practice;

2. The way practitioners construct social work can allow practitioners to avoid some of the problems that a structural construction of social work would raise. Practitioners largely position themselves or are positioned as implementers of programs and services, without any direct involvement in local social welfare policy and politics;

3. There are minimal conflicts between social work practitioners and mayors and the few social workers who do report conflicts see the problem largely as an unwelcome intrusion into the professional territory. This suggests that among the more prominent concerns of practitioners in Philippine municipalities is the dilution of their professional identity and status rather than ideological concerns over citizen rights and well-being.

4. The strategies that practitioners employ in responding to the circumstances in the local government practice environment largely fail to challenge inequality and oppressive practices. Moreover, the very action and inaction of practitioners help create and sustain the very factors that make their position vulnerable as they largely leave unchallenged the inequity and hierarchy characterising their organisational and societal orders.

The study concludes with a discussion of the implications of the findings for social work practice in Philippine municipalities, in the Philippines in general, and social work education. It is argued that a structural perspective requires interventions beyond those that are currently seen in the practice of the study participants.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text. All substantive contributions by others to the work presented are clearly acknowledged.

Nilan G. Yu
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CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL WORK IN PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITIES: An introduction to the thesis

Ang taong nagigipit, kahit sa patalim, kumakapit. (A desperate person will cling even to a knife's blade.) – Filipino proverb

RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS

This study addresses the question: In what ways do social workers manage competing organisational and professional mandates? The question and its answers are explored through a study of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments, particularly by municipal staff commonly known as Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) Officers who work as heads of Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) Offices. A municipality is a local government unit covering several villages that serves 'as a general purpose government for the coordination and delivery of basic, regular and direct services and effective governance of the inhabitants within its territorial jurisdiction' (Local Government Code of 1991, Section 440).

Social work practice, as detailed in the next chapter, has no singular meaning and construction and so the research question only takes on a fuller meaning in particular practice contexts. The choice to undertake a study of social work, with social work in MSWD Offices as the main unit of analysis, is based on a principle in case study research that specifies the potential for maximum learning as a key

sampling criterion (Stake 1995). According to Stake (1995), the most important basis for sample selection in a case study – considering the limited representational value of case studies in view of sampling constraints – is to choose units from which most can be learnt. A more elaborate discussion of how this principle was used in narrowing down the scope of this study is contained in the next section. But applying the above-stated principle, an actual practice scenario (although it cannot be claimed to be typical) vividly portrays the significance of the research question. In one of the biggest local government units in the country, there has been a perceptible pattern of summary executions of suspected criminals who are mostly from poor families and under 18 years of age (Casalda 2004; Marks 2004). The mayor has been publicly lauding these killings as an expeditious means of ridding the town of criminal elements with statements to the media and in campaign trails like: 'I tell the people during elections: If you want a mayor that doesn't kill criminals, look for another mayor…' and 'If I win, more criminals will get killed… Now if you tell me you won't vote for me because I've killed many people, then don't vote for me.' (Conde 2002; Marks 2004: 4-5). The mayor is now on his fifth term and has since been appointed as a Presidential anti-crime consultant. The phenomenon has since spread to other areas, with the mayor of another of the country's biggest towns offering a bounty of 20,000 pesos – more than a month's worth of wages – to any police officer who can 'permanently disable any criminal' (Mercado 2005: A12). Such situations would very well merit a critical response from social workers if they were to take human rights as a basic tenet of the profession (Hare 2004; Ife 2001a; 2001b; International Federation of Social Workers 1996). But social workers working in such circumstances, under the direct control and supervision of the mayor themselves, cannot take a professionally-committed response without expecting to suffer professionally (not to mention physically considering the Philippine's record in human rights). This study asks how similarly situated professionals reconcile what can sometimes be apparently irreconcilable mandates.

The central aim of this study is to analyse the ways by which social workers in Philippine municipal governments respond to demands imposed upon them, either through direct or indirect orders from their immediate superiors (that is, mayors) or unwritten rules which may be incongruous with their construction of their professional values and principles. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers;
2. Explore their construction of social work;
3. Investigate the conflicts in professional and organisational mandates that they encounter in practice; and
4. Analyse their strategies in managing such conflicts in mandates.

This introductory chapter outlines the research problem and the rationale for the study, its scope and parameters, the theoretical propositions that inform it, the approach taken and the structure of the report.

THE PROBLEM AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Kulkarni's (1993) analysis of the dilemmas in social work practice suggests that there are inherent contradictions in the practice of social work accompanied by problems and challenges within the immediate work setting and the larger political economic order. Kulkarni (1993) encapsulates the problem in his discussion of the dilemmas in social work practice:

> I am of the view that a social worker does not normally face any real dilemmas in his/her three conventional roles when he/she functions as a friendly helper, a purveyor of charities or as a dispenser of welfare services… His/Her challenges, dilemmas and confrontations begin when he/she chooses to function as a change-agent. In that role, he/she disagrees with the status quo, believes that he/she can possibly cope with a problem or hopefully even solve it if he/she were to work towards changing the existing situation. In doing so, he/she disturbs the vested interests who profit from the status quo… If he/she were to concentrate only on his/her social work mission he/she has to be mentally prepared to go down as a martyr to his/her cause; and martyr he/she does become (although like an unknown soldier who goes down fighting). On the other hand, if he/she were to first try to save himself/herself or his/her agency, he/she may do so at the cost of his/her mission. For then he/she ends up either compromised or coopted by the

> establishment. So virtually it becomes a no-win situation. (Kulkarni 1993: 23-4)

In this illustration, Kulkarni (1993: 24) suggests that there are conventional, 'non controversial' roles in social work and also that there are, adopting the terms of the author, non-conventional, controversial roles. This is similar to Mullaly's (1997: 23-4) distinction between 'conventional' and 'progressive' views which I go on to discuss in Chapter 2. What Kulkarni (1993: 24) refers to as 'non-conventional roles' are the tasks of a 'change-agent' who 'disagrees with the status quo' and works 'towards changing the existing situation'. Hurdles and personal sacrifices are to be expected but Kulkarni goes to the extent of suggesting that workers who adopt such roles are in a no-win situation. The implicit argument it seems is that, if there are such workers, they are bound to fail and suffer. And so apart from asking how social workers in general manage competing mandates, this study seeks to find out how social workers who adopt non-conventional roles manage to do so, if at all, considering the difficulties outlined.

Contradictions and Challenges in Social Work

The reference to inherent contradictions in the practice of social work largely stems from an appreciation of the competing values that make up the value base of social work (Clark 2000; Mattison 2000; Robison & Reeser 2000). There are also contradictions generated by the interface between the general aims of social work and the social context. Mullaly (1997) notes how social work espouses egalitarian and humanitarian ideals while it is practiced within and, in the process, helps maintain an unequal social order. There are also contradictions in the various constructions of social work. A nagging accusation is that, instead of looking after the interests and well-being of the people they claim to serve, social workers police the poor and preserve the status quo by providing a semblance of social reform and change in the process of dispensing welfare (Piven & Cloward 1972; Margolin 1997; Michielse 1990; Peirce 1974). Margolin (1997) portrays social work as one class (the mostly middle class social work professionals) judging the actions and colonising another (the

mostly lower class population that constitute social work's clientele). A more elaborate explication of the contradictions and various constructions of social work is presented in Chapter 2 and so the discussion here will be circumscribed. What is being argued is that there are contradictions within social work theory and between theory and practice as represented by Kulkarni's distinction between conventional and non-conventional roles. But beyond social work theory and practice, the structural view of social work put forward in Chapter 2 as informing this research also points to contradictions and challenges embedded in the immediate practice setting (that is, social welfare organisations) for those who adhere to non-conventional, controversial roles.

Organisations are not neutral, inconsequential vehicles for social work practice. There are two divergent views regarding organisational needs and professional expectations. The first sees social welfare organisations as having the same goals and values as those of the profession while the second views organisations and the goals of the profession as being irreconcilable (Gilbert, Miller & Specht 1980). The latter view suggests that social welfare agencies can be instruments of repression and exploitation even as they assume the image of a benefactor (Cloward & Piven 1981). Conrad (1988) identified conflict between professional and organisational values as the most intense source of role conflict for professionals. The problem hinges on the fact that social workers are not only employees, they are also professionals. On one hand, they have professional commitments and discretion and, on the other hand, they have organisational obligations. Thus, social workers are 'constantly faced' with reconciling bureaucratic demands and their professional avocations and conflict can occur between what they feel they should do as professionals and what they are obligated to do as employees (Bar-On 1995: 70; Robison & Reeser 2000). One dilemma of social workers then would be whether they can serve as advocates of clients against decisions of superiors or elected officials that they deem prejudicial to their clients' interests (Shamai & Boehm 2001). But if a bureaucratic orientation goes hand-in-hand with employment, there is the distinct

possibility that organisational forces can sway social workers who may end up serving as instruments of social control or palliative measures rather than providing care and ensuring people's well-being (Bar-On 1995; Rhodes 1986). The likelihood of this is even more present when we consider the relative 'powerlessness' of social workers which can force them to support bureaucratic norms and accede to the authority and dictates of their agencies and administrators (Bar-On 1995: 70-4).

Adding to these problems inherent in work within organisations are the special problems arising out of work within public organisations. For one, the ability of professionals to speak out against government policies can be restricted when one is employed in a public agency (Mendes 2003a). If they work in government or an agency supported by it, social workers might feel obligated to show loyalty even while they are opposed to certain policy decisions (Shamai & Boehm 2001). Such feeling is not entirely baseless because there can be very serious personal consequences for whistle-blowers including criminal sanctions (DeMaria 1996). Over and above the problems inherent in work within organisaitons are the challenges that can be posed by practice within particular political economies.

The influence of the political-economic context on social work practice cannot be overstated. National and international politics can impinge on social work activities (Jamrozik & Nocella 1998; Shamai & Boehm 2001) to the point that non-government organisations in Third World countries, traditionally regarded as bastions for independent and critical practice, have been accused of pandering to imperialist interests (Petras 1999). Ife (1997a: 32) asserts that the cost of speaking up is much higher in developing countries than in developed countries. This suggests that the conduct of an investigation into the research question within developing as opposed to, say for example, developed countries would provide a better opportunity to maximise potential learning which, as pointed out earlier, is identified by Stake (1995) as a key sampling principle in qualitative research. The researcher's identity as a Filipino social work professional and educator provided an opportunity

for exploring the problem in the Philippines, a developing country with a relatively long tradition of social work in both private and public realms.

Consistent with the above-stated principle, the choice of the practice setting of MSWD Officers as the focus of the study was made because of the apparent richness of the practice setting in offering insights to shed light on the research question. First, public agencies are thought to be more demanding than private agencies in terms of competing mandates, given their reputation for bureaucratic rigidity and vulnerability to political influence. Then, among public agencies, there are those that are professionally-administered (with professional administrators serving as a sort of insulation between direct practitioners and elected officials) and those that are directly administered by elected officials. Local government units are among the latter. Thirdly, among the local government social welfare and development units, MSWD Offices are at the lowest levels of the Philippine bureaucratic strata which, as a Filipino euphemism goes, puts them *malayo sa kusina* [far from the kitchen] or away from the central source of sustenance and power. Thus, among the public social welfare agencies in the country, municipal government units represent a good choice in terms of the potential for maximum learning given the proximity of the employed professionals to personalities and positions representing some of the interests that could be affected by workers who choose not to be confined to so-called 'non controversial roles'.

The Philippine Local Government Practice Context

The contradictions and challenges attributed earlier to social work in general also apply to the Philippine practice context. There are those who lament how Philippine social workers generally fail to respond to social issues, preferring instead to retain their 'traditional neutrality' and focus on palliative measures possibly for their 'self-preservation' (Cueto 1999: 50-51; Lasan 1999: 27). Arguments for entrepreneurship (see for example Genzola 1999, Jamias 1998, and Padua 1998), participation and empowerment (as seen in Cueto 1999: 52, Cura 2002, and Pangan

1998) traverse the mainstream social work literature with the professional community appearing to be largely unmindful of how these discourses complement the advance in the Philippines of neo-liberal ideology which accompanied the privatisation and devolution initiatives over the last decade. The extent to which the political and ideological dimensions of social work are recognised and acknowledged in the mainstream professional community and the implications of this for social work practice will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. Suffice it to say at this point that the same questions about contradictions in professional values and constructions of social work operate in the Philippine practice context.

The Philippine local government as an organisational environment bears familiar as well as distinct challenges to those faced by social work practitioners in organisations generally. Local politics are dominated by an elite whose interests impinge on local governance. The Philippine Local Government Code of 1991 ushered in the devolution of social welfare and development programs and services, placing these in the hands of mayors. Previously under the auspices of the professionally-staffed Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), local social services are now directly in the hands of local political and economic elites. After the devolution, not a few social welfare officers suddenly found themselves struggling for their own professional survival as they competed for resources in a new policy and bureaucratic environment dominated by a new set of relationships and interests. The mayors' rein over local social services is considerable. The appointment of MSWD Officers and the very creation of the MSWD Office itself are now subject to the discretion of mayors. What once were assured in every city and municipality under the DSWD are now discretionary under the new dispensation.

The new arrangements brought new challenges. At the start of implementation of devolution, officials from the affected departments expressed concern about the local government units' ability to absorb the devolved functions

(Borlagdan, Gabronino & Traema 1993). In a study conducted in 2002 among local government staff, 79% reported 'experiencing … pressures from the different local executives' and 65% said they were 'experiencing too much political influence and intervention' (Valdez 2002: 204-205). While the autonomy gained by local governments may have favoured some local social welfare units, it brought with it some problems. The devolved social workers reportedly have to contend with bureaucratic pressures, harassment and politicking while grappling with funding and resource constraints (De Leon 1998; Valdez 2002). Some of them deplore the need to 'kowtow' to political leaders, while others experience political and even sexual harassment (Franco 1997: 20). Some mayors reportedly favour political supporters in the allocation of social service resources. Social welfare officers often acknowledge that they have to abide by the decisions of their mayors or face the prospect of being floated (that is, not being given any responsibilities while retaining entitlements) or dismissed from service. Social services generally do not receive funding priority to the extent that existing budgets are realigned for entirely different purposes, compromising the MSWD Officers' ability to render service to the most depressed and remote areas where such services are most needed (Asia Development Consultants 1997; De Leon 1998). Staff and service delivery in low income municipalities are said to suffer the most as they subsist on their share of the low revenues of their local governments (Laigo 1998). As if these were not enough, some local governments have been known to violate or fail to uphold pro-poor laws (David & Valte 2001). Even public servants themselves are subject to some of the very problems ordinary citizens face. One of the most frightening experiences of a state auditor was dealing with a city official in Mindanao who bluntly asked how much money it would take for her to look the other way while he was cleaning a gun right in front of her (Contreras 2003). Local politics, as with national politics, is tainted by the use of patronage, terror and corruption, among other things, with the proverbial three Gs – that is 'guns, goons and gold' – dictating the outcomes of elections (Abad 1993; Berrigan 2003; Coronel 1998; Coronel 2000; Lacaba 1995; Vitug

2002). It is difficult to imagine how a critical, human rights-based social work practice can be safely pursued in such a social environment.

The state of affairs in Philippine local governments is similar to the national political economy and partly reflects this. The Philippine legislature and the electoral system are dominated by the economic elite consisting mostly of big landowners and compradors (Abad 1993; Coronel 2004; Gonzalez 2001). Fame (that is, celebrity status) and family appear to be the two main determinants in the national legislative races (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2004). Appointments in the executive branch follow the practice of political rewards, a mixture of the American 'spoils system' and the Filipino 'patron-client system' (Gonzalez 2001: 265). As for human rights, no less than the immediate past president, Joseph Estrada, was implicated in the questionable treatment of criminal suspects and political rivals (Araya 2001). To establish this context, a more extensive discussion of the Philippine political economy is given in Chapter 4. A short note on the devolution is, however, required here since it figures in the analysis of the policy environment of MSWD Officers in Chapter 7. The Philippine bureaucracy is a legacy of the country's colonial past and, as a result, has traditionally been highly centralised (Huque 1985; Sosmeña 1987; Tapales 1992). Marcos' rule weakened the neutrality of the civil service and heightened the politicisation of the Philippine bureaucracy (Cariño 1989). As a reaction to this, there was a strong move for decentralisation starting in the latter half of the 1980s. Devolution was then framed as a vehicle for democratisation, local empowerment, and equitable national development (Brillantes 1998; Iglesias 1986; Padilla 1998; Pimentel 1993). While the devolution offered some benefits such as providing some democratic space and enabling more responsive local initiatives, it also had some unintended effects. Poblador (2000) questions its overall impact on Philippine society given what seems like a situation where there is a range of uncoordinated local initiatives. According to him, the devolution of economic and political powers to the local government units entailed 'a substantial price in terms of social welfare forgone' (Poblador 2000: 112). A key issue here is how the discourse on

devolution sidelined or displaced the collectivist and egalitarian agenda advanced by some quarters.

Studying the MSWD Officers' Practice and Setting

In a position where their work may intersect directly with the interests of their superiors, how do social workers do social work? Servility can become a sensible strategy in sustaining the career and upward mobility of welfare professionals in practice settings where one's willingness to accede to authority is tied to one's employment prospects (DeMaria 1996). With one's continued employability hinging on one's capacity to work with elected officials who are more often than not among the privileged members of the community and whose political and economic interests may traverse professional interventions, social workers in local governments are in a compromising position. Yet short of withdrawing altogether from the agency, are professionals really left with only one option: to treat organisations as 'enemies' of clients and to wage continual warfare within the organisation (Gilbert, Miller & Specht 1980: 199-200)? Cloward and Piven (1981) point to the need for a full and critical understanding of agencies in order to defend the interests of clients. Beyond this, it is argued here that a critical understanding of social work practice is also needed.

The practice setting of MSWD Officers provides us with a good case to explore social agencies and social work practice in relation to the question of how social workers manage competing mandates. In situations where the interests of clients bring workers face to face with organisational impositions, how can practitioners respond? There are obvious difficulties when social workers themselves may be victims of injustices or when their work environments marginalise them. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to imagine how much of what Pangalangan (1999: 55) calls the 'science and art of social work practice' can MSWD Officers actually do to judiciously strike a balance between their professional mandates and organisational demands. One may wonder to what extent MSWDOs can truly serve in the best

interests of their clientele if their tenure is contingent on their ability to gratify their mayors. What happens when the decisions and actions of mayors conflict with the values and principles they hold as professionals? One position that has been advanced is to 'Know your politician…, his family; interest[s], likes, dislikes…', 'Understand his wife's characteristics', and 'Know your politician's trusted person' (Parafina 2002: 92-3), suggesting a level of conviviality that borders on accommodation and indulgence. Such strategy would, at best, be inadequate under a structural construction of social work (as outlined in Chapter 2). This study explores the experiences of the participants to determine the range of possibilities and directions for action (drawn from an analysis of the strategies they employ) for social work practice in similar contexts.

SCOPE AND PARAMETERS

Before we can even attempt to explore the ways by which social workers manage competing mandates, there is a need to clarify what we mean by some of the basic concepts. The term 'social work' is defined in Republic Act 4373, the law regulating the practice of social work in the Philippines, as 'the profession which is primarily concerned with organized social service activity aimed to facilitate and strengthen basic social relationships and the mutual adjustment between individuals and their social environment, for the good of the individual and of society'. The concept being central to the question and the analysis, a whole chapter (Chapter 2) of this thesis is devoted to explicating the concept and outlining a particular construction that, in a way, problematises what in other constructions (particularly those that favour 'non controversial' roles) would be unproblematic. The term 'competing mandates' refers to the tensions and conflicts between the demands imposed upon social workers by their organisation, in the form of official responsibilities, unwritten rules and discretionary orders from their superiors, and by their discipline as they construct it (in the form of values, principles, and ideals). While discussions about values in social work are usually in the form of ethical dilemmas that arise from the operationalisation of what often are complex and

competing constructions of professional values, this study is concerned with how social workers manage to reconcile, if necessary, the values and principles that they hold as professionals and the values and principles that are imposed on them in their organisational setting. The terms 'ways' and 'manage' refer to the strategies consciously or inadvertently employed by professionals in resolving any conflicts or tensions.

In exploring the ways by which social workers manage competing mandates, it is necessary to specify a particular practice context. Different practice contexts offer different employment conditions, different demands and opportunities for practice, different supervisor-supervisee relations, and a host of variations that could frame the problem. For example, there would be conceivable differences in the policy and organisational dynamics in a private as against a public agency. Even within, say for example, the universe of public agencies, the range of practice opportunities may vary between agencies with specialised functions (for example, a medical institution or child welfare agency) and agencies with a more general mandate like those of local government social welfare and development units. Even among local government social welfare and development units, resource and functional differences can result in differentiated practice environments.

The practice and work setting of MSWD Officers was chosen for its potential to offer maximum learning to address the research question concerning the ways by which social workers manage competing organisational and professional mandates. MSWD Officers work in Philippine municipal governments under the general direction and control of municipal mayors. In line with the institution of devolution in the 1990s, municipal governments were given the autonomy to shape local social welfare and development initiatives. This study will examine what social workers in MSWD Offices are supposed to be doing based on the demands imposed within their organisation, what they think they ought to be doing based on their construction of

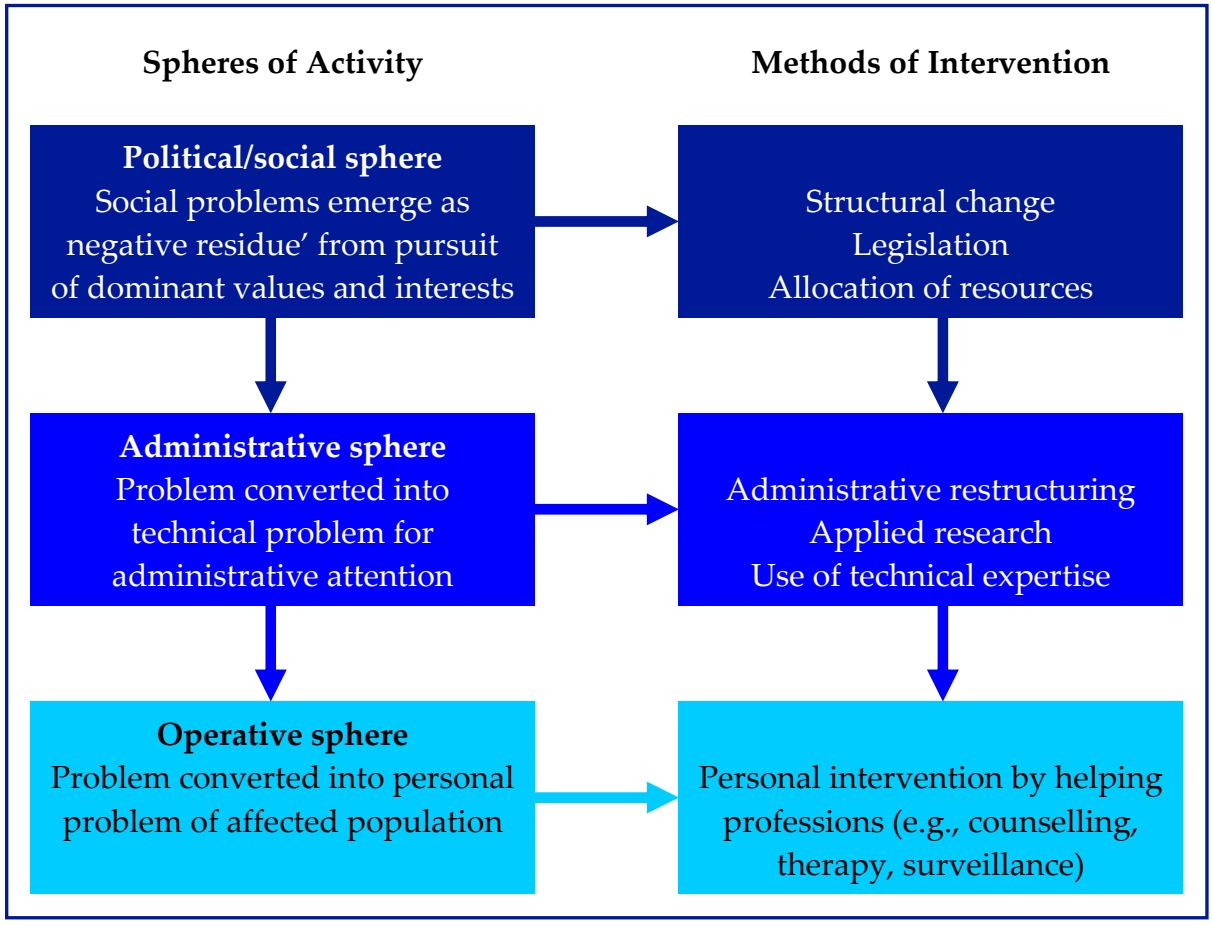
their profession and practice, and how they reconcile any differences between what they are expected to do and what they think they should be doing.

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

A number of theoretical propositions inform this research which touches on issues of professional purpose and orientation, autonomy and discretion, and agency and adaptation. Lipsky's (1980) notion of street level bureaucracy suggests that social workers actually enjoy a significant degree of autonomy and discretion which are inextricably linked to their functions. This implies that their actions are not necessarily confined to their overtly-defined functions. Moreover, Lipsky argues that social workers, as street-level bureaucrats, actually shape policy through their practice and thus exercise considerable impact on people's lives. This can be seen in how they (a) socialise citizens to expectations of government services and their place in the political community, (b) determine eligibility of clients, and (c) oversee the services citizens receive (Evans & Harris 2004; Lipsky 1980). Lipsky's analysis of the street level bureaucracy offers important guidelines in the conduct of this study. For one, it underscores the role of the organisational environment in determining the range of workers' latitude. While measures like mandatory reporting, child protection systems and conscription of roles through job compartmentalisation have effectively eroded the street level bureaucratic powers of many social workers in Western countries, social workers in the Philippines still enjoy some latitude in the way Lipsky characterised street level bureaucracies. Secondly, if what is written is not what is necessarily seen in practice and if practice constitutes policy as Lipsky suggests, then a review of the practice and practice environment of the MSWD Officers cannot be made solely on what can be gleaned from official documents. The practice of social work as accounted by the MSWD Officers themselves should form a key basis of any study of their roles and functions.

The concern over degrees of discretion and autonomy can be better understood from a larger perspective. Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) theory of

residualist conversion of social problems posits that social workers are often left to intervene at the operative (rather than the administrative and less so at the political) level in the systemic conversion of social and political problems into technical and personal problems, serving only to legitimate the power structure. Under this framework, social problems are seen as natural residues in the pursuit of societal goals within the established order and the interventions on social problems are generally determined by how they threaten the interests of dominant forces. This framework, illustrated in Figure 1.1, suggests that social workers are systemically (that is, through laws, procedures and organisational demands) confined to the application of policies formulated in accordance with the interests of the dominant order.



SOURCE: Jamrozik and Nocella (1998: 50)

Methods of Intervention in Social Problems
Figure 1.1

Applied to the study, the theory highlights the impact of the larger political economy on social work practice, necessitating the analysis of the political economy of Philippine social policy, the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare and the mainstream construction of social work in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. It also suggests that there are systemic elements that could generate conflict and tensions in practice. However, the recognition of conflicts and tensions would depend, to a large extent, on the practitioners' own construction of social work practice. Those who see social work in terms of residual and individualist interventions would certainly find no problem working in a system that conscribes their actions to the operative, as against political, level.

As employees of organisations and members of a discipline that claims radical roots all at once, social work practitioners would have to strike a balance between systemic demands, embedded in the organisational environment, on the one hand and professional principles on the other. Gilbert, Miller and Specht (1980) identify three sources of tension in work within organisations: restrictions on professional autonomy, excessive position power and professional vision extending beyond agency mission. Threat to professional autonomy arises, for example, when the professional is ordered by a superior to do something that is directly contrary to his or her personal judgement (Robison & Reeser 2000). For Terrell (1974: 333), the choice seems to be between an 'institutionalised' and a 'cosmopolitan' personality, the former referring to a bureaucrat primarily loyal to the organisation and the latter to a professional committed to the discipline. Gilbert, Miller and Specht (1980: 203-4) have a more elaborate framework (outlined in Table 1.1), naming four types of 'role adaptations' in response to conflicts in professional and organisational demands, namely: (1) alienation, (2) compliance, (3) resistance, and (4) integration. The framework suggests that alienation arises in those who have low professional and bureaucratic orientation (that is, those who do not strongly identify with professional and organisational ethos). A high professional and low bureaucratic orientation leads to resistance while the opposite leads to compliance. A high level of professional and

bureaucratic orientation supposedly results in the ability to integrate competing demands. Applied to the research question, the framework offers some insights. In situations where there is a dominant orientation, less tension can be expected because the order of orientation would, in a way, regulate and facilitate decisions. If organisational demands have primacy, then there would be less pressure to consider disciplinal demands and vice-versa. In situations of alienation, such tension would be non-existent. Those who have no strong commitment to their professional and organisational roles would experience no such tensions. It is among those who both have a strong bureaucratic and professional orientation, those who strive for integration, that such tensions can conceivably be greater and occur more often and so it is among such practitioners where we can expect the kinds of struggles anticipated by the research question.

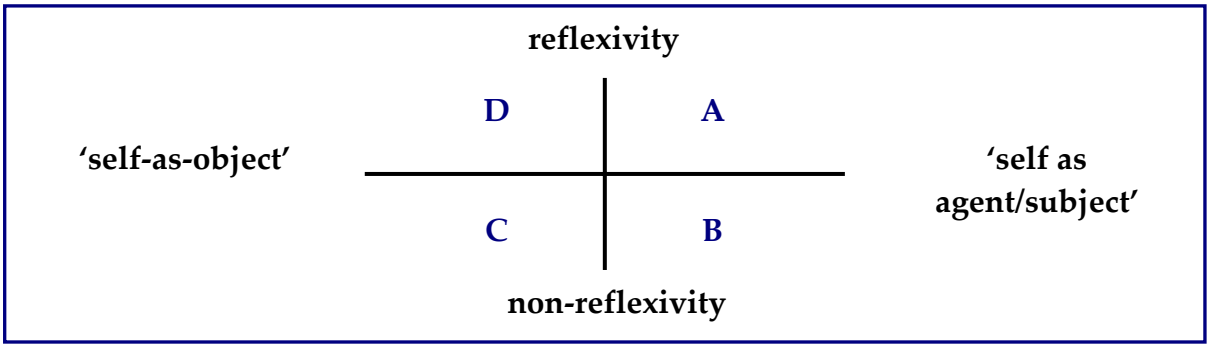
		Professional Orientation	
		Low	High
Bureaucratic Orientation	Low	Alienation	Resistance
	High	Compliance	Integration

SOURCE: Gilbert, Miller and Specht 1980: 203

Adaptations to Conflicting Demands of Professional and Bureaucratic Roles
Table 1.1

The table above indicates that there is a range of role adaptations that professionals can take, depending on where their commitment lies. Social workers cannot be exclusively categorised in any one of the four roles. One social worker may perform all the four roles depending upon the context. However, the choice of role adaptations is contingent on the levels of reflexivity and agency of actors. Taking cognisance of structural sources of social problems, a critical perspective cannot rest on a strong version of agency. Such a conception, like Giddens' highly reflexive and subjective model of agency embedded in his theory of structuration (Hoggett 2001;

Greener 2002), is deemed inadequate for this study. As Hogget (2001) argues, Giddens' voluntaristic and rationalistic portrayal of the welfare subject fails to take into account the incapacity and irrationality that can come with experiences of powerlessness and oppression. Thus, the model makes 'unrealistic assumptions' about agency and reflexivity in the context of social policy (Greener 2002: 698). A more useful conception is offered by Bourdieu's (1990a, 1990b: 52) notion of *habitus*, the embodied 'system of structured, structuring dispositions' that accommodates structural as well as cognitive constraints. Some have cautioned that the emphasis on the unconscious in the application of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* puts it at risk of being mechanistic or deterministic (Noble & Watkins 2003). Greener (2002) suggests that assumptions of high agency would lead to interventions that emphasise citizen obligation and responsibility as against collectivity and citizen rights. For if indeed people have the capacity to act on their problems, then there is wisdom in having them do so. If indeed people are able to solve problems on their own, then perhaps these problems do belong in their sphere of influence and, by implication, responsibility. A key analytical framework here is the work of Greener (2002) which integrates the theories on agency of Hoggett (2001) and Bourdieu. Hoggett's (2001) model of agency, integrated with the social theory of Bourdieu, appears to provide a good framework of agency that can account for non-reflexivity and objectivity and allow the exploration of the role of context or *field* in the shaping of human behaviour (Greener 2002). The model, outlined in Figure 1.2 below, considers two dimensions: reflexivity and agency.



SOURCE: Hoggett (2001: 48)

Hoggett's Model of Agency
Figure 1.2

Under the framework, reflexivity ranges from a scale of non-reflexive, instinctual, habitual behaviour to highly-reflexive behaviour. In the case of the latter, actors are able to thoughtfully consider their actions and modify them in accordance with their experience in interacting with their environment. The second dimension runs the spectrum of 'self as object' through to 'self as agent/subject' where the former refers to the inability of actors to impose their will on their surroundings as against the latter which connotes the ability of actors to shape their environment. In Figure 1.2 above, quadrants A and B both refer to actors who have the ability to enforce their will on their surroundings but differing in their ability to consider their actions; the former having high reflexivity while the latter has low reflexivity. Quadrants C and D both account for actors who have a limited ability to influence and modify their environment, with those in D having high reflexivity and those in C having low reflexivity. The analysis of agency can be made at two levels: (1) at the level of clients as viewed by social workers and (2) at the level of the social worker in relation to organisational boundaries. The first refers to how social workers view the people they work with and social problems. The second relates to the latitude of autonomy and discretion that social workers have in 'doing social work' within their organisational contexts. The model covers the range of actions and options that social workers have. Rather than serve as a typology for characterising individuals, this model plots the different positions people occupy in various situations (Hoggett 2001). One's level of agency and reflexivity may therefore vary as one takes on different roles (for example, as a parent, as a spouse, as a superior and as a supervisee) or particular situations. Yet this model seems helpful in providing insights into the particular situation of social workers working as Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Philippine municipal governments. It is conceivable, for example, that the organisational position and the delineation of functions of social workers in such context define a particular level of agency. As for reflexivity, Bourdieu (1990a: 11) points out that actions simply cannot be taken at face value, even if they have all the appearances and even results of rationality, since they are more often than not based on the actors' 'feel of the game' guided by their *habitus*.

It is therefore necessary to look into the meanings of actions, beyond those the actors themselves ascribe to them, in the context of the professional and larger societal culture. Applied to the study, Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus* tells us to consider structures within the worker as well as those without, for it is the *habitus* which intuitively orients practitioners to the realm of the possible, defining what they can, cannot and should do. It would, however, be misleading to assume a discrete line separating reflexive and non-reflexive action because our ways of thinking – which supposedly inform our actions – can limit our reflexivity.

These are the key theoretical propositions that guided the collection and analysis of data for this research which may be summarised as follows: (1) the organisational environment impinges on social work practice, (2) the larger political economy and policy environment have a direct bearing on the work of social workers, (3) there are a range of strategies or role adaptations that social workers may adopt depending on the values that they hold, represented by, among other things, their disciplinal and organisational orientation, and (4) the actual choice of strategies is dependent on their level of agency and reflexivity. The propositions collectively inform the analysis of data in this study.

THE APPROACH

The approach taken in this study is drawn from a particular practice and research tradition: critical theory (Agger 1998; Fook 2002; Ife 1997a; Morrow 1994). Connell (1977: 4) argues that, in discussions of what a theory is good for, the most important logical distinction is between two types of approach which he called 'categorical' and 'generative'. A categorical theory is one that is helpful in the systematic sorting of people, things or ideas. On the other hand, a generative theory helps us see how basic structures and processes generate historical reality. As opposed to positivism which counsels adjustment to everyday life, critical inquiry emphasises the need to uncover structural roots of domination and oppression (Agger 1998). And so beyond categorising, there is an interest in critical research to

generate accounts of inequality and oppression with the view of building knowledge for emancipatory action. In line with the study's critical perspective, the analysis in this research is underpinned by a generative approach. And so rather than simply seeking to categorise social workers according to the four role adaptations identified in Table 1.1, for example, the interest in this study is to generate accounts of how such role adaptations arise in their practice. Accordingly, the purpose is not so much to categorise the practice and actions of social work practitioners as to identify and analyse the processes and structures that produce them. Rather than simply determining the brand of social work social workers do, the stress here is on the dynamics that create such kinds of practices. Beyond locating social workers in their organisational and social space, the study explores how this relates to their actions and the choices that they make.

The analytical approach in this study is informed by a structural construction of social work, even as it is acknowledged that this is just one of a host of competing constructions of the profession (Davis 1991; Mullaly 1997). This particular construction, which is explicated in Chapter 2, holds that the social problems social workers often deal with are linked to structural disadvantage and inequality. In identifying the primary purpose of social work as addressing structural disadvantage and inequality, structural social work places critical theory at the heart of social work research, education and practice (Cox & Hardwick 2002; Ife 1997a; Mullaly 1997, 2002).

This pursuit of a fuller understanding of social work practice stems from the researcher's experience as a social work professional and educator in the Philippines. Social work in this country, where poverty incidence ranges from official government figures of around 34% to alternative estimates of up to 87% (Calpotura 2003; Yu 2002a), has been largely identified with work with the poor. But if the prevalence of poverty in the country is historically rooted and materially sustained under a hegemonic neo-colonial global order (Sison & De Lima 1998), then Philippine

social workers are dealing with forces that they themselves may be subject to. Can such an order not frame social work practice, such as the range of legitimate interventions, through national laws and social policy? What values and interests do social welfare organisations and social welfare professionals, operating within such an order, impose or represent? The view of values and principles taken in this study is one that recognises how the different conceptions of social work represent different value positions. It is acknowledged that there is no unified set and no single reading of social work values (Clark 2000). If the definition of social work is a claim of space as Vicary (1998) argues, then professional values and principles could best be understood as part of such lays of claim. This means that social work values and principles cannot be taken as givens or bearing self-evident, unambiguous meanings. They can only be understood within specific contexts and in specific assertions through discourse and practice. Such a view, which is consistent with this study's generative approach, is reflective of what Rein (1976: 73-9) calls the 'value-critical position' which 'treats values… as subject to debate and analysis'.

As part of the critical approach, it was necessary to outline the larger political-economic, historical and professional contexts in which this study of social work practice is situated. Three chapters are devoted to this, namely Chapter 4 which contains an exposition of the political economy of Philippine social welfare policy, Chapter 5 which traces the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare, and Chapter 6 which outlines the mainstream construction of Philippine social work. These accounts were drawn from existing literature. A rereading of the literature was necessary to rethink, reframe and recast some of the more established notions in mainstream Philippine social work. It was necessary to critically analyse Philippine social policy, mainstream accounts of social welfare history and the mainstream construction of Philippine social work for a more informed understanding of the practice context and practice of the research participants. These readings of the Philippine political economy, Philippine social welfare policy and Philippine social work in the above-named chapters, coupled with the theoretical propositions

outlined in the preceding section, were used as tools and resources to inform the analysis in this study.

This research investigates the challenges and the ways by which social workers manage such challenges for social work practice in organisations through an instrumental qualitative study of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments. This is an instrumental study (Stake 1995) in the sense it seeks to gain insights into a general research question by studying a particular practice setting which is that of social workers in Philippine MSWD Offices. This qualitative study comprises several sub-units of analysis representing the 1,495 MSWD Officers in the Philippines, including 37 randomly-selected survey participants who submitted valid returns, 10 purposively-sampled interview participants and 11 purposively-sampled focus group participants. The questionnaire which was fielded to the survey participants selected through systematic random sampling was meant to achieve breadth while the interviews and focus group discussion were aimed at allowing for depth towards a triangulation of data. More of this will be featured in the discussion on methodology in Chapter 3.

The literature containing the key theoretical propositions that inform this study helped guide the interpretation and analysis of the data. The analysis focused on the participants' organisational and policy environment, their construction of social work, and their accounts of conflicts and management strategies. In line with the generative approach stated above, the analysis draws out underlying processes and structures that generate the kinds of practices, actions and strategies found through the study. The general implications of the findings are discussed in relation to social work practice in Philippine municipalities, social work practice in general and social work education.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

So far, this chapter has introduced the study by explicating the research question and the aims of the study, the problem, its rationale, its scope and parameters, the theoretical propositions, and the approach. The rest of this chapter will outline the structure of this thesis, with some details given on each chapter.

The thesis can be thought of as being in three sections. The first section, comprising Chapters 1 through to 3, outlines the research problem, the theoretical framework and the methodology of the study. As was stated earlier, the research question is underpinned by a particular construction and reading of social work and the practice contexts. This construction and reading inform the research question. Embedded in the exploration of the ways by which social workers, particularly those in Philippine municipal governments, manage competing mandates are particular assumptions about the concerns of social work from a particular standpoint and how it is defined in social policy, dominant social welfare ideology and social work practice. It is acknowledged that these readings and constructions vary depending on one's ideological position. Given this, judgements on the validity of interpretations and analyses would depend, to a large extent, on the viewpoints of the readers. With the relative character of viewpoints, the main measure of rigour that could be offered in this instance is a declaration of the theoretical and ideological position from which this study was done, as it is done so in the next two chapters.

Chapter 2, entitled 'Structural social work', outlines a structural construction of the profession constituting a position paper on social work practice. This construction, presented in contrast with the conventional or mainstream view of social work, is seen as a critical element underpinning the research question. While a conventional construction of social work would largely fail to generate tensions and conflicts in practice, it is argued that a structural construction would most likely result in dilemmas in practice arising out of the workers' engagement with political and power issues. At the same time, it is acknowledged that such a construction of

practice is marginalised in mainstream social work in view of the structural dynamics that draw professionals to gravitate around dominant values (Tesoriero & Verity 1993). This construction is set in contrast with how the practice of social work is framed in social policy, dominant social welfare ideology and social work practice.

The methodology of the study anchored on a critical perspective is explicated in Chapter 3. The bases for the choice of a critical perspective are argued and the implications of such perspective are laid out. The chapter contains a discussion of the background of researcher, the case study approach used, the methods employed, the unit of analysis, the research process, ethics considerations, and the scope and limitations of the study.

The second section, covering Chapters 4 through to 6, outlines the larger political-economic, historical and ideological context in which the practice of the participants takes place. Chapter 4, entitled 'The political economy of Philippine social policy', distils the ideological elements embedded in contemporary (post-colonial) Philippine social policy, through a historical, political and economic analysis. It is argued that Philippine social policy since independence has been largely informed by a residual, individualist perspective sustained within a neo-colonial political-economic order. The chapter submits the political economy of Philippine social welfare policy as a critical element underpinning the research question. Social policy based on a residual and individualist perspective would favour a conventional construction of social work while a structural construction of social work would be at odds with the prevailing political economy. This gives a deeper meaning to the question. If the policy environment conscribes social work to residual and individualist interventions, then practitioners with a structural view of work are bound to encounter tensions in the interface between prevailing social policy and their practice.

The historical and ideological analysis in Chapter 5, entitled 'Ideological roots of Philippine social welfare', traces the origins of Philippine social welfare and social work practice. The chapter locates these in the Spanish and American colonial dispensations which constructed residual, individualist and functionalist views of social welfare initiatives. More importantly, the chapter points out the absence of a critical perspective in prevailing accounts of social welfare as evidenced by the failure of such accounts to recognise the ideological dimensions of practice in what amounts to an apolitical construction of social welfare history, practice and theory. This represents yet another critical element underpinning the research. What is evident in the analysis is that dominant Philippine social welfare ideology does not reflect and support a structural construction of social work practice. The identification of the lack of a critical perspective in accounts of Philippine social welfare reinforces the relevance of the research question.

Chapter 6, entitled 'Interrogating mainstream Philippine social work', analyses the record of mainstream Philippine social work in relation to a key theme: the protection of human rights. It was noted that martial law under Marcos, with the accompanying assault on human rights, constituted a veritable litmus test for mainstream social work in terms of how it had been positioned and how the mainstream professional community positioned itself in Philippine society. An analysis of the contents of the local professional journal (taken to represent the voice of the mainstream social work) throughout most of the decade or so of martial law in the 1970s and early 1980s was used to reconstruct the position taken by the mainstream professional community. What emerged was a patently conservative construction by social work practitioners and writers of social work practice in relation to social policy and human rights. This raises the question 'What values inform mainstream social work practice?' and further supports the necessity and relevance of exploring the research question.

The third and last section, comprised of Chapters 7 through to 9, lays out the findings of the study and their implications for social work practice, education and research. The discussion of 'The local government practice environment' in Chapter 7 contains the data and analysis of the practice setting of MSWD Officers in line with the first research aim. The analysis was focused on two dimensions: their organisational and policy environment. The exploration of the organisational environment focuses on the organisational culture, particularly the relationship between mayors and MSWD Officers as well as municipal government staff in general. The exploration of the policy environment surveys the mandates and functions of MSWD Officers. The exploration of the Philippine local government practice environment shows a constricted practice milieu laden with latent tensions. It was found that the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers is one that is imbued with rules, expectations and demands that can potentially run counter to a practice of social work anchored on a structural view of inequality and disadvantage.

Chapter 8, entitled 'Practice, conflicts and strategies', outlines the findings and analysis of the MSWD Officers' practice of social work under the authority of municipal mayors in line with the second to the fourth research aim specified at the start. The analysis looks into the MSWD Officers' construction of social work, their perceptions of conflicts in mandates and their strategies in managing the conflicts. The participants' construction of social work was explored through their views of social problems, their constructions of social work interventions, and their self-ascribed roles in local social welfare administration. The analysis of the perceived conflicts and strategies employed by MSWD Officers in handling such conflicts revealed a range of actions, although most are found to have conservative orientations. The ways by which MSWD Officers manage competing mandates is linked to the political economy of the larger Philippine society which is seen to impinge on their organisational environment and *habitus*.

The conclusion chapter, Chapter 9, summarises the study, explores the implications of the findings and surveys the tasks that lie ahead. The implications of the study are discussed in relation to social work practice in Philippine municipalities and local governments, social work practice in general and social work education. A number of questions for further research are raised. Cental to these tasks is the critical rethinking of social work practice in the Philippines, particularly in terms of the values represented in practice and its role in relation to social policy and governance.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURAL SOCIAL WORK

Kung saan ang hilig, doon mabubuwal. (Wherever which way one leans is where one falls.) – Filipino proverb

CONTROVERSY OVER THE NON-CONTROVERSIAL

This study into the ways social workers manage competing organisational and professional mandates carries implied assumptions about what the profession is. It suggests that social workers experience tensions between what they feel they ought to be doing and what their organisations require them to do. This may lead some to think that there is a singular meaning of the term social work but, as pointed out in the previous chapter, this is not the case.

This chapter analyses the varying constructions of social work and puts forward a particular construction of the profession that identifies unanswered questions and, in the process, raises the research question. The chapter will (1) explicate the contradictions in social work and social welfare, (2) outline the construction of social work that informs this research, (3) point out the role of ideology and the political-economic/material context in the shaping of constructions of social work, and (4) explore the implications of a structural construction for social

work practice and research in general and for this study of social work practice in Philippine municipalities in particular.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the different and sometimes competing constructions of social work and social welfare. The differences between the various constructions of social work are at the heart of this study because, as pointed out by Kulkarni (1993), they yield different actions and consequences for social work practitioners. Some constructions, particularly those that confine actions to conservative roles consistent with dominant ideology do not invite dilemmas as much as constructions that call for the appropriation of political issues, the exercise of power and the introduction of structural change (Kulkarni 1993). Relating this to the study, it can be said that there are constructions of social work that problematise the interface between social work and the organisational and the larger political-economic context and there are constructions that render it a non-issue.

Contending Views on Social Welfare and Social Work

Midgley (1997: 5) defines social welfare as 'a state or condition of human well-being' but notes that the term is often defined in a more 'narrow sense' as 'charitable activities or government social programs for the poor'. Depending on who views it, welfare may mean 'assistance for a disadvantaged population, or encouragement of irresponsibility; a community's obligation towards its less fortunate members, or abuse of the community's generosity by undeserving individuals; an integral part of the government's role in the capitalist economy, or a burden on the economy that negatively affects its performance, with detrimental effects on the whole society; a path to a good and caring society, or a 'road to serfdom'' (Jamrozik 2005: 1). And so while some bemoan the inadequacy of public expenditures to meet the needs of vulnerable populations, others lament how welfare drains social and economic resources (Galper 1975; Stoesz 1988). There are those who value social welfare's contribution towards maintaining social stability while others see it as a way for the established order to maintain its legitimacy and regulate the behaviour of citizens

(Galper 1975; George & Wilding 1985; Michielse 1990; Piven & Cloward 1972). These are highly contrasting views of what is supposedly a single concept. Such controversy over the concept of social welfare mirrors the debates concerning the discipline most closely associated with it: social work.

The International Federation of Social Workers (2005) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work define social work as the profession that 'promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being.' While it appears that there is a general agreement on the definition of the term, social work is a contested concept. Social workers are commonly seen by the public as 'altruistic' servants who have chosen the road less travelled, relinquishing the promise of financially-rewarding career paths in favour of a modest but noble vocation (Robison & Reeser 2000: 204). At worst, they are dismissed as zealous do-gooders. But from within the ranks of the profession itself and the very people they supposedly serve, there are persistent dissenting voices. Social workers have been accused of policing the poor, aiding in stabilising an unjust society, and subjugating the people they claim to help (Piven & Cloward 1972; Margolin 1997; Michielse 1990; Peirce 1974).

Social work comes from a range of traditions and theoretical influences which results in contentious debates over the unit and nature of intervention (Ife 1997a; Kilty & Meenaghan 1995). Kulkarni's (1993: 23-4) reference to 'conventional, non-controversial' roles and the role of a 'change-agent' represent competing constructions of the profession and the varying stances professionals take on in their practice. Mullaly (1997) refers to them as the conventional and the progressive constructions of social work. The differences cannot simply be thought of in terms of a binary. Instead, these traditions and influences can be seen as occupying various positions on a spectrum with the opposite ends represented by the two competing views of social work. The two views embody two traditions of modern social work in

the United States[1] on which Philippine social work was modeled after (a more elaborate discussion is contained in Chapter 5 which traces the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare): the Charity Organisation Society, identified with Mary Richmond and 'friendly visits', and the Settlement House Movement, identified with Jane Addams and social action and reform (Hare 2004; Ife 2002; Mullaly 1997; Specht & Courtney 1994).

Conventional social work is associated with the professional tradition laid down by Mary Richmond (Margolin 1997). The approaches under this tradition are patterned after a medical model of practice, with much emphasis given on human behavior theory in the diagnosis and treatment of social problems which are often associated with social deviance, illness or personal inadequacy (Margolin 1997; Rose 2000). As such, the interventions often have a therapy and individual adjustment orientation (Courtney & Specht 1994; Specht 1990). Although practitioners of this brand of social work would describe it in more favorable terms, there are those who regard these approaches to practice as oppressive. Some argue that asking people to adjust effectively assigns the blame to them and requiring people to live up to certain standards in a society that severely restricts their life chances and choices only serves to burden them and represents yet another form of oppression (Orton 2004). Margolin (1997: 9) likens such an approach to a process of 'colonisation' by one dominant class over a subordinate class in the way professionals, mostly from the middle class, go into the homes of mostly lower class clients to examine their lives, judge them and impose values. It was this therapy orientation that led to Courtney and Specht's (1994) indictment of social work as being unfaithful to its mission drawn from its radical roots. But, as argued below, the person that epitomises the radical genesis of social work had, in fact, disowned the profession.

Jane Addams, to whom social workers pay homage for social work's radical roots, was ideologically at odds with social work as it was widely practised during

[1] It does not embody those in Australia, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe, among others.

her time and, perhaps, as it is widely practised today. Margolin (1997: 4) says that Jane Addams was 'opposed to the way most social workers did social work', did not support the professionalisation of social work and, above all, disliked being called a social worker. Unlike most social workers of today, Jane Addams refused to call the people she worked with as clients, calling them instead 'neighbours', and was opposed to the idea of keeping files on them (Margolin 1997: 4). Identifying with Addams' tradition, there are those who believe that progressive/radical social work is what social work practice ought to be (Ife 1997a; Mullaly 1997; Polack 2004; Tesoriero & Verity 1993). Embedded in progressive social work is an emancipatory agenda. Social work, according to Ife (2001a: 142), is driven 'by a passion to make the world a better place, an outrage at injustice and oppression, and a commitment to change.' Progressive social work employs structural analysis in rooting out the sources of social problems. According to Mullaly (1997), this perspective informs a number of approaches in social work variously referred to as radical social work, critical social work, Marxist social work, political social work, progressive social work, socialist social work, socialist welfare work, and structural social work. A common theme among these varying notions is the elimination of discrimination, inequality and oppression (Dietz 2000; Dominelli 2002b; Mullaly 2002) through political action (Alstone 2002; Langan & Lee 1989).

What the discussion has shown so far is that social work is contested, with no singular meaning. The two views identified above embody different assumptions about what needs to be undertaken in social work practice. Rather than seeing them as distinct, mutually exclusive elements of social work, they can be viewed as part of a whole, embodying the contradiction inherent in social work practice within a given political-economic order. This means that the contention does not arise simply between various practitioners who espouse one view or the other but even within practitioners themselves as they grapple with social problems informed by dominant ideology. Such is the contradiction that Margolin (1997: 4) says many social workers 'claim Jane Addams as their source of inspiration, but they do like Mary Richmond'.

The distinction is not that simple. While the contrast presented above suggests an all-or-nothing position, this is not the case in practice. The criticisms levelled against conventional constructions of social work single out individual-oriented interventions such as those represented by psychotherapy and behaviour modification but the orientation of practice cannot be equated with particular methods. We cannot argue, as some might do, that casework is wholly conventional and that community organising is patently radical. As discussed below, even approaches commonly identified as radical can have conservative elements in them.

Conservative Elements in 'Radical' Approaches

Some of the so-called 'radical' interventions in social work embody conservative elements. Psychotherapy, identified with one-on-one intervention, is often set in contrast with community work (see for example Specht and Courtney 1994) as if work with communities comes with a built-in assurance that interventions would be structurally rather than individually oriented. But community organising and related approaches can also amount to therapy in the way exhortations for the building of a sense of community through the development of trust and a common set of values locates problems and people's redemption in the community's collective psyche, will or ability. Bryson and Mowbray (1981) warn us against the ideological implications of idealised notions of community work which assume that a just system can evolve out of capitalist societies through technical, non-political action even as it allows government to limit the resources it commits and de-politicises social problems. Social action in the tradition of Alinsky (1972), which appropriate the term 'radical', is essentially conservative in the sense that Alinsky implicitly accepted structures in American society, setting out not to change the system but to help people work within the system by being more 'politically sophisticated' (Ife 2002: 54; Mowbray 2000).

Conservative elements are embedded in some of the most popular discourses in social work today including, among other things, empowerment and participation.

Popular definitions of empowerment and participation point to their emancipatory potentials in the way participation (which in social work is often made in reference to the involvement of clients in problem-solving and service delivery) is assumed to have an effect on empowerment (Le Bosse et al. 1998/99; Itzhaky & York 2000) and empowerment, in turn, is taken as an effective antidote to inequality and oppression (Boehm, 2002; Breton 1994; Du Bois & Miley 1996; Gutierrez 1995). Recognition of their centrality is seen in the amount of interest in the literature on empowerment (see for example Breton 1994; DuBois & Miley, 1999; Gutierrez 1995; Littrell & Beck 1999; McCammon, Spencer & Friesen 2001; Pease 2002; Rose 2000; Speer & Peterson 2000) and participation (see for example Beresford and Croft 1993; Blanchet 2001; Carroll 1980; Checkoway 1992; Hafner 1987; Haidari 2001; Itzhaky 1991; Itzhaky & York 1991, 2001; Keough 1998, Littell 2001; Littell, Alexander & Reynolds 2001; Littell & Tajima 2000; McArthur 1993) and how the two are linked (see for example Itzhaky & York 2000; Le Bosse, et al., 1998/99; Watt, Higgins & Kendrick, 2000). Faith in the virtues of the two concepts have led to the celebration of what are sometimes framed as their natural extensions: social enterprise, social capital, civil society, the community, and the local (Clarke 1996; Cox 2000; Gray, Healy and Crofts 2003; Healy & Hampshire 2002; Smith, Littlejohns & Thompson 2001). However, questionable ideological assumptions can be and often are interposed in such discourses. Popular constructions of these notions are often underpinned by pluralist conceptions of power that overlook power and wealth inequalities, assuming instead liberal views of social problems and changes (Mowbray 2000). Thus, one might come across suggestions that community capacity building fosters initiative in people who may have otherwise been 'accustomed' to having government 'do for them' (Smith, Littlejohns & Thompson 2001: 30). These assertions serve to place the ultimate responsibility on people and thus echo if not support neoliberal discourses on welfare dependency and individual responsibility (Mowbray 2000).

The emphasis given in these discourses on people's assumed agency is problematic. The primacy given on people's action in such approaches lends itself to

an individualist orientation that deflects attention from systemic sources of social disadvantage, leaving instead the disadvantaged to look out for themselves as part of their responsibility towards society. While such approaches do enable a few to overcome some forms of oppression and inequality, they often do not change the material conditions that create the problems in the first place. And in drives for building capabilities for social action towards empowerment and participation, non-beneficiaries can end up being disadvantaged in competition with beneficiaries for scarce resources and opportunities (Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda & Staker 2002). Moreover, social action can and often is used more effectively by sectors that are already privileged (since they have louder voices) to the detriment of the marginalised (Mowbray 2000). When problems persist, those that remain poor and disadvantaged may be held to account for how well they worked towards their empowerment in the way they participated in governance, developed skills, taken action and the like. The fundamental problem with pluralist notions of power, with such concepts like empowerment and social action, come from the assumption that the system works – all that people need to do is speak up and be politically agile (Mowbray 2000). This goes against a basic assumption in a structural conception of social work as outlined in subsequent sections.

The tension between conservative and progressive constructions of social work that was part of the early evolution of the profession remains in place. Of the two ends of the spectrum, conservative constructions have remained dominant over the years (Hare 2004; Mullaly 1997). But even the espousal of seemingly progressive views does not necessarily assure that practice can be oriented towards the protection of citizen values and interests. Margolin (1997) suggests the cynical view that social work's engagement with empowerment discourse is really meant to sustain the profession by allowing it to continue to weave favourable stories about itself while remaining engaged in what are essentially intrusive interventions that impose dominant values and choices. Engagement with so-called radical discourses by professionals can be underpinned by a struggle for professional relevance and

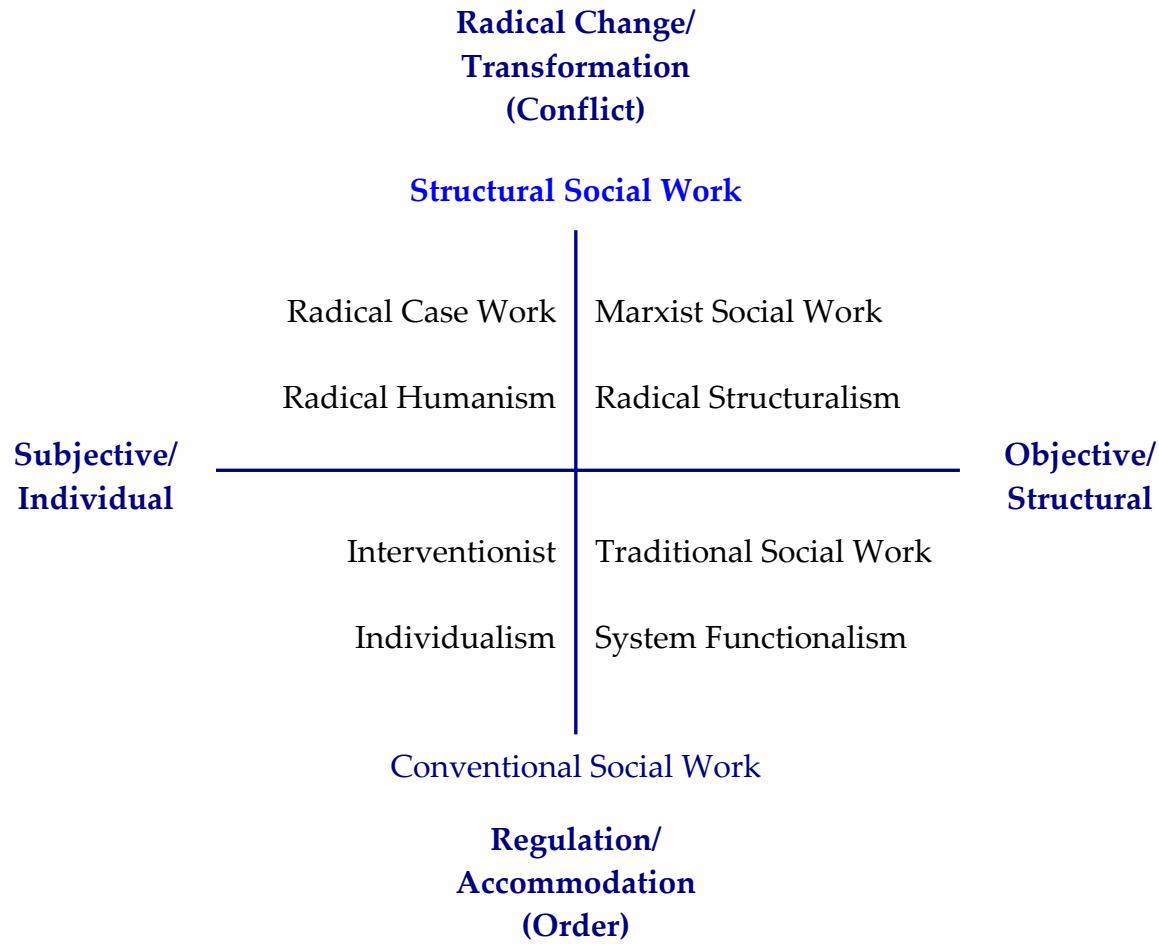
survival as much as a struggle for citizen rights and welfare as will be seen in Chapter 6. With the view of clarifying the analytical framework of the study, it is necessary to explicate the contending views of social work and outline the particular construction of social work that informs this research.

EXPLICATING SOCIAL WORK APPROACHES

The contrasting conceptions of social work embody the tension between competing perspectives represented by order/functionalist and conflict theories of society, social change, and social problems. The former assumes that societies are generally functional, with social institutions that adequately meet human needs whereas the latter sees societies as unhealthy, with structures that promote inequality and create problems for certain disadvantaged sectors (Mullaly 1997). The perspectives give contrasting emphasis on the assumed locus of the problem, with the former bearing the assumption that problems are mainly located within individuals and their immediate environment while the latter assumes that problems are largely rooted in social structures. The perspective has implications for the course of action. The former emphasises individual treatment towards coping and adjustment while the latter stresses political action towards societal transformation. The competing emphasis between individual treatment and political action is one of the most enduring tensions within social welfare and social work (Chambers 1974; Halmos, 1978; Haynes, 1998; Jacobson, 2001; Piven & Cloward, 1972; Rein, 1970). Lundy (2004) provides a useful organising framework for social work approaches as shown in Figure 2.1.

Under the framework presented in Figure 2.1, theories and approaches may be situated along a continuum. The vertical axis represents the order-conflict divide discussed earlier. As implied by the terms, the order perspective promotes the regulation of behaviour and encourages accommodation while the conflict perspective points to radical change and transformation. The horizontal axis represents the equally important dimension of where and how change occurs, with

varying degrees of importance placed on the subjective, individual condition on one end of the continuum and objective, material/structural condition on the other. Different theories, approaches and models of practice may be situated in any of the quadrants. For example, traditional social work informed by functional systems theory would be located somewhere in the lower right quadrant while an interactionist approach informed by individualist perspectives would be somewhere in the lower left quadrant. Similarly, Marxist social work informed by radical structuralism would be located somewhere in the upper right quadrant while radical case work informed by radical humanism would fall somewhere in the upper left quadrant. Conventional social work is located towards the order perspective while structural social work is located towards the conflict end of the spectrum (Lundy 2004; Mullaly 1997).



SOURCE: Adapted from Lundy 2004: 54

Organising Framework for Social Work Approaches
Figure 2.1

Conventional Social Work

Conventional social work is underpinned by conservative assumptions about society, social problems and social welfare. The conventional view assumes that social problems are largely due to personal difficulties or immediate environmental issues and all that is needed is to help people cope with or conservatively modify existing conditions (Mullaly 1997). It works on the assumption that, apart from minor faults, the way society is structured is inherently just and social institutions are largely adequate in meeting human needs. In other words, there is a belief that the system works, leading to mostly individualist notions about where problems emanate. If society is by and large just, then social problems cannot be attributed to it and how it is structured. Instead, solutions to social problems can be located in individuals, their immediate environments and, sometimes, in certain social institutions (Margolin 1997). By focusing on the individual, the conventional approach emphasises social responsibility and social adjustment. The needy, seen as the source of their failures, are then told to help themselves and those who fail are held to account or purportedly 'helped' to overcome what are thought to be non-systemic, personal impediments. In so doing, conventional or mainstream social work reinforces the social order and perpetuates social problems.

Conventional social work advances the notion of apolitical action. It is characterised by a disavowal of any social and political reform agendas and a general lack of engagement with power and political issues (Margolin 1997). Its dissociation from any social and political reform agendas suggests the notion of an apolitical profession. The resultant construction is a profession that is silent about power and structural oppression. However, this lack of engagement with power and political issues does not make it any less political. It is in fact this apolitical posturing that makes it so politically potent (Margolin 1997). Some argue that the main task of social services, from a functionalist perspective, is actually the promotion of social integration and the acceptance of the dominant values in society (George & Wilding

1985). The prevalence of the conventional approach reflects the dominance of certain ideologies, mainly those identified as conservative and liberal (Mullaly 1997; Taphouse 2001).

Popular constructions frame social disadvantage as being rooted in individuals and, sometimes, in social institutions. From these perspectives, unemployment can be attributed either to people's failure to make the grade because of deficiencies in attitude and abilities or to a mismatch between people's abilities and employment opportunities. Malnutrition can be blamed on something as intimate as people's lack of knowledge of good eating habits or something as extrinsic as inadequate socialisation provided by schools and the family. A surge in homelessness may be attributed to misinformed rural folk who, from a popular view, leave what is thought to be the idyllic countryside with the wrong assumption that they can have a better life in the cities. The two views essentially 'blame the victims' or 'blame the rescuers' (Ife 2002: 49-50). The problem with these views is that, while they may be true in some sense, they fail to take into account forces that shape social problems beyond the deficiencies of individuals and institutional structures in society. More fundamental questions, such as why some people tend to make the grade more than others or why some are not taken to task for how they eat or live, are not considered. Consequently, they often lead to questionable interventions. Addressing problems like malnutrition and urban homelessness through palliative measures such as supplemental feeding and *balik probinsya* (back to the province) programs, as the Philippine government does, merely ameliorates the symptoms but do nothing to eliminate the roots of the problems. If the problems are indeed mere manifestations of entrenched structural disadvantage and inequality as a structural construction would argue, then interventions such as these may be ineffective, at best, or even serve to burden already burdened populations.

By privileging behavioural rather than structural concerns, conventional social work places the onus on individuals even when the problems are rooted in the

way society is structured. Reforms are concentrated at the individual level in terms of disciplining the poor or instilling behavioural adjustment (Stoesz 1997). This construction of social work and social problems is in contrast with structural social work which is outlined below.

Structural Social Work

Three categories of accounts of social issues are proposed by Taylor-Gooby and Dale (1981), namely: individual, institutional and structural accounts, to which Ife (2002) adds a fourth one: post-structural accounts. What individual and institutional accounts of social problems fail to consider are systemic and discursive elements that generate and sustain them. Ife (2002: 52) argues the need to focus on the third and fourth perspectives, stating that unless changes are made to the basic social structures and discourses of oppression which foster and maintain them, any intervention would have no lasting impact. What is being argued here is that there are elements beyond individuals and social institutions that produce disadvantage. This concerns structural and discursive elements such as the capitalist system, a patriarchal culture, institutional racism (Brunton 1993; Chamber & Pettman 1986; Lavalette, Penketh & Jones 1998) which promote and reinforce disadvantage and oppression. Thus, a key to understanding social problems beyond individual and institutional accounts is to recognise them not as technical issues but as problems of domination and oppression arising out of structural inequality and disadvantage.

A structural perspective advances the notion of social problems as being mainly rooted in social structures. As mentioned earlier, a structural construction of social work is informed by conflict perspectives of society and social problems. A structural view sees society as unhealthy, permeated by competing values and interests that result in the structural marginalisation of some sectors (Mullaly 1997). Structural social work is based on the belief that most of the issues and problems social workers deal with are rooted in the social, political and economic structures of society (Lundy 2004; Mullaly 1997). The perspective acknowledges that people's lives

are impinged by politics, economics, culture, gender and racial identity and discourse shaped by dominant ideology (Agger 1998). This is not to suggest that practitioners working from a conventional perspective altogether fail to take into consideration external factors (which may include the structures just mentioned) in their interventions. Most basic social work texts do refer to the social environment in their discussions of social work functions. But a conventional perspective often comes with a weak interpretation of Mills' (1970) dictum calling for the consideration of economic and political institutions (not just personal situation and character) in the study of social problems. A strong version (on which structural social work is based) would argue that, apart from simply taking the social milieu as a context of social problems, social workers must extend their analysis and action towards incorporating socio-economic structures as the main source of problems (Fook 1993).

From a structural perspective, many of the problems people face are manifestations of structural inequality and disadvantage. Structural social work focuses on structural sources of inequality that result in the exclusion of people from opportunities and life-sustaining resources (Jamrozik 2001; Mullaly 1997). It identifies social problems as manifestations of inequality and oppression along a range of social divisions such as age, sexual orientation, region, ethnicity, religion and caste, with the main forms being race/ethnicity, gender, and class (Dominelli 2002b; Ife 2002; Jamrozik 2001). From this perspective, marginalised people are not those who do not have personal, moral or spiritual strengths and resources but rather those whose life chances and choices are being severely curtailed by inequalities in the distribution of economic, social and political power and resources (Breton 1994). Other forms of social divisions where inequality and oppression occur include, but are not limited to, age, ability and sexual orientation. These other forms of inequality need not be borne out of the main forms but they can certainly serve as yet another layer. While less encompassing than the main forms, the disadvantages arising out of these social divisions are no less debilitating and thus deserve equal attention in social work practice. There are, of course, other forms of inequality and part of the

task of rooting out structural disadvantage is to uncover them. These need to be recognised and uncovered in order to help people root out their oppression.

Social inequality and disadvantage can be multifaceted/multidimensional, dynamic and multilayered (Pettman 1992). The *multidimensionality* of social disadvantage is evident in the exclusion of disadvantaged sectors in various aspects of life. Susceptible populations can be socially excluded in the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental dimensions (Martin 2004; Nayyar 1998). The poor are not only denied access to economic resources, but they also find it difficult to have access and be integrated in the social, cultural, political and environmental spheres of social life. All at once, they are excluded in various ways which are then manifested in the variety of faces of structural disadvantage: homelessness, malnourishment, illiteracy, ill-health, low life-expectancy, lack of access to basic services, and lack of voice in governance, among others. The multidimensional character of social inequality and disadvantage suggests that they are *dynamic and mutually reinforcing*. People's disadvantage in one respect makes them vulnerable to other disadvantages. In this sense, disadvantage begets other disadvantages. In certain cases, the more disadvantaged people feel, the more they become alienated and excluded leading to disillusionment and dissent which then invites repressive action resulting in oppression and more disadvantage. The dynamic character of social inequality and disadvantage means that they can be reconstituted, renewed and recreated. Social inequality and disadvantage can also be *multilayered*. For example, gender and/or racial disadvantage can be another disadvantage over and above the class disadvantage that many women suffer. Thus, a person may suffer from layers upon layers of oppression and disadvantage that are woven into and reinforce each other. This makes inequality and disadvantages seemingly intractable, especially within the purview of individual-oriented approaches. Structural social work's location in the conflict end of the spectrum represents an acknowledgement of differences in interests and power. The perspective rejects pluralist conceptions of power or commonality of interests. In recognising the centrality of structures,

structural social work calls for the breaching of the traditional divide between the private and the public, the personal and the political, the individual and society (Chambers 1974; Halmos 1978; Lundy 2004, Mullaly 1997; Schwartz 1974). In other words, it politicises or brings into the public domain what otherwise would be considered private, individual issues. In doing so, the personal dimension is not negated and individual responsibility for actions is not denied. Personal elements are recognised even as emphasis is given on the structural dimensions of social problems through an acknowledgement of the interconnection between individual action and the economic and social position of individuals in society. While not all social problems are totally structured, all have a structural element in them (Fook 1993).

A guiding principle in structural social work is that interventions must be geared towards challenging all forms of structural inequality and oppression through political action towards social transformation (Davis 1991; Dominelli 1997, 2002b; Mullaly 1997, 2001, 2002). Social services are political in the sense that they either challenge inequality or sustain the social order that creates them (Galper 1975). T.H. Marshall's (1970, 1981) vision of social transformation is the advancement of welfare as a right and the use of social interventions in the elimination of poverty, the maximisation of welfare and the pursuit of equality. This is a radical conception of social interventions considering how the notion of equality goes against the very thesis of capitalist ideology which pervades most of the political economic contexts of practice in social work today. Mullaly (1997) argues that social work ideology has much more in common with socialist (that is, social democracy and Marxism) than with capitalist perspectives (such as neoliberalism). The failure of the socialist projects in China and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may lead some to dismiss the concept but, as Turner (1986) points out, the difficulties that come with the development of equality and an egalitarian society cannot be used as irrefutable arguments against them. As part of the overall goal of social transformation, Lundy (2004) identifies the protection of clients' rights, collectivisation (that is, the bringing together of problems and actions), materialisation (that is, the linking problems to

material conditions), and the enhancement of the power of clients in the working relationship and in society as being among the major principles of structural social work.

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND IDEOLOGY

A helpful way of making sense of the complex array of definitions and constructions of social work is to see conventional notions of social work in the context of the larger political economy. Social work does not exist in a vacuum. It is formed and shaped within particular historical and material conditions. An understanding of how social work, as a social construction, is shaped by material conditions helps extricate the dynamics that generate dominant constructions of the profession.

One of the ways by which competing views of society and social problems shape social welfare is by constructing views about those that access welfare services. The way clients are seen shapes the way social welfare provisions and interventions are structured. The conventional view leans towards treating people as beneficiaries or consumers while the progressive view sees them primarily as citizens (Clarke 1996; Romanyshyn 1971). The difference is important because it has implications to the quality and character of the provisions and services given and how people are regarded. The issue of citizenship relates to contending emphasis between citizen rights and responsibilities ranging from a strong or maximalist version to an essentially weak, minimalist conception (Powell 2002). The former regards welfare as an essential citizen right and therefore favours collectivist, inclusive, universal interventions while the latter emphasises individual responsibility and highlights citizen obligation and discipline (Cunningham & Lavalette 2004; Dwyer 2002). Thus, different conceptions of people lead to different social welfare objectives and interventions.

The fact that conservative constructions of social work have consistently remained dominant over the years is not accidental. While the choice of approach depends on the value and belief systems of practitioners, these often reflect the dominant value and belief systems – the dominant ideology – in the larger society. Mullaly (1997: 35-6) suggests that the absence of a social vision consistent with its articulated value base forces social work to accept by default mainstream definitions and explanations of social problems based on the ideologies of conservatism and liberalism. For some (see for example Margolin 1997), this is not a passive process but involves an active role of professionals in driving discourses for self-serving ends. Rose (2000: 410-1) argues that the path towards 'pathology-oriented' or 'deficit-based' theories that hide oppression is necessitated by the contingency of sustained employability on the profession's ability to deflect attention from social structures and their social control instruments. The concern for the attainment of professional status accompanying the process of professionalisation afforded less space for actions that challenge dominant views and practices (Tesoriero & Verity 1993). The profession's orientation can thus be systemically channeled towards particular ends in line with dominant ideology.

Having evolved and being situated within socio-political contexts permeated by dominant interests and ideologies that regulate actions and ideas, social work – as practised by mainstream practitioners and sanctioned by law – is sensitive to dominant interests and ideologies. The political-economic environment can force practitioners to forgo long-term, strategic concerns in favor of short-term, pragmatic issues (Kilty & Meenaghan 1995). The legal sanction given for professional social work practice may be seen as a political territory granted in favour of practitioners whose professional and personal interests necessitate that they claim such space. The 'claim of territory' (Vicary 1998: 312) exercised by the mainstream professional community is often made within the prevailing system of ideas. As social workers lay claim to their social space by advancing definitions of social work, the process of claiming itself can be shaped by dominant ideology and discourse. In making a claim

of space within the established order, the evolving profession is induced to be attuned to dominant values which require a shift in ideology towards conservative, individual-oriented action and away from radical action and engagement with policy (Tesoriero & Verity 1993). Social work, as it is constructed by practitioners, can thus be shaped by political, economic and social forces beyond their control (Vicary 1998). The individualist orientation associated with conventional social work may be a claim made by practitioners themselves but this lay of claim was made within a system that specifies the boundaries of legitimate territory. Mainstream or conventional social work is therefore systemically susceptible to ideological influences from the larger political economy in which it operates. In a sense, conventional constructions of social work represent dominant ideology. This explains the dominance of conservative constructions of the profession and the restrained acceptance of progressive approaches within mainstream social work. Conventional constructions of social work are as much a product of social work practitioners and theorists as they are of the material conditions in which they evolved.

The social construction of social work and social welfare can be seen as products of political process involving contending ideologies. As argued above, ideology underpins social welfare and social work interventions. Ideology dictates economic, political and social policies (Greener 2002; Hoggett 2001; Kilty & Meenaghan 1995; Serr 2001; Wheelwright 1993) which, in turn, shape society and efforts at the ground level by dictating funding priorities and program directions. And so ideology through politics and policy shapes conceptions of social welfare and social work practice (Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda & Staker 2002; Crimeen 1996; Kilty & Meenaghan 1995; Shamai 2001). Thus, political economy and ideology are important dimensions of social work practice. Whether they acknowledge it or not, social workers' actions are guided by theory and ideology (Mullaly 1997). The very act of moving away from ideology, as some claim to do, is itself an ideology (Kilty & Meenaghan 1995: 451). Lundy (2004: 51-2) argues that we must take the ideology

embedded in social work theories and approaches into account if we are to understand them and critically analyse practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND THE STUDY

Structural social work stands as a contending perspective that is not congruent with dominant ideology. Thus, practitioners with a structural construction of social work will find themselves at odds with dominant constructions of the profession and the dominant order, including practices and prescriptions that flow from them. It is therefore necessary for such practitioners to carefully consider how their perspective can be translated into practice. Here, we outline the implications of a structural construction of social work for social work practice and research and for the research at hand.

Social Work Practice and Research

With the understanding that society is permeated by inequality and pervaded by oppressive practices, practitioners who espouse a structural construction of social work would do well to begin with a critical view of their own practice as professionals and as members of society. The work towards maintaining an approach directed at actively challenging structural disadvantage and inequality starts with the construction of social work practice itself. A structural perspective will point out that the very act of helping others through 'social welfare' initiatives, as an exercise of power and discourse, needs to be critically examined in and of itself. Structural social work requires a critical understanding of social work practice including the manifest and latent values and interests embedded in it. A 'value-critical' position (Rein 1976: 73) that treats values not as givens but as being subject to debate and analysis can help practitioners analyse the values and interests advanced with the exercise of power through the practice of social work. As we shall see in Chapter 6, the values and interests of citizens do not necessarily go hand in hand with all the values and interests represented and advanced in practice. This position will be taken as part of the overall research approach.

The critical engagement with social work extends to and through research as an integral part of social work practice. Research as a tool for practice can be used to uncover oppression and disadvantage and advance knowledge towards the elimination of structural inequality. But as part of social work, research in social work practice is also subject to the kind of critical engagement with social work theory required for structural social work. This means that the act and process of doing research itself will be subject to the same critical position mentioned above. The discussion on methodology in Chapter 3 elaborates how a critical position was operationalised in this study. But in terms of social work practice as a whole, the theory of Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) as outlined in Chapter 1 provides a useful framework. Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) point out the importance of going beyond the operative sphere where interventions are made at the individual level and into the administrative and political/social spheres. The latter two point to interventions at the organisational and societal/political levels. Under the framework, social workers must aim at changing the existing social order with interventions directed towards their workplace and the larger system beyond their work with individual citizens (Mullaly 1997). Applied in practice, this means that social workers may have to work towards changes in their clients' relationships with their agencies, locality as well as the relationships between these and the national and global levels (Dominelli 2002).

Based on the above-stated framework, practitioners of social work would expect critical engagement with their organisational practice context. The idea that structural inequality permeates society suggests that all elements of the prevailing order, including the institutions that claim to address the needs of disadvantaged sectors and redress the shortcomings of the established system may harbour some of the very elements that a structural practice of social work should be directed towards. This means that social workers may need to critically look at their own

organisations and practice settings for artefacts and practices that uphold and reinforce structural inequality and disadvantage.

The framework identified above also points to the need for critical engagement with the social, political and economic dimensions of the societal practice context. The focus on structural sources of social problems points to the need for engagement with policy and power issues. As mentioned earlier, social work is political in that it is a claim of space and power and it involves a political act in the form of allocation of resources and power. In view of this, social workers would need a critical understanding of their role in relation to the State, the nature of state power and the potential role of social work as a mechanism for social control and oppression (Bailey & Brake 1980; Davis 1991).

There are competing accounts about social work's record in terms of engagement beyond the operative sphere, especially at the policy and political level. On one hand, there is an assumption that the social work profession, since its founding, has always assumed a key role in social welfare policy (Craig 2002; Domanski 1998; Schneider & Netting 1999). On the other hand, there are those who suggest that policy practice is a neglected part of social work (Figuera-McDonough 1993). Bar-on (2002) notes that when faced with pressures from the agency and clients, social workers tend to accede to their agency and that, while they are subjected to considerable bureaucratic control, they generally accept this control voluntarily. This process of institutional suppression and, from another perspective, professional accommodation is systemic because the vigilant, critical engagement with policy and politics demanded by a structural construction is understandably unacceptable to institutions that represent dominant interests (Bryson & Mowbray 1981).

Structural social work requires a critical understanding of social work practice and the practice context. A structural conception of social work demands a kind of

practice that transcends the social order (Mullaly 1997). With the recognition that the social order itself is a source of social problems, social work practice would have to go beyond what can be afforded by conventional definitions of social work in terms of legitimate action and the givens of existing arrangements. This perspective informs the analysis in this study.

Social Work in Philippine Municipalities

A structural construction of social work has important implications for this study of how social work practitioners in Philippine municipalities manage competing mandates. There are inherent challenges for structural social work practice which can be accentuated by particular political-economic settings such as those in Philippine society and, in particular, organisational settings such as those in Philippine municipalities. Philippine municipal governments represent dominant interests in the locality which link into the national and global order. Professionals working in these bureaucracies with a structural conception of social work would have to recognise that they are practising within organisational environments that bear some of the very practices and values that need to be challenged through their work. For one, as state mechanisms, Philippine municipalities may bear system maintenance and/or control functions that are incongruent with a structural perspective. As part of their functions, Philippine municipal governments are expected to accept and enforce state policies that (as a structural perspective would point out) largely reflect dominant interests. Considering the kind of work demanded by a structural perspective, it is conceivable that such perspective is unacceptable in most Philippine municipal bureaucracies. Calls for social change and transformation from social work practitioners would, at best, sit uneasily with the overall organisational mandate of the municipal governments focused on enforcing the law and keeping the peace. The dominant interests that they represent, such as those of the big landowners and capitalists, would certainly be threatened by suggestions along the line of more equitable distribution of resources and power. Even acknowledging some degree of agency on the part of social work practitioners

and the local government leadership as a whole, the organisation's location in a hierarchical political-economic order makes any structural change effort challenging. It is possible that political mavericks may occasionally take the helm of Philippine municipalities and social workers might find themselves working with a political leader who is sympathetic to their cause. But with the continued existence of government units (or at least the occupiers of positions) dependent on their ability to deliver particular outcomes, compromise and accommodation of elite interests would have to be among the options. In a country where elections can be bought by the ballot (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2004)), election funding support is often enough to discipline what the economic and political elite consider as rouge politicians. And even if a sympathetic national leadership could be won, there is still no assurance of a more auspicious working environment considering how Philippine society is itself subsumed in the larger global political-economic order.

Apart from being an instrument of the established order for protecting elite interests at large, Philippine municipalities can also, in and of themselves, generate oppression and inequality. Philippine municipalities could be seen as a microcosm of Philippine society, harbouring similar hierarchical structures and relations. In this setting, power inequality can pervade the relationships within the local government bureaucracy, including that between the professionals working as the heads of MSWD Offices and the mayors who serve as the chief local executives with control and supervision over all local government executive offices including MSWD units. Power inequality between the political and economic elite and ordinary citizens may also become evident as the municipal government is used as a vehicle for the advancement of the interests of the former. Exclusion and oppression of ordinary citizens can occur when the local government bureaucracy becomes an arena for political exercise by powerful parties of interest.

Structural social work in Philippine municipal government units sets practitioners to the task of addressing systemic social inequality and disadvantage from the lowest levels of the administrative hierarchy. With the power imbalances and conflicts of interests inherent in political-economic conditions like those in the Philippines and organisational milieus like those in Philippine municipal bureaucracies, the introduction of structural interventions would not go unhindered or unchecked. Social workers with a structural construction of their practice can expect systemic obstacles and challenges to their work, running the risk of being subjected to repression and oppression themselves in the way most of their clients do when they speak up against the system. As pointed out in the immediately preceding section, a structural construction of social work necessitates critical engagement with practice, with the organisational context and with the larger social order. Thus, any attempt to analyse social work practice in this setting would require a critical understanding in all these dimensions.

In terms of critical engagement with social work practice, a structural perspective requires the interrogation of the participants' construction of social work because their ideas about social work in Philippine municipalities cannot simply be left unexamined as if they were context and value-free conceptions of professional action. The practitioners are not presumed to be acting with unquestionable competence, unbridled beneficence, and unassailable motives. Instead, a structural perspective demands that the participants' construction of social work be subjected to a critical examination of the values and interests that they represent which may be of citizens, mayors, other stakeholders and even those of the workers. This was carried out specifically with the examination of the participants' construction of social work and of conflicts in mandates in Chapter 8. The participants' practice and construction of social work were examined in terms of their conception of social problems, the interventions articulated in their practice and their self-ascribed role in politics, policy and program development. Interventions that deemphasise collective responsibility and place emphasis on change on the part of individuals, their family

and their immediate environment and role definitions that distance practitioners from policy and politics were taken as indications of a conventional (as against structural) orientation.

In relation to the need for critical engagement with the practice context, a structural perspective required the examination of the participants' organisational environment. The Philippine municipal bureaucracy was not regarded as an inconsequential element in the practice of social work. A structural perspective required that they not simply be seen as a neutral medium for practice. Instead, the municipal bureaucracy was treated as a legitimate subject of analysis in terms of political dynamics and culture. Attention was given to the culture being fostered and the values and interests imbedded in the structures and practices that dominate Philippine municipalities. A focus on this is made in the analysis of the participants' organisational environment and how they positioned themselves within that environment in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively. The examination of the participants' organisational environment was focused on their working relationship with mayors and the overall organisational ecology in Philippine municipalities as evidenced by such dimensions as decision-making processes and tenure. An emphasis on centralised authority and organisational hierarchy were taken as indications of a practice environment that was incongruent with principles underpinning a structural construction of social work. From a structural perspective, such a practice environment would require structural intervention from social work practitioners.

Concerning the need for critical engagement with the larger social order, a structural perspective requires the examination of the practice context beyond the immediate organisational environment of the practitioners. A study focused exclusively on the Philippine municipal bureaucracy was deemed inadequate to provide an in-depth understanding of practice within that setting. There was a need to draw on an understanding of the larger (national) political-economic and ideological context. This was carried out in the study with the analysis of the political

economy of Philippine social policy as discussed in Chapter 4, the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare in Chapter 5, the mainstream construction of social work in Chapter 6 and linked into the analysis of the strategies employed by practitioners in managing competing mandates in Chapter 8. A political economy and ideological tradition that emphasises individual responsibility and residual (as against institutional) interventions and a professional tradition that privileges the exclusive values and interests of certain sectors were regarded as indications of a political and practice context that need to be challenged by social work practice informed by a structural perspective. Thus, a structural construction of social work was operationalised in this study in all three levels based on the framework of Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) through an analysis of social work practice, the organisational practice environment and the larger political-economic context.

The systemic nature of social inequality and disadvantage raises a fundamental problem for social work practice. If structural and discursive elements that generate social inequality and disadvantage are indeed so pervasive and persistent (as a structural perspective would argue), then it is conceivable that change efforts will be systematically thwarted or negated and the inequitable balance restored. If the system is held together by structures that transcend national boundaries, then actions at the local or even at the national level would not suffice. The systemic link of mainstream social work practice environments to the established order marginalises structural social work practice and puts it in an inauspicious, if not hostile, working environment. More importantly, if the profession exists and is legitimated within the existing social order organised in accordance with dominant values and interests, then social work practice itself can be influenced, if not co-opted, by the system. These are among the key issues explored in the study.

SUMMARY

This chapter outlined structural social work as a construction of practice that points to unanswered questions and raises the research question regarding the ways

by which social workers manage competing mandates. It was argued that there are varying constructions of social work, with conventional constructions relegating the research question to the status of a non-issue. The varying traditions and internal oppositions within social work generate differing conceptions of society, social problems and social work practice even as social conceptions generate and shape social work practices. The ideology underpinning the various constructions of social work was identified as a useful guide in accounting for the differences in constructions. A structural construction of social work was put forward as problematising what would otherwise be taken for granted: the interaction between social work practice and organisational environment. This construction acknowledges the existence of inherent tensions in the introduction of structural interventions in social work practice within organisational and political-economic settings characterised by stark inequality and dominated by elite interests.

The study examines and analyses how social work practitioners manage the tensions and contradictions between their professional and organisational mandates. Embedded in the research question is an anticipation of a possible conflict in ideology and the potential for this is raised particularly by a structural construction of social work. It was pointed out earlier that a structural construction of the profession leans towards a particular ideological orientation, namely a socialist ideology that supports collectivist, rights-based arguments for welfare (Mullaly 1997). As we shall see in the second section comprised of Chapters 4, 5 and 6, such a construction is at odds with the Philippine political economy, the ideological traditions that inform Philippine social welfare and the mainstream construction of Philippine social work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Bago ka bumati ng sa ibang uling, uling mo muna ang iyong pahirin. (Before pointing out other people's faults, you should correct your own first.) – Filipino proverb

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods employed in this study of the ways social workers working in Philippine municipal governments manage competing organisational demands and professional mandates. The chapter begins by explicating the theoretical perspective on which this study is based. In line with the theoretical position adopted, a background on the researcher will be presented. Then the methodology, methods, unit of analysis, process, ethical considerations and scope and limitations of the research will be outlined.

The term theoretical perspective refers to 'assumptions about reality' that underpin the research methodology and methods (Crotty 1998: 2). Three of the most prominent theoretical perspectives in social science research are positivism, interpretivism and critical theory (Agger 1998; Crotty 1998; Neuman 2003). In line with the structural construction of social work that informs it, this study is in the

tradition of 'critical inquiry' or critical research which is anchored on and often identified with critical theory (Agger 1998; Crotty 1998: 5).

The choice of theoretical perspective is an important element in social work practice and research. Certain perspectives such as the other two mentioned above can be problematic when applied to social work and social research. For instance, some perspectives hide the theoretical base of actions in the way many social workers adopt an anti-theoretical orientation to the extent that they 'elevate theoretical ignorance to a level of a professional virtue' because they see their profession as basically practice-oriented, requiring 'common sense' and 'pragmatism' (Fook 1993; Kapoor 2002; Mullaly 1997: 99). Thus, social work suffers from approaches that are ostensibly a-theoretical and pragmatic. However, regardless of whether it is acknowledged or not, the actions of social workers are based on theory and reflect an ideology (Mullaly 1997). And as pointed out in Chapter 2, base pragmatism or an a-theoretical position can lead to a lack of critical analysis of the implications of actions and can effectively make practitioners more susceptible to certain theories and ideologies rather than insulate them (Kapoor 2002). Similarly, one's theoretical perspective can have overriding implications for research. According to Mullaly (1997: 100), theory has four basic functions: description, explanation, prediction, and control and management of events and changes. The choice of paradigm (referring to the function of theory employed) has implications for the position of social work practice and research with respect to the maintenance or restructuring of the society within which they are undertaken (Mullaly 1997). This raises problems for theoretical perspectives that largely remain uncritical of the social, economic and political dimensions of social problems and social action (Agger 1998; Dow & McDonald 2003). Cox and Hardwick (2002) point out that there are political, structural and social influences on research which are not always examined critically. In view of certain constructions of social work that identify the elimination of oppression and social inequality among its primary purposes, there are those who argue that critical theory should be a defining element in social work research and

practice (Cox & Hardwick 2002). Mullaly (1997) argues that structural social work has a critical social theory base and may be regarded as part of critical theory.

Arising from its significance in social work practice and research, the choice of theoretical perspective becomes particularly relevant to the current study. This study of the ways by which social workers manage competing mandates looks into the participants' organisational and policy environment as well as their constructions and practice of social work. The former was taken in this study as embodying the organisational demands they have to respond to while the latter were seen as representing their conception of their professional responsibilities or mandates. From a structural social work perspective (as outlined in Chapter 2), the organisational and policy environments of Philippine local governments and the practice of social work within Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices are potential venues for structural disadvantage and oppression. In other words, the practice and practice environment of social workers in Philippine local governments, being part of a social order permeated by social inequality, may harbour and propagate some of the very problems that practitioners, working from a structural social work perspective, are supposed to address. Considering that there are elements in the practice of social work that may be hidden from the purview of certain theoretical perspectives as pointed out above, the practice and practice environment of social workers in Philippine municipal governments therefore need to be examined critically.

Critical theory argues that domination is structurally perpetuated and reproduced, that there is a connection between everyday life and large scale social structures and that change can begin with everyday practice through the dialectical link between structure and agency (Agger 1998). Since there are many forms of critical theory and this tradition is continuously evolving (Agger 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren 2000; Morrow 1994), it is necessary to explicate the use of the term in this study. The critical perspective employed in this study is characterised by a number of features outlined by Neuman (2003: 81-7) along the following dimensions: (1)

purpose of social research, (2) conception of the nature of social reality, (3) assumptions about the nature of human beings, (4) assumptions about science and common sense, (5) the constitution of an explanation or theory of social reality, (5) the basis for determining the validity of explanations/theories, (6) the nature of good evidence or factual information, and (7) the place of socio-political values. The characteristics of critical theory as applied in this study are briefly defined hereunder.

Social research that has the purpose uncovering underlying forces that govern social relations in order to change the world is in contrast with a positivist approach that aims to uncover immutable laws or an interpretive approach that seeks to discover people's constructions of social life. By uncovering myths and hidden truths, the purpose of critical inquiry is to empower the less powerful to change their social order. Critical inquiry adopts the position of historical realism which sees reality as constantly evolving over time as it is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and other forces in contrast to the positivist assumption of an unchanging, eternal truth. Reality cannot be taken at face value because illusions, myths and distortions[1] supported by structures of power often lie underneath discourses and constructions of truth. While recognising people as creative, changeable and adaptive, critical inquiry works with the assumption that they can be misled and entrapped in processes and relationships that allow others to abuse and exploit them. In other words, it recognises human agency but, at the same time, acknowledges that this can be hindered by structural and ideological impediments under certain circumstances (a more elaborate discussion of this was made in Chapter 1 under the section entitled 'Theoretical Propositions').

Critical inquiry cautions against claims based on scientific objectivity and common sense. The former can be and has been used in advancing dominant

[1] These terms are deliberately used here to contrast a view of absolute reality and a view of subjective reality with one subjected to critical appraisal.

ideology and social philosophies in the guise of scientific truth (Agger 1998; Nevile 1997). With structures of power perpetrating myths, distortions and illusions (as mentioned above) which all inform common sense, our understanding of the world therefore cannot also be based on it. Ideology can define the subjective interpretation of social reality. Under critical inquiry, theory is needed to unveil and expose these structures in the way critical dialogue and analysis, as outlined by Freire (1972), enables the poor and oppressed to gain a structural understanding of their condition. Critical inquiry acknowledges both agency and structure. The approach recognises the existence of material conditions that shape the beliefs and actions of people and limit their choices while believing that the development of new ways of understanding and of seeing the world would enable people to change their social reality.

The ultimate test of a theory from a critical perspective is its ability to help people understand and change their world. This is based on one of Marx's more famous dictums: that it is through trying to change the world that we come to understand it. A good theory, according to this framework, is one that locates sources of domination, presents an alternative vision, and enables the oppressed to understand and act on them. Critical inquiry bridges the object-subject gap embodied in positivist and interpretivist approaches respectively. It acknowledges the existence of material conditions independent of subjective perceptions and, at the same time, recognises the role of values and theory in the interpretation of facts. Thus, value positions are crucial in the understanding of what are regarded as 'facts'. Critical inquiry rejects the positivist notion of a value-free research and the interpretivist notion of a relativist value position. Such undertaking springs from a commitment to a value position or moral point of view. To be objective is to have a non-distorted (that is, free from false consciousness) view of reality. One cannot truly be value free and an important step is to declare one's values.

A critical theoretical perspective has important implications for the conduct of this study. With the recognition that Philippine local government bureaucracies can harbour structural inequality and oppression, there is a need to take into account how status and power differences are manifested and managed within and through the organisational and policy environments of the participants. Similarly, with the view that social work practice can promote as much as challenge structural inequality and oppression, there is a need to critically evaluate the assumptions, practices and beliefs held by the participants about their work. In view of how social work is positioned within Philippine society (a more elaborate discussion of this is featured in Chapter 6), the perspective informs us that the ways by which practitioners manage competing mandates can accommodate their interests as individuals and as an occupational group as much as any claims made in the interests of social welfare and citizens. These dimensions of social work practice are critically examined in this study which, consistent with the characteristics of critical inquiry outlined above, aims to contribute to the emancipation of social workers as well as the people that they serve.

The theoretical perspective of this study points to research as a political act. By this we mean that it is not a neutral, value-free enterprise. The understanding of the constructed nature of knowledge tells us that claims of truth and knowledge constitute an act of defining the world in one's terms. They are, in a sense, an exercise of power. The advance of knowledge and any claim to knowledge constitutes an advancement of the claimant's political position. The very act of doing research is therefore a form of political action. Research, from a critical vantage point, would be useless if it had no practical implications in addressing oppression and inequality. The purpose of research, from a critical perspective, is 'to change the world' by analysing and transforming social relations (Neuman 2003: 81). In social work, this is achieved by doing research to influence policy and practice (Alston & Bowles 1998). By uncovering underlying forces that shape social relations, the social order can be unravelled through research in such a way as to facilitate its transformation. This

understanding of the political nature of research explains the views advanced in this study. This study does not advance definitive judgements and prescriptions. Instead, the critical analysis of social work practice contained in this study should be seen as sitting side-by-side with, even as it contests, other readings. It may be regarded as a contribution to the wide range of knowledge and understandings of social work which can be used as a resource to spur research and action amongst professionals who are struggling with the issues that are explored herein.

The recognition that no analysis can be entirely value-free has particular implications for the researcher. The declaration of the researcher's identity and values, while running counter to the standards of objectivity demanded by traditional positivist research, contributes towards the integrity of a critical study inasmuch as it arms the reader with an understanding of the value position of the researcher. A background on the researcher is presented below for this purpose.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCHER

That I am a Filipino pursuing a PhD in Australia speaks of my relatively privileged position as a citizen of a developing country where most people are hindered by economic circumstances from obtaining even a college degree, held in Philippine culture as a dependable meal ticket. I am a thirty-five year old male – these traits alone put me at an advantage over seventy-five percent of the population in a society which privileges males over females and adults over younger persons. I grew up in a middle class family of Filipino-Chinese descent, yet another important indication of status in Philippine society. My primary and secondary schooling were almost entirely in exclusive Catholic schools, reflecting the relatively privileged status of my family and the premium given by my parents to education. I feel most comfortable speaking and writing in English (thanks to an American-dominated educational system and media) in spite the fact that I grew up with and still speak two other Filipino languages: Tagalog and Cebuano/Visayan. I had what may best be described as an itinerant upbringing as we moved from city to city, with no more

than two years in one, until I graduated from high school. The movement from region to region gave me a deeper understanding of the diversity of Filipino life and a disjointed identity, what with a society where regional roots make up a significant component in one's sense of being.

In spite my relatively privileged position, my upbringing was not free from the hazards of being 'othered' – that is, being excluded. Part of primary school was putting up with some school and play mates who taunted me for being '*Intsik*' (that is, Chinese), in contrast to them who were supposedly more Filipino than I. As a young person of the 'poorer' lot of what was otherwise a relatively well-off Chinese-Filipino extended family on my mother's side, I was socialised early on that there were voices that mattered and those that did not, like those of the young and not so well-off. Even then, I found these conventions quite discomforting. In the society I grew up in, even language serves as an instrument for othering. When we transferred from the small municipality of Madrid, Surigao del Sur where I spent my early childhood to the burgeoning City of Cebu in the Visayas, there were light-hearted banters that came from some city-dwelling relatives and acquaintances about our provincial Surigaonon tongue. But when I did learn to speak Visayan, there was yet the ridicule that came from some Tagalog speakers who mocked the way Visayans spoke English and Tagalog when we transferred to Manila. Having learned to speak English and Tagalog well enough, I was not often the object of such treatment but they affected me just the same especially when I was assumed to be part of the group that had the privilege to do the othering, in which case you were expected to laugh along and even regurgitate some of the jeers. While my personal experiences do not capture the breadth and depth of prejudicial and discriminatory treatment of marginalised segments in Philippine society, they nonetheless ingrained in me a repugnance to discriminatory and exclusionary views and practices oriented towards minorities and marginalised sectors that remind me of the communities and settings I grew up in.

My professional education in social work gave me a vehicle to articulate and translate into action my aversion to discriminatory practices. I went into social work not having a full understanding of it – all I knew was that I could not imagine myself in any of the popular career paths that mainly promised economic advancement, perhaps in reaction to the value system and attitudes I saw in some of my very own relatives. My social work education inside and, especially, outside the classroom exposed me to ideas that resonated with my concerns over exclusionary and discriminatory practices: human dignity, human rights, equality and social justice. One of the most enduring insights I gained as an undergraduate student was how education was used by students to climb the social ladder over the backs of the marginalised sectors of society whose very labour and deprivation supported the country's exclusionary educational system. Instead of delving into the ego and the id as some teachers wanted us to do, I found myself more absorbed with concerns about community work and social policy. My last semester in my bachelor's degree gave me the opportunity to live and work in an indigenous Mangyan community for almost five months. This experience left an enduring vision of what I, as a professional, was bound to do. Mangyans are the indigenous peoples of the island of Mindoro who were dispossessed of their lands through deception, usury, and violence by settlers from other regions. Today, they suffer from discrimination, ridicule, exploitation and exclusion in provincial enclaves dominated by lowlanders. The rice and salt meals that formed a daily part of living and working within the community gave me but a peek into the adversities that they and other indigenous peoples in the Philippines endure. I went on to work with marginalised urban communities as a professional. While the settings differed, my work with various marginalised communities pointed to common themes: dispossession traced to the country's colonial history, exploitative relations, power imbalances, discrimination, and exclusion.

Reflecting on the values that I have leaned from my life experiences that come into play in this research, I would summarise them as follows:

1. I value human life, regardless of its location in the physical, social and economic space, and detest practices such as discrimination, ridicule, abuse and exclusion that devalue it;
2. I value egalitarian principles believing that the quality of life of people, including the quality of being free from unjust relations, cannot be made contingent on socially-constructed inequalities;
3. I believe in the collective responsibility of society to act on inequality and injustice;
4. I value education and knowledge in so far as it supports human life and believe that research cannot be done for its own sake.

As a researcher, I stand as a relatively privileged member of Philippine society (which is an underprivileged member of the global community) whose life and professional experiences have raised questions over the bases for the grant of privileges to some and the withholding of privileges from others. Years of living in various regions and exposure to various forms of exclusionary and discriminatory practices channelled my interests to particular areas and constructions of social work that inform this research. The critical perspective nurtured through my professional education and intellectual development provided a framework through which I studied social work practice. My identity as a social work professional provided a basis for reflection from which I drew insights in the analysis of the data in this research. My life experiences and values shaped this research in these ways.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology. Methodology refers to 'the strategy, plan of action, process or design' that lies behind the choice of methods and the desired outcomes (Crotty 1998: 3). Considering the various ways by which the research question 'In what ways do social workers manage competing mandates?' could be addressed, there were various options in the choice of methodology. Under

the common categorisations of approaches to social research, this is an exploratory study employing mainly a qualitative approach supplemented by some quantitative data. It is exploratory as this is an area that has not been explored by other authors. It is qualitative in the sense that most of the data used are of this kind (for example, transcripts of answers to open-ended questions, interviews and focus group discussion). The choice of the study's design is explained below.

One strategy that immediately presented itself in view of the researcher's identity as a social work professional from the Philippines studying in Australia was to do a comparative study between the two countries. However, the research question, underpinned by assumptions about certain practice contexts, favoured a focus on the Philippines. But even as it was confined to the Philippines, the range of choices for the study was overwhelming. Social work practice in the Philippines runs the gamut of practice settings: from privately to publicly funded, from primary (mainly social work and social services) to secondary (auxiliary), from institution-based versus community-based, from small to large organisations, from local to international, from conservative to progressive, and from religious to secular. Workers within these organisations are exposed to varying degrees of influences from the Philippine political system and the larger political economy. The research question could therefore have been approached through a variety of perspectives corresponding to the wide range of practice settings. One option then would have been to attempt a quantitative study to survey the full range of practice settings to serve as basis for analysis. While not impossible, the scale of such a project is simply beyond the resources available for this study. More importantly, achieving such a comprehensive coverage is not necessary for the purposes of this research. While the question can be answered quantitatively, the interest in the experiences of social workers grappling with contending imperatives does not lend itself to such an approach.

As an alternative to a survey of the whole range of practice settings, a qualitative exploratory study was deemed an adequate and more feasible strategy for the purpose of addressing the research question. Studying particular contexts to gain insights into phenomena that affect much larger populations is not uncommon. Such was the approach used by Bourdieu (2001) in studying gender relations through an ethnographic analysis of Kabyle society as a case in point even as he took the analysis to larger contexts: to France, European culture and beyond. A similar approach characterised his analysis of academic culture in general (Bourdieu 1988), set in the scene of the French intellectual community and university system, and of power and social structure (Bourdieu 1996), drawn from a critical examination of privilege and distinction in the French education system. A qualitative approach, drawing elements from such methods as case study research, was deemed appropriate in exploring the answers to the research question because it is most useful in addressing 'how' and 'why' questions (as against who, what, when, and where) or, in other words, the understanding complex social phenomena (Crotty 1998; Yin 2003; 1-5). While the mention of 'why' questions here might suggest that this is in explanatory rather than an exploratory study as stated earlier, the focus of this research is not to test hypotheses (as what is done in the former) but to contribute towards the generation of such, requiring the exploration of the subject. The question on the ways by which social workers manage competing mandates thus favoured the use of a qualitative approach.

The choice of a qualitative approach which employs some of the elements of case study research was made in full cognisance of some of the most common objections against the strategy namely: (1) it cannot support scientific generalisation and (2) it lacks rigour (Yin 2003: 10-1). It is held here that these objections, informed by traditional research frameworks, are inappropriate when applied to a well-formulated qualitative study where rigour, for example, is established differently, not less so (Yin 2003). In line with the principles of case study research, the concern for generalisation in this study is chiefly in relation to theory (as against the

population) (Eisenhardt 1989). This research requires engagement in 'analytic (as against statistical) generalisations' to theoretical propositions for which the qualitative approach exemplified by case study research is well suited (Yin 2003: 32-3). The need to ensure rigour was addressed chiefly through the explication of the theoretical propositions that informed the analysis of data in this study (as was done in the introduction), the preservation of the chain of evidence (through the proper storage of data as explained below) and the triangulation of method (Neuman & Kreuger 2003). Three methods were used in the conduct of this study.

THE RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical perspective used in this study made it necessary to look into the larger political-economic context of MSWD Officers as well as their immediate practice setting and the practice. And so an important preliminary task was to analyse the political economy of Philippine social policy, the ideological traditions that inform social welfare practice in the Philippines and the values embedded in the mainstream construction of Philippine social work. Given this aim, the use of secondary sources of data was deemed as the most appropriate basis for the analysis presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The examination of the political economy of Philippine social policy in Chapter 4 was based on various historical accounts and references pertaining to Philippine government policies on health, education, housing, employment and social welfare since Philippine independence in 1945 up to the present. The exploration of the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare in Chapter 5 was based on various historical accounts pertaining to social welfare related practices since the pre-colonial period up to the end of American colonial rule. Lastly, the interrogation of mainstream Philippine social work's record on human rights under the dictatorial rule of President Ferdinand Marcos was mainly drawn from the professional journal of that era. Thus, the use of secondary sources of data and analysis was a key method employed in the second section (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) of this thesis.

In answering the research question 'In what ways do social workers manage competing mandates?', the research explores the mandated responsibilities of social workers working in Philippine municipalities, their construction and practice of social work, their experiences working under mayors and their responses to potential and actual challenges posed by their practice settings. To ensure rigour, a 'triangulation of method' (Neuman & Kreuger 2003: 137), with the mixing of quantitative and qualitative approaches, was adopted involving the use of (1) a survey through self-administered questionnaires, (2) interviews, and (3) a focus group discussion. Surveys are generally considered quantitative and identified with positivist research and the use of this method in the study may therefore be seen as being incongruent with the critical approach adopted. But as explained above, theoretical perspectives refer to assumptions about what constitute reality (Crotty 1998) and therefore cannot simply be equated with specific methods and approaches. Data from qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observation can very well be appreciated from a positivist perspective. On the other hand, quantitative methods can be very useful in critical research as has been demonstrated by Bourdieu (1984, 2001). Each method helped fill in some of the gaps in data not afforded by the other methods and helped validate the interpretation of data generated by the others.

1. Survey

A questionnaire was designed to survey the range of practice environments of the 1,500 or so Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers and to generate leads for interview participants. This approach appeared to be the most appropriate given the geographic dispersion of the participants. There were two kinds of questionnaires used. The first one was a questionnaire that covered the following topics: (a) community problems, (b) programs and services, (c) budget concerns, (d) tenure/job security, (e) working relationship with mayor, (g) construction of social work in local government, (g) political activities, (h) program development and management, and (i)

theoretical practice problems. The second one was a subset of the first and was used as a probe in documenting reported incidents of conflicts between professional discretion and organisational demands, particularly those involving orders and decisions of municipal mayors that came in conflict with professional discretion.

2. Interview

Out of the respondents to the survey came volunteers and leads for interviews. Interviews were employed given their usefulness in developing detailed descriptions, describing processes, portraying how events are interpreted, and bridging intersubjectivities – that is, allowing readers to understand situations from the perspective of subjects (Weiss 1994). A key advantage of interviews is that they are flexible, allowing opportunity for probing beyond what surveys and group discussions can afford (Daymon & Holloway 2002). As part of the research design, interviews were conducted to explore the work environment and the constructions and practice of social work of four practitioners in active service and the experience of six other practitioners who were removed from office. These are featured as sub units of analysis in this research. The interviews were in the form of semi-standardised or semistructured interviews (Berg 1995; Daymon & Holloway 2002) that were guided by some predetermined questions and topics but which allowed the interviewer to digress and probe beyond the prepared questions when the answers merited probing. The in-depth studies consisted of two workers who reported problems with their superiors and two who did not. In addition, interviews were also conducted with six other key informants who had been removed from office to explore the circumstances in which social workers can be and have been disciplined. The main topics covered by the interviews were as follows: (a) the work environment in the local government, (b) programs and services, (c) construction of social work in local government, (d) autonomy and discretion, (e) tenure/job security, (f) relationship with clients and the public, (g)

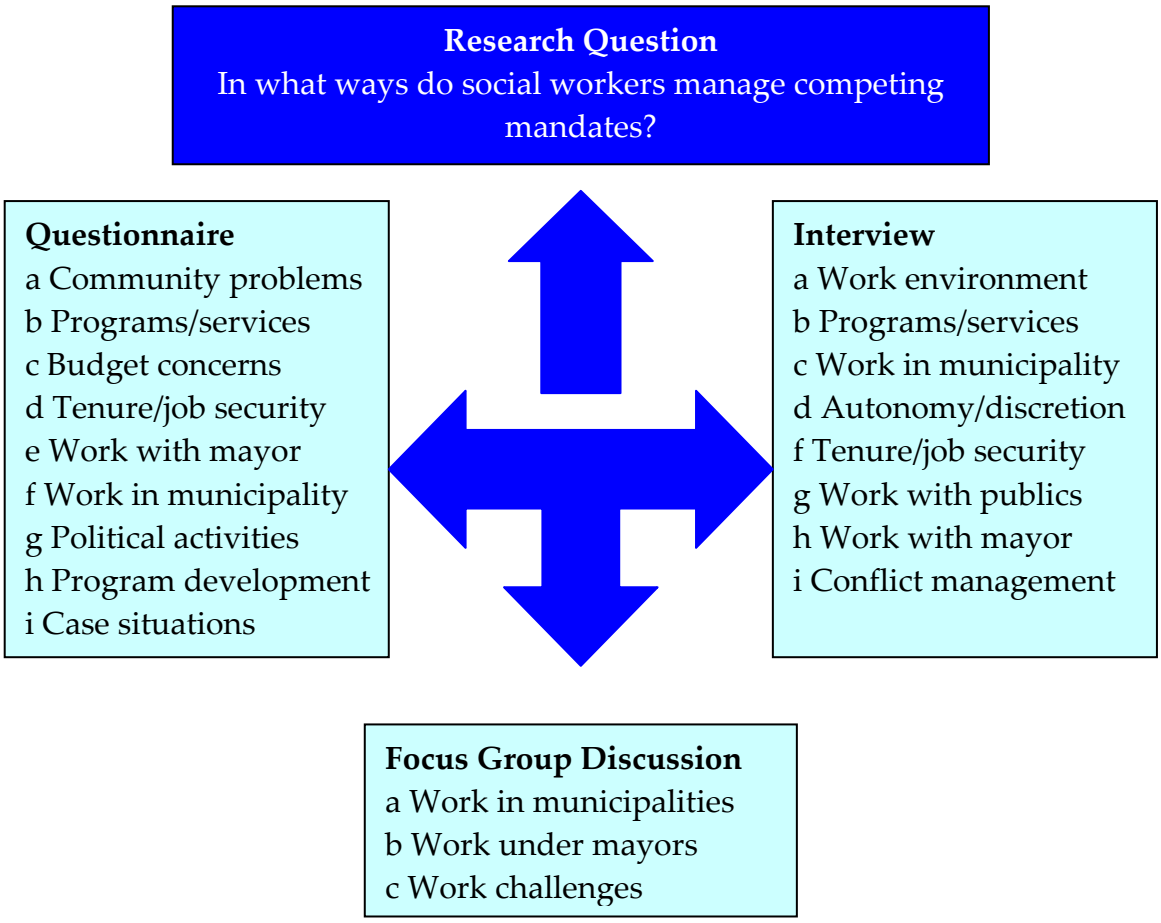
working relationship with mayor, (i) value conflict management strategies and results.

3. Focus Group Discussion

One focus group discussion was conducted as part of the national convention of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers Incorporated in 2004. The main purpose of the focus group discussion was to provide a more in-depth understanding of the way practitioners construct their work and work environment to supplement the data from the survey and interviews. An important attribute of a focus group discussion is the opportunity it offers for group interaction, enabling the dynamic generation of ideas and ways of thinking that is not possible in one-on-one interviews (Bender & Ewbank 1994; Clarke 1999; Smithson 2000). The main topics covered in the focus group discussion were participants' construction of: (a) social work in the local government; (b) work under local politicians; and (c) work challenges in local governments.

It was intended that these methods together would capture all the necessary data and were purposely made redundant (that is, they were designed to gather overlapping information and duplicate some of the functions of the others) so that pertinent data was obtained even when one of the component methods failed. Each of these methods, on their own, would not have been sufficient. The survey offered breath but not the depth of interviews and the dynamism of a focus group discussion. The interviews provided depth but not the scope afforded by a survey and the generative environment provided by a focus group discussion. The focus group discussion allowed the generation of perspectives and ideas through the dynamic interaction among participants but not at the scope and depth of the two other methods. Together, they generated separate but interrelated sets of data that could be used hermeneutically (that is, used to interpret each other) and triangulated as indicated in Figure 3.1 below. This is the main measure for ensuring integrity of

interpretations of data which will be discussed in more detail in the section on data interpretation.



Triangulation of Method
Figure 3.1

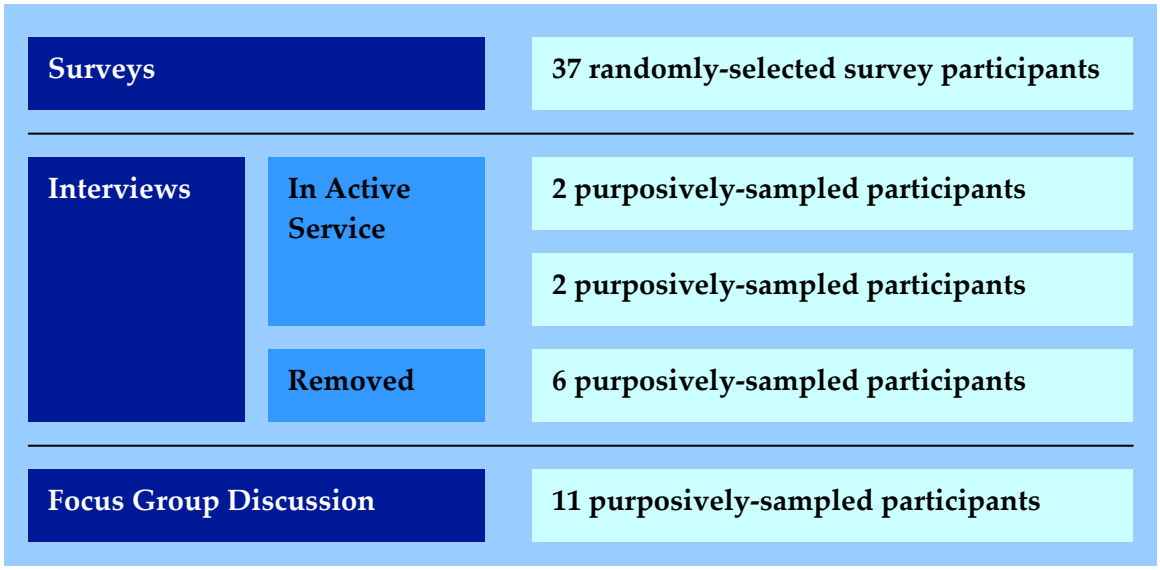
THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis in this study is social work practice in Philippine Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices. The choice of the unit of analysis in this study is informed by the primary principle for the selection of cases in case study research as specified by Stake (1995). Stake (1995: 4) argues that the first and most important objective in the selection of units of analysis in case study research is to 'maximize what we can learn'. What this implies is that the selection of the unit of analysis cannot be left to chance as what may result from a strictly random selection process. What is needed is an active, purposive process of selecting units of analysis with the potential to yield the most insights. The principle runs against the grain of

traditional research where the ability of a study to represent what are conceived to be objective truths is underscored. Such an approach would require representativeness of sample as a key element. Questions may therefore be raised over the generalisability of case studies from this perspective. However, such an objection does not apply to this study. It is not the concern of this research, for example, to determine the exact extent to which the problems identified herein are occurring in Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices. The study does not seek to measure precisely how much or how often problems occur or exactly how many are affected by the problems. In short, there is no intention to invoke generalisability of findings. Instead, what the study aims to do as pointed out earlier is to engage in 'analytic generalisations' (Yin 2003: 32-3) that would allow the linking of the data to the theoretical propositions that inform this study (outlined in Chapter 1) for which the selection principle employed here is well-suited.

This is a qualitative study of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments that draws elements from case study research as outlined by Yin (2003). Qualitative studies such as case study research are particularly useful for studying information-rich situations in great depth (Patton 2002). This study looks into Philippine Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices as a practice context for social work as a whole while recognising that only the specific experiences of individual practitioners can give substance to this theoretical whole and provide depth in perspective. The study explores the practice and practice contexts of 37 randomly-selected practitioners who responded to a survey and the practice experiences of a total of 10 practitioners who were interviewed (two who reported experiencing no problem with their mayors, two who did and six who had been removed from office) and 11 practitioners who participated in a focus group discussion. The selection of the interview and focus group participants was also based on the same principle specified earlier, the main aim being to maximise what can be learned. All these form part of the overall study of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments which may be represented as shown in Figure 3.2

below as drawing from data gathered through three methods from a corresponding set of practitioners. The process of selecting the unit of analysis in this study is explicated in the next section.



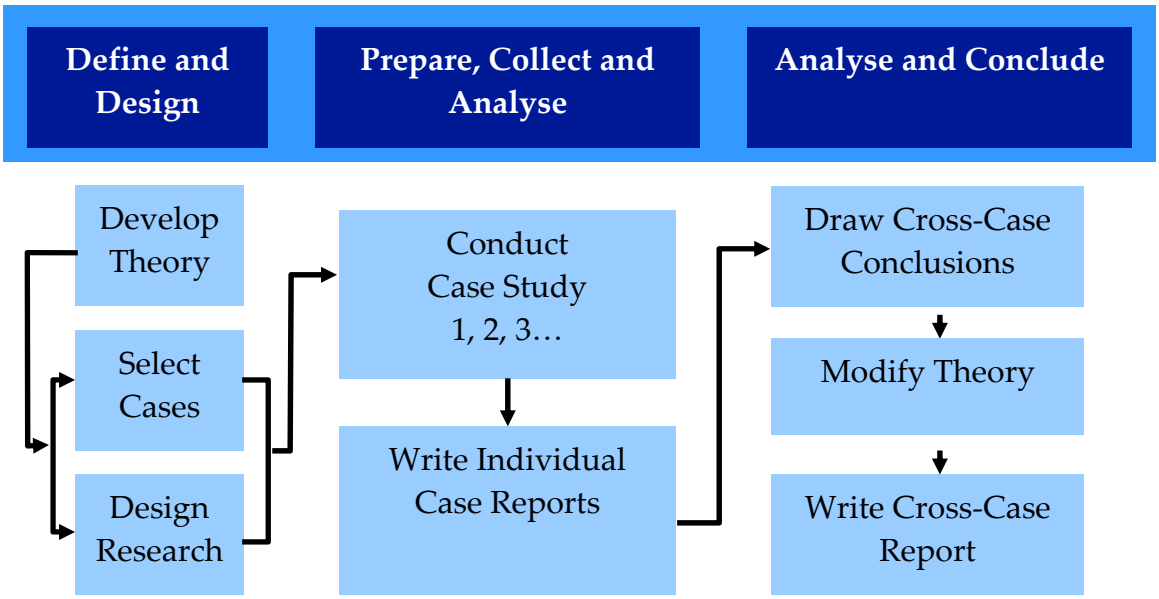
Study of Social Work Practice in Philippine Municipal Governments
Figure 3.2

While this study looks at social work practice in Philippine municipal governments, the goal of the research is much broader. The study into the ways by which social workers under Philippine mayors manage competing mandates is really a question about how social workers can do social work, within the particular construction laid down in Chapter 2, in constricted organisational and political-economic environments that conceivably characterise the work milieu of many professionals in developing countries like the Philippines. Some might question the usefulness of studying the management of competing mandates in social work through the purview of Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers that number no more than 1,500 (not counting social work professionals under them). Again, this is a legitimate objection from the research tradition and theoretical perspective that emphasises representativeness. But rather than limiting its usefulness, the pursuit of in-depth data about social work practice in Philippine municipal governments sharpens the research by practically grounding it and yielding more than abstractions about social work practice. The application of the

findings can be extended beyond the particular research setting to that extent that it contributes to general social work knowledge which, in turn, informs practice in other settings. The focus on social workers in Philippine municipal governments thus refines the research process without necessarily confining the analysis.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This section outlines the research undertaken, the broad strokes of the process being similar to the flow of case study research as outlined by Yin (2003) and shown in the modified flowchart in Figure 3.3 below. The discussion in this section includes the selection of the unit of analysis, the selection of participants, the development and deployment of data collection instruments, data collation and analysis, ethical concerns and scope and limitations.



SOURCE: Yin (2003: 50)

Flowchart of the Study
Figure 3.3

Selection of Unit of Analysis

The selection criterion employed in this study favoured public over private practice settings in that the former placed practitioners more in direct link with institutional influences, particularly senior public officials and government instrumentalities. Social work practice within the Philippine bureaucracy is mainly in

discrete departments or units, allowing for an organisational structure that lends itself to supervision of professionals by professionals. Since the early 1990s, the leadership of the Department of Social Welfare and Development has been dominated by professional social workers in contrast to previous decades when the position was, as with other senior government positions, routinely dispensed as a favour to the President's political allies. The Department is the single biggest employer of social workers in the country with more than 700 social workers throughout the archipelago. On a much smaller scale, social workers are also employed in the 'social welfare' sections of other departments and agencies, such as the Department of Labour and Employment and big government hospitals. Within these so-called auxiliary practice settings, social workers still are generally under the supervision and control of professionals (albeit from other disciplines) and are thus somewhat insulated from direct political pressures emanating from elected officials. Unlike most of their colleagues in other government units, social workers who serve as heads of local government social welfare and development offices serve directly under the control and direction of elective officials (namely governors and mayors) which leaves no administrative layer to insulate them from political influences from persons who may have a direct personal interest in some of the issues that they deal with at work. This position of social workers working in Philippine local governments suggests that their practice context can offer the maximum potential for learning in an investigation of the research question.

In preliminary discussions about the research, the president of the Association of Provincial, City, and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Incorporated (APCMSWDOPI) suggested the inclusion of provincial and city governments in the study. The researcher decided against the idea pointing to the significant variances between provincial, city and municipal units in terms of mandate, functions, and resources. A decision was made to focus on the municipalities which constitute the numerical majority of local government units. As an aggregate, municipalities constitute the biggest market of social work jobs in the

Philippine bureaucracy. Most of the 1,495 Philippine municipalities have a section known variously as the 'social welfare office', 'social services office', 'department of social welfare and development', 'social welfare and development office', 'social services and development office'. For the purposes of this study, they are referred to here by the most common title of 'Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office'.

As has been argued, the organisational position of social workers in Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices is potentially challenging. The job puts them under the direct control and supervision of municipal mayors who possess extensive forms of power, including discretion over the need for the establishment of such an office and the appointment of its head and all personnel. This makes the position of the social worker susceptible to political pressures and influences. In addition, Philippine local politics and governance, as with national politics, is dominated by economic and power elites whose interests can conceivably come in conflict with social work interventions. Some local government officials have been reported as having violated or ignored pro-poor laws, endorsed extrajudicial violence and threatened the lives of whistle-blowers with impunity (Contreras 2003; David & Valte 2001; Marks 2004). Accounts from staff who understandably wish to remain unnamed point to the unwritten rule in some local government bureaucracies that prohibits the extension of services to the political supporters of the incumbent's political rival on the pain of punitive sanctions. Such conditions could very well present a special challenge for all social workers, perhaps especially those who hold a structural construction of social work.

In the absence of a systematic record of practitioners who have had problems with their superiors, the selection of participants had to start from a random sample of the general population of MSWD Officers. Although there was the professional association which represents Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers, there was no database of cases pertaining to the concerns in this research.

Problematic situations were handled by the Association on a case-to-case basis and ethical considerations on the part of the association made it difficult to base the research on whatever cases they may have had at hand. The selection of participants was therefore a critical step in initiating the study.

Selection of Participants

The professional association served as the main channel by which access to the study participants was gained. The list of members furnished by the Association served as the population from which a sample was drawn. The quality of the sampling thus depended to a great extent on the accuracy of the list. And while the list was supposedly the most up-to-date record of the professional association at the time it was used, it is possible that some changes may have occurred between the time of the compilation of the list and of the sample. Those who were excluded from the sample as a result of these may therefore have been denied the opportunity to participate and this may be considered a limitation of the study.

With the view of gaining insights into the array of work environments and in the absence of specific leads for interview participants, random sampling was used for selecting participants in the survey involving the use of a mail-in questionnaire. Systematic random sampling was employed in selecting 120 participants. The sample size of 120 was chosen in anticipation of non-responses. Of the 120 invitations sent out, only 37 (30.8%) valid returns were received. Albeit higher rates of return could be achieved by more sophisticated designs, the 30% rate of return achieved in this study falls within the expected range of responses for regular mail out surveys (Dillman 2000). In addition to its primary purpose, the survey was also meant to generate leads through snowball sampling (Healy 2002; Weaver 1999) for practitioners who have reported conflicts between professional discretion and organisational demands, particularly those involving orders and decisions of municipal mayors. From the snowball sample generated, 12 invitations to participate

through a mail-in questionnaire were mailed out. From these, five valid responses were received.

Volunteers for the interviews were identified through responses from the systematic random and snowball sampled participants. Applying the criterion of potential for maximum learning within a structural perspective, issues that (consistent with critical theory) seemed to indicate exploitation and abuse of power were chosen over what appeared to be mere disagreements in judgement. In the same vein, situations where the tenure of the workers was threatened were chosen over those where less harmful sanctions were reported. Prospects for interviews were limited to those who volunteered and it is conceivable that some of those who did not volunteer may have had valuable information that remained inaccessible through the research. Ethical and logistical considerations also precluded the choice of some cases. The case of one volunteer would be much too recognisable if certain prominent details were featured and so a decision was made against presenting them. Leads deemed logistically inaccessible from the base of operations of the researcher had to be ruled out. Again, these constitute some of the limitations of the study.

Besides the main participants, the president of the professional association, past and present senior Department of Social Welfare and Development (one current and three past secretaries of the Department), and selected academics were interviewed. The interviews were aimed at gathering perspectives on the institutional and professional context as well as broader systems that have an impact on the work of social workers in local government units in line with the structural perspective that informs this study.

The selection of focus group participants was through purposive sampling. Arrangements for the conduct of the focus group discussion were made with the professional association more than a year before its execution. As arranged, the focus

group discussion was timed with the annual convention of the APCMSWDOPI in 2004 in Metro Manila. This was an important consideration since this was the only time in a year when a large number of them are gathered in one locality. Otherwise, many of the participants would have been required to travel by air just for the focus group discussion. Invitations for participation in the discussion were posted in the conference venue and a similar announcement was made during the conference proper. There were 11 volunteers who participated in the focus group. Their identities and their qualification to participate in the discussion (that is, whether or not they were registered professionals and if they held the position of a local government social welfare and development officer) were attested to by the association president.

Development of Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire that was developed for this study contained 12 sections (see Appendix 1). The first asked the prospective participant to check if he or she qualified for participation in the study based on two criteria: the respondent has to be a social worker and a head of a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office. The second section solicited identifiers. The main contents of the questionnaire were those enumerated in the methods section. The questionnaire ended with a section soliciting volunteers for an interview and referrals for snowball sampling. The questionnaire was piloted with five convenience-sampled participants working in Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices in towns within and around Metro Manila. Among other insights gained, the pilot process pointed to the need for the inclusion of the first section and basic identifying information incorporated in the second section. From the main questionnaire, a sub-section focusing on reports of value conflicts was developed to form the questionnaire used with the snowball-sampled participants (see Appendix 2). The questionnaires for the randomly-sampled and snowball-sampled participants were designed to identify volunteers and generate leads for interviews.

The interview guide for selected participants contained six sections (refer to Appendix 3). Besides personal and professional background information, the interview guide called for a discussion of the local and work environment, the participants' responsibilities and activities, their views on social problems and their clients, participants' views about social welfare and social work, and their experiences in working under mayors. This guide was pilot tested with one Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer. Initially, the plan was simply to draw up accounts of those who had problems. But one of the examiners of the research proposal pointed out that a fuller understanding would be gained by developing accounts of participants who reported no problems and so this was integrated in the research design. The same interview guide was used for this purpose. A separate interview guide (see Appendix 4) drawn from a section of the main interview guide was developed for the interviews with six practitioners who had been removed from office.

The focus group discussion guide (Appendix 5) contained three main sections covering the participants' construction of social work in local governments, work under politicians, and challenges they face in this context. No pilot testing was done on this guide but it was revised and refined based on initial analysis of survey responses and interviews over the more than one-year period leading up to the conduct of the focus group.

Conduct of the Survey

For the mail-in questionnaire survey, a package of information containing (a) a letter, (b) an information sheet, (3) the questionnaire and (4) a stamped, self-addressed return envelope was sent to prospective participants. As indicated in the letter and information sheet, the return of the filled-in questionnaire was taken as an indication of consent for inclusion in the study. Based on feedback and observation, postal delivery from Australia took at least 10 days to reach some respondents and returns took roughly the same amount of time. Considering the pace of delivery, a

full two months was allowed to pass before follow-up letters were sent. No further follow-up was made after this point.

Conduct of the Interviews

For the interviews, a package of information containing (a) a letter, (b) an information sheet, and (c) the interview guide was sent to prospective interviewees. The final meeting schedules were arranged by telephone. Immediately before the start of each interview, the information sheet was reviewed and the participants were asked for their consent through the signing of a consent form. With the consent of participants, all the interviews were audio-taped for the purpose of generating a transcription. The average interview lasted for about one and a half hours. Just one interview was conducted per participant and this was found to be sufficient especially since most of the interviews are supplemented by data from the returned questionnaires of the interviewees. The same criterion used in the selection of the sub units of analysis was applied in the choice of information pursued in the gathering of data in interviews. The principle was useful in sorting out which issues and events merited probing, based on their potential to shed light on the themes being explored.

Different arrangements were made based on the requirements of the interview participants. The interviews with workers that had no problem did not require special arrangements in the choice of venue and, upon the suggestion of the participants, were done within their work premises. As for the two interviewees who reported problems, one of the participants volunteered to travel to another town hundreds of kilometres away in response to the offer of the researcher to travel to her municipality saying that she could 'use the break in the big city' anyway. The statement was taken at face value although it appeared odd when, right after the interview that began just an hour after she arrived, she indicated that she planned on taking the next bus home. Out of courtesy, no effort was made to explore other reasons behind the incongruence although there is reason to believe that it may have had something to do with the sensitive nature of the interview topic. All interviews

with practitioners who had been removed from office were conducted in venues based on the stated preferences of the participants.

Conduct of the Focus Group Discussion

The researcher was scheduled to be in Australia when the national convention of the professional association, where the focus group was to be conducted, was scheduled. For this reason, the researcher commissioned a lecturer in social work from the University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development to administer and facilitate the focus group discussion. More than seven months before the scheduled date, a meeting was held between the researcher and the assigned facilitator to brief her on the purpose, the prescribed process and expected outputs of the focus group discussion. A final set of instructions were conveyed by email in the last few weeks leading to the event. Based on the report of the facilitator, the participants were briefed on the purpose and design of the activity following the process agreed upon and using the information materials provided by the researcher. They were then asked to indicate their consent by signing the prepared consent forms. The focus group discussion was audio-taped with the consent of all participants. The transcription for the focus group was done by a person commissioned expressly for that purpose, with the output checked against the audio-tape by the focus group facilitator and the researcher. After the focus group, the facilitator turned over to the researcher the (a) tapes, (b) transcript and (c) consent forms as agreed upon beforehand.

Data Collation and Analysis

The theoretical and methodological principles of qualitative research often bring together data collection and analysis in an iterative process wherein previous data, immediately analysed and evaluated, directs the researcher to new data that need to be sought (Sarantakos 1998). This process was evident in the research in various ways. For one, the mail-in questionnaire responses provided leads to other potential survey and interview participants. The mailed-in questionnaire responses

also raised issues and brought out concerns that were pursued in the interviews. Then, the initial analyses of the survey responses and the interviews informed the refinement of the focus group discussion guide. And so rather than being a discrete segment, data analysis commenced with data collection as part of an integrated, iterative process.

The main analytic strategy employed in this research is the use of theoretical propositions, one of the three general analytic strategies identified by Yin (2003: 111-5). Under this strategy, theoretical propositions, the core of which were outlined in the introduction, guided the data collection and analysis. Among the standard analytical techniques used were explanation building and cross-case synthesis (Yin 2003: 116-37). The explanation building data analysis technique, aimed at building explanations about cases, was used as part of a hypothesis-generating process that set the stage for cross-case synthesis, with the analysis being ultimately linked to the theoretical propositions on which the study rests. Analytic memo writing (Neuman 2003: 445-6) was used throughout the process of organising, coding and analysing the data. The tactics in generating meanings used in this study included: (1) noting of patterns or themes, (2) clustering, (3) metaphor making, (4) counting, (5) comparing and contrasting/'analytic comparison', (6) partitioning of variables, (7) subsuming the particular into the general, (8) factoring, (9) uncovering variable relationships, (10) building of a logical chain of evidence, and (10) linking to theory (Neuman 2003: 456; Yin 2003: 323-5). The analytic procedure went through six basic phases as outlined by Marshall and Rossman (1999): (1) organising the data, (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns, (3) coding, (4) testing of the emergent understandings, (5) searching for alternative explanations, and (6) report writing. Storing, organisation and processing of the data was facilitated by the use of computers. The primary data for the study were tabulated mainly in two ways: a computer spreadsheet program was used in the collation of the quantitative data in the survey and a word processing program was used in the transcription of the qualitative data from the survey (particularly the answers to open-ended questions),

the interviews and the focus group discussion. The transcriptions of all interviews and coding of all qualitative data were all done by the researcher, allowing the researcher to develop an intimate familiarity with them. The computer program SPSS (Version 11.5) was used to manage and analyse the quantitative data. Some of the qualitative data were managed and analysed with the aid of the software NUD*IST™ (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising).

The data were interpreted at first, second and third-order levels (Neuman 2003). Rigour for the first-order interpretation (that is, the participants' own meanings and understanding) was maintained through the triangulation of method (Neuman & Kreuger 2003) and the use of the participants' own words whenever possible. The usefulness of triangulation was seen, for example, in how the interviews and focus group discussion allowed the probing of some key concepts such as the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) which is merely referred to by some participants in the survey as 'AICS'. In turn, when some interview and focus group discussion participants mentioned problems, such as those pertaining to the administration of AICS, the survey shed some light on how broad the practice was in terms of the number of units offering such a program, the amounts involved, and other details. Policy documents and interviews with senior Department officials and selected academics were used to inform second level interpretations which refer to interpretations situated in wider contexts. Third order interpretations of data (that is, linking the data with theory) were anchored on the works of Jamrozik and Nocella, Bourdieu, Greener, Lipsky and structural social work theory that were outlined in Chapters 1 and 2.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

Ethics is an important element in the conduct of this research. Given the sensitive nature of the issues being explored in the study, there was the distinct possibility of compromising the interests and safety of prospective participants. Such would have made the research ethically untenable. Conscious effort was therefore

exerted in adopting measures to safeguard participants from risks of exposure as outlined below.

Survey

It was noted in the early stages of planning the research that the perspectives of mayors would have given an insightful look into the work of the social workers they supervise and that there was the danger of a halo effect of having participants report on their own work. But the involvement of mayors would have required reference to the participation of the professionals themselves. This could have resulted either in a compromised set of data or the employment status of practitioners. The quality of data would have been rendered suspect if participants had to worry about the personal and professional implications of their participation in the research. Considering the potential for exposure of the main participants, the participation of mayors was therefore ruled out. The exclusion of mayors from the study does not undermine it because the study is primarily concerned with how social workers constructed their work and work environment. Considering the constructed nature of 'truths' as acknowledged in this research, the variability of constructions is taken as a given. In terms of institutional grounding, the research was seen more as a concern of the professional association in that the research was concerned with practice and professional principles and it was through the association that participants were identified and accessed. Thus, the ethics approval process for this study included clearance from the Association (see Appendix 10).

Interviews

Interviews were arranged in venues suggested by the participants as far as practicable. Confidentiality was given emphasis in the choice of location. As indicated earlier, all interviews were audio-taped with the informed consent of participants. Interviewees who opted for anonymity were assigned aliases which were used in the transcription done by the researcher personally. Similar measures were used in disguising other identifying information such as place names and,

where appropriate, the gender of the children of the interviewee (and as expressly requested by one participant in the validation process of her interview transcript). All interview participants were given an opportunity to validate the transcript of their respective interviews.

Focus Group Discussion

A number of measures were adopted to protect the participants of the focus group discussion. All the participants were made to sign consent forms that included a provision concerning confidentiality between participants. In addition, the Association was requested not to record and publish the names of focus group members in any of the conference documents, including rosters of workshops and the conference proceedings. Their names do not appear in the transcription.

On the whole, the research protocol observed in the conduct of this study restricted the gathering of information within the scope of the research question with the informed consent of participants, including their right not to participate or withdraw from participation at any given time and to stipulate anonymity. Formal ethics approval was sought from the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee for the research design and all research instruments. Approval was granted by the Committee for two separate requests on 8 July and 20 November 2003 (see Appendices 6 to 9). Rigour was assured through measures identified by Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda and Staker (2002): (1) the researcher's high familiarity with the research context, (2) the use of triangulation, (3) consultation/involvement of participants (to the extent specified in the scope and limitations), and (4) the keeping of all data to allow tracing. In accordance with University policy, the chain of evidence will be maintained through the storage of all primary data collected, namely the filled-in questionnaires and transcripts of interviews and the focus group discussion, for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group of the University.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study addresses the question **'In what ways do social workers manage competing mandates?'** by studying the case of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments through a nationally-derived sample. As such, it does not cover the whole gamut of practice settings for social work in the Philippines. The study does not cover social work practice in city and provincial governments although some analogies could be inferred. While investigation into the peculiarities of the work context of social workers in these other settings might prove insightful, this is beyond the scope of the study which is based on the assumption that the practice context in Philippine municipal governments presents an adequate range of issues for analysis to substantively address the research question. This study was not also intended to look into the results or impact of the work of the participants. While the study explores how competing mandates affect the lives of the participants, it does not go beyond that to explore how this affects the lives of the people they work with, namely their clients and publics.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The first limitation is the relatively limited participation of the practitioners in the design and conduct of the study. Seeing the research as a project of social work practitioners, a more active involvement of the participants would have been desirable. Involvement of the main research participants was relatively limited for a number of reasons. Their active participation was hindered by the sensitive nature of the topic (most interviews had to be conducted outside the workplace), their geographic distance from each other, their geographic distance from the researcher, and their lack of access to information and communication technology (for example, all interviewees had no access to the internet and some had not regular access to telephones), among other things. As noted earlier, the association leadership did have an opportunity to provide inputs at the early stages of the planning process and some professionals did have a hand in the piloting of instruments and transcripts.

Another limitation is that the study relied heavily on the account and self-reporting of social workers. Since no data was gathered from other possible sources of information such as mayors, other Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office staff, their clients and the general public, questions may be raised about the accuracy and objectivity of the accounts. The possibility of bias arising from self-selection or a halo effect due to self-reporting and the obtrusive means by which data was gathered (Checkoway & Zimmerman 1992) should be acknowledged. But the fact that the practitioners are the main, almost exclusive, source of data for their practice does not undermine the main findings of this kind of a study (Itzhaky & York 1991) which focuses on the constructions of the participants of their work, their work settings and their responses to challenges. The triangulation of method and the hermeneutic interpretation of data yielded by the different approaches helped establish consistency of accounts and meanings.

Yet another limitation is that the study was restricted to those currently holding the title of head of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office who volunteered to participate. The research design was open to 'negative evidence' (Neuman 2003: 458) in relation to factors which participants were unaware, wanted to hide, overlooked or failed to report and practitioners whose stories were, for various reasons, excluded from this study. Resource considerations limited access to some cases. Some leads were not pursued because they were either too far from the Philippine base of operations of the researcher which is Metro Manila or too out of the way from the key informants who were given preference in accordance with the sampling principle specified above. The voices of those who chose not to respond to the survey or participate in the interview or focus group discussion are not represented here. And while favourable circumstances led the researcher to gain access to Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers who have resigned, been forced to resign, floated/shelved or fired, no systematic process of tracing these cases was found and employed. And if, as the theoretical propositions that guide this research suggest, workers who put up a fight face the prospect of punitive sanctions,

then this limitation may have confined access to those who have maintained their position and precluded access to what may be more information-rich cases of those who fought and lost.

A fourth limitation is that the study was not designed to be sensitive to gender or cultural nuances. The participants, as with the population, are dominated by females but the research design did not allow the factoring in of gender as part of the analytical framework. Sensitivity to variances in culture also was not built into the research design in the sense that no conscious and systematic effort was made in the sampling and analysis to draw out any cultural variances between, say for example, areas predominated by Muslims, indigenous peoples and Christians. While the study of these factors may prove to be instructive, no conscious effort was made to sensitise the research towards these issues.

The last limitation that could be cited is the constraint imposed by ethical considerations on the methods that could be employed. More in-depth information could have been gained through contact and time intensive methods such as participant observation. However, the sensitivity of the topic and the circumstances to the participants did not favour such measures.

SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the methodological aspects of this research, including its theoretical orientation, the methods, the unit of analysis, the research process, the ethical concerns and the scope and limitations. It was pointed out that a critical theoretical perspective was congruent with the structural construction of social work outlined in Chapter 2. A structural construction of social work points to the key role of the prevailing political economy and dominant ideology in the shaping of social work practice. Thus, if a fuller understanding of the specific practice context for social work in Philippine municipalities is to be achieved, there is a need to critically analyse the larger historical and political-economic context for social work practice in

the Philippines. And so in line with the theoretical perspective and the structural construction of social work informing this study, we will first examine the larger (national) practice context before proceeding to the discussion of the particular practice context of social workers in Philippine municipal government. This will be undertaken over the next three chapters with the analysis of the political economy of Philippine social policy in Chapter 4, the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare in Chapter 5 and the mainstream construction of Philippine social work in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER

4 THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PHILIPPINE SOCIAL POLICY

'Kung maiksi ang kumot, matutong mamaluktot.' (If the blanket is short, then learn to curl up.) – Filipino proverb

POLICY, POLITICS AND SOCIAL WORK

The two preceding chapters outlined a structural construction of social work and the value of a critical theoretical perspective which both point to the role of ideology, politics and policy in shaping social work practice. An important step towards exploring the ways by which social workers manage competing professional and organisational mandates therefore is to understand the political-economic environment in which social work practice takes place. In line with the critical theoretical perspective employed in this study, this chapter analyses the Philippine political economy as the broader context wherein the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities is situated.

The structural construction of social work outlined in Chapter 2 serves as the main framework for analysis in this chapter, with Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) theory of the residualist conversion of social problems (discussed in Chapter 1) specifying the key elements in the examination of different levels of interventions on social problems. The chapter (1) presents a reading of contemporary Philippine social

policy, (2) retraces the development of contemporary Philippine social policy in the post-independence Philippine state, and (3) outlines the material conditions that bring forth and sustain the contemporary Philippine social policy regime. The analysis of contemporary Philippine social policy is made along key areas, including those identified by Jamrozik (2005) such as employment, health, education, housing and what may be referred to as social welfare provisions to vulnerable populations like Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and the poor. The analysis is trained at identifying ideological themes that underpin the prevailing policy directions in these areas. It is argued that contemporary Philippine social policy is a product of the post-colonial (that is, the period starting with the grant of Philippine independence in 1945) or, more precisely, neo-colonial political economy of Philippine society. The latter term is adopted in this study, a key assertion in this chapter being that contemporary Philippine social policy, along with the post-independence Philippine state that emerged after the Second World War, evolved out of a special relationship between the United States (US) and the Philippines amidst the growing dominance of multilateral financial players such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This alliance between American economic interests and the local elites, supported by successive governments, shaped both the problems (in terms of economic and social inequality) and actions (in the form of social policy and interventions) in the way the partnership resulted in the ever-increasing disenfranchisement of the masses while providing a venue for inter-state collaboration. This special relationship is a key element in the shaping of contemporary Philippine social policy. The chapter ends with a note on the ideological and practice implications of the prevailing political-economic environment.

This analysis of Philippine social policy and politics examines ideas about the Philippine state or, more specifically, particular state institutions that serve as key venues in the shaping of social policy. It is therefore helpful to consider relevant

theories on the state and propose a theoretical context of state institutions. The state is a historical phenomenon and a human invention (Hall 1984). The term does not stand for a single entity but for a number of institutions – the government/political leadership, the administrative bureaucracy, the military and the police, the judiciary, the local/sub-central governments and the legislature – that make up what may be referred to as the 'state system' (Miliband 1973: 46-51). The analysis in this chapter will focus mainly on the first and last elements as key venues in the creation and shaping of social policy. A notable feature of the state is its 'maximal control' over resources and force, the allocation of which is tied to the notion of legitimacy of ends (Migdal 2001; Vincent 1987: 20). Thus, the relationship between the state and the economic elite is not simple and straightforward. With the authority of state mechanisms resting on their legitimacy, there are tensions that necessitate the dilution of ruling class interests – notwithstanding their hegemonic dominance – in state actions. Kerkvliet (1998) argues that a study of the state's performance in policy would provide us with an accurate reading of its strength or weakness. From a Marxist perspective consistent with the practice framework that informs the research question, the state is shaped by its dual role: internally serving as a medium for inter-class domination, thereby ensuring the domination of ruling classes and the cohesion of class-divided societies, and externally functioning as a vehicle for intra-class competition between territorially-bounded ruling classes (Cochrane & Anderson 1986). Cochrane and Anderson (1986) argue that the consideration of external influences is so indispensable to any analysis of modern states that to ignore the complex relationships arising out of this would virtually incapacitate any attempt at theorising. The analysis in this chapter focuses on both the internal and external dimensions and the political dynamics that lead to the shaping of Philippine social policy. The special relations between the Philippines and the US serve as the backdrop of what Frankel (1978: 5) calls the 'historical specificities' in the formation of the Philippine state system and politics.

CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE SOCIAL POLICY

Despite a provision in the 1987 Philippine Constitution stipulating that the State 'shall give priority to education', interest payments for public debts have consistently taken the biggest share in the national expenditure since the 1980s up to the present. Of the budget for 2004, 31% was allocated for interest payments alone, far outweighing the budgets for education (15.5%), health (1.49%), community development and housing (0.31%), and agriculture, agrarian reform, and natural resources (3.9%) (Freedom from Debt Coalition 2003). If principal amortisation is included, payments for debt actually consume more than 50% of the national government's budget (Balana 2003; Tomas 2004). While it would appear that priority is in the proper place given that the budget for education comes second to debt servicing (if the latter was seen as representing another order of imperatives beyond the government's discretionary control), this is rather misleading. Foreign debts allow governments to circumvent national budgeting processes with their treatment as 'off-budget items' (that is, they are automatically appropriated and not subject to Congressional approval – itself a political decision), allowing the governments of the day to draw up financial allocations that only appear to be consistent with constitutional provisions (Balana 2003: A-5). With the bulk of national expenditures going to debt payments, one could very well imagine the compromises needed in education, health, employment, housing and welfare provisions.

Education

From having the highest literacy rate in Asia in the earlier half of the twentieth century, Philippine elementary and high school students ranked third to the last in elementary math and second to the last in elementary science in an international test across 45 countries in the 1990s (Sison 2000a). For every 100 who begin Grade I, only 67 finish primary education and only 40 finish high school (Garcia 2001a, 2001b). These are mere manifestations of the problems plaguing the Philippine educational system.

Public education suffers from lack of resources and skilled teachers. Of 43,000 rural villages, 12,000 do not have an elementary school and the textbook to student ratio is 1:3 (Pinauin 1998). The conduct of classes under the shade of trees or in dilapidated school buildings is not uncommon in rural areas (Sison 2000a). The education department has resorted to three-shift classes in some urban areas and the multi-grade system (where pupils from different grades are combined) in other areas to meet the growing demand for education. Low salary has been a perennial problem and many of today's public school teachers lack quality education resulting in low quality teaching (Garcia 2001a; Zamora 1994). A survey on the welfare and working conditions of public school teachers nationwide found that 55% said their schools had no access to electricity, 84% had no running water and only 38% had toilets, about 25% reported teaching in classrooms without ceilings and about 45% said they had to bring their own tables and chairs (Sison 2000a).

The country's educational system reflects the prevailing development philosophy (Pinauin 1998). In the Philippines, the government has always shared the responsibility for providing primary education with private, mostly religious, institutions much more than anywhere else in the world (Bray 1996; Nawawi 1980). Although there are basically no fees for public elementary schooling, poverty often pushes children out of school because the poor can ill-afford to spend for school-related expenses like transportation, food and learning materials (Sison 2000a, 2000b). The government did not expand its role in education even with the adoption of the 1987 Constitution. Instead, the government shirked from its role (Villegas 1997). While there have been no overt moves towards the privatisation of primary education, the continuing increase in household resourcing to maintain access to opportunities provided by the public education system represents an ever-increasing private burden for elementary education (Bray 1996). The educational system as a whole has been rationalised in line with the conditions of the International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment programs (Guillermo 1997; Pinauin 1998; Simbulan 2001). In the rationalised system, emphasis is given to primary education under the

'education-for-all' rhetoric which, at first glance, appears to be a step towards democratisation. However, the emphasis given to primary education paved the way for the introduction of policy changes towards the liberalisation of tertiary education where state colleges and universities are being pushed towards fiscal autonomy which, under the Philippine education system, meant the eventual withdrawal of direct government financial support for tertiary education (Guillermo 1997; Pinauin 1998). With tertiary education being available only to those who can afford to pay, access to quality education has increasingly been confined to the elites. The Higher Education Act of 1994 mandated state-supported institutions of higher learning to orient their programs in line with national plans that are geared towards global competitiveness. These trends reflected a paradigm shift from education based on a moral and rights-based discourse to that of a seemingly value-neutral position on education consistent with neo-liberal philosophy (Guillermo 1997; Kuehn 1997; Villegas 1997).

Health

Citing government and World Bank figures, Flavier (1999) noted that the decline in infant mortality in the country has been the slowest among Asian countries. The hospital bed to population ratio of 1:859 is a far cry from that of Japan and the United States of 1:64 and 1:194 respectively (Del Rosario 1997). Dissatisfaction with the public health care system pushes people to avail of the services of private health maintenance organisations (HMOs) who reap huge profits (Macatangay 1999). The national drug industry is dominated by transnational corporations, with the Philippines having one of the highest drug prices in the world due to the monopoly enjoyed by trans-national corporations (Cariño 1997; Padilla 2002).

Del Rosario (1997: 6) attributes these to the 'commodification of the health system'. Villena (1995) noted that public health was becoming more private than public as support for the health sector was being reduced while the government

gradually unburdened itself of the responsibility for the public's welfare. Although the present Constitution mandates the state to 'protect and promote the right to health of the people', the government does not give high priority to public health care (Bautista 2001, Congressional Commission on Health 1993). Total spending for health has been much less than the 5% recommended by the World Health Organisation (Flavier 1999). Budget allocations for health in 2003 accounted for only 2% of the total national budget (Yu 2003).

Structural adjustment conditionalities, applied in health care by the Aquino, Ramos and Estrada administrations as streamlining of operations and right-sizing, essentially involved progressive efforts to privatise health services, initially through the expansion of private sector participation in the delivery of health services, then with the scaling down of government role and functions and finally with the corporatisation of government hospitals (Yu 2003). Public health policies that have been adopted in accordance with this framework include presidential decrees which provide for the privatisation of government corporations and institutions, the Local Government Code which mandated the devolution of public health services, the National Health Insurance Act (Republic Act 7875 enacted on 7 February 1995) which mandates universal health coverage with significant private sector participation, and an executive order redirecting the functions of the Department of Health after the devolution of national health services (Del Prado et al. 1999). Devolution has resulted in the overall decline of percentage share of total government spending for health, as primary health care was left to the local governments' ability and willingness to allocate funds (Magno 2001; Simbulan 2001; Villena 1995).

Philippine health policies appear to be oriented towards economic imperatives consistently embraced by succeeding administrations. One of the most recent major pieces of health legislation, the National Health Insurance Act of 1995, was enacted to 'underscore the importance for the Government to give priority to health *as a strategy for bringing about faster economic development*' (emphasis provided). As it is with

education policies, it appears that Philippine health policies are underpinned by economic imperatives.

Employment

The commodification of the health system came hand in hand with what De Guzman (1998) calls the commodification of labour through the contractualisation of labour and forced labour migration. The oil crisis in the 1970s resulted in the closure of firms and the cutback of jobs and set the stage for the government's adoption of a laboor export policy (Gonzalez 1998). The Philippine government encouraged labour migration to absorb the country's surplus labour and to increase foreign exchange earnings. Under Marcos, labour export, hand in hand with the promotion of a local business climate favourable to foreign capital, became the state's *de facto* employment policy (Gonzalez 1998).

The labour export policy, sustained by succeeding administrations, hailed overseas Filipino workers (OFW) as the 'new heroes' but Rodriguez (2002: 342) argues that the discourse only really serves to enable the government to discipline them as citizens-at-large in the global economic order. Some see OFWs as modern day slaves who suffer unspeakable sexual, mental and physical abuses on foreign soil (Alcuitas 2002; Timson 1995). The labour export policy was carried on under the Aquino and Ramos administrations, with little concern over its social costs (Gonzalez 1998; Tigno 2000). The tragic fate of Flor Contempacion, a female OFW in Singapore, somewhat forced the government to rethink its labour export policy (Gonzalez 1998; Tigno 2000). The execution of the mother of four who was working in Singapore as a domestic helper to financially support her family provoked such widespread anger to the point that it threatened the legitimacy of the Ramos government. Responding to the public outcry, the Philippine legislature convened a special session to put together Republic Act 8042 otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995. The act signalled a tactical reversal of the government's two-decade *de facto* employment and foreign relations policy. One criticism of the law,

however, was that the deregulation of recruitment activities gave the government lesser power in protecting overseas workers (Villafaña 2000). Another key criticism is that, in spite of what the law says, the government was still pursuing economic policies that fail to address fundamental problems in the economy which brings about the phenomenon of mass labour migration (Villafaña 2000). Only a few years later, there was a resurgence of the exodus of labour migrants and the government would continue to value remittances of migrant Filipinos (Alcuitas 2002).

The local employment generation strategy of the Marcos administration, consistent with the dominant development paradigm, was adopted by succeeding administrations. The government encourages labour flexibilisation --- that is, the contractualisation of labour --- to enhance the country's global competitiveness (Delos Santos 1999). The underlying philosophy as articulated by the World Bank (1995) emphasises the need to keep wages low to solve unemployment and frowns upon most forms of social provisions, family benefits and wage subsidies because they undermine the efficiency of market forces. A favourable business climate for foreign investors is seen as vital to creating employment and, for business, this essentially means low wages and no strikes (Delos Santos 1999). Thus, low wages together with other anti-labour practices have become integral to the government's development agenda, leading to the criminalisation of strikes and the contractualisation of labour (Arao 1998; Tujan 1998; Valbuena 1996). This is in spite of a Constitution that 'affirms labour as a primary social economic force' and mandates the state to 'afford full protection of labour' and 'promote full employment'.

Housing

While the 1987 Constitution declares as a matter of principle that the state 'shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare', many of them live in deplorable conditions. More than three and a half million people live in slums in Metro Manila where one in every four persons is a squatter (Guzman 1996e).

The avowed beneficiaries of government policies and programs do not benefit from many of the initiatives. The Aquino government's National Shelter Program (NSP) was supposed to extend housing assistance to the lowest 30% of the urban population and mass housing was supposedly the centrepiece program of the Estrada administration. But government housing programs since the 1940s have been mainly oriented towards the middle class (Guzman 1996e; Ocampo 1978). Squatting was generally viewed as a legal problem and squatters were punished and relocated to the outskirts of urban areas. Squatting was made a crime with the issuance of Presidential Decree 772 in 1975 carrying the penalty of imprisonment for up to one year. One of the key concepts that evolved with the creation of the National Housing Authority in 1975 was that the long term solution to the housing problem rested on the full recovery of all costs of development from the beneficiaries (De Guzman & Reforma 1981). Massive demolitions of squatter houses were done in the 1970s to give way to the government's development projects and while low cost housing was introduced, these projects hardly benefited the lower class (Guzman 1996e). Housing subsidies are generally regressive, with bigger loans getting bigger subsidy benefiting mostly higher income groups and not the intended beneficiaries (Llanto et al. 1998).

The orientation towards middle class housing is structural. The housing problem is largely the result of the massive migration of rural population to urban areas due to the pervasive rural poverty and the displacement caused by militarisation and so-called development projects of government (Guzman 1996a, 1996e). But instead of improving the rural areas, efforts went to relocation. Postwar housing policies up to the end of the 1950s were mainly modified extensions of pre-war housing policy which centred on Manila (Ocampo 1978). Relocation brought people to the fringes of urban centres, in areas without livelihood opportunities and basic services and this ultimately drove them back to the cities. Middle class housing gets the bulk of the government’s shelter program funds because it assures higher

profits for the service providers (Guzman 1996e). All of these happen while tens of thousands of people are continually under threat of eviction from their homes to give way to government development projects (Guzman 1996a; Urban Poor Associates 1995).

Housing has always been a privately-oriented enterprise. Post-war housing policies were along the concept of private enterprise system with the primary motivation of clearing slums (Ocampo 1978). As in other areas, there was an expansion in the state's role in housing under the Marcos regime but, faced with bankruptcy, the Aquino and Ramos governments reoriented the state's role from being the producer of housing units to that of facilitator, signalling a shift to a market-based housing finance and resulting in the privatisation of the housing service (Guzman 1996e; Llanto & Basilio 1999). The Arroyo administration continued with this thrust towards privatisation (Austria 2002). The last two major pieces of legislation related to housing, namely the Urban Development Act of 1992 and the Comprehensive and Integrated Shelter Financing Act of 1994, both acknowledged the critical role of the private sector as a matter of policy. With this, housing services have essentially been commercialised, marginalising further the working class and the unemployed (Guzman 1996e). It seems that democratised access to housing has never been a priority for government. The more important agenda, it seems, is economic growth. The Comprehensive and Integrated Shelter Financing Act of 1994 puts housing in its place by citing 'the role of housing *as catalyst of economic growth and development*' (emphasis provided).

Welfare

Post-war social welfare initiatives started with war relief and rehabilitation. The discourse then shifted to social amelioration with the creation of the President's Action Committee on Social Amelioration in 1948 to help 'victims of dissident depredation and violence'. The Committee merged with the Social Welfare Commission to form the Social Welfare Administration in 1951. The Administration

was charged with the enforcement of laws and regulations regarding relief and other social services and the oversight of all charitable and relief agencies supported by the government such as institutions for 'the aged and/or *infirm* and of dependent, *defective* and/or *delinquent* children' (emphasis provided) (Department of Social Welfare and Development 2004; Franco 2000; Mendoza 2002: 29). The agency became the Department of Social Welfare when it was elevated to a department by Marcos in 1968 who later renamed it to Department of Social Services and Development in 1976 to signal the supposed shift of the agency's thrust from dole out and relief to development focused on the 'upliftment of the bottom 30% of the population' under the principle of 'self-help' (Department of Social Welfare and Development 2004; Mendoza 2002; Montes 2000: 618-19). Under the Aquino administration which was burdened with de-bureaucratisation efforts and calamities, the agency was renamed as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and, left with little resources to work with, focused on disaster management and relief and rehabilitation which limited the prospect for initiatives beyond basic needs (Bautista 1996; Franco 2000: 1022-3). The orientation led to the use of the Minimum Basic Needs as framework for poverty alleviation of the Ramos administration's so-called Social Reform Agenda where the DSWD focused on the delivery of basic social services in its flagship program, the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS). The framework has been adopted by subsequent administrations.

The enactment of the Local Government Code of 1991 was a turning point. The law mandated the devolution of DSWD services to the local government units. As a consequence, the Department was streamlined and its role was repositioned 'from rowing to steering' in 1998 which signalled its retreat from direct service provision and program implementation to that of policy and program development and technical assistance (Department of Social Welfare and Development 2004; Franco 2000). Unlike in other policy areas, however, there have been no perceivable moves towards privatisation of DSWD services and this may be due to the fact that

no significant financial gains can be eked out from such services to support private initiatives (De Leon 2003, *pers. comm.*, December 11; Laigo 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 10; Soliman 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 16).

Taking on its more specialised role in program development, the Department embarked on a landmark program in 2002 under the Arroyo administration, the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) project. This is the very first time that a flagship program of the Department has been funded by a loan. The US$100 million loan for the Project was pushed by the World Bank (Padua 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 18). The Project gives municipalities fixed allocations for expenditures of public goods and the different *barangays* or villages within the municipalities are supposed to come up with project ideas which are then pitted against each other in a vote to decide which areas would get funding. While the Project has been praised for engendering people empowerment (Cabreza 2004), there are causes for concern. The form of financing is favours projects that contribute towards financial capital formation and foreign exchange build-up (Sta. Ana 1998). Moreover, it subjects the Project to World Bank prescriptions. Consistent with World Bank conditionalities, most of the initiatives undertaken have been infrastructure works concerning water, roads, day care and school buildings (National Project Management Team 2003). The Project requires people to engage in what Guggenheim (2003: 5) calls 'horse-trading' for basic services. Concerns were raised over equity and access issues posed by the competition model of the project during its appraisal (Investment Coordination Committee - Technical Board 2002), but the project nevertheless found support from the top.

This survey of contemporary Philippine social policy in education, health, employment, housing and welfare provisions shows stark inconsistencies between articulated principles and policy actions. What are stated as imperatives in the Constitution and in policy statements are not reflected in national programs and

expenditures. Priorities appear to be grossly misplaced: as the masses struggle with homelessness, unemployment, poor health and high mortality, low education, deplorable living conditions, over half of national expenditures go to debt servicing. Most social welfare provisions are confined mainly to the 'poorest of the poor', reflecting a residual orientation. Social provisions, overtly or covertly, are largely founded on functional or security (rather than right-based) justifications such as counter-insurgency and/or national economic advancement. On the whole, citizens are more often than not left only to themselves and expected to look after their own well-being. A growing acceptance of neoliberal philosophy, manifested in moves towards privatisation and corporatisation, is leading to the further retrenchment of what were already gaunt social provisions. As stated earlier, a key assertion in this chapter is that Philippine social policy has been moulded within a political economy marked by a special relationship between the Philippines and the United States. As can be seen in the following account of the development of post-colonial Philippine politics and governance, particular values and interests have often prevailed in the setting of the direction of Philippine social policy throughout the several changes in administration since the grant of Philippine independence in 1945.

POST-COLONIAL POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

A Commonwealth government was established in 1936 ostensively to pave the way for independent rule after ten years. This, however, was disrupted by the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945. The Second World War brought with it unprecedented destruction, with a million Filipino lives lost. The main focus in the midst of the occupation and immediately thereafter was war relief and rehabilitation (Almanzor 1966; Mendoza 1981; Montes 2000). The end of the war saw the supposed grant of Philippine independence (others would argue to the contrary as explained in this chapter). But the United States continued to play a strong hand in Philippine politics and the economy. As shown below, the United States had a hand in the rise and sustenance of almost every post-colonial Philippine administration since independence and up to the present. Nothing could have foretold more clearly the

extent to which the US would keep its grasp over the supposedly independent state than the very circumstances under which the first post-independence head of state rose to power.

Roxas Administration (1946-1948)

Right after the war, so much furore was raised in media and in political circles over collaboration with the Japanese 'puppet government' installed in place of America's so-called Commonwealth government. Roxas, the pre-war speaker of the House of Representatives who served as a minister for economic policy in the Japanese-sponsored government, was one of those facing such charges when he was summarily exonerated by United States General Douglas McArthur, a close pre-war associate who went on to support his successful presidential bid (Constantino 1978).

Guerrero (1971) asserts that the United States favoured Roxas because he could easily be threatened with prosecution for Japanese collaboration if there was ever a need to do so. As it turned out, Roxas became a good ally of the United States. He was convinced that the Philippines would not survive without aid from the United States and so it was not necessary to force his cooperation (Constantino 1978). Within a year of assuming office, Roxas signed into law the US-RP Military Assistance Pact (which allowed continued United States control of the Philippine armed forces) and the US-RP Military Bases Agreement was approved, allowing the United States to retain extraterritorial rights over 23 military installations for 99 years (Brillantes & Ilago 1994). More importantly, Roxas earnestly and successfully campaigned for the amendment of the 1935 Philippine Constitution to give Americans parity rights to exploit Philippine natural resources and operate public utilities in order to facilitate the release of war damage payments which was made contingent on the adoption of the measure (Constantino 1978; Guerrero 1971; Kerkvliet 1979).

The local elites saw in Roxas the promise of the restoration of pre-war oligarchic structure (Constantino 1978). While extending favours to the American and local elites, Roxas employed heavy-handed measures in suppressing the peasant movement (Kerkvliet 1979). Dying of a heart attack in April 1948, Roxas was succeeded by his vice-president, Elpidio Quirino, who would later be elected as president on his own account. However, the symbiotic relationship between the Philippine and the US governments, already in place over a decade earlier under the Commonwealth era, would live on long after Roxas' passing.

Quirino Administration (1948-1953)

Upon assuming power, Quirino promised to restore peace and order and confidence in government. The platform, translated into the national government budget, gave one-third of national appropriations to the Department of National Defence (Constantino 1978). Post-war reconstruction was still a vital concern and United States aid was still needed and so Quirino acceded to American pressures, including the placement of American overseers in key departments ostensively to help put the house in order. This gave Americans direct economic, military and political influence in Philippine governance (Constantino 1978).

American economic advice, depending on one's perspective, resulted in strategic gains or losses. Filipino entrepreneurs ended up being confined to packaging and assembling (Contantino 1978). A key aim towards economic development under Quirino was the elimination of the peasant rebellion and the United States played a direct and active role in counter-insurgency. The appointment of Ramon Magsaysay as defence secretary, upon strong advice of US authorities (and in spite of misgivings on the part of Quirino), led to breaking the backbone of the rebellion (Brillantes & Ilago 1994; Constantino 1978). Quirino's Social Amelioration Program included public works in underdeveloped areas, educational programs for children of dissidents, and the opening up of agricultural settlements as homesteads for peasants relocated from troubled areas (Montes 2000). What seemed like noble

deeds really had questionable ends. The building of roads in Central Luzon, undertaken with United States aid given in the name of development, was really meant to facilitate army operations (Constantino 1978). The educational programs for children of dissidents served as a counter-insurgency measure to lure in rebels. Guerrero (1971) saw the establishment of agricultural settlements as nothing more than disguised landgrabbing in frontier areas. A breakdown in the negotiations with the peasant movement led to renewed aggressive measures on the part of government.

Quirino won a full term in the 1949 elections which has been recorded as one of the dirtiest in Philippine history (Constantino 1978). The uncertainty that Quirino brought with him, given the violence and fraud that accompanied his election, convinced the United States that they needed someone new which they found in their ally, Magsaysay, who defeated his erstwhile boss in the 1953 presidential election (Constantino 1978). Realising that Quirino was intent on clinging onto power, Magsaysay switched to the Nacionalista Party to clinch its presidential nomination.

Magsaysay Administration (1953-1957)

Magsaysay's rise to the presidency came with constant American sponsorship. Years before the 1953 presidential election, the Central Intelligence Agency was already grooming Magsaysay for the presidency with propaganda mills touting him as the 'man of the masses' and 'saviour of democracy' (Constantino 1978; Smith 1976: 109-10). He was credited with crushing the peasant rebellion and overseeing peaceful elections in 1951, both achieved with extensive Central Intelligence Agency support (Constantino 1978). Magsaysay proved to be a good ally of the United States throughout his presidency. He signed the 1954 Laurel-Langley Agreement, the Philippine's second free trade agreement with the United States, which extended national treatment of United States investments and economic interests (Chikiamco

2004). Magsaysay supported the Central Intelligence Agency with the sending of Filipino military personnel in its operations in Vietnam (Smith 1976).

Pursuing the aims he espoused earlier as defence secretary, Magsaysay worked on suppressing the insurgency using the two-pronged strategy he had employed successfully, coupling intensive US-backed military action with so-called social amelioration initiatives (Constantino 1978). A key aim was to win the people's trust. His Social Amelioration Program included the construction of feeder roads and artesian wells and the promise of land to the landless (Mendoza 2002). Big estates and public agricultural lands were acquired for distribution or sale to tenant-farmers under the Land Reform Act of 1955 and the development of cooperatives and the extension of liberalised credit facilities to farmers were undertaken. Magsaysay's land reform program was essentially ineffectual but is seen by some historians as very useful in the 'psychological warfare' designed to win over the mass base of the emerging armed peasants' movement (Constantino 1978; Kerkvliet 1979: 239). The office of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD), created in 1956 with Central Intelligence Agency backing, adopted a model for rural improvement as an 'alternative to communism' that is the forerunner of current government initiatives in community development (Constantino 1978: 265-7; Racelis 2000: 159-87).

The effective curbing of dissent and the maintenance of political stability under Magsaysay's government provided an auspicious environment for the advancement of the interests of United States and local economic elites. One can infer the value of Magsaysay to the United States from the account of a Central Intelligence Agency operative who narrated how the CIA station in Manila was asked to 'get the Philippines back on track' sometime after his untimely death in a plane crash (Smith 1976: 287).

Garcia Administration (1957-1961)

Garcia assumed the presidency after Magsaysay's death without being personally beholden to the United States. Garcia was not particularly preferred by the Central Intelligence Agency but he was made Magsaysay's vice-presidential running mate as a concession to Nacionalista Party stalwarts in the negotiations for the defection of Quirino's defence secretary from the Liberal Party (Constantino 1978). Following Magsaysay's death, the Central Intelligence Agency worked on a plan for the 1957 elections, spreading their efforts between supporting their choice and ensuring the defeat of what they saw as a nationalist crusader (Shalom 1986; Smith 1976). Garcia successfully won a full term against the Central Intelligence Agency's choice using his party's old machinery. Under the circumstances, the Americans did not have the same level of influence they enjoyed in previous administrations.

Garcia did not augur well for United States interests. The United States had earlier allowed the adoption of foreign exchange and import controls under the Quirino administration to avert the serious deterioration of the Philippine economy and to counteract the communist threat heightened by the severe crisis in the Philippine economy. Garcia, however, took this a step further by adopting a 'Filipino First' policy in line with the nationalist discourses prevailing at that time. Garcia condemned the notion of laissez faire as 'heretical and outmoded' and argued for stronger economic controls and government intervention as vital elements to growth and development (Constantino 1978: 309-10). The 'Filipino First' policy was not really revolutionary in the sense that it simply meant the preferential treatment of Filipino businesses over foreign investments but it antagonised foreign, mostly United States, business interests enough to earn the disapproval of the United States government (Constantino 1978: 310; Guerrero 1971).

Garcia's rule did not bring about substantive changes in Philippine society and Philippine-US relations. For one, he merely adopted the Magsaysay

administration's social amelioration and community development programs, emphasising 'participation and cooperation' in the spirit of 'civic consciousness' and 'self-help and self-reliance' (Garcia 1957: 38). Although not beholden to the United States, Garcia's political fortunes rested on the local oligarchy which had standing interests with United States businesses. With increasing pressure from the United States Government, Garcia later backed down on his nationalist economic policy but, by then, it was already too late. Red scare tactics were used against him and as early as two years before the 1961 presidential elections, Central Intelligence Agency plans were underway to catapult his vice-president, Diosdado Macapagal, to the presidency (Constantino 1978).

Macapagal Administration (1961-1965)

Macapagal's assumption of power restored the United States' dominance over the Philippines. He had Central Intelligence Agency connections as a congressman and got Agency funding for his presidential bid (Constantino 1978). Macapagal promised to restore free enterprise and open the doors to foreign investment and so he also enjoyed the support of United States economic interests in the presidential election. He was so convinced of the nobility of his cause that he carefully pointed out in first State of the Nation Address that his actions 'had prior approval of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the US State and Treasury Departments' (Constantino 1978: 311).

Macapagal's presidency was marked by the policy of economic liberalisation. Pursuant to his campaign platform of free enterprise, his very first executive act was to institute a decontrol program which lifted foreign exchange controls (Constantino 1978). The Central Bank floated the peso and an open door policy for foreign investments was adopted, setting the stage for destatisation initiatives (Tabbada 1985). The 'decontrol program' of 1962 saw the foreign debt balloon from $ 150M to $600M in 1965 (Brillantes & Ilago 1994). As expected, hundreds of local businesses, subjected to formidable foreign competition perished (Constantino 1978).

Macapagal (1975) held steadfastly to his vision of free enterprise even as he advocated the need for a welfare state years later. The Agricultural Land Reform Code his administration endorsed to Congress as a response to the insurgency problem had far too many loopholes to have any significant impact, after being subjected to more than 200 amendments (Constantino 1978; Guerrero 1971). Sensing ambivalence in the Philippine military and intelligence community with Macapagal, the US stayed 'neutral' in the 1965 presidential elections by contributing to the campaign funds of both the incumbent and his challenger, Ferdinand Marcos, a minor elite who switched parties just before the election to serve as standard bearer of the Nacionalista Party (Bonner 1987).

Marcos Administration (1965-1986)

Marcos was a double-edged sword for the United States. On one hand, he was responsive to United States interests. Marcos affirmed his commitment to free enterprise in his first State of the Nation Address and actively campaigned for foreign investments throughout his presidency (Brillantes & Ilago 1994). He supported the United States in the Vietnam War with the US military bases in the country serving as staging ground for their operations. His commitment to defend the Philippines from the communist threat at the height of the Cold War won praise from United States President Lyndon Johnson who called Marcos his 'right hand' in Asia (Sison 1989: 30). The continued presence of the US military bases in the Philippines was assured under his leadership. On the other hand, his administration became a continuous source of embarrassment for the United States with the widespread human rights abuses that came with the imposition of martial law and the rampant corruption and ostentatious extravagance (Mijares 1976).

Marcos' rule saw an unprecedented level of human rights abuses and corruption (McCoy 1999; Salonga 2001 – more details on these are presented in Chapter 6 in the discussion of the mainstream construction of Philippine social

work). Working with a fraction of the Philippine bourgeoisie and in partnership with multilateral financial institutions, Marcos turned the Philippines into one of the most completely transnationalised political economies in the Third World (Stauffer 1986). Fiscal policies became anchored on debt financing (Amatong 1986; Briones 1983; Kessler 1980). The primary impetus was personal wealth accumulation, with an estimated five to ten billion US dollars going to Marcos's family and cronies after about two decades of rule (Miranda 1999; Salonga 2000, 2001). The foreign debt ballooned from $600M at the start of Marcos' rule in 1965 to $28 billion at the end of the dictatorship in 1986.

The United States ended up, in Bonner's (1987) words, 'waltzing with the dictator'. From the purview of US President Ronald Reagan, the United States was better off supporting an autocratic government criticised for human rights violations than having the Philippines overrun by communist insurgents (Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986). While fully cognisant of the widespread human rights abuses and corruption, the United States together with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund chose to underwrite the dictatorship. The United States supported Marcos because his rule assured the continued presence of its military bases in the country (Federal Research Division 1991). Moreover, United States economic interests were safe under Marcos. The ballooning of the Philippine debt came with the active push of international lending institutions and it was Marcos who issued a presidential decree authorising automatic appropriations for debt service (Briones 1988; Galicia 2000). For well over a decade, the US simply stood down as Marcos maintained power through fraud and terror, content that United States economic and military interests were protected.

The Marcos regime saw a phenomenal growth of the state with the doubling of the number of both military and civilian personnel in less than a decade (Tabbada 1985: 432-8). With planning and policy making powers centred on Marcos, the state actively intervened in the economy and engaged in the operation of state enterprises

(Bautista 1985; Simpas & Mariano 1978). While there were no state enterprises among the top ten corporations in the Philippines in 1970, four of the top ten corporations were state-owned only a decade later, accounting for 49% of total sales and 72% of total assets (Tabbada 1985). This should not be seen as the state displacing the elite but rather as the state doing business for the elite — at least those who belonged to Marcos' clique (Bonner 1987; Tabbada 1985). While the expansion of state intervention in the economy and the nationalisation of enterprise can be ascribed socially desirable attributes within the context of discourses on the welfare state, they mainly served as a means for consolidating power and wealth under Marcos.

The growth of state interventionism was also seen in social policy albeit in less concrete terms. The Marcos government saw a radical shift in policy, at least on paper, with the adoption of the 1973 Philippine Constitution which declared that 'The State shall promote social justice to ensure the dignity, welfare, and security of all the people' and that it 'shall regulate the acquisition, ownership, use, enjoyment, and disposition of private property, and equitably diffuse property ownership and profits'. These constitutional provisions are a landmark in Philippine social policy in that this was the first time that a Philippine constitution mandated the state in the promotion of social justice. This was a big departure from the two previous constitutions, namely the 1899 Malolos Constitution under the revolutionary government of Aguinaldo and the 1935 Philippine Constitution under the Commonwealth Government. The latter only mentioned social justice as a 'concern' of the State (1935 Philippine Constitution, Article 2, Section 5). With the social welfare portfolio finally raised to cabinet level, the agency 'blossomed' (Montes 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 12). The DSWD emphasised 'self-help' to uplift the bottom 30% of the population focusing on the basic needs (Lim 1973; Montes 2000).

But if the implementation of Marcos' Land Reform Code is any indication, the promise turned out empty. Land reform took a backseat to tourism development and its implementation was minimal, with no substantive wealth redistribution element

(Richter 1980). The social justice rhetoric in his *Kilusang Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran* (Livelihood and Development Movement) Program was negated by anti-insurgency functions and practices favouring those with political connections (Agulto 1983; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986). In the end, Marcos himself became the problem for the United States. His rule saw the resurgence of the insurgency problem. The foreign debt grew as the public coffers were being raided and public financing became heavily dependent on foreign borrowing (Brillantes & Ilago 1994). At the height of the 'people power revolution' in 1986, Marcos grudgingly acquiesced to the stern advice of a United States senator acting as President Reagan's personal envoy to 'Cut and cut cleanly' (Bolton 2000: 8). The handover of power to Corazon Aquino, a scion of one of the country's biggest landowning families, signalled no change in the Philippines-US relations.

Aquino Administration (1986-1992)

Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency with the support of the Catholic Church, the military, the oligarchy and the United States (Lallana 1986). She was a member of landed elite, a safe choice for United States economic interests. The Aquino government encouraged foreign investments and promoted import liberalisation and export-oriented industrialisation (Abad 1993; Brillantes & Ilago 1994). The government insisted on assuming all foreign debts in full, in spite of compelling evidence of the complicity of some lending institutions in the grant of onerous debts to the Marcos dictatorship and the overwhelming international goodwill that provided the opportunity to review and repudiate patently dubious ones (Federal Research Division 1991; Galicia 2000). She vigorously campaigned for the renewal of the US Military Bases Agreement until the very end.

The Aquino administration saw a retreat in the state's role. Riding mainly on an anti-Marcos platform, the main concern of the regime was redefining the state's role and reorganising the bureaucracy to remove all traces of the Marcos legacy (Cariño 1989; Gotladera 1986; Monsod 1986; Pilar 1988). This led to destatisation

measures as efforts were made to decentralise the monolithic structure that was formed to support the previous regime (Tapales 1992).

The egalitarian promise of people power was not delivered. Although Aquino's assumption to the presidency presented significant opportunities for substantial social, economic and political reforms, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program she instituted was severely watered-down by the landlord-dominated Congress (Abad 1993; Legarda 1989; Rimban 2004). Absorbed with exorcising the bureaucracy of Marcos' legacy and besieged by numerous coup attempts, the resurgence of violence and successive natural disasters, the main concern of the Aquino administration for the most part appeared to be its own survival (Aquino 1987). Left with little resources to work with, the DSWD was mainly confined to relief drives and disaster management. To fill the void, the government capitalised on the phenomenal increase in the number of non-government organisations (NGOs) resulting in problematic government intervention with the cooptation of NGOs as implementers of government programs (Abad 1993; David 1996; Lopa 2003). As Philippine society celebrated the blossoming of the NGO community and civil society in the latter part of the 1980s, there was a retreat in the state's role in social welfare as in all other frontiers where advances were made earlier under the Marcos administration in line with his efforts to consolidate power and legitimise the status quo. The trend would continue under Aquino's anointed successor, Fidel Ramos.

Ramos Administration (1992-1998)

Fidel Ramos ascended the presidency with a plurality mandate, narrowly winning a seven-way contest. He had banked on the endorsement of Aquino and his pivotal role in the toppling of the Marcos dictatorship. Without a traditional political machinery to rely on, he used his military network having served as a soldier, a vice-chief of staff of the armed forces under Marcos and eventually chief of staff and later defence minister under Aquino. His administration rallied power blocs around his

vision which was the achievement of a newly-industrialised country (NIC) status. The plan was to integrate the Philippines into the world economy by aggressively implementing neoliberal policies (Escresa 1996). The government undertook a series of economic reforms including a policy of import liberalisation, removal of controls on foreign exchange transactions, privatisation of national corporations, and the deregulation of industries in line with the structural adjustment policies imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and supported by other multilateral financial institutions (Guzman 1996d; Salazar 1994). International economic cooperation became the centrepiece of the administration's foreign policy (Almonte 1998; Brillantes & Ilago 1994).

The transnational corporations and the national oligarchy benefited the most from the Ramos administration's drive towards global competitiveness (Haygood 1997a; Padilla 1997; Serrano 1999). To entice foreign capital, Ramos worked for 'industrial peace', a euphemism for policy that discouraged vigilant unionism. As Aquino did, Ramos followed Marcos' labour policy, encouraging overseas labour migration as leverage for the balance of payments problem.

Social reform was hailed as the Ramos administration's safety net complement to its aggressive economic thrust. The Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) framework adopted as strategy for client identification and program implementation under its Social Reform Agenda meant that efforts were to be focused on the survival needs of the poorest 30% of the country's population (Bautista 1997; Montes 2000). There were those who saw the Social Reform Agenda as nothing more than propaganda and a means of advancing the neo-liberal agenda (Guzman 1996b, 1996c). The basic social services provided through the DSWD's flagship program was criticised as dole-outs (Buendia 1995a, 1995b; Ruiz 1995). Many of the promises that the Social Reform Agenda held were negated by the government's overall development framework which put at risk livelihood opportunities and the environment and gave prominence to foreign interests (Raquiza 1997). The privatisation of utilities,

particularly water and power distribution, led to increases in rates (Haygood 1997b; Yu 2002b). The government cut back on its rice price stabilisation efforts presented a spectacle not seen in 30 years: people queuing for hours to buy imported rice (Broken rice bowl 1995). The Ramos government saw the further ebbing of the state's role through its implementation of neo-liberal policies. The implementation of the Local Government Code of 1991 resulted in the devolution of basic programs and services of three national agencies.

Estrada Administration (1998-2001)

Joseph Estrada received the same overwhelmingly strong mandate as president that he got as vice-president under the plurality vote that installed Ramos. He had elite origins but was styled as a 'man of the masses', akin to that of Magsaysay. Estrada took a pro-poor stance with his slogan '*Erap para sa mahirap*' (Joseph Estrada for the poor) – his nickname '*Erap*' being an anagram of the Filipino word for 'buddy'. Capitalising on its populist platform, the Estrada Administration declared mass housing as its centrepiece program with creation of the Presidential Commission on Mass Housing. Behind the populist discourse however, his presidency was a triumph of the remnants of the Marcos regime. While Estrada himself was not closely linked with Marcos, his presidential campaign and administration were littered with Marcos cronies. It soon became apparent that much of it, including a highly-publicised lunch with protesting peasants where Estrada used his bare hands — a dramatic gesture of solidarity with the masses in Philippine culture (Lopez 1998) — was mostly public relations. In the midst of mass lay-offs and very low wages, Estrada called for a strike ban, a moratorium on collective negotiation agreements, a wage freeze, and even the abolition of the minimum wage (Guzman 1999). He waged an all out war in Mindanao which displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians and wrought an economic cost of one billion Philippine pesos a day (Cantos 2001; Lopez 2000). The national budget saw cuts in the health and environment sectors, among others (Carrera 2000). Much of the Estrada regime's poverty alleviation efforts were in shambles as foreign and domestic policies were

determined by the President's so-called midnight cabinet, a select group of drinking buddies ignominiously mixing private and government business with the President over bottles of the most expensive whiskies until the wee hours of the morning (Bautista 2002; Tordesillas 1999). His presidency was marred by allegations of misconduct and corruption that led to the filing of plunder charges (Doronilla 2001; Hutchinson & Tordesillas 2001). Gloria Arroyo, Estrada's vice-president, took over the reins of government in 2001 after Estrada's impeachment and eventual ouster.

Arroyo Administration (2001-Present)

Arroyo's initial claim to fame was as a daughter of former President Diosdado Macapagal. Her charm and charisma made her as a strong contender as she rose from the senate to the vice-presidency. How she managed to win a full term on her own has since been marred by allegations of fraud (Tubeza & Parco 2004).

As her father did, Arroyo reaffirmed her belief in free enterprise in her first State of the Nation Address (Malonzo 2002). Like Ramos, she advanced the free trade agenda, courting foreign capital and promoting trade liberalisation (Padilla 2002b). Her government oversaw the liberalisation of the rice sector and an expanded privatisation drive that threatened thousands of jobs (Padilla 2002c). Arroyo also continued with Ramos' poverty alleviation programs, focusing on the poorest 25% of Philippine provinces and municipalities. The government saw to a shift in financing in social welfare, with the fund of the flagship poverty alleviation program through a loan from the World Bank. This change in financing shaped the character of social welfare provisions. Much of what has been undertaken in the flagship program known as Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) are infrastructure projects such as water supply and roads (National Project Management Team 2003), reminiscent of the post-war infrastructure-oriented and economic-centred development paradigms in the 1970s. While the projects were undertaken through participatory decision-making processes at the municipal level, 'participation' was mainly confined to the allocation of a

predetermined resource pool through a process mimicking and modelling competitive-tendering practices (Padua 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 18).

The immediately preceding discussions illustrate the special relationship between the United States and the Philippines. They show that United States economic and military interests have been closely tied to the social, economic and political changes that have occurred in Philippine society since independence. The special relationship between the two countries is founded on and is an expression of the common economic interests of their respective ruling classes. The relationship helped shape the Philippine state system and politics and guided the direction of Philippine economic, political and social policy. In line with the growing influence of United States capital and multilateral institutions, Philippine social policy has increasingly been oriented towards neo-liberal philosophy.

SOCIAL POLICY IN A NEO-COLONIAL ORDER

Contemporary Philippine social policy is characterised by a functionalist, residual and individualist orientation, taking on important maintenance and legitimation functions under the post-colonial setup. Social provisions were a key component in counter-insurgency drives of succeeding regimes since independence. Such apparently propitious initiatives as road constructions, resettlements, land reform programs and community development projects had counter-insurgency applications (Constantino 1978; Guerrero 1971; Manalili 1990; Racelis 2000). The functionalist element is also seen in how contemporary health, employment, housing and education policies gear whatever little social provisions are allocated towards the goal of engendering economic competitiveness.

Policy statements and actions mostly confine social provisions to residual initiatives. This residual element came in the form of relief and rehabilitation in the post-war era and in the Aquino administration, social amelioration in the Quirino and Magsaysay administrations, and the basic social services for the 'poorest of the

poor' or the 'bottom poor' under the Marcos, Ramos and Arroyo administrations. The residual framework is seen in repeated and consistent references to 'the destitute', 'the poor', and 'the bottom 30%' accompanying most social provisions in education, health, housing, employment and welfare services. Its current incarnation is the preoccupation with providing 'minimum basic needs' to the 'poorest provinces and municipalities'.

The legitimacy of such austere measures is maintained by a pervading individualist perspective which locates social problems within individuals and their immediate environment. Only an apolitical, value-free reading of Philippine social problems can justify the constant preoccupation with 'relief and rehabilitation' of 'the infirm', 'the defective', and 'the delinquent' as seen earlier. This view which would find no fault in the promotion of private responsibility in the way citizen responsibility and private sector involvement are emphasised in Philippine health, housing and education policies. It is this perspective that serves as basis for the encouragement of 'self-help' (as articulated in earlier times) which, under the current administration, comes in the form of participation in competitive-tendering exercises for access to the most basic of social services.

It is argued here that contemporary Philippine social policy can only be fully understood within the bigger political-economic milieu. Contemporary Philippine social policy evolved within a political-economic order which serves as the matrix in which contemporary Philippine social policy is framed and operationalised.

The Post-colonial Political Economy

Post-colonial Philippine politics and state affairs are dominated by elite interests. Contemporary Philippine politics can be traced to the country's colonial history, the colonial rulers having established the foundations of contemporary Philippine society including the nurturing of the local oligarchy (Buendia 1993; Federal Research Division 1991). The economic position of the elite afforded the

exercise of political power and political power, in turn, enabled them to secure their economic interests. Big landowners and compradors today hold sway over the Philippine legislature under an electoral system where political parties are 'ideologically indistinguishable' from each other (Abad 1993; Coronel 2004; Gonzalez 2001; Shalom 1986: 163). It is fame, family and fortune that determine the results of elections (Averch, Koehler & Denton 1971; Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2004). Electoral contests may be seen as nothing more than intra-elite power struggles amongst the oligarchy (Brillantes 1987). The winners get to dispense the political favours and spoils useful in protecting and leveraging the economic position of those in power and their allies.

Subject to the overarching influence of the elite, both local and foreign, the Philippine state system is oriented towards particular interests. By and large, the Philippine state virtually served as the 'midwife' of domestic capitalists since the early years of the Republic (Tabbada 1985: 432). It is not a question of whether or not the government promotes the interests of the rich but rather who among the elite benefits from the 'windfalls' afforded by governments of the day (Chikiamco 2004; Shalom 1986: 162).

The dominance of the elite crafted a particular orientation in the conduct of state affairs and governance. Kerkvliet (1998) points out the striking discrepancy in the Philippine state's performance in the implementation of land ownership policy: it is strong in relation to tenants, landless agricultural families and common citizens (as shown by its resolute and effective action in maintaining and enforcing the prevailing land ownership patterns) while it is weak in implementing policies that favour small tenants and farmers and infringe on the interests of the elite. Beyond serving the interests of the ruling class, the Philippine state system has largely played a minimal role in the economy (Federal Research Division 1991). This is not incidental. The interests of the Philippine oligarchy necessitate the obstruction of substantive structural reforms (Hutchcroft 1998). But the need for legitimation also

requires engagement with social reform rhetoric. Thus, discourses on social welfare and social justice periodically find their way in Philippine politics and state affairs without becoming an integral agenda of governments. Under this *modus vivendi*, social problems are dealt with through high impact, low change initiatives that do not address the structural roots of social problems. It was not surprising, for example, that the same landlord-dominated legislature that approved the agrarian reform law under the Aquino administration went on to reject Aquino's appointee for agrarian reform secretary when he refused to accept the demand of some members of the Philippine legislature for him to institute a policy that would allow them to dodge key provisions (Dela Cruz 2003; Rimban 2004).

The Neo-Colonial Order

The contemporary Philippine political economy is held in place by the neo-colonial relationship between the Philippines and the United States. As we saw in earlier sections, the Philippines did not really lose its economic and political dependence on the United States with the grant of independence in 1945. The Federal Research Division (1991) of the United States had noted that, at the time of independence, the Philippine economy was more dependent on US markets than any single state was on the rest of the union. American 'aid' and capital became potent weapons by which the United States, through the Central Intelligence Agency, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other agencies played a direct hand in Philippine politics, the selection of Philippines heads of state and in the conduct of post-colonial state affairs (Constatino 1978; Dutt 2001; Guerrero 1971; Smith 1976). Independence merely modified the United States' control over Philippine society as the Philippines moved from being a colony to a neo-colony, with continued United States interventions in the political, military, and economic spheres (Constantino 1978; Manzo 1998; Shalom 1986; Simbulan 2000). In essence, the current neo-colonial relationship between the US and the Philippines constitutes 'a single, unbroken line' that began way before independent rule (Constantino 1978:

320). In place of direct rule was a relationship that kept in place political, economic and social arrangements that existed under the United States' colonial rule.

While multilateral institutions do play a role in contemporary Philippine society, the United States occupies a singular place in the Philippine political economy. No other country commanded as much military presence in the territory, with approximately 15,000 United States military personnel and 1,000 defence civilians spread over a number of extensive military bases at its height (Federal Research Division 1991). No other country enjoyed as much influence on Philippine politics, making and unmaking the political careers of successive Philippine presidents. No other country has had so much at stake in the Philippine economy since Philippine independence (Federal Research Division 1991). No other country apart from the United States has appropriated as much influence in key spheres of public life in Philippine society. The pre-eminence of the United States has been sustained and heightened with the Americanisation of world trade and capital via such institutions as the WB and the IMF.

The colonial link remains because of the symbiotic relationship between the local elite and those of the United States. The American colonial government bound the ties between the United States and the Philippines by latching the economic interests of the oligarchies of both countries. On the part of the local oligarchy, Untied States aid and capital were important in rebuilding their pre-war status and in pursuing economic advancement. The assistance of the United States was indispensable for the sustenance of the post-colonial Philippine state. On the part of the United States, the local elite had a key role in the protection of their business interests in the country. Protection of United States capital made the sustenance of the post-colonial Philippine state, dominated by the local oligarchy, an imperative. The United States thus remained an interested party in Philippine politics and the local oligarchy found it in their interests that the United States maintained a certain

degree of control over Philippine politics and state affairs (Federal Research Division 1991).

The main beneficiaries of the neo-colonial relationship are the local elite and United States economic interests. The United States (through the Central Intelligence Agency and other institutions), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral financial institutions were able to systematically plunder the Philippine economy for transnational corporate interests in consonance with the local ruling class (Bello 1982). Under 40 years of tutelage from the IMF, the gap between the rich and the poor only widened (Freedom from Debt Coalition 2004). This underscores an important element of the neo-colonial order.

It is evident that exploitation and marginalisation are inherent elements of the neo-colonial relationship between the Philippines and the United States. The exploitation and marginalisation occurs not only at the international level, in terms of the unequal relationship between the two countries, but also at the intra-national level, in reference to the unequal relationship between the local elite and the general population. It is the contention in this chapter that it is this unequal and exploitative relationship that necessitates and rationalises the contemporary Philippine social policy regime. The residual, individualistic orientation of Philippine social policy helps sustain the functioning of Philippine society by providing the most basic of needs and services as to sustain the pursuit of dominant values and interests, in the way education and health policies are geared towards maintaining a labour force needed to power the country's drive towards global competitiveness. A residual, individualist orientation is also essential in focusing attention on individual responsibility, thereby deflecting blame that could otherwise be attributed to structural sources of the social problems plaguing the Philippine populace. In the process, Philippine social policy helps sustain and reproduces the exploitative relationships within the neo-colonial order through the promotion of dominant ideology, values and interests.

This analysis of contemporary Philippine social policy and the Philippine political economy points to the existence of a paradigm of inequality. In the way social policy is framed and Philippine society is structured, it would appear that inequality is and always has been taken as a given, as if it were a seemingly inalienable part of life. Inequality serves as the compelling logic behind the functionalist-residual-individualist orientation of contemporary Philippine social policy. Such was the worldview that held in place centuries of colonial rules and it appears that such view still dominates contemporary Philippine society. This framework is irreconcilable with a structural construction of social work. For one, it rationalises the unequal distribution of life chances. It normalises illiteracy, ill health, underemployment, homelessness and lack of well-being of citizens. It legitimises the optional or restrained grant of social provisions. It ennobles remedial efforts that 'ameliorate' and 'alleviate' suffering without addressing structural inequalities.

NEO-COLONIAL SOCIAL POLICY

The contemporary Philippine order embodies a host of contradictions. While the Constitution gives priority to education, the majority of Filipino children are denied educational opportunities. While the Constitution upholds health as a right, the majority of Filipinos lack access to the most basic of health services. While the Constitution recognises labour as a primary social-economic force, the marketing of loosely protected Filipino labour remains a key economic strategy of succeeding administrations. While the Constitution acknowledges the sanctity of family life, hundreds of thousands live in deplorable conditions. While the Constitution promises social justice, citizens are told to help themselves.

Contemporary Philippine social policy operates within a neo-colonial order. The grant of independence in 1945 only hid from view an unbroken colonial bond that continues to subsume the Philippines under American neo-colonial influence. The Philippine's colonial relationship with the United States was extended through a neo-colonial bond with the local ruling class that accommodates American economic

and military interests. Through the decades, the United States has maintained a strong and steady hand in Philippine politics and governance. Globalisation makes this relationship even more seamless with the growing dominance of multilateral financial institutions (Skene 2003). It is this neo-colonial relationship with the United States which helps sustain the contemporary Philippine state overridden by the interests of the economic elite. This neo-colonial setup moulds contemporary Philippine social policy. The seeming contradictions noted above make perfect sense under the logic of the neo-colonial order. Existing and operating within a neo-colonial political economy, contemporary Philippine social policy espouses the central philosophy of that order: inequality. This political economy provides the material and ideological bases for the functionalist-residual-individualist orientation of most contemporary Philippine social policy initiatives. The neo-colonial political-economic order provides the overall logic on which contemporary Philippine social policies are founded. This has direct implications to the study. The analysis in this chapter points to the national and international dimensions of what constitute the social reality of Philippine social workers and their clients. It outlines the range of interventions (from the local, national to the international level) that practitioners who espouse a structural perspective must engage. Working within a neo-colonial political-economic order, Philippine social workers cannot confine their actions and interventions at the local or even at the national level. As for social workers in Philippine municipal governments specifically, the problems that they deal with, the mandates that they hold and the work environments in which they operate are kept in place by dynamics and material conditions that extend well beyond their specific organisation, locality or nation. If strategic changes are to take place, their actions would have to go well beyond the confines of their units and transcend the ideological framework of the prevailing dispensation. However, as we shall see in the next two chapters, mainstream Philippine social work theory and practice appear to be not critically-oriented towards the ideological dimensions of social welfare and social policy.

CHAPTER 5

IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF PHILIPPINE SOCIAL WELFARE

Ang hindi marunong lumingon sa pinangalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan. (They who do not look back to whence they came from will not reach their destination.) – Filipino proverb

IDEOLOGIES AND PROFESSIONAL MANDATES

The structural conception of social work informing this study into the ways by which social workers manage competing organisational and professional mandates requires an understanding of the practice environment beyond the immediate practice setting of the research participants (that is, Philippine municipal bureaucracies). The analysis of the political economy of Philippine social policy featured in the previous chapter contributes to our understanding of the research problem by outlining the larger political-economic environment that directly and indirectly shapes the Philippine local government policy and practice context. This context constitutes the larger political and material imperatives that form part of the 'organisational mandates' of local government bureaucracies. This chapter will explore the broader historical and philosophical foundations of Philippine social welfare with the aim of gaining an understanding of the theoretical and ideological traditions that inform the practice of social work in the Philippines, forming part of what may be regarded as the 'professional mandates' of social work practitioners in the Philippines. The structural perspective employed in this study acknowledges that

there are broader contributors to individual practice which can be understood from the viewpoint of power and oppression. This chapter will illustrate how the traditions that inform social work practice form an important part of the structures surrounding individual actions. Consistent with the structural perspective cited above, the analysis in this chapter will be on a broader scale – beyond the immediate work settings of the research participants.

In exploring what constitutes the professional mandates of the social work practitioners in the Philippines, the analysis in this chapter goes beyond the kind of 'generic' social work 'values' and 'principles' explicitly stated in social work texts as outlined by Mendoza (2002: 486)[1]. The approach employed here is a critical analysis of the welfare initiatives under the Spanish and American colonial dispensations viewed against prevailing accounts of Philippine social welfare history. Virtually all existing mainstream social work accounts of Philippine social welfare history suffer from a common flaw: ideological ignorance. This refers to the failure, deliberate or otherwise, to incorporate an examination of underlying ideological themes in the analysis of social welfare concepts and actions. In tracing the development of Philippine social welfare to early English poor laws, for example, Mendoza (2002) notes the various repressive measures that were employed including, among others, the registration of paupers, the whipping and execution of beggars, and the branding of vagrants without remarking on the ideological implications of such treatment of the poor in the way contemporary Philippine social policy, as discussed in the preceding chapter, emphasises individual responsibility. Montes (2000) highlighted the emphasis given on family responsibility under the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 without questioning the assumptions behind the principle. Consistent with this viewpoint, the most prominent mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare history – namely those in the professional encyclopedia (Franco 2000; Montes 2000), the professional journal (see for example Almanzor (1966)), and a popular

[1] Her book *Social Welfare and Social Work*, originally published in 1981, was the first and until now the only one of its kind and is fondly dubbed by some students as 'The Bible' of Philippine social work.

introductory text in social work education (Mendoza 2002) – routinely enumerate the advances in social welfare made under Spanish and American colonial rules such as the establishment of hospitals, schools and asylums in the former and the flourishing of public education and health programs in the latter. To date, these are the main substance of discussions on Philippine social welfare history. What often go unnoticed or ignored are the colonial agendas that were, by default, constructing Philippine social welfare and social work practice. This chapter outlines the ideological legacies of the colonial rules.

An analysis of colonial welfare initiatives is relevant to this study of contemporary social work practice. It is argued here that the colonial dispensations laid the groundwork for contemporary social welfare practice both in terms of the material conditions that they created and the ideologies that they implanted. More importantly, the historical analysis will outline key ideological themes that virtually all mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare ignore. A key assumption here is that we can learn as much from what is not said as we can from what is said. Such oversights, if they could be called as such, have serious implications for contemporary social welfare practice as will be explained in the latter part of this chapter.

A critical theoretical perspective has implications for the historical and ideological analyses made here. The perspective demands a critical appraisal of historical readings, such as those of Agoncillo (1969), Lightfoot (1973), Phelan (1959) and Zaide (1979), which contain sweeping generalisations characterising Filipinos as 'antipathetic to… a priestly life' (Lightfoot 1973: 96) and 'indolent' (Agoncillo 1969: 12). This is not to say that such accounts have nothing to offer because, even if they hold what could be considered as ethnocentric views, they may contain data that lend themselves to critical examination and reinterpretation. But if history is written by those who prevail, then it is incumbent upon those interested in hearing unrepresented voices to maintain a critical stance in reviewing historical accounts.

This account of the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare is itself an interpretation with a view of history that, in the words of Constantino (1975: vii), makes 'the past reusable for present tasks and future goals.' A critical view sees historical accounts as interpretations of history reflecting the viewpoint of those who exercise dominion. Many early accounts of Philippine history discussing how 'Magellan discovered the Philippines' were arguably written from the viewpoint of the colonisers. This has since been challenged by critical historians (such as Constantino (1975, 1978)) who would see Magellan not as a discoverer as much as an interloper. The critical perspective also bears clear implications for the ideological analysis in this chapter. As argued in Chapter 2, social welfare and social work practice are not value-free but are instead permeated by ideologies. An understanding of social welfare and social work practice requires a grasp of their ideological orientations. The position adopted here is in agreement with that of Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) that one must begin with a critical analysis of its function in maintaining society to gain a particular understanding of social welfare informed, as explained in Chapter 2, by a structural construction of social work (Jamrozik & Nocella 1998; Peirce 1974; Stoesz 1988). This tenet guides our analysis of social welfare initiatives in the Philippines under three an a half centuries of Spanish colonial rule followed by almost five decades of American colonisation.

THE PRE-COLONIAL SEEDBED

With the paucity of historical records, pre-colonial social welfare practices are often inferred from laws and customs that existed in pre-colonial Philippines. Often mentioned in such discussions are the so-called 'Code of Kalantiaw' and 'Code of Maragtas' (see for example Leogardo, De Leon & Jacob (1981: 179), and Zaide (1979)) even though Scott (1968, 1984) had long proven the so-called 'Code of Maragtas' as an inadvertent treatment of a book of legends published in 1907 as a pre-colonial record and the 'Code of Kalantiaw' as a forgery. While it is understandable that these were cited in earlier accounts of Philippine social welfare history (see for example, Almanzor 1966), they unfortunately still figure in more recent accounts (see for

example Franco 2000 and Montes 2000). This raises the question of what passes off as historical facts in mainstream accounts of social welfare history.

Prior to Spanish colonisation, there was no Filipino nation to speak of. It was possible, with the spreading Muslim influence in the region that the Philippines could have ended up as a Muslim country or a number of smaller countries for that matter (Steinberg 1987; Tate 1971). The Philippines as we know it today was a sprawling archipelago of more than 7,000 islands occupied by a diverse and dispersed set of societies. Of those islands that were inhabited, many were sparsely populated and only a very few had more than the usual small villages. Villages were in the form of a *barangay* usually composed of 30 to 100 families led by a *datu* or chieftain. The archipelagic topography hindered travel and precluded the emergence of bigger socio-political formations (Tate 1971). Having different languages, customs and beliefs, the inhabitants of the archipelago did not see themselves as possessing one national identity and many regarded others as having a different identity and status as seen in the way Muslim pirates preyed on *Visayan* coastal villages for their thriving slave trade.

Although there was no national identity and political formation, there did exist emerging nations across the archipelago such as the *Ilocanos*, the *Pampangos*, the *Tagalogs*, the *Bicolanos*, the *Hiligaynons*, and the Muslims. There were extensive trade relations with what are known in modern times as China, Indo-China, North Borneo, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan and Thailand and commerce with Indian and Middle Eastern traders before Spanish rule (Steinberg 1987; Guerrero 1971; Tate 1971). The Sultanate of Sulu, established in 1450, was in existence long before the first Europeans came and Maguindao, formed into a Sultanate in 1619, was already taking shape as a confederacy when the Spaniards arrived (Steinberg 1987; Mahmoud 1974; Tate 1971). The Muslims were never conquered and subjugated by the Spaniards. Thus, they lived outside the Spanish 'Philippines' and developed a separate national identity, system of governance and practices in social welfare based on a mixture of

Islamic and indigenous principles. The Muslim societies in Mindanao were not a part of the Philippines until the Americans succeeded in conquering Sulu and Maguindanao in the early 1900s.

The way the natives' lives were linked with nature shaped a particular worldview that served as basis for collective life. Veneracion (1999) traces Philippine social work to the concept of *pagtutulungan* or 'mutual help' in the context of the varied and numerous independent villages in the pre-colonial period. The *barangay* served as the social context in which mutual help was provided on the principles of reciprocity and collectivity. The chief served as leader, mediator, and administrator of collectively-managed land. Ownership of the land itself during this period was largely not seen as a source of wealth. The philosophy of this collective life is embodied in the concept of *bayanihan*, a Filipino term equated with mutual aid and cooperative endeavour (Tagalog-English Dictionary 1986). It is generally used to describe collective efforts for the benefit of the collective or a member thereof. This can literally be seen in a rather unusual if not crude practice amongst certain indigenous and rural communities: the manual transfer of houses. The transfer of houses (often made of bamboo, nipa and other light materials) were and still are practised in some communities for various reasons including the dictates of the nomadic culture of some indigenous peoples. In the absence of heavy equipment and given the enormity of the task, collective effort of the community is invariably called upon to accomplish the task, with none of those helping expecting anything immediate or particular in return for their effort. Those who help know that they can depend on the others as well if they themselves would need their assistance. While there is the risk of romanticising pre-colonial Philippine societies and although it cannot really be said that contemporary rural or even indigenous communities have remained unchanged throughout the centuries, this modern-day artefact may very well be the closest representation of a way of life, based on the principle of reciprocity, on which social care for members of some collectives was provided in pre-colonial times.

Religion was a key element in the pre-colonial worldview. Celestial bodies such as the moon and the sun and terrestrial elements like the wind, rivers and trees were worshiped and an unseen world of spirits, deities, beings, monsters and ghouls were thought to interact with the living (Scott 1994). This deeply embedded belief in the supernatural may help explain how the Spaniards successfully conquered the Philippines with the cross as well as with the sword (Rafael 1988). The conquest would eventually mould the Filipino national identity and national patrimony and sow the seeds of organised social welfare in the Philippines as discussed below. The succeeding colonial dispensations would nurture a distinctly different way of life and worldview.

COLONIAL GENESIS

The Eurocentric perspective that permeated early Philippine historiography tainted views of Philippine social welfare. This is evident in how Almanzor (1966: 312) unquestioningly identified the spread of Christianity as 'the paramount motive' of Spanish colonisation. Even the more recent account of Franco (2000: 1011) noted how the 'Natives who became impoverished because of displacement, dislocation, and oppression by the *conquistadores*' auspiciously 'became beneficiaries of charity' with the 'the introduction of Christianity by the Spaniards'. Such accounts often fail to point out that three and a half centuries of Spanish colonial rule created the material foundation on which contemporary Philippine social inequalities exist and supplanted what in most accounts were collectivist orientations with a residual, individualist framework in the provision of social welfare.

Spanish Colonial Rule: The Cross and the Sword

Many accounts of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines – christened after King Philip II of Spain – purport motives ranging from propitious serendipity to nobility: the Spaniards were said to have chanced upon the Philippines while they were in search for the Spice Islands and they supposedly saw it as their sacred duty

to convert the pagan inhabitants to Christianity. Nevertheless, while Ferdinand Magellan's coming across the Philippine Islands in 1521 may have been accidental, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi's setting up of the first permanent Spanish settlement in Cebu in 1565 was not. And although Spanish occupation did turn the tide of what was a perceptible pattern of expansion of Muslim influence from the South, the activities and influence of the friars were not confined to the pulpit as outlined below. As argued below, Spanish colonisation of the islands came with the unmistakable object of expanding the Spanish Empire. There was a clear and unabashed imperialist design, with the Spaniards merely being concerned with getting caught transgressing the demarcation consecrated by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 that carved the world in half between themselves and the Portuguese (Lightfoot 1973).

Spanish Conquest and Colonisation

The conquest of the Philippines by the Spaniards followed the pattern set in the Americas: large estates were established and a system of tribute and labour services was imposed on the indigenous populations (Dixon 1991). When territories in Luzon and the Visayas were conquered, the Spaniards divided them into feudal districts called *encomiendas,* the administration of which (covering not only the land, but its people and resources) was given to those who distinguished themselves in the service of the Spanish crown through conquest, with the 'right' to transmit the rule over the fiefs to their heirs (Lightfoot 1973: 6; Mabini 1933: 301).

Apart from the loss of lives and destruction, colonial conquest brought economic and political displacement to the native population. Poverty amongst the indigenous populations was fostered by outright dispossession and the imposition of policies that advanced the Spanish colonial agenda. The colonial government's claim to the land in the name of the Spanish King and laws requiring the registration of lands would have been preposterous for many of the indigenous peoples whose worldviews made it inconceivable to own land. The natives who complied with the

requirement for land registration would not have fared much better against the Spanish conquistadores and the native elites that worked with them. Purposely denied knowledge of the royal language, they were at a grave disadvantage within the colonial society where Spanish was the official medium. Those who acquired land titles were those who found favor in the eyes of Spanish authorities and those who resisted colonial rule were entirely excluded (Constantino 1975; Scott 1993). There were areas that went unconquered or uncolonised, remaining beyond the political reach and jurisdiction of the Spanish colonial government, and no less than the U.S. Supreme Court[2] acknowledged that this precluded the registration of lands by inhabitants of those areas. On the other hand, Spanish and local individuals who found favour in the eyes of the colonial authorities were said to have been arbitrarily granted land 'as far as their eyes could see' or 'as far as they could ride around on a horse in a day'[3], without regard as to whether or not these were occupied or tilled by natives. Policies such as the tobacco monopoly made entire regions economically vulnerable and dependent. Under the tobacco monopoly instituted to economically prop up the Spanish colonial government, areas found to be ideal for the cultivation of tobacco were designated to be exclusively used for such purpose and the production of other crops was prohibited to the extent of excluding even the domestic requirements of the tillers. The produce was to be sold exclusively to the colonial government at rates fixed by the government itself. Having been confined to a single cash crop and forbidden from engaging in subsistence farming, the tobacco farmers became economically vulnerable to fluctuations in the price of tobacco and the weather (Lightfoot 1973). In addition, inhabitants who worked within the designated areas became dependent on the open market for their staples.

Failing to extract an adequate level of economic returns to sustain an expanded military conquest, the colony favoured a certain mode of colonisation. For

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[2] The U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged and used this as basis for its ruling in the case of Cariño versus Insular Government of Philippine Islands, 212 U.S. 449 (1909).

[3] This was how some native inhabitants perceived Spanish jurisprudence as reflected in the oral history of places like *Barrio Krus na Ligas* as narrated to the author by local elder Efren Francisco.

the most part, the colony proved to be unprofitable. It was not until the establishment of the Tobacco Monopoly in 1782 that the Spanish colonial government operated with a surplus (Lightfoot 1973). Before that, the Spanish colonial government faced perennial financial problems. Unlike the Spanish colonies in the Americas, the colony in the Philippine islands largely operated on a deficit facing the risk of bankruptcy without the annual subsidies from the viceroyalty of Mexico (Steinberg 1987, 1990). Even as the promise of gold and fortunes failed to materialise, the colonial government had to continually expend resources to quell intermittent uprisings that hounded it throughout its existence. The failure of the colony to bring in economic riches did not encourage many *peninsulares*, a term for Spaniards born in Spain, to settle in the islands and only a very limited number served in the colonial government. The colony was won and kept with a minimum force such that Spanish presence amounted to less than one thousand in Manila and a 'handful' of officials elsewhere around the mid-1700s, two centuries into the Spanish colonial rule (Lightfoot 1973: 74). In the absence of many conquistadores, colonisation of the Philippines was left mostly to the religious orders (Dixon 1991; Lightfoot 1973).

Critical historians see the cross as much as the sword as having a hand in the conquest of the Philippines (see for example Constantino (1975, 1978)). The religious orders played a special role in Spanish colonial expansion. With the very limited military force held by the Spanish colonial government, much of the pioneering work was done by friars who ventured into places where no Spanish soldiers went. The religious orders would be instrumental in the founding of thousands of towns by the end of the Spanish regime. It was perhaps for this reason that the Bishop of Cagayan vaunted that 'One religious was worth a hundred Spanish soldiers' in a letter to King Philip III of Spain in 1605 (Tate 1971: 344). Power was concentrated in the clergy as the people were grouped 'under the bells', the church often being the only 'hard' construction in Philippine communities around which sprang the municipal seat of government, the school, and the dwelling units of the more influential inhabitants

(Lightfoot 1973: 64). Until the twilight years of the Spanish colonial rule, it was the friars who exercised many of the executive functions of government at the local level. Apart from being the guardians of the faith and public morals, they had control over local governance, education and health, census and taxation, peace and order, anti-insurgency – virtually serving as the only colonial authority at the local level in many of the colonised communities (Schwarz & Schwarz 2002).

Control was achieved through ideological manipulation and the cooptation of the indigenous social structure. The need for social control necessitated the maintenance of ignorant and pliant subjects and the privileging of certain values. The value of subservience to those in power was dutifully fostered and enforced by the friars. With the friars' monopoly of the royal and divine power, to question the friars would have been tantamount to questioning the Spanish King and God himself. With this, the populace were conditioned to have someone, other than themselves, think and decide for them. Those who learned to read and think beyond what they were taught were tagged as heretics and filibusters and properly disciplined as such. The Spaniards worked with the chiefs and their families whose descendants would form the core of the *principalia* – the principal natives – in the colonial caste system. Assigned to collect taxes, recruit labour for the galleon trade and serve as royal administrators of lands, the *principalia* accumulated wealth by siphoning part of the taxes and deriving personal revenues from transactions related to their responsibilities under the colonial regime. As a consequence, the Spanish colonial rule gave rise to and nurtured a class which would form the local oligarchy in post-colonial Philippines.

The overall weakening of Spain's military strength in the seventeenth century, the overspreading of Spanish resources among its distant colonies, and the tumultuous atmosphere in Spain itself all worked together to limit its ability to expand its colonial capital in the archipelago (Steinberg 1990). Under these circumstances, there was but little interest to allocate the precious Mexican silver to

'welfare' concerns of the *indios* – as the native population was called, a derivation from their colonial experience in the Americas.

Welfare in the Spanish Colony

The colonial caste structure and the financial health of the colonial government precluded substantial government provisions in social welfare. The colonial caste system was marked by a stratified racial and class structure to such an extent that there was social legislation prescribing a dress code for '*indios*' and proscribing their privileges (Steinberg 1987: 166, 1990). With the Spanish colonial government continually struggling to keep itself afloat while maintaining its fragile hold over the territories, there was but little government resources to allocate for social welfare.

The gauntness of the colonial government and the omnipotence of the clergy created a model of social welfare marked by a strong religious (and chiefly, private) involvement. Hospitals, orphanages, asylums and other institutions were established during this period mainly under the auspices of the religious orders (Almanzor 1966; Mendoza 2002; Montes 2000). Religion was a key factor in the welfare activities even of lay persons. Charity, seen as a form of *indulgencia* – an act to atone for sin and purchase eternal salvation, was the primary impetus for private welfare during this period (Almanzor, 1966: 312; Franco 2000; Montes 2000). The model that emerged under the Spanish rule is exemplified by the *obras pias* or pious trade. The term refers to religious orders, such as the Brotherhood of Mercy and *Santa Misericordia* (holy pity), who combined sound investment and charity (Lightfoot 1973: 77; Schwarz & Schwarz 2002). Headed by members of leading families in Manila, the Brotherhood of Mercy used funds left in its trust in highly profitable investments, such as financing the galleon trade, to generate income for use in charity work. Such work included maintaining orphanages, assisting those suffering from extreme poverty and giving relief in times of calamity (Legarda 1999; Lightfoot 1973). Interestingly, the funds of the *obras pias* were used to establish the Banco Español-Filipino in 1851

and the Monte de Piedad, a savings bank and a pawnshop, in 1882 (Legarda 1999: 337-8) whose progenies still exist today. The current banking system therefore has for its ancestors the first merchant banks in the country that emerged out of the efforts of charitable organisations and the current welfare system has for its ancestors charitable activities funded by commercial investments.

The administration of education provisions in the Spanish colonial regime showed a minimalist, functional approach. While the Spanish government decreed the establishment of a free public primary education system, the religious orders given the mandate to implement the decree at the national and local level were wary of teaching the *indios* anything that would give rise to liberal ideas, including technical and scientific knowledge (Constantino 1978, Schwarz & Schwarz 2002). Thus, innocuous subjects were taught. Filipinos learned to read prayer books and stories on the lives of the saints piously translated by the friars in their dialects (Mabini 1933). The first university courses offered in the *Colegio de Santo Tomas* – founded in 1611 and known today as the University of Santo Tomas, the oldest university in Asia – would be chiefly confined to theology, philosophy and the arts for more than two centuries (Schwarz & Schwarz 2002). For the same reason, the friars did not favour the idea of teaching the *indios* foreign languages, including Spanish (Constantino 1978, Schwarz & Schwarz 2002). The offering of education in the local dialects accomplished two things: it kept regional lines in place, allowing the Spaniards to play one ethno-linguistic group against another, and it preserved the friars' vast powers at the local level (Constantino 1978). The unwillingness on the part of friars to teach Spanish stems from a clear conflict of interests. Being the only one who understood Spanish made the friar the sole interpreter of royal and divine law in most of the Philippine villages. At once, they were the voice of God and the King. The friars interpreted as well as enforced royal and divine law. Their privileged position gave them power to condemn defiant subjects either as traitors or heretics and to collect tributes in behalf of the King and *indulgencia* in behalf of God. This monopoly of discerning God's wisdom and understanding the Spanish King's

decrees gave friars immense powers which they would have had to share had there been others who understood the Spanish language. The need to maintain power on the part of the religious orders had a material basis. With their position, religious orders accumulated vast tracts of land either through inheritance from the pious or as payments for defaulted debts (Lightfoot 1973). The religious orders had become the largest landholders in the colony by the eighteenth century and three, namely the Dominicans, Augustinians and Recoletos, held between them 420,000 acres of agricultural land at the end of the Spanish occupation (Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904: 28; Schwarz & Schwarz 2002).

The opening up of the Philippines to international trade made advancements of education and in other areas of colonial life inevitable. The Philippines was so open to international trade (specifically to Chinese and British traders) by the latter part of the 1800s to the extent that it was dubbed 'an Anglo-Chinese colony flying the Spanish flag' (Steinberg 1990: 59). The opening up of the Philippines to the world and the increased efficiency in transportation made it possible for more Filipinos to pursue foreign higher studies. The friars were thus forced by circumstances to establish colleges of medicine and pharmacy and change the curriculum to lure Filipinos from studying abroad where they were more likely to acquire 'liberal' ideas (Mabini 1933: 306). While liberal ideas did come, the over three hundred years of Spanish rule left a lasting imprint on Philippine society.

The Spanish Welfare Legacies

The most important legacy of Spanish colonial rule to Philippine social welfare is the shaping of the Philippine nation itself and the forging of the Filipino identity. Without Spanish colonisation, the Philippines could not have been one country as it stands today. As argued earlier, before colonisation there was no such thing as a Filipino nation and no Philippine national state to speak of (Steinberg 1987; Tate 1971). Spanish conquest welded together an archipelago of thousands of islands into a single national territory. The numerous nations-in-the-making that saw each

other as distinct were given a common experience of being subjugated and exploited. Varied as their languages, histories, and cultures were, their facing a common enemy and sharing a common experience of struggling for independence gave them common goals and aspirations. Spanish colonial rule gave an assortment of emergent nations a common destiny, creating what Steinberg (1987: xiii) calls the 'singular and plural' national identity of the Filipino. At the heart of this identity is a deeply ingrained religious character, an amalgam of indigenous and Catholic religiosity that held perseverance in suffering as a 'virtue', fate as the will of God and misfortune and poverty as punishment for sin or a 'test of character' (Samson, Piquero & Banzon 1976: 33). This spirituality permeates Filipino consciousness and life. It is instructive to note that many of the insurrections that plagued the Spanish rule had religious undertones and the rite of the *pasyon*, a Filipino-Catholic practice of observance of the passion of Christ, itself provided the language for popular and revolutionary movements (Ileto 1979).

Spanish colonisation laid the foundations of contemporary Philippine society. As Constantino (1978: 32) argues, 'The basis for what developed into what is now accepted as a typically Filipino way of life and manner of viewing the world was laid during the early years of Spanish occupation'. The dispossession and displacement that came with Spanish conquest are manifested today in the concentration of power in a few that allow inequality to persist and be taken as a given part of life. The gaping inequality in power and wealth today mirrors the hierarchical social stratification enforced in the colonial order. Spanish colonial rule created and nurtured the *principalia*, the forebears of today's local oligarchy. The heirs of the rest of the *indios*, systematically dispossessed and subjugated under the Spanish regime, constitute the bulk of today's Filipino masses. The concentration of power in the Spanish colonial society as epitomised by *plaza* persists. Even today, many Philippine towns are still structured around the *plaza* with the church, the municipal hall, and other institutions of power built around it. Apart from the material aspects of contemporary life, of equal importance is the worldview bestowed through Spanish

colonisation. The colonial order held a view of citizenship which defined different entitlements for the colonial rulers and colonial subjects. In a society where distinctions in status between *Insulares* (individuals of Spanish descent born in the Iberian Peninsula) and *Peninsulares* (individuals of Spanish descent born outside the peninsula) were emphasised, the lowest rung of the colonial caste system was reserved for the *indios*. Spanish colonisation established a notion of society in which inequality is a given – an inalienable part of life – in a social order where differences in identity and status could neither be questioned nor challenged.

Spanish rule fostered a particular brand of social welfare, carrying ideological elements evident in contemporary Philippine social policy (as outlined in the previous chapter). The colonial order indirectly shaped social welfare practice in that initiatives inimical to the colonial order were forcefully subdued and only the actions that furthered the colonial agenda were legitimised. As shown above, the social welfare initiatives under the Spanish colonial dispensation were largely residual in character – that is, they were mainly private (as against public) initiatives oriented towards addressing certain needs of disadvantaged individuals and sectors (as against ensuring the well-being of citizens in general). Responsibility for social welfare was not seen as part of the mandate of the colonial government and its financial troubles did not allow the accumulation of surplus that could have been allocated to such initiatives. But the precarious financial position of the colonial government cannot fully account for this approach's legitimacy. Underpinning the predominantly residual approach to social welfare under the Spanish regime is the systemic exclusion of structural conceptions of social problems. The colonial order precluded structural conceptions of social problems because any suggestion remotely questioning the legitimacy of the order was treasonous. With structural sources ruled out, social problems could only be legitimately ascribed to the individual based on dominant ideology. From the ideological standpoint of a dominant colonial society bearing a strong religious influence, social problems arise from the moral and spiritual make-up of individuals. The religious perspective of those who dispensed

welfare, this very act being part of their struggle for personal salvation, would have also borne an individualist orientation. Thus, the colonial political context and the philosophical orientation of most of the practitioners under Spanish rule favoured welfare initiatives that had a strong individualist orientation which in turn legitimised residual approaches to welfare.

The three and a half centuries of Spanish colonial rule from 1521 to 1898 sowed the seeds of organised social welfare in the Philippines. They carried ideological elements reflective of Spanish colonial society. This framework was challenged, albeit briefly, within the Philippine revolutionary movement that put an end to Spanish colonial rule.

The Philippine Revolution: At the Crossroads

Buried in the flurry of the revolutionary struggle were tensions within the revolutionary front that were to determine the ideological underpinnings of the emerging republic. The ideological conflict was buried beneath the personality-based struggle between two contending forces. The victor went on to establish the revolutionary government and craft the country's first constitution.

Having seen the failures of reformist initiatives and realising the futility of campaigning for reforms under colonial rule, Andres Bonifacio organised the *Kataastaasang Kagalanggalangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Highest and Most Venerable Society of the Nation's Children) or *Katipunan* in 1892. Under his leadership, the movement which was to deliver the deathblow to Spanish colonial rule articulated egalitarian ideals embodied in its motto: 'liberty, equality and fraternity'[4] (Constantino 1975; Fernandez 1926; Karnow 1989: 75). The egalitarian philosophy embedded in these principles could have had far-reaching implications in the formation of the emerging republic. What such a prospect could have led to in

[4] The crafting of this motto was inspired by the French revolution, knowledge of which was derived from the European education of young Filipinos from prominent families.

terms of the power of the *principalia* may have been what prompted them to derail Bonifacio's leadership of the revolutionary movement, establishing in its place a revolutionary government dominated by them and led by Emilio Aguinaldo, one of their own (Constantino 1975; Steinberg 1990). In contrast with the egalitarian discourses that dominated Bonifacio's Katipunan, there was less talk of universal equality in Aguinaldo's government (Fernandez 1926).

American Colonial Rule: The School and The Krag[5]

As Filipinos were about to rid themselves of one colonial master, another came to take its place. Without the aid of the cross this time, this second colonial rule was gained through sheer brute force (Miller 1982; Pomeroy 1970). Spanish colonial conquest paled in comparison to the ferocity by which American colonial rule was won. Under the almost five decades of American colonial rule which saw the expansion of the colonial territory, a national state system was set up and what were then novel social welfare approaches were introduced. The American colonial government bestowed a distinctive set of legacies to Philippine social policy and social welfare.

American Conquest and Colonisation

While portrayed by its American proponents as an emancipatory project, American colonial conquest of the Philippines as argued below was nothing short of ruthless subjugation. Through unprecedented atrocities, it reconfigured the Philippine national patrimony and effectively established colonial rule over the Islands. Before granting the Philippines its independence, it had nurtured the local oligarchy's dominance over the political and economic life of the nation and securely tied the colony's destiny with its own.

[5] The Krag Jorgensen rifle was the standard military rifle of US forces from the late 1890s to the early 1900s.

The colonisation of the Philippines was depicted as a mission of beneficence. American colonial rule of the Philippines was framed as a 'benevolent'[6] gesture to bestow the blessings of democratic governance to the local populace. Exhortations on America's 'manifest destiny' (Fiske 1885: 578) and 'The White Man's Burden' (Kipling 1943: 321) made the annexation of the Islands a providential mandate. Apart from prominent military and political leaders, a large segment of the American press and protestant churches campaigned for and defended the annexation, with some members of the latter arguing that anti-imperialism was 'the invention of the devil' and that 'Jesus himself was the most imperial of the imperialists' (Miller 1982: 18). Thus, the subjugation of the archipelago became a moral and divine imperative. Ironically, the incident that triggered or, some would say, served as pretext for America's own foray into colonialism came from its very objections over colonial injustices. Public outrage over atrocities committed by Spanish colonial authorities in suppressing insurrections in its colony in Cuba was played up in the American press to make a showdown with Spain on humanitarian and moral grounds inevitable (McKinley 1898; Swift 1899). After winning the war against colonial Spain, the US itself became a colonial master.

The means employed to exact submission did not match the nobility of purpose articulated. When the 'niggers'[7] put up a strong resistance, the prescription articulated and implemented by the then American military commander of the Philippines General Arthur MacArthur was 10 years of 'bayonet treatment' (Pringle 1939: 170). General J. Franklin Bell who was in charge of the campaign in a province in Luzon explicitly authorised 'the starving of unarmed hostile belligerents as well as armed ones' (Pomeroy 1970: 95). A dramatic but not necessarily uncommon measure was used to punish the entire province of Samar for the transgression of one of its towns which mounted a resistance that was to be the United States' single biggest

[6] In a proclamation dated 21 December 1898 announcing his decision to retain control of the Philippines, US President William McKinley declared that the annexation was to be one of 'benevolent assimilation'.

defeat in the war. The townsfolk of Balangiga staged an assault on the American military company stationed in this coastal village which left fifty-nine US soldiers dead at the cost of two hundred and fifty Filipino lives. In subsequent retaliatory actions, US General Jacob Smith would later be quoted by his own men as having ordered: 'I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better it will please me.' (Karnow 1989: 191; Miller 1982: 220; Pomeroy 1970: 95). When asked to specify the age limit to respect, Smith reportedly said 'Everything over 10' and went on to issue a handwritten order to turn Samar into a 'howling wilderness' (Pomeroy 1970: 94-5). The 'water cure' and other forms of torture were employed (Miller 1982: 225-6; 250-1). To strangle mass support for the resistance which US military officials preferred to call 'brigandage' (Pomeroy 1970: 86), a policy of reconcentration was imposed with the establishment of zones to which everyone from outlying areas were required to move. Anyone found outside the zones were subject to arrest or execution and everything remaining beyond them – livestock, domestic animals, food stores, crops, houses, boats and all – were subject to confiscation or destruction. The relentless efforts to enforce US rule on the Islands included 'depopulation campaigns' resulting in the extermination of entire village and provincial populations, prompting a member of the US Congress to remark:

> You never hear of any disturbances in Northern Luzon, because there isn't anybody there to rebel… The good Lord knows the number of Filipinos that were put under ground. Our soldiers took no prisoners, they kept no records; they simply swept the country and wherever and whenever they could get hold of a Filipino they killed him… (Francisco 1987: 16)

It is difficult to determine the actual number of Filipino lives that were lost since the Americans kept no records and many died not from bullets but from the starvation and disease that came in the wake of the US military's scorched earth policy. But some figures can be culled from US sources themselves. Major Cornelius Gardener, the provincial governor of Tayabas who was concerned with the

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[7] Filipinos were commonly referred to as 'niggers' by American military officers, soldiers and journalists (Miller 1982: 218; Pomeroy 1970: 136).

incendiary effect of US actions in a neighboring province, complained about General Bell's 'all out war on the entire population of Batangas' which claimed 100,000 Filipino lives (Miller 1982: 232). Although the estimates vary, Geneneral Bell himself estimated that 'one-sixth of the inhabitants of Luzon' (or roughly 600,000 in Luzon alone) may have lost their lives as a direct and indirect result of the war (Francisco 1987; Pomeroy 1970: 96).

The Americans did succeed in subduing resistance and establishing a colonial government. Apart from rounding up the remnants of the resistance forces, the Americans accomplished what the Spaniards failed to do: conquering the Muslims and integrating them in the national patrimony. Elections were promptly introduced in pacified places, with the proviso that officials declare a pledge of allegiance to the US. The Americans are credited for founding the country's democratic system of governance and state system. The Philippine civil service established by the colonial government was quickly filled by Filipinos from the schooled elite (Karnow 1989).

The American conquest came with the cooperation of the elite, the descendants of the *datus* who became the core of the *principalia* under the Spanish colonial rule. From the ranks of the local oligarchy were the first advocates of cooperation with the Americans and acceptance of US sovereignty (Pomeroy 1970; Steinberg 1990). There was a meeting of minds because American colonial policy suited the interests of the oligarchy and a working relationship with the elite was essential to American interests gaining a foothold in the territory (Steinberg 1990). Commercial interests in the mainland linked with the *caciques*, the emergent merchant class, in securing raw materials for US industries. As discussed in the preceding chapter, this relationship would persist beyond the grant of independence. By the time independence was granted, the political and economic interests of the elite had become intractably intertwined with the US economy. It was William H. Taft himself, the first American civil governor administrator of the colony, who

succinctly observed that the US policy for Philippine independence was 'merely awaiting for the local oligarchy's preparedness to rule Islands' (Steinberg, 1990: 64-7).

Much of the effort in the later part of American colonial rule was directed towards preparing for the colony's independence. The Treason Act of 1901 had made advocacy of Philippine independence a crime but political shifts in the US eventually led to a commitment to grant independence. As an intermediate step, a commonwealth government was established which was to give way to independent rule after ten years. This government was dominated by the *principalia* which benefited from the colony's free trade relations with the US mainland (Karnow 1989; Pomeroy 1970; Steinberg 1990).

Welfare in the American Colony

From the point of view of patriotic Americans, American colonial legacies to the Philippines include 'better transportation, mosquito control, the work ethic, the seed of Protestantism and that perfect symbol of American beneficence, the ubiquitous schoolhouse' (Miller 1982: 2). These initiatives, however, can only be fully understood in the context in which they were undertaken. Like most actions of the colonial administration, welfare activities were a function of colonial policy.

Many accounts of Philippine social welfare (see for example Franco 2000, Mendoza 2002 and Montes 2000) credit American colonial rule for advances in public education and health. The establishment of schools is regarded by many as 'America's single greatest achievement in the Philippines' (Karnow 1989: 200). It was reported in 1904 that 2,000 primary schools and 38 secondary schools were being operated in the Archipelago and that the colonial government had in its employ 1,000 American teachers primarily tasked to teach English to the 2,500 or so Filipino teachers and their pupils (Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904). While the Spaniards kept Filipinos in functional ignorance by offering fragmented and limited education, the Americans democratised education by instituting a national public education

program. American education significantly raised functional literacy in the Philippines. A similar level of advancement was made in the area of public health with the successes made in fighting epidemics such as bubonic plague, smallpox and cholera in the early 1900s (Franco 2000; Mendoza 2002). The period saw the integration of health programs, compulsory vaccination against contagious diseases and the creation of provincial health boards, among others. The advances in public education and health form the core of the progress in Philippine social welfare under the American colonial regime.

Significant as these advances may be, a clear understanding of the ferocity by which subjugation was won by the Americans would raise a question on the impetus for American initiatives in the colony, including so-called 'welfare' activities. An American editorial cartoon of that time depicted the choice for Filipinos as being between American soldiers or teachers (Keppler 1901), where the former was given when the latter was rejected. Seen from the barrel of a gun, the teachers would have been the obvious and benign choice but both achieved the same purpose. Initiatives presented as public welfare provisions had colonial functions. For example, while the US did purchase friar lands in the early 1900s to sell and distribute as small landholdings, it really did not do so to pursue land reform for humanitarian and egalitarian aims. The main intent for the redistribution of the friar landholdings was to relieve the colonial government of the burden of responding to 'agrarian disturbances' and to hasten the development of commercial agriculture – a key agenda in the American colonial project (Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904: 28; Dixon 1991; McKinley 1898). The first law passed by the United State's Philippine Commission was the appropriation from local taxes for the construction of roads 'conducive to the public welfare' but the allocation was actually requested for strategic military purposes by General MacArthur who candidly explained that the main purpose was to make roads passable for rapid military deployment and whatever benefits came to the communities would be purely 'incidental' (Pomeroy 1970: 141). Similarly, while the creation of the public school system and the

establishment of schools were touted by the civil colonial government as a means for 'elevating the Filipinos, materially, socially, and morally' (Pomeroy 1970: 141-2), General MacArthur was more forthright in explaining that their recommendation for the appropriation was made 'primarily and exclusively as an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people' (Pomeroy 1970: 142). The Americans actively advanced education seeing it as a way of winning over the people's trust and remolding the Filipino mind (Constantino 1982). Education, it was thought, was useful in creating an affinity amongst the natives towards the US, instructing the Filipinos on 'the duties of citizenship' and making them 'less liable to be led by political leaders into insurrectionary schemes' (Karnow 1989: 200-1). The impetus for the establishment of public health programs, the other major area wherein the Americans are often given credited, were similar. The U.S. military, for example, was as keen on the war against cholera as the civilian department of health because quarantine measures were useful as a subtle means of 'hamleting' Filipinos – forcing people from the fields into towns for the purpose of cutting off support for Philippine revolutionary forces (Ileto 1995). Evident in these cases is the functional value ascribed to so-called social welfare provisions for the furtherance of the agenda of the established order.

The advances in welfare policy and practice under American colonial rule can not be taken at face value. While they indeed raised the quality of life of some Filipinos to some extent, they also served the purposes of the American colonial agenda. This dual character of the American colonial government's welfare initiatives is among its legacies to Philippine social welfare.

The American Welfare Legacies

As reflected in contemporary mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare, American colonial rule brought a number of advances to Philippine society and social welfare that should be acknowledged. At the same time, there is a need to critically analyse the supposed advances in terms of the ideologies that underpinned

them. Some of the ideologies that prevailed in this era continue to be reflected in contemporary Philippine social welfare.

The American colonial period saw advances towards the formation of contemporary Philippine society. For one, the US completed today's Philippine national patrimony with the conquest and integration of the Muslims in the South which hitherto had been effectively outside Spanish Philippines. In trying to remake the Philippines in its own image, the US undertook initiatives in the political, educational, economic and cultural fronts (Karnow 1989). The rule introduced the concept of democracy which is regarded by many as the hallmark of contemporary Philippine politics. This was a big leap from the previous regime that upheld the sovereignty of royalties, the indisputable supremacy of a foreign race and the overarching authority of an aristocracy of friars.

The American colonial government also introduced great strides in Philippine social welfare. What once was the almost exclusive province of private religious and charitable institutions and individuals became a public matter with the introduction of nationally-administered public health and education programs. Again, this was a revolutionary advancement in the sense that it was virtually unthinkable less than half a decade earlier for the government to be actively involved in social welfare provision. It brought Philippine governance closer to an institutional conception of social welfare. These advances however would have to be appraised in the light of the circumstances in which they were made.

In surveying the legacies of American colonial rule to contemporary Philippine social welfare, we would need to consider the costs of these advances. The rule was won at the cost of hundreds of thousands of Filipino lives, including the obliteration of entire generations and communities in some cases. One can only imagine the psychological, social and economic impact on the lives of those left behind, including those who were orphaned after the killings of 'Everything over 10'.

We find that some of the actions by which the Marcos dictatorship would be vilified seven decades later (more on this in the next chapter), such as the use of the 'water cure' and other forms of torture, were not really far removed from the nation's experience under American martial law. The brutal conquest and forcible integration of the Muslim states that had a history stretching way beyond the Philippine's colonial beginnings would become the basis for the Muslim secessionist movement that has been hounding the Philippines for more than three decades now. American colonial rule brought with it physical, social, economic and political dislocations that form part of the contemporary social canvass.

American rule contributed to the growth of inequality in Philippine society. Finding it an expedient mechanism to obtain legitimacy, the American colonial government purposely worked with the oligarchy. When the US committed itself to preserving property rights upon its assumption of control over the colony from Spain[8], it effectively committed itself to the extension of the Spanish colonial order. Today's land ownership regime can be directly traced to the land ownership pattern under Spanish colonial rule which, as discussed earlier, was set forth with the outright and arbitrary claim of territory by the *conquistadores*. American colonial policies built on the hacienda system of the Spaniards, helping consolidate landholdings and enhancing the role of big landowners (Dixon 1991). The widespread poverty that is often characterised today as if it was a relatively recent phenomenon was already well-entrenched by the time the US was preparing the Philippines for self-governance[9]. The US colonial government instituted a form of democratic governance that favoured the oligarchy[10]. In nursing the Philippine oligarchy, American colonial rule effectively disenfranchised the majority of the

[8] The protection of friar lands was expressly stated in the peace treaty between the United States and Spain.

[9] With a quarter of the population of sixteen million dispossessed, poverty was so widespread in the 1930s that an American researcher called the *barrios* a 'rural slum' (Karnow 1989: 272).

[10] As a matter of policy, the right to suffrage was limited to persons of means: those who served in positions, those who owned real property and paid taxes of a certain value, and those who spoke, read and wrote English or Spanish (Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904; Karnow 1989).

populace, setting the stage for a particular kind of democracy that subsists on patronage politics. The local elite did not have exclusive benefit from the American rule. American economic interests benefited greatly from the link established between the two countries. As outlined in the previous chapter, this unequal neo-colonial bond between the two countries plays a significant role in the contemporary Philippine political economy.

Notwithstanding the apparently more institutional (as against residual) approach, American initiatives did not really constitute an advance towards an inclusive, rights-based argument for social welfare. In the first place, it was a racially-segregated, exclusionary regime[11]. Because of this, the American colonial state actually had a very limited role in the Philippine economy in the first half of its tenure (Pomeroy 1970; Tabbada 1985). Low taxes and low expenditures limited state intervention in public life, including welfare. Moreover, colonial policy also depended on the party in power in the US (Tabbada 1985). This climate set the tone for the policy environment in which welfare activities were undertaken. American colonial rule instituted a limited set of publicly-funded and delivered social welfare initiatives in health and education, among others, based on an exclusionary definition of citizenship. The welfare activities were a function of colonial policy. As with the Spanish regime, the American colonial order systematically ruled out propositions suggesting a structural conception of social problems[12]. The racist, ethnocentric view informing American colonial administrators located social problems in the backwardness of the uncivilised or unschooled native. Social problems were seen as having come from a regressive educational and value system and the lack of exposure to modern thinking and practices. Thus, the American pioneers saw as their mission the education of the 'niggers' (Miller 1982: 218;

[11] Anti-imperialist positions in the mainland, where one would expect humanistic sympathy, were informed by arguments feeding on the fear of 'Asiatic' races contaminating white America and most Americans in the colonial territory, holding the same views, carefully maintained social distance from the natives, engaging in raucous racist muckraking in their exclusive functions (Karnow 1989: 213; Miller 1982; Pomeroy 1970: 107).

[12] That is until the US decided to let go of the Philippines.

Pomeroy 1970: 136) to their ways of life and thinking. While the approach was institutional, the locus of change was to be the individual.

The American colonial rule bequeathed a distinct set of philosophical legacies for Philippine social welfare. A key legacy is the public (as against private) sponsorship of social welfare activities which, as pointed out, was a sharp departure from the *modus vivendi* under which welfare activities were undertaken in the previous colonial dispensation. American colonial rule brought in a functionalist framework of welfare, where initiatives were undertaken in line with the interests of the prevailing order. An individualist perspective also came with the restrictive colonial environment that precluded structural attributions to social problems.

IDEOLOGICAL IGNORANCE, IDEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

The Spanish and American colonial rules laid the foundations of contemporary Philippine society, planted the seeds of organised social welfare in the Philippines and bequeathed a set of traditions and philosophies that form part of the ideological heritage of contemporary Philippine social welfare. The colonial rules brought forth the highly unequal Philippine society of today and engendered inequality as a way of life. Under the colonial orders, inequality was an inalienable, unquestionable part of life. There were the rulers and the ruled, the Spaniards and the *indios*, the Americans and the niggers. This dichotomy became imbedded in Philippine culture rendering normal the distinctions between the *principalia* and the commonfolk, the persons of means and non-citizens, the learned and the unschooled, the elite and the masses and other social divisions in Philippine society that persist to this day.

The colonial eras also brought forth the first organised social welfare initiatives in the country, many of which are still very much part of contemporary Philippine society. The colonial rules established welfare institutions like hospitals, orphanages, schools and public governance systems that serve as the forebears of the

current welfare system. Many of these colonial infusions remain. Institutions like the San Lazaro Hospital, the University of Santo Tomas, and the *Hospicio de San Jose*, founded by the Spaniards in 1578, 1611 and 1778 respectively, and the University of the Philippines and the Philippine General Hospital, established by the Americans in 1908, still exist today and are at the forefront of their respective fields. The review of the historical roots of organised social welfare in the Philippines presented above also shows what constitute as the legacies of the colonial dispensations to the post-colonial Philippine society. Some key dimensions are outlined in Table 5.1 below based on the frameworks of Chambers (1993), Gilbert, Specht and Terrel (1993), and Romanyshyn (1971). Among those worthy of note are the ideological shifts that transpired from pre-colonial times through to the grant of independence. While mutual help was the primary form of welfare activity within the pre-colonial societies, the colonial rules of Spain and the United States introduced the first organised social welfare initiatives in the country. As shown in the table, welfare activities shifted from a universal coverage of members of the collective in pre-colonial times, to selective under Spanish rule, then back to a paradoxical form of universal entitlement covering colonial subjects under an exclusionist American colonial rule. The delivery system and financing method moved from the collective in pre-colonial times to the private sector in the Hispanic period and finally to the public sector in the American colonial regime. Finally, the impetus and motivation for social welfare activities moved from being of functional concern to the collective and practitioners in pre-colonial times and Spanish period respectively, to that of the state in the American period. While many of these appear to be progressive shifts as far as current social welfare theory is concerned, the colonial dispensations brought with them certain changes that negate the net effect of these apparent advances.

The social welfare initiatives under the colonial regimes carried with them ideological underpinnings that mirror some of the dominant contemporary discourses on social welfare pointed out in the previous chapter. For this reason, they need to be critically examined.

	Pre-colonial Prehistory-1565	Spanish 1565-1898	American 1898-1946
Benefits/ Provisions	Mutual Help	Hospitals Orphanages Schools	Education Health
Coverage/Bases of Allocation	Universal (Members)	Selective/Special (Means-Test)	Universal (Subjects)
Delivery System/ Structure	Chief Collective	Private (Religious)	Public (State)
Financing Method	Collective	Private (Donations)	Public (Colonial Taxes)
Conception of Welfare	Institutional	Residual	Mixed
Locus of Problems	Supernatural/ Metaphysical	Individual-Spiritual	Individual-Moral
Goals/Impetus	Collective Welfare	Functional-Personal	Functional-State

Ideological Shifts in Philippine Social Welfare
Table 5.1

While creating poverty and inequality, Spanish rule introduced an individualist and residual framework in what were predominantly private initiatives. Under Spanish rule, social welfare initiatives were undertaken in an exclusionary socio-political environment by practitioners heavily informed by a religious perspective that emphasised the moral-spiritual (and therefore individual) dimensions of social problems. Problems were seen as stemming from personal frailties or shortcomings and their upliftment were to be the work of God through the hands of the faithful. The (colonial) government itself was removed from this work of the pious. There was a promising albeit brief interlude of an egalitarian ideology in the revolutionary movement that overthrew Spanish rule but this was quickly subdued by the local elite and overtaken by American colonisation. American colonial rule brought an institutional (that is, public), individualist and functionalist paradigm even as it wrought destruction, consolidated the elite's hold on the emerging Philippine state system and established a neo-colonial relationship with the colony. The adoption of a limited institutional approach to welfare under the American colonial government failed to challenge residual orientation prevalent

under Spanish rule. The concept of welfare as citizen right was never fostered in spite of the adoption of a universal (albeit racially-qualified) basis of entitlement under the Americans. The tenure of the American colonial government introduced a concept of welfare as a function of colonial policy based on an individualist perspective that was focused on social-moral backwardness of what were deemed to be uncivilised savages. Therefore, from having functional value to the collective, social welfare acquired a functional value to the state. In this context, welfare is no longer seen for its existential value but is instead subject to statist functional rationalisation. In this sense, social welfare served as a function of the colonial agenda (Constantino 1978). Key to the analysis is the recognition of the political-economic conditions in which the social welfare initiatives were undertaken. As suggested by dependency and world systems theories (So 1990), many of the social problems plaguing the majority of the Philippine population during these periods would have come as a result of the relationship of dependency and the progressive integration of the country into the world capitalist system but the colonial orders would have systematically forestalled structural conceptions of social problems, confining the analysis and interventions to the individual. This is where the two regimes found a common ground. The colonial dispensations thus moved the locus of problems from outside the individual in pre-colonial times – in the realm of the supernatural and the metaphysical – to within the individual in the spiritual and moral dimensions. Through this, social problems became embodied, leading to the corresponding focus of interventions that leaves the burden of reform on the individual. Altogether, these may be collectively regarded as the ideological legacies of the colonial eras.

The fact that these ideological legacies largely go unmentioned in mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare raises some unsettling questions over the ideologies that inform contemporary social work practice. This review highlights the ideological legacies of the colonial eras which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, are featured prominently in contemporary Philippine social policy. The

ignorance of these ideological legacies in mainstream accounts suggests that these ideological elements traverse professional discourse largely unnoticed. If such ideological underpinnings accompanying the seeds of contemporary Philippine social welfare traverse the mainstream professional literature without being regarded as worthy of note, then it is possible that similar ideologies permeating contemporary social policy and social welfare practice are left unquestioned. What goes unnoticed, goes unchallenged. In the absence of a critical understanding of these ideological underpinnings, the values that inform them – individual responsibility, minimal government, functional use of welfare – can become the values that inform social welfare practice. Permeating social policy and social welfare practice, such values can become part of the mandates of the profession.

What this suggests for this specific research is that practitioners may be informed by values and systems of ideas that are left unexamined. As part of a larger professional tradition, social work practice in Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices could very well be permeated by ideological underpinnings like those engendered under colonial conditions without them being actively challenged. Such practitioners, schooled by the very same books cited at the beginning of the chapter, would conceivably find it difficult to identify questionable ideologies in their own practice settings when these ideologies are taken as a given in professional texts and discourse. The kind of practice that arises from this is one that would leave unquestioned policies and practices that emphasise individual responsibility, proscribe government involvement in welfare to the bare minimum and necessitate the justification of welfare initiatives based on their functional value in maintaining the social order. In view of this, this is one of the more important themes explored in this research, with pertinent discussions featured in Chapter 7.

This chapter argues against the romanticised mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare history by uncovering the colonial agenda and ideologies that guided the initiatives under the colonial eras. Its reveals what appear to be a

glaring oversight in mainstream accounts of social welfare history at a scale that suggests the preponderance of the ideologies in contemporary social welfare practice. It is argued that the silence in mainstream accounts on the frameworks that were implanted under the colonial rules can be taken as an indication that such ideologies may traverse contemporary social welfare policy and practice largely without mention and, as a consequence, without critique. At the very least, the failure of mainstream accounts to point out the values and beliefs embedded in colonial welfare provisions represents an uncritical stance towards social welfare initiatives or the acceptance of such initiatives at face value. There is certainly the possibility that if such values and belief systems appear in contemporary social policy and practice, they could also go unremarked. Such systems of ideas can very well permeate contemporary social policy and social welfare practice and become part of the professional mandates of practitioners without being questioned.

The last two chapters have painted a critical view of the political-economic practice environment of Philippine social work practitioners as well as the ideological traditions informing contemporary Philippine social work practice. The two are vital to understand social work practice in Philippine municipalities. The former outlines the imperatives of the higher and larger order – the Philippine state system and Philippine society in general – which inform and form part of the institutional (and therefore organisational) mandates of Philippine municipalities. The latter raises questions over the ideological and philosophical foundations of the larger profession (that is, social work in general as opposed to social work in local governments) by pointing out glaring oversights in mainstream accounts of Philippine social welfare history. It points out the need to critically interrogate what practitioners regard as their professional mandates (as done in the study and featured in Chapter 8 herein). How these two are embodied in the mainstream social work profession will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

INTERROGATING MAINSTREAM PHILIPPINE SOCIAL WORK

Kung ano ang puno, siya rin ang bunga. (Whatever the tree, so will the fruit be.) – Filipino proverb

SOCIAL WORK, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MARTIAL LAW

The relevance of the question on the ways social workers manage competing organisational and professional mandates is highlighted by a particular reading of the Philippine political economy and the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare (as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively). This chapter integrates the analyses in the two preceding chapters in terms of how the Philippine political economy and the ideological traditions that inform Philippine social welfare work together to shape mainstream social work practice in the Philippines. In the way that the two previous chapters explored the broader context for social work practice beyond the immediate work setting in Philippine local governments, this chapter looks at the broader professional community to which social workers serving as social welfare and development officers in Philippine local government units belong. The aim is to outline the broader implications of the research question and illustrate the broader dynamics that this research seeks to explore at the local government level.

The chapter illustrates how mainstream Philippine social workers constructed their practice in response to the expediencies in a particularly trying period in recent Philippine history. It does so by discussing a key historical event in Philippine history, namely martial law, and the mainstream professional community's response to the challenges that it posed as reflected in the professional journal. In a sense, this is an interrogation of mainstream Philippine social work's record under martial law.

The chapter begins with a short note on methodology: defining key terms, arguing the rationale for the approach taken and providing some background on the literature that serves as the body of data for this chapter. It will then introduce mainstream social work through the lens of the professional journal outlining the key themes dominating professional discourses in the early years of the profession's evolution. An account of the challenges posed by Marcos' dictatorial rule and the critical response of certain sectors will then be given followed by an outline of how mainstream Philippine social work, as represented by the articles in the journal within that period, responded to the challenges of martial law. Finally, the ideological underpinnings of the actions taken will be analysed and their implications for the current research will be outlined.

The range of traditions and influences that inform social work coupled with the different experiences of professionals across countries, given differences in culture and socio-political environments, results in a diverse set of constructions of the profession (Ife 1997a). But, as Mendoza (2002: 86) points out, professions do have a 'professional culture' generated by the interaction of the 'network of formal and informal groups' comprising the professional community, which include employers, the educational institution and the professional association, where shared values, norms and symbols exist. This implies the existence of a dominant construction of social work held in common by a significant proportion of social work employers, educators and professionals. The term 'professional social worker' is used in contemporary Philippine national culture and jurisprudence to refer to those who

passed the board examinations and secured a licence to practise social work from the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). The term 'mainstream social work' is used here to refer to the dominant construction and practice of social work embedded in the institutions that collectively represent the Philippine social work community.

This chapter presents a critical view of the response of mainstream Philippine social work to the challenges posed by martial law as mainly represented by the professional journal *Social Work*, a publication of the Philippine Association of Social Workers (PASW). Some data were obtained through interviews with key informants (social workers who in one way or another were involved with the professional community during that time), but the contents of the journal were considered as the most important body of data given their relative reliability (as opposed to the recollection by interviews of events more than two decades earlier) and volume. Unfortunately, no substantive account of the activities of dissenting social workers under martial law has been compiled. This would have enriched the discussion and analysis here. The choice of martial law under Marcos as a point of reference in this analysis is not arbitrary. It is consistent with the sampling principle employed in this study which specifies that the primary criterion in the selection of units of analysis is to maximise what can be learnt (Stake 1995). This period in Philippine history was chosen because it represents a key historical period that, as argued below, presented a potentially challenging practice environment for social work practice. The choice of the journal of the PASW comes with the recognition that the professional association, apart from being the biggest collectivity representing the local professional community, forms the larger body of which the participants in this study is a subset. The PASW, founded in 1947, was the first and – for almost half a century – the only national organisation representing Philippine social workers. The articles used in this study were selected from all available copies of the professional association's *Social Work* journal in three libraries in Metro Manila: those of the University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development, the Philippine

Association of Social Workers, Incorporated (PASWI) and the Frank X. Lynch Library which is housed in the Philippine Social Science Council. The articles were chosen on the basis of their potential to offer insights into how mainstream social work was positioned under martial law. Since the professional journal contained a diverse range of materials from conference proceedings to news bits to research-based papers to anecdotal accounts to advice columns to tip sheets and a host of other forms of content, a quantitative approach to analysing the contents of the journal in line with the aim of this chapter was found to be inappropriate. Instead, all available journal issues were scoured for articles with references to the Marcos administration, martial law, human rights, social welfare and other keywords from which themes were drawn. The process, in effect, focused attention to the dominant voices in mainstream Philippine social work in terms of what they said and what they left unsaid in response to the human rights situation under martial law.

Some objections might be raised against the approach taken in this chapter, among these being: (1) the relevance of such an historical analysis in contemporary practice, (2) the adequacy of an analysis of text-based actions to the exclusion of dissenting voices embodied in other forms of social action such as participation in mass protests and armed resistance, and (3) the representativeness of the professional association and of the profession professional journal of mainstream social work. These objections are briefly dealt with hereunder.

Considering that this is an analysis of the voices represented in the professional journal (the regular publication of which came only between 1956 and 1984) in relation to martial law under Marcos (which was between the early seventies and the mid-eighties), some might raise the question of the relevance of such an exercise to contemporary social work practice. In the first place, martial law had long been lifted. It will be argued here that the dynamics between particular political economic contexts and professional responses raise important issues that transcend chronological boundaries. It is also worth noting that an author and two-term

president of the professional association went on to serve at the helm of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the mid-1990s and a number of the authors directly taught many of today's Philippine social work practitioners and educators. The second and third potential objections relate to representativeness.

The second potential objection relates to the adequacy of an analysis of text-based action to the exclusion of other forms. It could be argued that non-text action would have been one significant form of expression of dissent under the repressive regime and to exclude them would be to systematically exclude dissenting voices. The critical perspective of this study presupposes and acknowledges the existence of subjugated as well as alternative voices that may have been hidden under larger social/political movements but their representation is not central to the task at hand. The object here is not to account for the entire range of responses of mainstream Philippine social work to martial law (which would then require an adequate representation of the profession) but to illustrate the relevance and expound the meaning of the research question by showing some of the ways by which mainstream Philippine social work, as represented by the Association (being the public organisation of the profession and the face of social work) and the professional journal (being the communication tool of that public organisation), responded to the challenges it faced. The ways by which mainstream Philippine social workers responded to the demands and challenges under martial law may provide insights into how contemporary social workers in Philippine municipalities respond to the demands and challenges within their organisations.

As for the third objection, the first question that might come to mind is 'To what extent did the professional association represent Philippine social work practitioners during martial law?' For this, some background on the association's membership is needed. The Philippine Association of Social Workers, Incorporated – the progeny of the PASW – has no record of the actual association membership during the time of Marcos and so exact figures cannot be quoted. These figures

would have been useful in establishing the extent to which the association membership represented the total number of social workers in the country. In the absence of exact figures, the PASW's membership during the martial law period will have to be inferred. It was noted by De Leon (1980) that the association's biennial conference in 1980 mustered as many as 500 participants. This number constituted almost 20% of the 2,982 social workers listed in the registry of the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission by the end of 1979. The latter figure represented all those who had been granted a professional license since it was made a statutory requirement about 15 years earlier, not all social workers who were in active practice. Taking this into consideration and considering how travel and related costs would have precluded the participation of some members from various parts of the archipelago, the actual number of association members would have been much higher. It can therefore be surmised that while the PASW did not represent all social work practitioners in the Philippines under martial law, it did represent a substantial portion of the practising professionals. A related question is the representativeness of voice. As mentioned earlier, the analysis in this chapter does not rest on a claim that the voices represented in the journal encompass the entire range of views held by Philippine social workers at that point in time. While the journal itself claimed to be 'the voice of Philippine social work' (The voice of Philippine social work 1963: 1111)[1], it conceivably could not have spoken for everyone. In the first place, articles were subject to the editorial imprimatur of the PASW's board of directors (Veneracion 2004, *pers. comm.*, January 29).[2] The PASW's membership was concentrated in the Greater Manila Area and many were employees of the Department of Social Welfare and Development who became members at the instance of their superiors who were also officers of the PASW (Del Castillo 2004, *pers. comm.*, January 30; Fondevilla &

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[1] Harvard style format is used in the referencing of articles in the journal which in this case calls for the specification of the title of the article in the absence of a named author. However, the acronym 'PASW' is appended to the journal title in the bibliography in order to distinguish references to this 'Social Work' journal of the Philippine Association of Social Workers from those of the 'Social Work' journal of the National Association of Social Workers in the United States.

[2] Veneracion (2004, *pers. comm.*, January 29), an editor of the professional journal in the early seventies, recounts how she was taken to task by the PASW's editorial board for her choice of articles and her use of a red-coloured cover in one journal issue.

Mendoza 1973: 23; Montes 2004, *pers. comm.*, 12 February). Moreover, the more radically-inclined professionals at that time stayed away from the Department and, by association, the PASW, in view of its strong link with the establishment (Alcid 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 19; Soliman 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 16). This would have resulted in the privileging of certain voices. What the journal articles represent are the voices and discourses that prevailed. The focus on dominant voices and discourses in mainstream Philippine social work is in line with the analysis in this chapter of some of the ways by which practitioners managed institutional mandates under martial law that appeared to compete with some of social work's fundamental values.

MAINSTREAM PHILIPPINE SOCIAL WORK UNDER MARCOS

An analysis of the response of mainstream Philippine social work to martial law requires a discussion of what constituted the mainstream Philippine social work of that era. The professional journal provides a telling snapshot of the profession at the point in time. The evolution of the profession and the professional culture that prevailed may be inferred from the discourses that dominated the professional journal during that period.

The government played a significant role in the introduction and development of social work in the country (Almanzor 1966; What the government is doing for social workers 1958). The professional association was founded by a group of pioneering Filipino social workers who studied in the United States starting in the 1920s under government-administered scholarships. The legal recognition accorded to social work with the passing of Republic Act 4373 in 1965 after years of lobbying by practitioners cemented the profession's link with government. The connection, however, went beyond this.

The Association leadership was closely tied to government. Many of the Association's officers in the early years were also high-ranking government officials

(Fondevilla & Mendoza 1973). This had a pragmatic value for the professional community. For a long time, the professional association was not financially self-sustaining and largely depended on government for funds, office space, administrative and other logistical support (Del Castillo, *pers. comm.*, 30 January 2004). Thus, in the choice of officers, it made good sense for Association members to elect those who had the political clout and connections to muster resources needed for the association's continued operation (Del Castillo, *pers. comm.*, 30 January 2004). The overlap between the association leadership and the national social welfare administration afforded this.

There was a close link between the professional association and the Marcos administration. Estefania Aldaba Lim, an erstwhile social secretary of Imelda Marcos, became the head of DSWD from 1971 to 1977. Although she was not a social worker, her personal ties with Mrs. Marcos served as a strong albeit informal connection between the establishment and the professional association dominated by DSWD staff. Rosita L. Fondevilla, a board member of the professional association in 1970-1971, went on to serve as assistant secretary for social welfare in the late seventies. Sylvia P. Montes, president of the Association from 1975-1976, concurrently served as undersecretary for social welfare and went on to serve as social welfare secretary from 1981 to 1986 until the very last days of the Marcos government.

One thing that struck outsiders was the distinct status and identity of the local social work practitioners. According to Amsterdam (1962) and Lutes (1971: 5), the class orientation of the local professional community – bearing elements of 'upper-class' values – set it apart from the clients that they served. The membership of the professional association at that time was predominantly conservative (Alcid 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 19; Veneracion 2004, *pers. comm.*, January 19). Social workers occupied a higher status in relation to the mass majority.

The early years were marked by constant soul-searching. In the first 10 years of publication of the journal, there were constant discussions regarding the need to reexamine and define the role of social work (De Guzman 1966). Concern over the failure of welfare initiatives to solve basic social problems created doubts over the relevance of popular approaches and interventions (Search for professional… 1971). There were misgivings over Philippine social work's 'Western orientation' with what was deemed to be an uncritical and wholesale assimilation of theories and methods from the West (De Guzman 1966; Fonseca 1956; Philippine National Committee 1960: 367; Tablante 1975). De Guzman (1966). Fonseca (1956) expressed doubts over the relevance of such models pointing to the stark contrast between the contexts in which they were developed and that in which they were being employed. Among the criticisms levelled against Philippine social work was the individual-oriented assessment and action and the use of 'psychiatric approaches' brought back by those who studied in the United States (Almanzor 1966: 313, 1974). Clients were seen as 'disadjusted' which Villamor (1957: 76), the then administrator of the Social Welfare Administration, described as those '**without foresight and initiative** to devote themselves to new endeavours' who became '**handicaps** to national development' (emphasis added). For Apit (1974: 15) and Lutes (1971: 3-8), this represented an 'adjustmental' approach where clients were made to 'adapt' or 'adjust' themselves to the social system. There was an ongoing concern to establish the relevance and legitimacy of the profession.

In line with these critiques, various directions for social work were charted. There were those who felt the need for Philippine social work to evolve its own techniques and methods applicable to the local culture and settings (Almanzor 1966; De Guzman 1966; Philippine National Committee 1960: 367). Fonseca (1956: 4) suggested a different conception of social work, one which had a community focus as against the 'individual focus' of 'Western social work'. Paraiso (1962: 945) argued that social work's focus on 'casework' may have limited its involvement in social and economic development programs. There were proposals for Philippine social work to

pursue a developmental thrust (Almanzor 1974; Lasan 1973b). Others advocated a more active role in social action and social policy (Florendo 1970; Generoso 1970; Lansang 1968; Lutes 1971; Montes, MEP 1977; Search for professional… 1971: 1; Social worker and politics 1957; Sucgang 1965). An alternative endorsed by some educators was the teaching of a 'generalist' practice model (Almanzor 1966: 313; Mendoza 1973).

Perhaps reflecting the worldview of many of the practitioners at that time, a key theme in professional discourses was self-help and its variants (such as independence, initiative, self-reliance, mutual help) as suggested by the works of Bonifacio (1977), the Council of Welfare Agencies (1956), Gariña (1956), Lasan (1977: 63) and Lim (1973, 1976a). Self-help was defined by the Council of Welfare Agencies (1956: 9) as 'the capacity of people... to make use of their own resources to achieve an objective' through mutual aid, cooperative action, and utilisation of outside assistance. Gariña (1956: 2) defined the concept as 'the ability of the person to discover his (sic) problems and to work out a solution for himself'. the process involved 'releasing latent energies and resources of the people', 'changing attitudes', 'encouraging initiative and civic consciousness', 'creating opportunities for participation', and 'creation of feeling that their life improves, and that greater success is possible' (Council of Welfare Agencies 1956: 8). Discourses on participation and self-determination (Balmaceda 1960; Chadwick 1957; Council of Welfare Agencies 1976; Cura 1981; De Leon 1981; Escaño 1975; Gariña 1956; Gatus 1956; Generoso 1970, 1974b; Lim 1976a, 1977; Pablo 1957) ran parallel to these. But the principles were often appreciated in terms of their functional value in relation to national government priorities such as family planning (Fondevilla 1978), human settlements (De Leon 1980; Marcos 1980), irrigation projects (Ehera & Pinat 1981) and national development (Montes, MEP 1977). Self-help was valued because improvement 'without any corresponding effort or sacrifice on the part of the community can do harm, especially if it destroys the will… the power and ability of people to help themselves' (Conference Executive Committee 1957: 36). Balmaceda

(1960: 334) warned that dole-outs may result in 'weakening the people's character and spirit of self-reliance'. The adoption of self-help as a principle and the fostering of self-sufficiency was viewed as a 'progressive… move to replace… dole-out' or 'outright assistance' (Cruz 1957; Villamor 1957: 77). Self-help was identified as an important principle in 'modern social work' that, in the context of work with the 'physically disabled', the aging and the 'domiciliary service', required practitioners to teach people how to 'rehabilitate or reorganise themselves' (Council of Welfare Agencies 1956: 8). For some, self-help and self-reliance held the promise of 'lasting and permanent' development (Balmaceda 1960: 334; Lasan 1977).

A key impetus for collective action in the early years, as reflected in the professional journal, was professionalisation. The social work community had been troubled with the nagging concern over the perception of social workers as a 'voluntary worker', 'fund-raiser', 'giver of charity', 'disaster relief worker', 'lady almoners' (Almanzor 1966: 321; Almanzor 1974: 7; Cardenas 1973: 18-9; Philippine National Committee 1960: 355, 364; Villamor 1957: 76). There were concerns over the low regard accorded by the public to the profession (Paraiso 1957: 38; Quintos 1968). The creation of a better public understanding of the profession and the push for professionalisation thus became vital tasks (De Leon 1980: 8; Facts about… 1964; Fondevilla & Mendoza 1973: 15-7; Isip 1957; Philippine National Committee 1960: 357; The function of the… 1964). The grant of legal recognition with the passing of Republic Act 4373 marked a coming of age for the profession. It was, in the words of Lansang (1968: 109), a time when 'Philippine consciousness of the social strategic role' of social work had 'matured to its prime'. But the drive towards professionalisation did have its detractors. Lutes (1971) and Lasan (1973a) suggested that the obsession with attaining the status of a legally-recognised profession led to the neglect of the profession's commitment to social reform and social action. It was pointed out by some that the main beneficiaries of the professionalisation of social work were the practitioners themselves (Almanzor 1974; Generoso 1974a).

As illustrated in the foregoing, the evolution of mainstream Philippine social work was marked by active support from and sponsorship by government. The social status and identity of social work practitioners was distinctly different from those that they served. The active drive towards the legal recognition of the social work profession suggests that social work practitioners recognised that they had a common identity and a common set of interests. It also reflects an awareness that it was in their common interest to work together. How these interests and values interface with the larger order is the subject of this analysis of mainstream social work's record under martial law.

MARTIAL LAW AND THE ASSAULT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Marcos instituted martial law in September 21, 1972 ostensibly to arrest lawlessness and violence. The vast majority from all classes welcomed martial law's promise of order after the unease brought about by the growth of radical political activism in the student and labour movements (Caoili 1986; Lande 1986). It has been suggested, however, that martial law was Marcos' coup that was meant to curb the power of his political rivals and consolidate his own (Brillantes 1986 1987; Shalom 1986). Marcos consolidated power by abolishing Congress and holding the judiciary hostage, compelling its members to submit undated letters of resignation (Shalom 1986). In their place, he exercised legislative and judicial powers by issuing presidential decrees and extending the jurisdiction of military tribunals.

To project legitimacy, Marcos attributed egalitarian and social justice ideals to what he dubbed as the New Society (Dubsky 1974; Marcos 1973, 1983; McCoy 1999; Philippine Army Civil Relations and Information Services 1976). Martial law was constructed as an instrument for reform and revolutionary change. Marcos surrounded himself with technocrats who espoused a scientific-technical culture and value orientation characterised by a rational, objective/apolitical approach to solving problems (Arcega 1976; Carbonell et al. 1977; Ocampo 1971; Simpas & Mariano 1978). In line with the dominant economic development framework of that period, much of

what was done under martial law was carried out in the name of development. These included the construction of an extensive fish port facility, hydroelectric dams, a nuclear power plant and the exploitation of forest and mineral resources. The exigencies of the projects resulted in the forceful eviction and dislocation of hundreds of thousands of people (Taw-il 1981; Youngblood 1990).

Resistance was met with repression. Marcos drastically curtailed civil liberties, proscribing the freedoms of speech and assembly and suspending the right to strike (McCoy 1999; Shalom 1986). All existing media franchises were cancelled and rumor mongering was prohibited, violations of which were subject to trial before a military tribunal and made punishable by imprisonment (Salonga 2001). There was a ban on political parties and participation in most organisations was prohibited (Parong 1999). Under the repressive laws instituted by Marcos, organising an assembly or engaging in 'propaganda assaults' against the government which 'tend to destabilize ... or undermine or destroy the faith and loyalty of the citizenry' attracted the penalty of death (Youngblood 1990: 144). Possession of documents referring to Marx and communism placed people in danger of being a target of a military crack down (Guerrero 2004, *pers. comm.*, 27 February). There was a preponderant fear of criticising the military and the Marcos government (Lande 1986).

The Marcos dictatorship was 'exceptional' for the quantity and quality of its violence (McCoy 1999: 129). Considering the nature of these crimes and the repressive environment under which they were committed, the figures can only tell part of the story. Kessler's (1989) tabulation indicated 21,561 cases of arrests, 737 cases of disappearances, and 2,427 cases of extrajudicial killings between 1975 and 1985. The figures are way below the 70,000 persons arrested and detained and 3,257 'salvagings' noted by others (McCoy 1999; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986: 19). Marcos himself had told Amnesty International in 1975 that 50,000 people altogether had been arrested and detained up to that time, with virtually all the 6,000 that remained in detention as of May 1975 being held without formal charge or trial

(Shalom 1986). Over and above these were the numerous cases of torture which was widespread and systematic (Amnesty International 1988; Lawyers Committee on Human Rights 1985; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986).[3] Under martial law, about 35,000 were reportedly tortured (McCoy 1999). Torture was systematically employed in interrogations of alleged members of armed opposition groups, their suspected sympathisers as well as ordinary criminal suspects including women and children, many of whom were from marginalised communities who had no means of appeal to influential friends or established institutions (Amnesty International 2003; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986).

Martial law under Marcos presented a clear and present challenge for social work. The physical and economic dislocation of hundreds of thousands, the repression, the deprivation of political and civil liberties of tens of thousands, and the untold torture and loss of lives suffered by countless others all represented a threat to human life and dignity. Martial law embodied a systematic and brazen assault on human rights which is seen by many as being among the fundamental principles of the profession (Amnesty International 2003; Hare 2004; Ife 2001; International Federation of Social Workers 1996; Mendoza 2002). Unlike more embedded structural oppressions, the atrocities that were blatantly and systematically committed under martial law required no nuanced sensibility to perceive. The Marcos regime embodied a system of governance that should have been evidently irreconcilable with some of the core values of the profession in the way people's voices were silenced and human rights were violated under the dictatorial regime.

[3] Among the more common torture methods employed were: (1) the 'water cure' where gallons of water continuously poured on the victims' face giving a continuous drowning sensation; (2) 'electrocution' where charged electrodes are attached to the prisoner's body, usually the breasts or genitals; (3) the 'wet submarine' where the victim's head is forcibly submerged in a pool of water, often a toilet bowl, to the point of suffocation; and (4) the 'dry submarine' where the victim's head is wrapped in a plastic bag to achieve the same effect as the 'wet submarine' (Bonner 1987: 166; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986: 46).

DISSENT AND RESISTANCE

In response to the challenges posed by martial law, some sectors took a critical stance. Segments of the student, peasant, labour and the religious sectors stood up against the dictatorial regime (Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986). At the forefront of the fight against human rights abuse were members of the religious sector. Although a majority of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy acquiesced to martial law (Parong 1999), the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) established the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) in 1974 which became a cornerstone in human rights advocacy during and long after the dictatorship. Although it was initially dominated by Catholics, many protestants, Muslims, and nonsectarian groups later joined TFDP in its work and in the fight against repression (Parong 1999; Salonga 2001).

Those who spoke up also were subjected to repressive measures. Many from the religious sector including priests, pastors, deacons and deaconesses, seminarians, lay leaders and bishops became victims of state harassment, arrests, detention, torture, disappearances and political killings under martial law (How can our songs this time be chanted 1989; Parong 1999; Youngblood 1990). This forced some members of the church, including priests and nuns, to go underground and join the armed struggle of the communist-led New People's Army (CNL National Congress 1992; Cariño 1986). Such was the repression that even prominent public figures such as former senators and the publisher of one of Manila's biggest dailies considered plans for an armed struggle (Salonga 2001).

As the years went on, the resistance grew stronger. The 1980s saw a resurgence of activism and protests. Students, farmers and labour from all over the country held ever growing marches that touched on such issues like the nuclear power plant, exploitative arrangements in agriculture, and the denial of the right to strike (Task Force Detainees of the Philippines 1986). The loosening of control of the press in the early 1980s gave way to an alternative press that actively explored the

limits of the democratic space, touching on issues of plunder and corruption and providing space for voices calling for the end of the dictatorship. Philippine Catholic bishops went on to issue a pastoral letter arguing that the fraud in the 1986 election denied Marcos the 'moral basis for holding on to power' (Carroll 1995: 174). This was the environment that ended the dictatorship.

Social workers were among those who mounted a resistance against the Marcos regime. A number of staff and students of the University of the Philippines and other universities were actively involved in protest actions and advocacy against the repressive regime (Guerrero 2004, *pers. comm.*, 27 February). Many social work graduates of that time stayed away from government and not a few professionals took up arms and joined the underground revolutionary movement (Alcid 2004, *pers. comm.*, 19 February; Soliman 2004, *pers. comm.*, 16 February). It was not their voices, however, that prevailed in mainstream professional discourses.

THE REPONSE OF MAINSTREAM SOCIAL WORK

While countless lives were in jeopardy and in the midst of a worldwide alarm over the human rights abuses, the journal of the Philippine Association of Social Workers bore no unequivocal challenge to martial law. As discussed below, the professional association's journal *Social Work* reflected no direct and active questioning of the human rights violations by the mainstream social work community until the twilight years of the dictatorship. Instead, discourses on the virtues of Marcos' New Society and social work's role under the new order abounded as outlined hereunder.

There were articles that acclaimed and affirmed the advances under martial law. An article by Lim (1973), who was then secretary of social welfare, expounded on the New Society's policies that according to her were meant to foster a better quality of life for Filipinos. An article by Cardenas (1973: 15) pointed to the prominence gained by public policy as one of the 'benefits of martial law'. In an

article about the philosophical base of the Philippine social welfare system, Lim (1976a: 20) elaborated on the 'reformist society under the leadership of a social revolutionary president'. Martial law was presented by S. Montes (1977: 59) as a 'democratic revolution'. An article by Corpuz (1977) extolled the New Society's agenda and exhorted support for it. Benitez (1980) lauded the national development strategy of Marcos.

There were articles that uncritically adopted the regime's language and rhetoric. S. Montes (1977: 59) suggested that 'The internalised change among people' was 'the true change, the lasting change that (they) looked forward (to) under the New Society.' Acknowledging that the Philippines was 'in the New Order' with 'new options under it', Fondevilla (1977: 79) declared that 'In our New Society, we seek no less than the creation of a new civic culture for the entire Filipino people'. The Marcoses themselves were given a voice through articles where President Marcos (1977) reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare of children and expounded on the actions taken by his government along those lines, and First Lady Imelda Marcos (1980: 6) talked about the 'ideology based on humanism' which served as the 'framework for social service' in the New Society. The Marcoses as well as ranking government officials were routinely invited to keynote the biennial conferences of the professional association at the height of martial law. The proceedings of the tenth biennial conference in 1975, keynoted by two of Marcos' undersecretaries, proudly featured a message from the President. Imelda Marcos herself keynoted the twelfth biennial meet in 1979. It could be said that the association was simply being politically expedient in its invitations. But whatever the intention was, the effect of such actions was to put the professional association together with the Marcos government in the eyes of the public.

A number of articles espoused Marcos' vision. Abello (1973: 8-9), who was then president of the Council of Welfare Agencies of the Philippines, talked about gearing social services towards the objectives of the New Society 'as envisioned by

President Ferdinand Marcos' without any hint of concern over concurrent events pertaining to human rights. In welcoming the participants to the professional association's ninth biennial conference in 1973, Lasan (1973b) warmly acknowledged the support extended by the Marcos administration and promised that the Association would work with the government as part of its drive to be in the mainstream of national development. Benitez (1980), Cordero (1980), and De Leon (1980) discussed the task of social work within the human settlements framework, in line with the minister for human settlement's (Imelda Marcos) priorities. More than ten years after the declaration of martial law, Montes (1983: 6) affably recounted how Marcos 'established the New Society' that promised peace and order, land reform, educational reform, decentralisation, government reorganisation, employment and social services.

Overlooking the repression and inequities, articles in the professional journal written by social workers who were government officials postulated social development and social justice underpinnings in the new order. Noting the preceding unrest from the ranks of the students and the masses, Cardenas (1973: 17) hailed the 'apprehension and detention of subversives' as one of the immediate benefits of martial law, equating it with 'rooting out of weeds'. The imposition of 'a new discipline' in the New Society was pictured as a 'cleansing process' serving as an 'essential groundwork for human and societal development' (Cardenas 1973: 17). Acknowledging that poverty was rooted in structures, Lim (1976b: 7) posited social welfare as an institutional function of the New Society through 'development from below'. S. Montes (1977: 59) pointed to the 'institutional and structural changes' introduced with the imposition of martial law that were aimed at the 'diffusion and democratisation of wealth'. The argument, it seems, was that the Marcos dictatorship was a vehicle for national development and democracy.

There were articles that argued the need for social change but contained no clear and consistent challenge of martial law. For example, S. Montes (1977: 85)

equated social development with change in social structures and advocated a more proactive, if not critical, posture marked by advocacy. Viloria (1976) pointed out the need to look at the sources of poverty from the individual up to the international level. Marcos himself was quoted by Lim (1976b: 6) as saying that poverty was 'the result of social arrangements'. And so general arguments for social change did not, in themselves, constitute an open challenge to the status quo. It was only around the mid-1980s, with a shift in the leadership away from public sector employees, that the Association took a more critical stance (Alcid 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 19).

Apart from looking at what was said in the journal, it is instructive to note what went unsaid. No article embodied an independent, unequivocal stand of the professional association against the threat to human life and dignity that the Marcos dictatorship represented. No article directly criticising the human rights abuses under martial law was published until 1984, in the twilight years of the dictatorship, with the publication of a position paper decrying the continued imposition of martial law. Even then, the article did not represent the independent stand of the mainstream social work community. The article bemoaning the failure of the Marcos regime to address the plight of indigenous peoples and the continued detention of political prisoners and calling for the repeal of repressive policies was a resolution of the Philippine Social Science Council (1984), of which the PASW was just one of 12 regular member associations. The closest articles ever got to challenging the excesses of the Marcos regime was Villalba's (1983: 18) observation, unaccompanied by a critique of the Marcos regime, of the growth of a protest culture and how the killing of a leading opposition figure in August 1983 ushered in mass protest actions and calls for change. The professional association did advocate for the release of certain prisoners of conscience or political prisoners but, from the account of Liwag (2000), this was mainly limited to social work professionals who were wrongfully detained. Even within this very limited scope, the merits of taking up the cause of detained professionals had to be argued before the association's leadership (Alcid 2004, *pers. comm.*, February 19).

An incident in one of the professional association's conferences in the mid-1970s provides a poignant insight into the culture and discipline that was being fostered during the martial law years. Apit (2004, *pers. comm.*, January 29) recounts that a group had organised a caucus to discuss 'social work and the most pressing issues facing Filipinos under martial law' two months before the tenth biennial convention of the PASW in 1975. About fifty people, mostly social work students, participated in the discussion. The participants came out with a statement that said something like: 'We, a group of social workers and social work students, believe that social work, being grounded in human values and dedicated to human development, should be interested and actively involved in issues faced by the Filipino people such as …the strike ban and other repressive actions on factory workers, the demolition of urban poor communities, the extreme exploitation of the sugar workers in Negros, the eviction of many peasants from the lands they till, the Chico River Dam and other development projects that are destroying the indigenous peoples' communities' (Apit 2004, *pers. comm.*, January 29). When their request for permission to read the statement in the conference was denied, a participant who may have seen the decision as an act of suppression proceeded to take a microphone and started reading the statement in the middle of the conference. At this point, the association president reportedly got hold of an umbrella and repeatedly hit the speaker with it and went on to call for police intervention.

The journal of the Philippine Association of Social Workers stands as an enduring record of mainstream Philippine social work's engagement with martial law. It stands as a testament to how the mainstream social work community, represented by the professional association, positioned itself under the Marcos dictatorship. Based on what can be gleaned from the articles that were published in the journal throughout the imposition of martial law which lasted more than a decade, it appears that the Marcos dictatorship largely stood unquestioned by mainstream Philippine social work. In the midst of an overt assault on the well-being

and human rights of hundreds of thousands, the journal was inundated with articles extolling Marcos' New Society, expounding on the gains under martial law and discussing the prospects of working within the new order. Silence on the human rights abuses alone would have been enough to put into question how mainstream social work positioned itself under martial law. However, not only did mainstream social work stay silent on the excesses, the professional journal became an active channel for propaganda by serving as a voice and echoing the rhetoric of the Marcos regime. The journal not only failed to serve as social critic, it became a discursive vehicle of the proponents of the established order as seen in the conservative response embodied in the professional journal. By omission and inclusion, the response of mainstream social work to the assault on human rights under martial law amounted to approbation and legitimation. Up to now, there is no record that the professional association has ever found the need to revisit and rethink its role under the Marcos dictatorship.

RECONCILING THE CONTRADICTION

Martial law under Marcos represented a direct challenge to Philippine social work in that the state system served as an instrument of repression and became a channel for the systemic assault of the human rights of countless citizens. The human rights abuses and the Marcos government as a whole warranted a critical response from a profession that supposedly espouses human life and dignity among its core values. The dictatorship attracted dissent and resistance from various sectors, including some elements of the Philippine social work community. But in analysing the contents of the journal within that period, we found a particularly disturbing pattern of inclusion and omission in the voices that were represented and the issues that went unspoken. There was hardly any critique of the excesses made under Marcos. Instead, the professional journal was dominated by articles that echoed and expounded the discourses advanced by the Marcos regime. As discussed in the foregoing, the professional journal provided ample space for voices that affirmed the Marcos government while offering no critique of the disregard for human rights that

it represented. Thus, mainstream social work contributed to the legitimation of martial law and, in the process, condoned the countless and unspeakable atrocities.

The response of mainstream Philippine social work to martial law suggests a contradiction that needs to be reconciled. Drawing from the texts and the context outlined above, a number of explanations can be inferred to account for the ways by which mainstream social work responded to martial law. Among these are: (1) there was concern for personal safety; (2) the practitioners had inadequate theoretical orientation; (3) the practitioners imbibed a value-free technocratic culture; (4) the association leadership wanted to protect the profession; (5) power was woven between the professional association and the Marcos administration; and (6) there was an ideological match between the dominant voices in the professional community and the established order. Each of these suggested explanations are briefly elaborated below.

1. Personal Safety

It is easy to imagine how the ravages of martial law could have silenced some members of the social work community. There was a real and present threat to the safety of those who spoke out against the regime. Those who published articles challenging martial law placed themselves in danger of being subjected to the kinds of treatment that they spoke against. Even in the absence of repressive laws, the daily reports of unexplained disappearances, arbitrary arrests, indefinite detention, torture and summary executions were constant reminders of the precarious state of affairs. Speaking out against the dictatorship was not an attractive option for those concerned with their self-preservation. Many of those who chose to speak up paid with their freedom and their lives. In a climate permeated by a preponderant fear of criticising the Marcos government, silence on the human rights violations was a compelling option.

2. Inadequate Theoretical Orientation

A second explanation that can be offered is the lack of identification of the professional community with the issue of human rights. De Leon (2003, *pers. comm.*, December 11) explained that Philippine social workers of that era had no exposure to issues on human rights and were thus not trained to consider it as part of their professional responsibilities. This explanation may have merit to some extent but it is instructive to note that, as early as 1960, the professional journal already featured an article that identified human rights as an integral concern of social work practice (see Human rights and social work 1960) and World War II had already brought the issue of human rights into the public arena. It cannot therefore be said that Philippine social workers at that time were completely ungrounded in human rights. A related objection is that social work was just a young profession then and as such was still in the process of developing its theoretical and philosophical base. A historical timeline will put things in perspective. While legal recognition came only in 1965, social work was introduced in the Philippines in the early 1920s (Fondevilla 2000; Mendoza 2002) and was therefore practised in the country for around 50 years when martial law was declared. Many of the articles, it has been noted, reflect an engagement with social justice discourse in the context of the dictatorship. This suggests that the authors were not only aware of these concerns but were actively framing them in consonance with the prevailing doctrine.

3. Value-Free Technocratic Culture

A third explanation that can be offered is that mainstream social work, dominated by government employees, assumed the value-free, technocratic culture engendered in the government bureaucracy under Marcos. Such a position made it possible for professionals to dissociate Marcos from human rights abuses. It was perhaps for this reason that Montes (2004, *pers. comm.*, February 12), who was president of the professional association before she

served as Marcos' social welfare secretary from 1981 to 1986, strongly believed that most if not all of those who were apprehended and jailed under martial law truly deserved the fate that befell them. As far as she was concerned, it was unthinkable that Marcos and the military officers she worked with would have resorted to unlawful measures and would have acted without any justifiable cause.

4. Protection of the Profession

A fourth explanation is that the professional community was itself concerned with maintaining its own legitimacy under the new order. The early years of Marcos were a landmark for social work. It was under Marcos that the legal recognition of social work was instituted and the portfolio of social welfare and development was elevated to the status of a full-fledged department. It was difficult to dissociate the rise of Marcos and the ascension of the profession's status. As Montes (2000: 619; Montes 2004, *pers. comm.*. February 12) puts it, social work 'flourished' under Marcos. The level of prestige accorded to the profession was assured so long as Marcos was in power. And with the centralisation of power and the imposition of repressive laws, a close link with the Marcos administration served as a form of protection and allowed access to resources needed in the ongoing operation of the professional association. Remaining in the good graces of the powers that be and perhaps even helping maintain the prevailing order secured the future of the profession.

5. Weaving of Power

A fifth explanation is that the professional community was woven into the establishment. It was not only that the professional community was concerned with its status as suggested by the previous explanation but rather that the professional community enjoyed a certain privileged status under Marcos. The leadership of the professional association was interlaced with the

Marcos regime in that, as noted earlier, many of the association's officers at that time were also high-ranking officers of the administration (Fondevilla & Mendoza 1973). In a sense, the professional community was invested in the Marcos regime.

6. Ideological Match

The sixth explanation being offered is that there was an ideological congruence between the Marcos rule and the prevailing professional culture. In this case, the professional community was not only protecting itself or its privileges but actually found an affinity between the values that prevailed at that period and the principles that the Marcos regime represented. According to Montes (2004, *pers. comm.*, February 12) martial law was, in the eyes of some social workers, a welcome relief from the violence and disorder that prevailed before its imposition. There was, in effect, a meeting of minds between the doctrine of the establishment and the worldview of some practitioners.

None of these explanations, on their own, are adequate. The explanations may have varied on a case-to-case basis and two or more may have worked in conjunction with one another. They need not be mutually exclusive. There is, however, a need to further analyse the dynamics that brought about some of the more notable responses of mainstream social work to martial law. The first three explanations appear to be sufficient in accounting for the omissions in the journal. But while fear for personal safety, lack of theoretical orientation, and a seemingly value-free technocratic culture can explain the silence on human rights abuses, they cannot rationalise the active legitimation embodied in some of the articles. It is therefore necessary to go beyond them as suggested in the three other proposed explanations. The latter three explanations, however, hint at factors and dynamics beyond the immediate confines of the historical context in review. The way martial law has been juxtapositioned with the dominant discourses in the professional journal reflects the initial assumption that the former elicited certain responses from mainstream social work.

Viewed in this light, the conservative responses of mainstream social work may be seen as having been precipitated by what could be considered as specific and unique circumstances attendant to martial law. But some of the explanations point to the professional community as a collectivity concerned with its own existence and whose dominant values and interests may have been congruent, if not integrated, with dominant values and system of ideas of the established order. In other words, aside from the constraints imposed by martial law, there were dynamics within mainstream social work as a collectivity that generated some of the responses that were seen.

MAINSTREAM SOCIAL WORK AS A CLASS

One way of understanding how mainstream Philippine social work positioned itself under martial law is to analyse it from a structural perspective by recognising social workers as a class in themselves. As noted earlier in this chapter, Almanzor (1974) and Generoso (1974a) have pointed out that practitioners themselves were among the main beneficiaries of the advancement of social work in the Philippines. This theme will be examined in this section.

As a class, social workers have a distinct set of interests and values. Martial law presented special challenges for the class in terms of the safety of its members and its vitality within the new order. The class' chances of retaining the status that it had gained and sustaining the expansion of its territory (in other words, preserving its interests and values) depended on the ability of its members to take into account political and pragmatic considerations in their actions and decisions. The discourses that were advanced in the professional journal can be viewed as part of the efforts of the dominant members of the occupational group to maintain the profession's legitimacy within the prevailing order.

Social workers form a class in that they constitute a group sharing a common economic and social status. Vicary's (1986, 1997) analysis of the class identity of

teachers provides us with a useful framework in understanding the class identity of social workers as applied herein. Sociologically, social workers can be considered as a section of the working class. They form part of the working class in that they do not own the means of production and they derive their economic livelihood from the sale of their labour.[4] However, there are divisions within the working class in terms of occupational identity and in the levels of occupational prestige arising out of differentiations in working conditions and rates of pay. Social workers generally distinguish themselves from those in the lower levels of occupational hierarchy by their possession of a relatively higher educational qualification. The qualifier 'relatively' is essential because Philippine social workers do not occupy the highest levels of the occupational hierarchy. Mendoza (2002: 88-9) ranks social work above electronic and clerical occupations but below medicine and law in the hierarchy of professions. The history of Philippine social work has been strongly influenced by what Jones (2000: 156) calls the 'aspirant' model of the profession – with the goal of achieving the characteristics of the established professions. Such a model is characterised by a concern with the pursuit of higher professional status through activities such as training and education, towards qualifications, licensing and regulation. As an occupational group, social workers constitute a sub-class with a differentiated identity and status determined through intra-class/inter-occupational struggles for disciplinal prestige. The obsessive drive towards professionalisation in the evolution of Philippine social work noted earlier can be seen as part of this struggle. Moreover, it can also be regarded as a manifestation of class consciousness – that is, the recognition of a common identity and cause amongst the members of the occupational group.

As members of a class, social workers bear a common set of values and interests. Some of these are embedded in professional principles articulated in text and in practice. But there are other values and interests that may remain hidden and

[4] Private practice has never been a feature of social work in the Philippines.

unarticulated but are no less potent. It could be argued that a more primordial set of interests and values built around self-preservation inform the actions of individual members and the collective. This is not to question the authenticity of claims over noble purposes as much as to subsume such claims under what may be considered as higher-order imperatives of professional practice. After all, preserving one's life and legitimacy, in one form or another, is a basic prerequisite for practice. In other words, if one were to practice social work as a profession, one must be in a position to claim and occupy a space within the political-economic order wherein practice is to occur. Professionals must therefore be engaged in the production or appropriation of space for themselves. While mainstream Philippine social work's struggle towards professionalisation may represent an effort on the part of practitioners to set service standards in the interest of the populations that they serve, it also embodies such a claim of space. One way that claim-making is done is with the advancement of definitions of social work. Defining social work is in itself a political act that constitutes part of 'a claim for territory' (Vicary 1998: 312). By advancing requirements for professional training and licensing in their campaign for legal recognition, mainstream Philippine practitioners were, in effect, laying the stakes to mark the boundaries of what Vicary (1997: xi) calls their 'estate-like' domain. The professional association then becomes a political instrument in achieving greater space and advancing the interests of the class in class or, more precisely, intra-class conflicts. With the exclusion of the unqualified, the practitioners were able to appropriate for themselves an exclusive space for practice. The achievement of monopoly over such space, in itself, protects the interests of the members of the class. Yet another way for the class to advance its interests is to engage in an ongoing campaign to expand their territory. The expansion of their territory contributes to the elevation of their status akin to the way the expansion of their feudal estates elevated the status of feudal lords. Their elevated status, in turn, provides the title holders with political power that can be used in the further expansion of their territory and so on. In this sense, the claim of social workers of being and acting in the interests of social welfare is, first and foremost, a claim of being.

The need to protect the values and interests that they hold as a class pushes mainstream social work to gravitate towards dominant ideology. The privilege and protection of interests that comes from the exclusive, monopolistic control of mainstream Philippine social work practitioners over their political space is guaranteed and enforced by the state. Mainstream social workers therefore operate with state sanction (through state legal recognition and licensing) and control (through the prominent role of government in the development of the profession and state influence over the occupational group). To a certain extent, their continued enjoyment of their privilege is predicated on a collaborative partnership with the state and, by association, with the dominant class. As an occupational group, social workers are thus exposed to and affected by dominant ideology. This makes mainstream social workers susceptible to dominant values and assumptions. The claim of mainstream social work to professional status based on models of established professions leads to the integration of political conservatism as an important element in practice. With this influence, mainstream practitioners end up echoing and imposing dominant ideology. Mainstream practitioners do so because and to the extent that they are able to draw sufficient rewards from it. The propagation of dominant ideology then becomes integrated in their functions as legitimated agents properly licensed under the established order.

This takes us back to the analyses and discourses advanced in the journal regarding the problems that ailed Philippine social work, particularly the criticism about its 'adjustmental' orientation and the emphasis given on self-help. Many of the criticisms were mounted on the contextual relevance of the theories in view of the stark contrast between the state of economic development of American society, from which many of the theories emanated, and Philippine society, in which the theories were being applied. The critiques that hinged on the 'Western' roots of Philippine social work were valid only up to a certain extent in the sense that the use of the so-called Western theories could not have been sustained without a corresponding

validation in the local practice context of the practices that flowed from them. It will be noted that at that while 'adjustmental' approaches to social work abounded, the possession of documents referring to Marx or remotely referring to socialist or communist ideology would have been sufficient ground to put one behind bars indefinitely. In other words, the practice in mainstream social work had to be congruent with the dominant ideology. It could therefore be said that the critique of the 'western' origins of mainstream social work practice was inaccurate. The problem was not as much about contextual as it was about ideological relevance – the main point of reference for mainstream social work being the ideology of the dominant class which, under martial law, was systematically imposed through the state system. Another way of putting it is to say that is was not as much about 'Western theories' as it was about class ideology. As argued below, preoccupation with professionalisation and the values and interests that it represents diverted mainstream social work from a concern with the social, economic and political elements that shape social problems to a concern with developing linkages and relationships that reinforced its position in the established order.

MARTIAL LAW AND MAINSTREAM SOCIAL WORK

Embedded in the outline given earlier on the human rights abuses under martial law and the responses of mainstream social work to it are two implied assumptions that have since been put into question in subsequent discussions, namely: that martial law (generally) represented a challenge for social work practice and that the responses from mainstream Philippine social work could largely be attributed to the conditions imposed by martial law. Firstly, we found that there were significant differences in how practitioners perceived martial law. Secondly, we found that while martial law did impose a repressive environment that elicited or enforced conservative responses from some social work practitioners, the forces that generated the kinds of responses seen in the articles of the professional journal did not all emanate from the Marcos government. These findings provide a more

elaborate explanation for the response of mainstream Philippine social work to martial law.

Martial law represented different things to social work. For some practitioners, it represented the subordination of human rights and social welfare to the political and economic interests of a faction of the oligarchy in the way the life and liberty of the general population were subjected to arbitrary abuse of power from the highest to the lowest levels of Marcos' military government. However, for others – and this is where earlier assumptions about what martial law meant for social work fell short, the Marcos dictatorship represented a welcome development, a respite from the disturbance and disorder that preceded it. To them, martial law heralded the restoration of order under a new, more stable society. This extends our understanding of the motivations and assumptions that informed the actions of some practitioners.

The second initial assumption was that martial law, in itself, shaped the response of mainstream social work. We found that it did to a certain extent. Held hostage by martial law, some members of the professional community found that accommodation was one strategy that afforded them access to safe-conduct. As practitioners who derived legal sanction from the established order, some social workers found wisdom in maintaining a positive relationship with those in power. And at a time when membership in an organisation or participation in organised action was enough basis to put a person in prison, those who spoke out against the regime were easily eliminated. The purging of belligerent elements sieved the mainstream profession (by excluding the more critical members or having them exclude themselves) which, if it was at all necessary, paved the way for the entry and dominance of moderate or conservative voices. The centralisation of control over financial and other resources also became compelling mechanisms to enforce discipline and loyalty in a professional community which was largely dependent on government in many ways for its existence. Thus, many of those who retained their

legitimacy and freedom or gained an advantaged position were those who, within the logic of the dictatorship, held the right ideology and chose their allegiances correctly. It could therefore be argued that the Marcos government was actively involved in the shaping of the response of mainstream social work in this respect. We find, however, that the initial assumption was inadequate in the sense that agency was largely attributed or confined to the Marcos regime. The recognition of mainstream social work as a class suggests that it was more than just an involuntary actor forced to respond to the demands posed by martial law.

Mainstream social work was actively involved in the shaping of its responses to martial law in line with its values and interests as a class. The new order represented not only restrictions but also opportunities. With one hand, it had the power to take away the status and privileges enjoyed by the class. This would have been a compelling force to silence a good portion of a professional community seeking to maintain its political space within the new order. But with the other hand, martial law also had the power to bestow privileges that provided an opportunity for the occupational group to broaden its claim of territory and elevate its status. Under martial law, access to financial and other resources was then, more than ever, contingent on one's political affiliations. In a sense, the New Society represented a new political frontier. The leading figures in mainstream social work under Marcos, particularly those who laboured over social work's role and place within the new order, could therefore be seen as pioneers acting in the name of the occupational group. If the professional community was to maintain if not expand its position within Philippine society, there was a need for mainstream social work to align itself with the dominant power. The advancement of the profession's status and space required the occupational group to find favour in the eyes of the powers that be. The collective interests of mainstream social work as an occupational group served as an impetus for the active seeking out of resources and opportunities offered by the regime. The concentration of power and resources under Marcos presented an opportunity for mainstream social work to advance its class position through the

cultivation of political capital in the form of strong links between itself and the government. As an occupational group that saw its phenomenal rise when Marcos came into power, the imperatives for the class may have even included the preservation of the status quo. And so, while the need for survival may have evoked silence or accommodation, the advancement of class interests inspired some members of the profession to proactively court the dominant order by expounding its rhetoric and contributing to its legitimation. Therefore, there were elements and dynamics within mainstream social work itself that generated the kinds of responses seen in the professional journal. That there were factors within mainstream social work which oriented it towards conservative responses brings the analysis beyond the historical specificities of martial law and thus relates it to the current research.

These last three chapters represent the theoretical and ideological backdrop of the practice setting of the participants in this research. The two preceding chapters outlined the extent to which Philippine social policy and social welfare are rooted in inequality. This chapter looked at how mainstream social work accommodated and advanced martial law under Marcos not only in response to the demands imposed by the established order but also in furtherance of the interests of the occupational group as a class. We found that the actions of social workers are regulated by the realities within the system as well as informed by their values and interests as professionals and as members of society. How this applies to social work practice in Philippine local governments is the focus of this study. The last three chapters altogether examine at the macro (national) scale the key elements – political economy, ideology, class identity – that need to be part of the structural analysis to understand the specific practice context of the research participants in this study of the ways by which social workers manage competing organisational and disciplinal mandates. The methodology of this study is outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT IN PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITIES

Madali ang maging tao, mahirap magpakatao. (It is easy to be human but difficult to act the way human beings should.) – Filipino proverb

The primary data in this study from the survey, interviews and focus group discussion are presented in this and the following chapter. In studying the ways by which social workers in Philippine Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) Offices manage competing professional and organisational mandates, there was a need to include in the analysis of the research question: (1) the policy environment for social work practice in Philippine municipalities; (2) the organisational environment of such practice contexts; (3) the constructions and practices of social work by practitioners; (4) the challenges that they face, and (5) the strategies they employ in response to such challenges. This chapter outlines the practice milieu of MSWD Officers and will focus on the first two aims while the next will cover the remainder.

The analysis of the data is integrated with the discussion which will draw on the theoretical propositions and discussions presented in earlier chapters. This and the next chapter are organised in themes consistent with the aims drawn from the research question. The presentation of data in these chapters varies in form and degree of detail. Some of the data were processed to the farthest extent possible as to

ensure brevity while others were kept in raw form to ensure authenticity and allow readers to directly validate interpretations where possible. Thus, depending on their relevance to the research aims, some sections only contain an abbreviated data and discussion (like the background information on the participants) instead of an exhaustive, item-by-item enumeration while, on the other hand, other sections contain very detailed data in the form of direct, verbatim quotes. A short background on the participants precedes the discussion on the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers.

BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS

Some background information on the research participants is given here to establish their competence in providing pertinent data for this study. With ethical considerations restricting the amount of background information that could be gathered and specified about the 10 interview and 11 focus group participants, the main background data featured in this section are those of the survey participants. The survey participants were (1) licensed social workers (2) actively serving as head of MSWD Offices. The first section of the questionnaire asked the potential participants to check if they were qualified to participate in the survey based on those two criteria. A total of 37 valid returns were received. Table 7.1 summarises the background data they provided. The average age of the participants was 45. The gender distribution of the participants, 92% of whom were female, appears to reflect the gender distribution of the general population of MSWD Officers. Twenty-five or 68% of the survey participants held a bachelor's degree, while 10 or 27% held postgraduate degrees. Twenty nine or about 80% of the survey participants had been serving as head of MSWD Offices for 6 or more years, including 13 or 35% who had served between 11 to 15 years, the highest being 24 years. About 33 or almost 90% of the survey participants have been social work professionals for 16 years or more, with as many as 26 or 70% reporting having professional social work experience of at least 21 years, the highest being 33 years.

Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Age	40 and below	3	8.1
	41-50	28	75.7
	51-60	5	13.5
	61 and above	1	2.7
Gender	Male	3	8.1
	Female	34	91.9
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	25	67.6
	Master's Degree	7	18.9
	PhD	3	8.1
	Partial postgraduate studies	2	5.4
Number of Years as Head of MSWDO	5 and below	8	21.6
	6-10	6	16.2
	11-15	13	35.1
	16-20	6	16.2
	21-25	4	10.8
Number of Years as a Professional Social Worker	5 and below	1	2.7
	6-10	3	8.1
	11-15	0	0.0
	16-20	7	18.9
	21-25	19	51.4
	26-30	5	13.5
	31-35	1	2.7
	No Answer	1	2.7
Class of Municipality	First	6	16.2
	Second	4	10.8
	Third	4	10.8
	Fourth	11	29.7
	Fifth	10	27.0
	Sixth	2	5.4
Number of Fulltime Social Work Staff	0	11	29.7
	1	11	29.7
	2	7	18.9
	3	3	8.1
	4	1	2.7
	6	1	2.7
	No Answer	3	8.1

n=37

Background of Questionnaire Participants

Table 7.1

The survey participants came from the full range of classes of municipalities, with 23 or 62% participants coming from lower class municipalities (fourth to sixth class). Twenty-two or 59% of the survey participants reported that they either had no or just one other licensed social worker in their unit while 10 or 27% reported having between two or three of such staff. Looking at the overall picture, the data suggests that most of the questionnaire participants are relatively mature social work professionals with decades of experience in social work practice and in managing an MSWD Office in organisational settings that are in predominantly lower class municipal government units staffed by one other licensed social worker. These data suggest that they have appropriate background and experience as study participants. We now turn to the policy and organisational environment of the participants.

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT OF MSDW OFFICERS

This section explores the policy environment for social welfare and development work in Philippine municipalities. Specifically, it examines the changes that have occurred in the devolution of local social welfare programs and services and the mandated functions of MSWD Officers under the post-devolution social welfare policy milieu. Analysing the data within a structural perspective raises particular questions over the current mandate of MSWD Officers in terms of the level and orientation of interventions to social problems (see Chapter 2 for a more substantial theoretical argument).

Post-Devolution Mandate of MSWD Officers

MSWD Officers count a number of programs and services under their portfolio. Under the devolved arrangements, MSWD Officers are responsible for the administration and implementation of a number of provisions and services. The Local Government Code of 1991 mandates local government units to provide '…programs and projects on child and youth welfare, family and community welfare, women's welfare, welfare of the elderly and disabled persons; community-

based rehabilitation programs for vagrants, beggars, street children, scavengers, juvenile delinquents, and victims of drug abuse; livelihood and other pro-poor projects; nutrition services; and family planning services' (Section 17.b.2.iv). The functions are delegated to and operationalised through the MDSW Office. Given their seemingly wide range of functions, one focus group participant described their role as a 'jack of all trades'. The survey participants indicated however that the work of MSWD Officers is concentrated on a few core tasks. Asked to identify the 'three most frequently availed programs and services', the survey participants named emergency financial assistance, day care and supplemental feeding, self-employment assistance, marital counselling and referrals to other institutions at the top of the list which quickly tapers off (see Table 7.2 below). Other programs and services mentioned include parent effectiveness services, skills training, capability building, crisis intervention, services for the elderly, women, the youth and the disabled, emergency assistance, and community organising.

Programs	Frequency	Percentage
(Financial) Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations	24	64.8
Day care and supplemental feeding	21	56.8
Self-employment/livelihood assistance	14	37.8
Referrals to other institutions	13	35.1
Marital counselling	12	32.4

n=37

Most Frequently Availed Programs and Services
Table 7.2

Given the fact that the current policy environment of MSWD Officers emerged from the implementation of the Local Government Code, it was thought necessary to consider the changes that took place with the devolution of social welfare programs and services. In the implementation of the devolution, preference was given to locally-assigned DSWD employees in the appointment of MSWD Officers during the transition period. This was purposely encouraged by senior DSWD officials who oversaw the implementation of the devolution in order to protect the employment of

their former staff and ensure program continuity (De Leon 2003, *pers. comm.*, December 11). However, the devolution was meant to foster local autonomy and discretion in order to provide space for creativity and more responsive governance and so one would expect to find a number of local initiatives more than ten years after its implementation. But when asked what programs beyond those devolved by the DSWD they were implementing, ten or 27% of the survey participants indicated no response. Of the survey responses that were received, many turned out to be adaptations or variations of old DSWD programs. The four programs most frequently mentioned by the survey participants as not among those devolved by the DSWD include medical care health insurance, services for women in especially difficult circumstances, court services, and children's rights advocacy and protection program. These programs, however, have a common characteristic: they all emanate from national initiatives. None of the focus group discussion participants were also able to specify a distinctly local initiative apart from those adopted from DSWD and national programs. A participant of the focus group discussion summed it up by saying: 'look what the social worker is doing right now, *parang the same program… DSWD* [they basically have the same programs as the DSWD], there is nothing new'. None of her colleagues differed. What is apparent is that, by and large, the participants could not name a distinctively local social welfare and development initiative over a decade after they were given the autonomy and mandate to do so. And so it would seem that devolution has not really given way to local initiatives and, for the most part, the programs and services MSWD Officers are administering today are not much different from those that were inherited from the DSWD (apart from a few derived from national initiatives). It could thus be argued that the roles and functions of MSWD Officers have not really changed with the devolution. Such is the continuity that one interview participant caught herself referring to long-defunct DSWD 'bureaus' (Minnie, 43) in naming the programs they currently had and a focus group participant still referred to the DSWD as their 'mother office'.

There were some changes, however, in terms of the extent to which old DSWD programs and services were carried over in the post-devolution setup. Twenty four or about 65% of the survey participants indicated that some of the old programs and services were no longer in operation. Twelve or 32% of the participants indicated that none of the devolved programs were discontinued as against only one respondent who indicated that most if not all devolved programs were no longer being implemented. The devolved programs which were most frequently reported as being no longer implemented include (1) livelihood assistance, (2) youth welfare services, (3) services for the disabled, (4) supplemental feeding and (5) skills development and job placement. The common reason for the discontinuance of devolved programs as indicated by 25 or 67% of the questionnaire participants were resource-related concerns, primarily in terms of budget limitations. In the devolved setup, local social welfare and development initiatives are now contingent on the ability and willingness of local governments to allocate resources for such purposes. An interview participant complained of being confined to providing financial assistance and day care services saying '*halos yun lang yung nai-implement namin* [these are all we can afford to implement]' because their local government provided only minimal funding for their unit (Stella, 42). The experience of MSWD Officers suggests that the scaling back of some programs reflects the varying financial resources and funding priorities of different local government units. Just how varied these are can be gleaned from an analysis of the implementation of the most frequently availed service, the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations.

Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations

To gain a better understanding of the work of the participants and to explore how programs are implemented across thousands of local government practice contexts in the devolved setup, one of the programs inherited by local government social welfare and development units from the DSWD – the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) – was examined in terms of the population reached, the entitlement levels and the resource allocation. The AICS, as it is often called by the

practitioners, refers to the grant of financial assistance to individuals and families in emergency situations. This assistance, which may be given for such purposes as burial expenses and the procurement of medicine, is often contingent on means testing. The survey participants indicated that the number of AICS recipients in the previous fiscal year ranged from two to 1,115, with sixteen or 55% reporting less than 100 AICS recipients (see Table 7.3 for tabulated responses). What these figures suggest is that the participants differ significantly in terms of the number of AICS recipients they transacted with.

Number	Frequency	Percentage
Below 100	16	55.1
101-200	4	13.7
201-300	2	6.8
301-400	3	10.3
401-500	0	0.0
500 and above	4	10.3
TOTAL	29	100.0

Number of AICS Recipients in Last Fiscal Year
Table 7.3

The participants were also asked about practices and policies relative to the grant of financial assistance under the AICS. They were asked if there was a maximum amount for the grant of AICS, how much this amount was, who fixed it, how much in total was granted in the last fiscal year, and the total number of recipients. The responses given indicate a range of variations. As to the question of whether or not there was a fixed maximum amount for AICS, 28 or about 76% of valid responses indicated that there was, while eight or almost 22% said that there was no such limit. Asked who fixed or decided the maximum amount to be given, the participants gave a variety of responses, with 12 or around 32% saying that it was done jointly by the mayor and the MSWD Officer and 11 or around 30% saying that the MSWD officers did so on their own. Curiously, two of the participants still pointed to the DSWD which again brings into question their appreciation of the

autonomy granted to them over a decade earlier. Based on the responses, it appears that MSWD officers have a relatively significant role in this area but this must be understood in the proper context. For one, the decision on this matter may simply be perfunctory in view of budget constraints, with final budget-setting authority often vested solely in the mayor. It is therefore helpful to consider the amounts involved in this specific program. Asked to quote the amount fixed for maximum AICS grants, the thirty participants who responded gave a range of figures from a low of 500 Philippine pesos to a high of 10,000 pesos (see Table 7.4). The mode, quoted by ten or 33% of the participants, was 1,000 pesos but as many as seven or over 23% of the participants quoted figures close to the median (4,500 pesos). This is a relatively significant variation considering that the family living wage (that is, the amount needed for a family of six to survive) at that time ranged from P 379 to P 748 daily (Padilla 2004). This means that the maximum amount of AICS granted by the different municipalities represented by the participants ranged from about two days to more than a month's worth of minimum wages.

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
500	2	6.7
1,000	10	33.3
1,500	1	3.3
2,000	6	20.0
3,000	3	10.0
4,000	1	3.3
5,000	6	20.0
10,000	1	3.3
TOTAL	30	100.0

Maximum Amount for AICS
Table 7.4

The 32 valid responses received in response to the question of 'how much was the total AICS disbursements in the last fiscal year' indicate a range between 500 pesos to 660,000 pesos. The smaller figure could be regarded as an anomalous outlier

(that is, data with a questionable validity in view of the apparent incongruence between it and the question) but the tabulation presented in Table 7.5 still shows a wide range of responses. Again, this suggests that there is a substantial range of variations across municipalities in terms of the total expenditure for this particular program.

Amount	Frequency	Percentage
10,000 and below	5	15.6
10,001-20,000	2	6.2
20,001-30,000	3	9.3
30,001-40,000	1	3.1
40,001-50,000	2	6.2
50,001-60,000	4	12.5
60,001-70,000	0	0.0
70,001-80,000	3	9.3
80,001-90,000	1	3.1
90,001-100,000	3	9.3
100,001 and above	8	25.0
TOTAL	32	100.0

Total AICS Disbursement in Last Fiscal Year
Table 7.5

This examination of the implementation of the most frequently-availed program of MSWD Officers, the AICS, reveals a significant range of variations across municipalities. There is a range of variations as to who fixes the amount, how much the maximum grant fixed, and the total AICS expenditure per municipality. Theoretically, two persons who may be similar in economic standing and needs would be entitled to significantly different levels of financial aid, amounting to a difference of up to a month's wages, simply because they reside in different municipalities.

While the continuity of DSWD programs was promoted by DSWD administrators as something to be desired, some practitioners regard it as a problem

in that it is seen as having resulted in the stagnation or lack of initiative on the part of MSWD Offices. One focus group participant pointed out that the problem with many practitioners today was that their 'umbilical cord' with the national DSWD had not yet been cut. The implied solution then is for MSWD Officers to reorient themselves to their local government which today serve as the auspices under which they practice social work. Such an approach, however, needs to be critically analysed.

The Post-Devolution Policy Environment

The picture that emerges from this examination of the policy environment of the participants is that of a set of practitioners mandated to perform a similar and specific set of roles and responsibilities in relation to what is collectively known as 'social welfare and development' initiatives of Philippine municipalities. The policy environment of MSWD Officers embodies practices and principles that invite critical analysis from a structural perspective. Specifically, the perspective would raise concerns about the residualist orientation of interventions embedded in the mandate of MSWD Officers and the undermining of citizen entitlements with the implementation of the devolution.

The legislated mandate of MSWD Officers appears to reflect certain ideological orientations that are incongruent with a structural perspective. The mandate of MSWD Officers revolves around the administration of a range of services targeted to meet specific needs of what would be regarded as marginalised client groups. Seen from a structural view of disadvantage outlined in the second chapter, the mandate of MSWD Officers under the devolved setup is highly circumscribed. While a broader interpretation can be argued, the legislated mandate of MSWD Officers expressly defines legitimate action in terms of providing specific social welfare 'services' to address residually-converted social problems (that is, social problems manifested at the individual level). Their mandate represents a narrowly defined and, perhaps, compromised role with the mention of 'rehabilitation' and 'family planning services', for example, rendering invisible any structural causes of

social problems. The kinds of programs and services they are administering (such as the emergency financial aid, livelihood assistance, marital counselling, parent effectiveness training, skills training and capability building), with preference for the most in need, embody an individualist orientation with varying degrees of assumed deficits in terms of the economic, cognitive, intellectual and other capacities of citizens. According to their mandate, 'vagrants', 'beggars', 'street children' and 'scavengers' are to be 'rehabilitated' and the poor are to be helped with livelihood – carrying an implicit assumption that there are internal deficiencies that need to be remedied. Embedded in such kinds of interventions is an assumption of a high degree of blame on the part of people. The structural determinants of their conditions are largely ignored in the way the legislated mandate of MSWD Officers defines local social welfare and development work. Within this role as administrators of packaged services aimed towards alleviating residually-converted social problems in the form of the immediate, compartmentalised needs of disadvantaged people, MSWD Officers would have a limited ability to address class, gender, racial and other forms of structural inequality. Under Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) theory of residualist conversion of social problems, an individualist orientation confines action to operative level interventions designed to address residually converted social problems (that is, social problems interpreted at the individual level). Such interventions overlook structural inequality and disadvantage as sources of social problems.

The devolution carried with it changes that have reconfigured local social welfare and development programs and services. The devolution was meant to foster greater local autonomy and control towards more democratic and responsive local governance. In terms of social welfare and development, local governments were given discretion over the allocation of resources for social welfare programs and services according to their resources and priorities and to tailor-fit initiatives in response to specific needs and conditions of their constituencies. In some ways, the devolution did afford opportunities for local capacity building and empowerment

(Brillantes 1998; Fabros 2003; Iglesias 1986; Illago 1997; Sosmeña 1987; Tapales 1992). But there is a range of meanings and implications one can ascribe to local autonomy and control. While the devolution removed some problems and obstacles and brought in positive effects in certain areas, it has had an overall negative impact on social welfare (Poblador 2000). The analysis of the organisational culture of MSWD Officers later in this chapter will outline the implications of the enhancement of local autonomy and control in relation to mayoral power and motivations and worker discretion and autonomy. But the data in this section suggest that there were barely perceptible but substantive changes in the construction of local social welfare programs and services as a result of the devolution. The accounts of practitioners indicated changes in the overall level and scope of local social welfare programs and services.

Based on the data, it appears that there has been an overall scaling down of local social welfare programs and services. If indeed current initiatives are largely confined to those that were handed down by DSWD and if the majority of municipalities no longer implement some of the programs, then there has been an erosion in the sum total of local social welfare initiatives. While it is possible that there may have been advances in certain municipalities in the form of increased allocation levels in some or all programs, the net result still is the attrition of local social welfare and development provisions in the devolved environment.

The cut back of certain programs and services in the majority of municipalities amounts to a veritable redefinition of the work of MSWD Officers. If (as the case may be in some municipalities) emergency financial assistance is discontinued, then the concerned municipalities would have effectively redrawn the parameters of local social welfare to exclude the concept. In effect, they redefine what constitutes social welfare and, as a consequence, advance an ideology.

The devolved practice environment represents a substantive ideological shift in the administration of local social welfare and development provisions in that it introduced a new way of thinking about citizen rights and access to social welfare provisions. As pointed out earlier, localisation itself need not be seen as intrinsically problematic. Localisation did, in certain ways, serve as a vehicle for promoting responsive governance and empowerment. But what localisation also did was to abrogate the idea that all Filipino citizens, regardless of physical location, are universally entitled to a certain (albeit minimal) level of social welfare provisions and services. In its place, localisation established the notion that access to social welfare opportunities and entitlements are variable and contingent to a large extent on the capacity and ideological orientation of local governments. The resulting mix is that there could be variations not only at the inter-municipal level but also at the inter-government or across governments that may result from local leadership changes according to one's physical (and, by association, economic) location.[1] Thus, one's rights and entitlements are dependent upon the politics of local government administration and can vary from one area to another and from one administration to the next. AICS is the case in point. It was noted earlier that there exists a wide range of variations in the implementation of what is supposedly a commonly needed provision. Certainly, the variations between municipalities can be explained away by readily apparent factors such as the financial capability of individual municipalities. If so, the variations cannot be regarded as being reflective of ideological differences and changes. But the ideological shift referred to here, while made in reference to space (that is, across municipalities), is with regard to the ideological changes that have occurred over time. Unlike the previous regime, the devolved setup provides space for a wide disparity in citizen access to entitlements and opportunities across municipalities. The definition of citizen entitlements can change drastically as one moved from one locality to another. Thus, at the implementation of the devolution, the chances of citizens of gaining access to such entitlements and opportunities

[1] There is a perceptible pattern of variations in living standards and income and the overall economic standing of local government units across regions, provinces, cities and municipalities.

became subject to the whims of mayors rather than a collective definition of citizen rights. The provisions and services one was entitled to depended on where one resided. Of course, their fortunes did not really rest on chance. Citizens from poorer municipalities were more likely to receive significantly less social welfare provisions than their counterparts in more well off municipalities. And so the adoption of the devolution represented an ideological shift in the sense that there was a deliberate decision to attach citizen rights and entitlements to the capacity and willingness of individual local governments to extend social welfare and development provisions and services, with citizens living in poorer areas effectively allotted less. Whereas before there was some semblance of a national definition of citizen entitlements reflecting (however faintly) a collectivist orientation, today – under the decollectivised system contingent on the economic prospects and priorities of individual municipalities – there is none.

From a structural perspective, the policy environment of MSWD Officers embodies practices and principles that need to be challenged. Their mandate is not amenable to social work practice that addresses structural inequality and disadvantage. While appearing to be largely unchanged, social welfare has been transmogrified in a way that subjects local social welfare initiatives to the vagaries of local politics. The result is a cacophony of local social welfare programs and services that, as a whole, undermine collectivist and rights-based principles. The devolution nullified the idea of local social welfare provisions being informed by nationally-set standards of citizen entitlements. It did away with national standards of benefits and provisions in favour of locally-defined citizen rights and entitlements to social welfare. Implicit in the decision is the derogation of a collective response to the needs of citizens and the espousal in its stead of a variable, relativist response driven by the economic fortunes and political preferences of local governments. The definition of citizen rights and entitlements became conditional, contingent on whether they lived in the right or wrong municipality – with their local government's economic standing and generosity serving as indexes. And so Filipinos residing in the poorest

municipalities ended up receiving much less than their compatriots in the most affluent municipalities, even if they were of similar economic standing. As a result, citizens are treated unequally based mainly on the unequal standing amongst municipalities and not in any way informed by understanding of structural inequality and disadvantage. Instead, the inequality embedded in the caste system among municipalities serves as the very basis for the definition of citizen rights and entitlements. Such a relativist response that rides on the economic disparities and structural inequality amongst local governments reflects a lack of recognition of structural sources of social problems and is incongruous with a structural construction of social work.

THE ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The organisational milieu of practitioners in municipalities can provide insights into key dimensions of the research question, namely: the potential sources of conflicting mandates and the range of actions that can be taken both by the mayors and practitioners. For this reason, part of the study looks into the organisational environment of MSWD Officers. Specifically, we will examine (1) the organisational location of MSWD Officers, (2) the organisational culture in Philippine local governments as seen by practitioners; (3) the views of mayors about social welfare and development work, and (4) the extent of the powers of mayors in relation to the security of tenure of MSWD Officers.

Organisational Location and Culture

Philippine municipalities are headed by mayors who, as the local chief executive, 'exercise general supervision and control over all programs, projects, services, and activities of the municipal government' (Local Government Code of 1991, Section 444.b.1). This puts local social welfare programs and services and the personnel implementing them directly under mayors. With the recognition that policy statements do not necessarily reflect practice, the study looked into the relationship between mayors and MSWD Officers.

The accounts of survey participants indicate that the relationship between mayors and MSWD Officers are generally in accord with the local government code. While three or 8% of the survey participants identified the chair of the municipal council committee on social services and the administrative/human resource management officer as sharing supervisory powers over them, all thirty seven or 100% of the survey participants indicated that mayors exercised direct supervision and control over their unit. The supervisory power of mayors includes the approval of the annual plan of the unit. Ten (10) or 27% of the survey participants said that this function was shared between the mayor and the municipal council, the administrative officer, the local finance board or budget officer while 27 or 73% of the survey participants said that it was the mayor who ultimately approved the MSWD Office plan. As we shall see in the discussions below, this distribution of approving authority more likely reflects the level of importance accorded to the task than the dilution of the powers of the mayor.

According to the participants, mayors do have an extensive amount of power in the Philippine local government bureaucracy. The extent of this power is perhaps best understood in how mayors can override the actions and decisions of town councils which are supposed to be independent legislative bodies serving as a counterbalance to the powers of the local chief executive. One interview participant quoted some council members as saying: '*kung ayaw ni Mayor, wala kaming magagawa* [if the mayor does not like it, we cannot do anything about it]' (Sharon, 50). With her attention called to the independence of the municipal legislative body as provided for in the Local Government Code, another interview participant remarked: '*structure lang iyan* [that is just a structure]' (Lourdes, 50), implying that the power of the municipal council was relatively inconsequential in relation to that of the mayor. Much of it has to do with control over resources according to yet another interview participant:

> '*Ang mayor ang nasusunod. Pagka hindi mo kapartido ang mayor, hindi makakakuha ng pondo… kaya kailangang kumampi ka sa kanya. Pag kumampi ka naman, dapat susunod ka sa lahat ng kanyang sasabihin.* [The mayor is obeyed. If one is not aligned with the mayor, you won't get funds … so you must side with him. And if you side with him, you should abide by everything he says.]' (Lanie, 48)

Those who did not abide by the mayor's wishes ran the risk of being 'blacklisted' (Sharon, 50) – that is, being removed from the mayor's good graces losing the privileges that come with it. The powers of the mayor extended to and benefited his family. One interview participant reported that her mayor surrounded himself with relatives, appointing them to strategic positions in the local bureaucracy (Sharon, 50) while another talked of having to work under two bosses: the mayor and 'Mrs. Mayor' or the '*Mayora*' (Shirley, 47) as they call her; the terms referring to the wife of the mayor who exercised as much influence over the running of the local government as the incumbent. What this tells us is that mayors occupy a highly privileged position in the local government bureaucracy such that their power can extend to their kin and overcome such institutions as the local council that supposedly have equal footing with them.

The centrality of the mayor's powers in the local government organisational environment can pose some difficulties for workers. Because decisions were often based on the mayor's preferences, Sharon (50) said that she and her fellow department heads were not inclined to say anything when the mayor asks them what their needs are because it is his preferences that prevail in the end. One interview participant who was having problems with her mayor said that she had to think 'ten times' before approaching the mayor and refrain from doing so when her gut feel told her that '*not good karon ang adlaw* [it was not a good day]' (Anne, 46). According to Anne, one had to make sure '*nga dili cloudy ang sky* [that the sky was not cloudy]' – a euphemism for a good emotional disposition on the part of her mayor who was sometimes 'moody' (Anne, 46). A focus group discussion participant summed it up by saying 'you should know how to dance' which means that one had to learn how

to move along with the mayor's drumbeat. None of the 10 other participants butted in to correct her.

The expected level of adherence to mayors can extend to support in elections. While only one survey participant reported being asked to campaign for the re-election of an incumbent, this is not fully indicative of the level of involvement workers can have. Mayors have the advantage of the 'and other tasks assigned by superiors' clause written into most government position descriptions. One interview participant, Marilyn (48), reported that she and her entire staff together with all other municipal employees were usually 'assigned' to cook food during elections for the incumbent's supporters and volunteers. Technically, they do not consider such work as being in support of the mayor's candidacy. Moreover, she was not particularly bothered by this saying that indirectly helping mayors advance their political fortune came with the job since staff like her were under them:

> *…inaasahan nila sa mga activities, nakalagay ang mga pangalan nila; 'from Congressman and Mayor so and so activity' sa streame., Di ba? Inaasahan nila iyon. Sa distribution, mag-isip ka ng strategy kung paano mailagay ang pangalan nila. Di siyempre, sa supot ng mga relief, ilagay mo ang pangalan nila. Basta gagawa ka ng project, ipapakilala mo sila. During graduation ng mga day care kung saan maraming mga children, mga magulang, at ibang mga tao, dapat lang nandoon sila. Basta lahat ng bagay, siyempre natural lang ilagay ang pangalan nila lagi.* […they expect that their names are attached with your activities; 'from Congressman and mayor so and so activity'. Right? They expect that. In the distribution (of relief), you will have to think of strategies of how to attach their names. Of course, you should put their name on the plastic bags that carry the relief goods. If you have a project, you should introduce them. During day care graduations where there are plenty of children, parents and other people, they should be there. It is but natural to always put their names in everything.] (Marilyn, 48)

In other words, the direct or indirect use by mayors of local government staff in election related concerns was part and parcel of life in the local government bureaucracy. It came with the territory, so to speak. It need not be made compulsory or expressly required but those who fail to do so would have to forego promotions

and contend with a low position unless one could rely on the principle of 'whom you know' (Marilyn, 48) which refers to having the proper connections in the mayor's inner circle. But then those who rely on these connections would be among those expected to actively contribute to the advancement of the incumbent's political fortunes. Thus, active involvement in organisational and electoral politics is an important part of the way of life in the local government bureaucracy. Even before she joined government, Nene (48) was reportedly warned by her brother: '*Pag nagtrabaho ka sa local government, hindi ika what you know, whom you know*' [If you work in local government, what matters most, he said, is not what you know but whom you know]. This turned out to be true, according to her.

The kind of power relation that we see between mayors and practitioners can be seen as being highly unequal, putting the latter at a disadvantage in terms of decision-making and in how they do their work. Given what we have seen, it is conceivable that mayors can define or redefine the work of MSWD Officers through their control of financial and political resources. The dominance of mayors over the local government bureaucracy mirrors the highly unequal distribution of wealth, resources and power, a key feature of Philippine society as indicated in earlier discussions of the Philippine political economy in Chapter 4. And so while Lipsky assumes that social workers have a high level of discretion and autonomy in their capacity as street-level bureaucrats, the realm of possibilities for social work practice in Philippine municipalities can only be fully appreciated with an understanding of the organisational order and how this resonates with the larger societal order.

Mayors' Views and Influence

Given the extent of power mayors have over MSWD Offices, the way mayors view social welfare and development work and the extent to which they impinge of workers' security of tenure would be particularly relevant in considering the factors that influence the work of MSWD Officers. These factors therefore had to be considered in the study. The discussion in this section focuses on views of mayors as

reported by the participants of the study and is not based on any interviews with mayors themselves. Based on the focus group discussion, the general perception of mayors is that the work MSWD officers do was 'dole-out' – that is, '*tagabigay ng sardines at saka other things* [giver of sardines and other things]'. An interview participant, Sharon (50), quoted her mayor as saying: '*Liability yang departamento na iyan. Puros bigay ng bigay ng pera sa tao, nagiging dependent yung mga tao* [That department is a liability. All it does is hand out money to people, making people more and more dependent.]'. Given what we saw earlier, such a perception may not entirely be unfounded.

The way mayors perceive social welfare programs and services can have implications for the work of MSWD Officers. For one, the view of social welfare as dole-out can result in the low prioritisation of social welfare provisions in resource allocation as in the case of Sharon. Moreover, such a perception can lead to particular ways of employing social welfare initiatives. An interview participant complained of how her mayor dispensed social services not on the basis of need but on 'political colours' and 'political identity' (Anne, 46), meaning that they were being dispensed in favour of citizens with certain political affiliations. The way social welfare is disparaged in the statements above rules out certain bases for resource allocation for such purposes, particularly those informed by rights-based and collective principles. From the point of view of mayors who hold such perceptions, the most apparent (if not the only) utility of social welfare programs and services would be their value as political capital or their perceived functional utility in advancing the mayor's political interests. And with the centrality of mayors in the municipal bureaucracy, they could very well shape the institutional value ascribed to local social welfare services.

The value ascribed by mayors to the work of MSWD Offices can also have personal implications for the employment status of workers. Over 50% of the questionnaire participants held the title of MSWD Officer or department head. A

little less than half of the participants held the position of Social Welfare Officer III, Social Welfare Officer IV and MSWDO Designate, position titles that suggest less-than-ideal designations because of the low salary range that they carry. This can be taken as a reflection of the varied financial statuses and salary regimes of municipalities, with some municipalities unable or unwilling to pay for the full salary grade of an MSWD Officer especially if the compensation given to municipal mayors, set as a percentage of the incomes of the municipalities, are relatively low. But considering the ecology of the municipal bureaucracy, such an explanation would be inadequate. There appears to be a hierarchy of spheres of influence, with – in the experience of Lourdes (50), Marilyn (48) and Sharon (50) – certain departments like those handling finance and infrastructure projects occupying a more prominent place than social welfare in the Philippine local government universe even while they are supposedly on equal footing based on the official descriptions of the local government organisational structure. Some practitioners see the low position titles of social welfare and development officers as indicative of the low regard given to social welfare and development work especially when viewed in relation to the position titles of other department heads. This element of an inter-group struggle among disciplines in the local government bureaucracy is akin to and perhaps embodies the struggle of mainstream social work for its identity and status within the community of professions in Philippine society as outlined in Chapter 6.

Surprisingly, the perception of the low regard of the work MSWD Officers were doing did not translate into a widely-shared feeling of vulnerability in terms of their tenure. The survey participants were asked questions relating to security of tenure in their organisation considering that this was one of the possible factors that would constrain the actions of practitioners. Posed with the 'unlikely' scenario that their mayors would want to remove them from their position 'for no justifiable cause', just 11 or 30% percent of the survey participants indicated that the said officials had 'enough power' to do so. Only seven or 19% percent of the participants said that they knew of a senior officer (that is, someone at the level of a municipal

department head like MSWD Officers) who was 'floated, suspended or fired for no known justifiable cause' in the last five years. As it turns out, threat to tenure (which, considering the extensive powers of mayors, would presumably be a problem) appears to be just a relatively moderate concern for MSWD Officers. This was validated in the focus group discussion where, when the issue of security of tenure was brought up, the mayor was the least of the trouble. Among the antagonists singled out were budget officers, planning officers and treasurers. '*Maraming kontrabida sa loob ng LGU, kasi gradually, nakakaasa sa atin yung LCE* [There are many antagonists inside the local government unit because Local Chief Executives gradually learn to depend on us], said one participant. The mayor was, in fact, even seen as an anchor with one participant claiming with a sense of pride that her direct access to the mayor allowed her to bypass the budget officer who could only exclaim '*Ikaw talaga, dumeretcho ka naman sa amo mo* [How clever of you, you went straight to your master/boss]'. Based on the answers of the questionnaire participants, mayors were not generally seen by practitioners as a threat to their security of tenure. The data seem to suggest a more auspicious working relationship with mayors than initially expected. It should be noted, however, that the views reflected in this subsection are mainly from practitioners who were all in their jobs. These views do not reflect the experiences of practitioners who have been removed from their positions.

Accounts From Beyond

The experiences of six practitioners who were removed from their positions provide insights into the risks practitioners face when their paths cross those of their superiors. In this section, the reasons and circumstances that have led to the removal of practitioners will be explored. These insights are important in shedding light on the options practitioners have in responding to challenges that they may face in their work. After all, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, the actions of practitioners are dictated by their values and interests as professionals and as members of society. The

experiences of Marilyn, Nene, May, Shirley, Lourdes, and Lani illustrate the range of causes and means by which MSWD Officers have been removed from their positions.

Three of the six were removed as part of what appears to be a commonly-practiced post-election culling of the local government bureaucracy. Over the course of at least two administration changes, Marilyn (48), who had been a social worker for twenty years, has been directed to report for work in the municipal library. In this more recent occasion, she simply received an order transferring her to the library 'for exigency of service' six days after the current administration took over (Marilyn, 48), together with all department heads of the former administration as well as staff from a number of departments. The transfer order specified no duties and merely instructed her to report to a clerk acting as the municipal librarian. They still received their prescribed remuneration and so they had no legal basis to challenge the order. At the time of the interview, she had been reporting to the library for almost three years and all indications told her that the incumbent would be re-elected in the upcoming elections.

Similar circumstances surrounded the ouster of Nene, 48, who had been a social worker for 22 years and head of her town's MSWD Office for seven years when her involuntary 'resignation' took effect. All senior officials of the previous administration were importuned into submitting courtesy letters of resignation which then served as basis for their termination. In her case, she was badgered into submitting one when, all in one day, a staff from the mayor's office came to her office at eight o'clock and ten o'clock in the morning and then at one o'clock and at three o'clock in the afternoon to ask for it. As she described, it was a deliberate, systematic effort to ease them out:

> *Tatlu-tatlong chief of office… Hindi sabay-sabay na mahahalata eh. Pag nakita mo sa payroll, wala ka na, i-aabot sa iyo yung resignation mo approved.* [The chiefs of office were dealt with in threes. We were not removed all at the same time since it would have been rather obvious. When you

> find that your name is no longer in the payroll; your approved letter of resignation will be handed to you. (Nene, 48)

The three personnel who held out faced a grimmer fate. They were not given their pay even as they were denied any leave of absence. Forced to absent themselves without permission to seek alternative funds for their family's needs, they ended up facing an administrative case for absence without leave which led to their dismissal with prejudice.

A more all-encompassing shakedown came with the new administration for May (48) who had been head of the social welfare and development office of her town for over twenty years at that time. Two weeks after assuming office, the new administration reassigned about 80 personnel of the local government, from department heads down to security guards, forepersons, drivers and mechanics, to 'conduct research' in the most remote of places. The reason was that they were rumoured to have supported the former mayor. In her case, May was '*gilabay*' [thrown] to a village in a 'rebel-infested area' (that is, a conflict-ridden area frequented by insurgent and military operations), some 70 kilometres away from the town proper. It took a total of 12 hours of travel using several modes of transportation (from an automobile, a motorcycle, a horse and by foot) from her home to the village. Failure to report for duty in the specified area, even under the most extreme weather conditions such as flooding, resulted in disciplinary action and the withholding of pay. After about two years and much wrangling all the way to the highest level of the Civil Service Commission, they were allowed to report in the town government's conference room where they were asked to prepare a research report. At the time of the interview, it had been a year since she submitted her report with no new task given to her and no dedicated office space to occupy. This notwithstanding, they were still required to report for duty every day, their attendance being closely monitored. With the incumbent mayor virtually running unopposed in the forthcoming elections, they expected no reprieve any time soon.

When the new administration stepped in, Shirley (47) already felt that she and the other senior officials of the previous administration were not really wanted but they were kept because of their protected tenure. While she survived the mayor's first term, a citizen complaint about the service quality of her office during the mayor's second term led to her reassignment to the office of the town administrator for unspecified exigencies 'of the service' without any specific duties (Shirley, 47). She was left on her own to find a space to occupy – '*nakikiupo* [relying on the good graces of others for a place and a chair to sit on]' was her way of describing where she ended up. There were indications that the complaint against her was fabricated but when, at one time, she gathered the courage to ask the mayor how she could have her position back, the mayor reportedly told her '*O sige, kausapin mo si Ma'am mo* [Okay, talk to your Ma'am]', referring to his wife who they addressed as 'Mrs. Mayor'. Though Shirley talked to the mayor's wife, nothing came out of it. But it got her to thinking: Why did she have to talk to the wife of the mayor regarding her job-related predicament? It then dawned on her that the mayor's wife may have had something to do with her removal, noting that '*Lahat ng desisyon ni Mayor batay sa kagustuhan ni Mrs. Mayor* [All the decisions of the mayor are based on the preferences of Mrs. Mayor]' (Shirley, 47). After that, the mayor and his wife no longer gave her an audience.

Lourdes, 50, was not among the 30 or so permanent employees who were removed by the new town administration in the post-election 'reorganisation'. But she ended up losing her job. She was 'reassigned' to a faraway village for over a year before she was indefinitely suspended and then forcefully removed from her office, with her personal belongings thrown out. Since civil service rules prohibited her arbitrary removal or demotion, the mayor simply changed her job description to what was tantamount to being a midwife of a village, requiring her to do weighing of infants and the like. Lourdes can only speculate the mayor's bases for working towards what she saw as her 'constructive dismissal' (Lourdes, 50). When the mayor assumed office, he reportedly told Lourdes (50): *'…yung mga hindi sa akin bomoto, wag*

mong tulungan [do not help those who did not vote for me]. She did not strictly follow the order and this apparently irked the mayor. The mayor also reportedly took over the administration of the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations which he used 'for his own caprice' to dispense favours (Lourdes, 50). Amounts in excess of the maximum level were given to people who were not even indigents, she explained, and her refusal to sign the release vouchers for such amounts infuriated the mayor. In another incident, the mayor apparently felt slighted when the preferred caterer he had specified for an activity organised by Lourdes was not awarded the contract. This was when she was sent away, charged with various administrative and criminal matters, and eventually forced out of her office. Lourdes surmised that it may have been her unwavering position and unwillingness to march to the mayor's drumbeat which forced the mayor to take such actions to discipline her. The Civil Service Commission was too slow to act on her case and when it did decide in her favour, the mayor simply ignored the Commission's recommendations.

The troubles of Lani (48) started when a subordinate embezzled a fund held in trust by her office. She was blamed for this and was reassigned to manage a town-owned resort in a remote village where, for one whole year, her only job was to see to it that the comfort rooms were cleaned regularly. An internal audit eventually cleared her of direct culpability and she sought the intervention of the Civil Service Commission but no concrete action was ever taken on her case. After a year, she mustered the humility to ask the mayor for forgiveness and it was only then that she was brought back to her office. Lani (48) saw the reassignment as a means of humbling her to submission because she admitted to being 'vocal' and '*palaban* [combative]' before. Considering her experience, she confided that she no longer openly took issue with anomalous practices of the administration the way she did before. She intimated that the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations, the cash assistance given to indigents, was being used by the mayor as a source of income. She explained that a person would be given, say, five hundred pesos and made to sign a blank voucher which afterwards would be processed for twice or thrice the

amount actually given. While she would have openly questioned such practice before, now she just says to herself '*bahala na ang Diyos sa kanila* [God will take care of them]' (Lani, 48).

The experiences of these six practitioners outline a variety of reasons and ways that lead to the removal of practitioners from their positions. It was found that MSWD Officers can be removed from office for reasons that do not even involve actual conflicts. Three of the six practitioners were removed soon after the new administration stepped in for something apparently as trivial as having been on the staff of the previous administration. In the case of Marilyn (48), she was removed from office only six days from the time the new administration took over and so there was hardly enough time for them to get to know each other much less allow any conflict to develop and boil over. Four of the six practitioners experienced no direct interaction, face-to-face contact, or any form of encounter with their mayors. In short, workers can find themselves removed from office without even any personal conflict with the mayors. Ideological conflict between mayors and MSWD Officers regarding the work of the latter is not necessary to result in such drastic an action as their removal from office. Moreover, it was found that there are a number of inventive ways of skirting existing measures to protect the tenure of local government personnel, effectively affording the removal of MSWD Officers from office for no justifiable cause. The assignment of certain tasks, the assignment to certain locations, the withholding of functions and the denial of working space are only some of the ways by which workers can be made to experience embarrassment, shame, discomfort, hardship and even danger as to effectively lead to their constructive dismissal. Existing mechanisms including the Civil Service Commission, which in such cases is supposed to be the bulwark of civil service staff, apparently are ineffective in deterring such actions. As seen in the cases of May, Lourdes and Lani, the ineffectiveness of such mechanisms can stem from the failure to act or failure to act in a timely manner on the part of the Civil Service Commission and the inconsequentiality of its decisions. Moreover, loopholes abound. The actions that

could be taken by mayors to chastise workers need not be in blatant violation of legal provisions. Reassignment appears to be the most expedient choice, with conceivably countless variations. The ways by which workers can be made to toe the line is perhaps only limited by the creativity of those in power. The inventiveness of some devices used clearly demonstrates the extent to which existing measures that protect workers could be circumvented.

Although practitioners may not recognise or acknowledge it, they are in a highly disadvantaged position in relation to mayors. Their security of tenure can easily be breached by mayors with or without a valid reason to do so. The privileged position of mayors gives them the financial and organisational arsenal to mount and sustain protracted battles against those who dare defy them. Thus, it could be argued that MSWD Officers who largely remain in their position do so by the grace of mayors and, as such, are vulnerable to influences and pressures from mayors in the prevailing organisational structure and environment of Philippine municipalities. This puts into question the level of discretion and autonomy of MSWD Officers in the work that they do. If indeed they can be effectively disciplined through extra-legal means, then level and range of agency of such workers can be defined and delineated not only by what is explicitly stated in policy but by the heads of local governments. While some workers can conceivably choose to act on their own, they can only legitimately do so and continue to do so for an extended period to the extent that those in power would allow.

SOCIAL WORK IN PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITIES

The policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers carries with it important implications for social work practice. The devolution introduced a subtle but substantive ideological shift in the way citizen rights and entitlements are defined in terms of the extent to which they remain or are eroded. The devolution also reconfigured the relationship between mayors and the personnel tasked with administering local social welfare and development provisions and services; the

latter not having been administratively accountable to the former prior to devolution. These features characterising the current practice environment define what constitute legitimate actions on the part of social work practitioners working in Philippine municipalities.

The policy environment of MSWD Officers demarcates practice in terms of narrowly defined operative level functions underpinned by a particular orientation. As argued earlier, the legislated mandate and functions of MSWD Officers mainly confine actions to residual, individualist interventions. At first glance, it appears that the devolution did not significantly alter the face of local social welfare and development provisions and services. Most of the programs being implemented today are among those that were handed down by the DSWD at the implementation of the devolution. But while some MSWD Offices may have benefited from a boost of resources committed to social welfare provisions and services by their local government, the devolution on the whole resulted in the scaling down of initiatives as a result of the struggle in some municipalities with limited resources and in others with competing priorities. More importantly, the devolution brought a change in the way citizen rights and entitlements to social welfare provisions and services are defined. The post-devolution practice environment subjects community-level social welfare initiatives to the economic capability and commitment of individual municipal governments, resulting in a set of local social welfare policies that vastly vary from municipality to municipality across the archipelago. The result is a patchwork of provisions and entitlement rules that collectively constitute the immediate and, often, only public social welfare initiatives that reach the average citizen. The prevailing milieu is one in which the commitment to benefits and citizen access to entitlements varies from one municipality to another and, conceivably, from one administration to the next. This can change the way workers view their work. Whereas before workers would have found it objectionable if the government (through the DSWD) allocated lower provisions for their constituency, having as reference nationally-defined statements of commitment, the workers of today have

no such standards to invoke and would be left to make do with what the government (this time through their local government unit) provides their particular population which may be significantly different from those in others areas, with the income level of their municipality and the priorities of their government of the day as the primary points of reference. As a consequence, the devolution brought an end to a collectivist orientation, as feeble and as limited as this was before the devolution, in local social welfare and development provisions. This puts into question the overall framework that underpins the post-devolution social policy environment.

The organisational environment in Philippine municipalities places MSWD Officers in highly unequal relationship with mayors. We found that mayors exercise direct control and supervision over most if not all MSWD Officers and the predominant local government organisational culture is one in which mayors wield a preponderant influence over the entire local government bureaucracy. The local government bureaucracy can be thought of as a microcosm of Philippine society, embodying the dynamics of the broader system. The relationship between mayors and MSWD Officers, to a certain extent, reflects the highly unequal social relations that characterise the Philippine post-colonial political economy (as discussed in Chapter 4). In this entrenched hierarchical organisational order, one can very well imagine how MSWD Officers are kept and keep themselves in place. In acknowledging that mayors see social welfare and development work as mere dole-outs, the participants identified one potential source of tension. Yet contrary to what was expected, only a few of them felt any threat from mayors and recognised mayors as having an overriding power to breach their security of tenure. The experiences of six practitioners who were removed from office did indicate that this was a false sense of security. But if mayors are indeed powerful and they generally have a low regard for social welfare and development work, then why do the practitioners feel no threat to their tenure? One possible answer is that practitioners generally do not see their work as being in any danger of crossing the interests of their superiors. On the contrary, some of their activities positively contribute to the strengthening of the

mayor's political position. Another possible answer is that workers are willing and able to work around this difference which, given the influence of mayors, leans towards compromise. Yet another possible answer is that there is really no substantive difference between their views and aims. These issues will be further explored in the next chapter in the discussion of conflicts and strategies. What is relevant to note at this point is that, while acknowledging the extensive powers of mayors, most practitioners do not feel at risk of being at odds with and under any threat from mayors.

Analysing the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers from a structural perspective (as outlined in Chapter 2), it can be argued that there are inherent problems for social work practice in Philippine municipal bureaucracies in terms of the power inequality that exists within such organisations and the residual, individualist orientation of interventions to social problems that they are mandated to uphold. The context shapes the work and power parameters of workers. The narrow definition of their functions that limits action to residual approaches and the way collectivist definitions of citizen rights and entitlements have been eroded in the devolved environment would invite questions over the legitimacy of the prevailing social welfare regime. The centrality and dominance of mayors and the highly unequal power relationships in the local government bureaucracy that mirrors the inequality and disadvantage permeating Philippine society would evoke action towards reconfiguring the organisational power structural and environment. The perspective would point out that practitioners would find it difficult to work towards addressing structural inequality and disadvantage with a mandate that proscribes their actions and a work environment that subjects them to some of the very relations that they are supposed to work against. With the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers defining the realm of possibilities for social work practice in Philippine municipalities, an ideological and political conflict would be inevitable from a structural perspective.

But contrary to initial assumptions, the data does not indicate that practitioners necessarily face tensions or challenges in their work environment. If we were to go by the participants' perception of their security of tenure, there appears to be no present threat to their tenure which, one can imagine, would accompany practice informed by a structural perspective. The practitioners' position in the local government bureaucracy may make them vulnerable in relation to the mayors but they themselves apparently do not feel that any tension exists. In this sense, the power and dominance of mayors in the municipal government bureaucracy does not pose a challenge for the practice of the participants. The notion of 'challenge' relates more to a structural view of social work. In other words, the context challenges a structural view of social work but not necessarily those of the practitioners. This leads us to the view that the extent to which the work environment represents a challenge in social work practice would depend on the practitioners' construction of social work and the extent to which this does not align with the powers that be.

Exactly how the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers interacts with social work practice depends on the perspective held by practitioners. The elements they represent and their implications only find meaning from the worldview of the practitioners themselves. The tensions and challenges that might be raised by a structural perspective will not be necessarily seen or felt by all practitioners because some constructions of social work will ignore the issues that such a perspective would raise. If a practitioner's construction of social work is contingent on the mayor's views as what can conceivably happen in an organisational culture that privileges mayors, then no conflict can be expected. The narrow definition of functions will not be an issue when one's primary point of reference and source of legitimation is the mayor. Some constructions would simply preclude the emergence of any tensions and conflicts. Rather than seeing their policy and organisational environment as inhibitive and oppressive, the participants' construction of social work can define these elements as givens or even as opportunities in the way mainstream social work found its place and found promise

in martial law (see Chapter 6). In this case, the participants' construction of their work within that context may itself be a challenge to structural social work. The next chapter explores the MSWD Officers' construction of social work, the conflicts in mandates they recognise and the strategies they employ in managing such conflicts.

CHAPTER 8

CONSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK

Ang gawa sa pagkabata, dala hanggang pagtanda. (What one does in childhood, one carries into adulthood.) – Filipino proverb

This chapter examines the participants' construction and practice of social work, with a special focus on the conflicts with mayors they encounter and the strategies that they employ in response to such conflicts. As noted in the previous chapter, how the practice environment of MSWD Officers impinges on their work largely depends on how they construct their practice. It was argued that if the practitioners' practice of social work and conduct of their functions were in consonance with institutional expectations, then little if any tension would occur. Moreover, if their actions were confined to those that did not challenge the interests of dominant forces such as those represented by mayors, then no substantive conflicts would be expected. Consequently, an important dimension that can account for the ways by which practitioners manage competing mandates is their construction and practice of their work. The approach taken in the analysis of the construction and practice of social work by the participants is in line with the theoretical perspective informing the study. A critical reflexive position will be maintained in looking at the participants' construction and practice of social work. This means that first order interpretations (that is, interpretations based on the

meanings ascribed by the participants to their actions) will be set against second and third order interpretations (that is, interpretations based on context and patterns of behaviour as seen by the researcher and interpretations that link actions to theory, respectively). The chapter begins with an exploration of how practitioners view their work, followed by a discussion of their accounts of conflicts with their superiors and, finally, an analysis of the strategies that they employ in managing conflicts. The chapter will end with an exploration of possible strategic directions for social work practice in this particular practice context.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK

The MSWD Officers' construction and practice of social work and social welfare and development work were explored by looking at the community problems that they regard as integral to their work, their projected actions in hypothetical situations and their self-ascribed roles in politics and policy and program development. Drawn together, these dimensions are taken to represent how practitioners construct and practice social work.

Social Problems

The questions about social problems sought to determine what problems MSWD Officers took cognisance of and dealt with in practice. Specifically, the survey participants were asked to (1) name 'the three most prevalent social problems in their municipality', (2) identify which among the problems their office can address, and (3) point out which of the said problems are the 'most crucial'. The responses provide us a glimpse into the kind of work practitioners see themselves as doing or having to do. Asked to identify three of the 'most prevalent social problems' in their municipality, the top answers in the questionnaire survey were as follows: (1) unemployment/lack of skills or opportunities; (2) poverty; (3) low income; (4) malnutrition/food/ lack of access to potable water; and (5) drug abuse/illegal gambling/vices (see Table 8.1). All top five answers are closely interrelated, pointing to the lack of economic opportunities and their implications which resonate in some

of the other problems mentioned such as poor housing conditions, health problems, and out of school children. There were a few responses that appeared to be anchored on perspectives that emphasise individual culpability including early marriage and pregnancy out of wedlock – identified by three participants – and large family size, lack of knowledge of responsible parenthood, lack of awareness of present problems, dole-out mentality and deterioration of social/moral values as social problems, each named by at least one participant. For the most part, the problems named by the participants appear to be an unsurprising range of answers; the kinds of concepts that one would find in mainstream social work texts.

From the responses to the previous question, the survey participants were asked to identify which, from among the problems they named, their office can address. The aim was to get a sense of what they thought were the boundaries of their organisational mandate and capability. The responses were based largely on the previous responses and so a similar, albeit tapered, order emerged (refer to Table 8.1 below). The top answers still include the previous top five. As for the most crucial social problems from the perspective of the participants, the top three in the previous two questions remained at the top. Based on what can be gleaned from Table 8.1 below, the responses of the participants appear to be typical and perhaps rather unsurprising from a group of social workers in the sense that they are part of the language of mainstream social work. The responses point to concepts that, when examined, can find meaning within a structural perspective in the way structural elements can be inferred from the inter-generational class, race and gender-based patterns that characterise such problems as lack of skills, poverty and malnutrition. There were responses that suggested an individualistic view but this did not constitute the majority of responses. The data indicates at least three important things, namely: (1) MSWD Officers do work with populations that are subject to structurally-rooted social problems; (2) MSWD Officers are attuned to such problems (although not necessarily defined in structural terms); and (3) they recognise such

problems as being part of their work concerns. We now turn to the interventions they employ in practice.

Social Problems	Most Prevalent		Can Be Addressed		Most Crucial	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Un(under)employment/lack of skills or opportunities	19	51.4	15	40.5	8	21.6
Poverty	13	35.1	10	27.0	6	16.2
Low income	12	32.4	10	27.0	7	18.9
Malnutrition/food/lack of access to potable water	10	27.0	9	24.3	1	2.7
Drug abuse/illegal gambling/vices	9	24.3	5	13.5	5	13.5
Domestic violence	5	13.5	5	13.5	2	5.4
Poor housing/squatting/families in danger zones	5	13.5	1	2.7	1	2.7
Health problems	5	13.5	5	13.5	1	2.7
Youth delinquency/conflict with the law	4	10.8	3	8.1	4	10.8
Marital relations problems	4	10.8	2	5.4	2	5.4
Out of school youth/children	3	8.1	3	8.1	2	5.4
Early marriage, unwed mothers and teenage pregnancy	3	8.1	2	5.4	1	2.7
Limited funding for basic services, poor health services	3	8.1	2	5.4	2	5.4
Child abuse, child labour, abandonment of children	2	5.4	1	2.7	1	2.7
High prices of commodities/ inputs	2	5.4	0	0.0	1	2.7
Large family size	1	2.7	1	2.7	0	0.0
Lack of knowledge of responsible parenthood	1	2.7	1	2.7	0	0.0
Lack of awareness of problems	1	2.7	1	2.7	1	2.7
Dole-out mentality	1	2.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
People empowerment	1	2.7	1	2.7	1	2.7
Deterioration of moral values	1	2.7	1	2.7	1	2.7
Others	4	10.8	1	2.7	2	5.4

n=37

Most Prevalent, Addressable, and Most Crucial Social Problems

Table 8.1

Social Work Interventions

To gain a deeper understanding of how the participants construct social work, the study explored the interventions they articulated in their practice. The survey participants were asked to outline 'no more than five key actions/objectives social workers should take' on three vignettes representing different case situations. The three vignettes were designed to feature readily identifiable 'presenting problems' while hinting at more embedded structural issues. The purpose was to analyse their intended actions with the view of inferring from these their notions of social work. The selection of issues was guided by literature which point to class, gender and race as the main forms of social disadvantage (Dominelli 2002a; Ife 2002). The first vignette related the case of a woman, an apparent victim of domestic violence with severe contusions who was referred to the MSWD Office by the police without action because it was 'a family matter'. The prevalence of the problem in the community was mentioned to hint at structural dimensions and the referral of the case as 'a family matter' was given as a subtle cue for the analysis of the situation in relation to existing institutional arrangements. The second vignette narrated the dropping out of school of a young girl from an indigenous community. References to prejudicial treatment, nutritional inadequacy and financial constraints were made to point to possible structural sources of the problem. The third and last vignette told the story of a farmer seeking assistance for the burial of one of his children. Apart from the presenting problem, the vignette insinuated more fundamental problems like the lack of livelihood opportunities and the economic dislocation of farmers arising out of the town's economic development initiatives. The valid responses of 36 questionnaire participants were analysed for key concepts which were then coded and tabulated, with inferences drawn from the tabulations.

The top five actions outlined by the survey participants in response to the first vignette were: (1) counselling; (2) interview; (3) referral; (4) reporting or recording of the case in the police blotter and (5) information and advocacy. The mention of interviews may be considered a predictable response in view of its place in formal

social work education but the way some participants described their course of action provides some clues about the framework that informs the action. A participant talked of doing *'Case work with the client to be able to know the real situation, why it happened and what are the underlying causes'* (Virgie, 54). The plan of action apparently comes with the assumption that there are 'real causes' behind the abuse to be uncovered through dialogue. But what kinds of reasons could possibly be constructed to explain the violence? Who determines the validity of such reasons? The stated intention fails to consider the power dimensions of domestic violence. It is telling that the top answer was counselling, specified by 23 or 63.8% of the participants. Although some merely mentioned the concept, the way other participants specified the process leads to certain answers. They talked of counselling both husband and wife about 'wholesome' 'family life relations' (Linda, 45; Sophie, 50) as a way to 'strengthen [their] relationship' (Beth, 44) 'for the sake of the family' (Vilma, 33). Embedded in these statements are unquestioned values and assumptions such as the authority of social workers on marital affairs and romanticised notions of family that could very well serve to perpetuate the disadvantage of the woman. Only four or 11% of the participants specified the need to intervene at the municipal or institutional level and only one identified an intervention directed towards redressing the structurally disadvantaged position of the woman.

The top five answers of the survey participants to the second vignette were as follows: (1) assessment, (2) educational assistance mostly in the form of scholarships and other school expenses, (3) values reorientation and counselling, (4) engagement of civil society particularly non-government organisations, sponsors and foster carers, and (5) community organising involving the parents and similarly-situated students. Again, the first two are perhaps to be expected, the first being part of mainstream social work text and the second being what might be considered a basic response to the presenting problem (which most likely refers to private initiative and in no way suggests that the government would take on a significant role as we will

see shortly). The third top answer deserves some elaboration. Thirteen or 36% of the questionnaire participants mentioned counselling for the parents to 'enlighten (them about) the role of parents' (Mia, 48), to teach them 'how to take care of their children' (Irene, 45), to point out 'how important education is' (Janet, 48) and to 'motivate parents to be responsible enough' (Beth, 44) to fulfil 'their duties and responsibilities' (Virgie, 54). It appears that these practitioners traced the problem to the values and choices of the parents, reflecting an individualist orientation. The same view apparently informs the intention of eight or 22% of the participants to introduce some form of livelihood or job opportunities. Seen in view of the disadvantaged position of most indigenous communities in the Philippines, such an assumption is problematic. Here we have what are most likely parents whose educational background and skin colour excluded them from most educational and employment opportunities, who would not be protected by labour laws if employed, who do not own the land they live on and till, who do not have access to proper health care and nutrition to remain healthy themselves. The response of some practitioners to instruct them on parental responsibility assigns the blame on them and adds to their burden. The reference made by 13 or 36% of the participants to the use of the resources of civil society (such as non-government organisation, potential sponsors and foster carers) suggests a very limited role of government. The responses of 11 or 30% of the survey participants who pointed to community organising (the top fifth course of action), seen in the context of other responses, may mean that actions and solutions are to be found in the people themselves. Only a handful of participants named actions beyond the immediate environment of the family and community and embody some notion of structural intervention such as the integration of services and intervention in the school system and at the municipal level.

The top five actions outlined by the participants for the third vignette were: (1) financial assistance, (2) job placement, (3) skills training, (4) livelihood assistance, and (5) farming technology assistance. The first one was expected considering the presenting problem. The second to the fourth all involve notions of facilitating a shift

in livelihood sources from farming to other jobs or livelihood opportunities requiring new skills. The participants, it seems, saw the problem mainly as a result of incongruence between current skills and available opportunities. The fifth top answer, in particular, locates the deficiency on the part of the farmer with one participant citing the need to 'Review the method of his farming technology' which 'might be obsolete' (Annie, 60). There were those who suggested that the farmer be given 'technical assistance on farming' (Milaine, 44) and 'informed of the modern methods' (Laurel, 55) or 'advanced technology… to gain more yield' (Mia, 48) such as 'the diversification of crops suited for the season' (Jet, 47). The responses suggest that the farmer's predicament was largely a technical problem that could be solved by technical means. Such an assumption again places the burden on the individual in the form of learning and adaptation aptitude. That the onus is on the farmer is shown in how one participant described the needed action by saying that 'Counselling [is needed to tell him] that he has to do something as the government cannot be always there for him and his family' (Gloria, 45). Such conception ignores structural issues affecting farmers such as exclusionary practices and processes that impede their access to technology, productive resources, capital, infrastructure and fiscal support and environmental safety. In relation to the possible systemic source of the farmer's problem, only three or 8.3% of the survey participants considered the possibility that the farmer's predicament as a area-wide concern, only two or 5.5% saw the need to look into the environmental impact of the economic development changes and only two participants considered municipal-level actions. In sum, the actions outlined by the participants for the third vignette focused mainly on individual interventions on the assumption that the problem was largely a matter of the farmer's technical competence.

A recurring theme in the responses of the survey participants to the vignettes was echoed by interview participants. An interviewee discussing 'the essence of social work' in local government units explained that:

'*Kami ay more on sa counselling at saka sa pagme-mediate sa mga custody ng mga bata… At saka more on counselling sa mga mag-asawa na naghihiwalay…* [Our role is more on counselling as well as in mediation in the custody of children… And also more on counselling for married couples who are on the brink of separation...]' (Lani, 48)

Another interview participant articulated the work that she rendered in similar terms:

'*Depende sa need… Halimbawa ang need ay counselling, I will give counselling. … Yung iba naman eh group therapy … husband-wife relationship - lumapit sa akin yung babae, ika-counselling ko siya.* [It depends on the need…For example, if the need is counselling, I will give counselling. … Others would require group therapy… in husband-wife relationships – if the woman approaches me, I will give her counselling.] (Lourdes, 50)

Even livelihood interventions, often construed as empowering, can be carried out by MSWD Officers with individualist underpinnings as reflected in the words of an interview participant who explained the value of introducing livelihood skills by saying: '*Hindi mo gagawing baldado yung walang kakainin, di ba? Kumukusar siya* [You will not be treating a person with nothing to eat as handicapped, right? The person fends for him/herself]' (Nene, 48). Altogether, the social work interventions identified by practitioners largely bear a residual, individualist orientation representing a conservative construction of social work.

Role in Politics and Policy Development

The participants' account of their views and involvement in politics and policy development adds to our understanding of their construction of social work. Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) argue that interventions on social problems can be made at the operative level (that is, as they are manifested in the lives of people), at the administrative level (or within societal institutions) and at the policy level in terms of

societal level choices. An individualist orientation generally confines action to operative-level residual interventions while a structural perspective would point towards the latter two. Under the devolved arrangements, MSWD Officers have been given a key role in the administration of local social welfare initiatives. In this position, practitioners theoretically have a stronger influence in the shaping of local government social welfare policy. How they position themselves in politics and the local government bureaucracy is outlined below.

The survey participants were asked to give their views relating to policy and politics. They were presented propositions embedded in Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) theory of residualist conversion of social problems. An individualist orientation emphasises individual responsibility and would therefore favour residual over institutional approaches (that is, minimal and selective rather than optimal and holistic interventions) and private over public action on social problems. In terms of social work practice itself, an individualist orientation would be characterised by a general lack of engagement with policy and politics. These were used as indicators to explore the political position of survey participants. Specifically, they were asked to indicate their position on four propositions corresponding to the above-mentioned factors, with choices ranging from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA). The first two propositions concerned policy preferences. The participants were asked to state if they believed that the government should serve more as a facilitator and less of a direct provider of social services and if they thought that the government should only serve those who clearly cannot afford basic services like health and education. Affirmative positions regarding these propositions were taken as an indication of a residual orientation in relation of social policy. The second pair of propositions relates to social work practice. The participants were asked if they thought that it was unprofessional for social workers to join rallies and if they thought that the development of policy was part of social work. An affirmative response to the former and a negative response to the latter were taken to indicate an individualist orientation in relation to social work

practice. The answers of the 36 survey participants who responded to the items are tabulated in Table 8.2 below.

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
The government should be more of a facilitator and less of a direct service provider of social services	6 16.7%	8 22.2%	7 19.4%	10 27.8%	5 13.9%
Government should only serve those who can not afford basic services like health and education	9 25.0%	9 25.0%	0 0.0%	1 2.8%	17 47.2%
It is unprofessional for social workers to join rallies	8 22.2%	12 33.3%	5 13.9%	5 13.9%	6 16.7%
The development of policy is part of social work	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 19.4%	29 80.6%

n=36

Views on Social Welfare and Social Work
Table 8.2

The responses to the first two propositions suggest that the questionnaire participants are evenly distributed in terms of their ideological orientation. About 40% of the participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the first proposition and about the same number agreed or strongly agreed. The responses to the second proposition were more polarised, with no neutral answers, but were still evenly distributed with 50% percent on one side and 50% on the other. This suggests that the practitioners were equally divided on the bases and the extent of involvement of government in the provision of social services. The responses to the latter two questions might be considered more definitive with over 55% disagreeing with the proposition that it is unprofessional to join rallies and 100% agreeing that the development of policy is part of social work. But how does this translate to practice?

When asked to name who was primarily responsible for developing new programs and services, only 14 or about 38% of the survey participants identified themselves as having this function. Considering that central to the devolution was the grant of autonomy and discretion to local governments, it is surprising that nine

or 24% of the participants still attributed such power to the DSWD. Altogether, 17 or 45.9% of the participants specified a variety of units and officials other than themselves, ranging from the national DSWD to the Municipal Planning and Development Office. A similar positioning is evident in how practitioners framed their role in policy. Asked to specify 'the most significant policy change' that they have introduced or helped introduce in their local government, 29 or 78% of the 37 survey participants were unable to give any response. Of the eight who did, only two specified what appear to be mildly substantive policy initiatives, namely the promotion of citizen participation in program implementation and evaluation. The promotion of citizen participation is considered only mildly substantive given the complexities of challenging power relations that are embedded in participation debates and the very limited potential for citizen participation considering the confined role in policy and program development that the workers themselves have as mentioned above. The rest of the answers referred to externally originated initiatives such as the adoption of national programs, the provision of assistance to disaster victims, the provision of Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) and the like. The participant who mentioned the AICS actually described her action in a way that invites critical consideration:

> In matters of AICS, we are firm in the office that such services is only for emergency cases not in ordinary situations, and should be limited according to urgent needs only. Otherwise, it will become a precedent for other people. (Annie, 60)

What is evident here is that the participant took pride as her 'most significant policy change' in being able to exercise professional authority, through policy action, to impose exclusionary entitlement rules. On the whole, the practitioners cited no policy initiative that could put them at odds with the established order and dominant interests. The lack of engagement with policy may be reflective of their attitude towards politics in general. An interview participant found wisdom in staying away

from politics altogether as suggested by her mayor who thoughtfully counselled her: '*iba ang pulitika dito… wag kang makiki-alam dito sa pulitika* [politics here is a contentious affair … do not meddle in politics here]' (Stella, 42). And so it seems that there exists an irreconcilable contradiction: practitioners theoretically acknowledge the value of political action but shy away from politics and policy in practice. This seeming contradiction will be teased out later in this chapter.

This section examined the MSWD Officers' construction of social work by exploring the problems they deal with, the interventions they employed and the way they position themselves in relation to politics and policy. We found that the participants do serve populations that experience the kinds of social problems that a structural perspective would call attention to. However, the interventions that are articulated in their practice appear to be individualist and residual in orientation. The way they portray their role suggests that they simply see themselves as implementers of policies and programs, maintaining distance from policy and politics. While MSWD Officers supposedly gained more discretion in the charting of local social welfare policy after the devolution and while they theoretically acknowledge the importance of the political action in practice, their attitude towards politics and their self-ascribed role in local social welfare policy suggest that their actions would be largely confined to the residual/operative level. In itself, the section provides a partial answer to the research question. The data suggests that most of the practitioners view social problems and social work with a residual, individualist orientation. Such a construction of social work and social problems minimises the chances of practitioners encountering competing mandates in their work. For if the problems that they are tasked with are mainly seen as individual problems, then practitioners would find no substantive conflict between the interests of the people they serve and the dominant forces in the established order. If practitioners are not engaged in politics and if the authority over the formulation of social welfare policy lies beyond them, then they themselves would have no imperatives to champion.

With the power to shape policy and develop programs belonging to higher authorities, there will be minimal points of contention.

CONSTRUCTION OF CONFLICTS

The ways by which practitioners manage competing mandates also depend of the conflicts that they perceived. Thus, a key aim of the study was to explore their construction of conflicting mandates in their workplace. There were assumptions about potential sources of conflict that were not supported by the data given by participants. Initially, there was an assumption that the way unit resources were allocated and used may be critical issues for practitioners. In particular, it was thought that the rechannelling of funds or the reallocation of personnel would be politically expedient for many local politicians and that this may be a common source of tension between the practitioners and their superiors. However, the responses of the questionnaire participants seem to suggest otherwise. Asked whether or not any MSWD Office budget was rechannelled to unrelated purposes the previous year, only three or about 8% responded in the affirmative. Moreover, only four or about 11% of participants reported any attrition of position items in the MSWDO in the last five years. Initial talks with potential participants also pointed to patronage politics as one of the sources of tension in the work of MSWD Officers. The more prominent issues revolved around 'unwritten rules' with regard to worker participation in electoral activities in favour of incumbents. Surprisingly, only three or 8% of the participants reported being 'made to participate in activities (for example, rallies or gift-giving) that favoured the incumbent mayor' and only one participant reported being asked to campaign for the re-election of the incumbent. It seems that pressure to engage in partisan activities during elections is not as widespread as initially thought. Similarly, when asked if their immediate superior had ever asked them to 'do something that they felt was demeaning to their professional status' and 'given them an order that was in conflict with professional values and principles', only six or 16% of the questionnaire participants responded in the affirmative to both questions. Another concern thought to be common was abusive treatment in view of

the privileged position of mayors but only one participant reported being verbally abused. The reported frequency of problematic orders ranged from one to three times which suggests that they may not be so common after all. All in all, we found that disputes on the allocation of resources, the imposition of extra-positional responsibilities and maltreatment are not prevalent problems.

But expectations about the administration of services to clients appear to be more in line with initial expectations. Asked if there was 'an unwritten rule to give special consideration to the political supporters of the mayor', eleven or 30% of the participants answered in the affirmative. The survey participants were also asked if there was a risk to their tenure/status if 'they extend assistance to known supporters of the mayor's political rival' and eight or about 22% of them said that there was. These responses suggest that, to a certain extent, there exists an institutionalised informal organisational culture that calls for the use of resources in accordance with the preferences and interests of the mayor. It is in this area where most of the practitioner-perceived conflicts lie. Most of the reports revolved around discretion and autonomy as seen in the following accounts:

> He [asked me to] make a referral letter for a … a private employee who has a decent life… (Hermie, 48)

> I was asked to prepare a social case study for 9 supporters of the mayor for the livelihood grant project amounting to 20,000 pesos each. (Ruth, 31)

> The worst thing is… when they ask [for] help especially in extending AICS. [Although] the Social Worker's assessment is [that the client is] not eligible to avail [of] the assistance… I can't do anything when mayor [tells me] to do so. (Jet, 47)

> As Municipal Social Welfare Officer, I should be given the chance to extend the social services to needy clients regardless of political colour. It was instructed by my mayor to refer to him anything before doing such (things)... (Laurel, 55)

> [I was asked to] Extend financial assistance to the relative[s] of the mayor in terms of medicines. He is the one who assess[ed] the need of the client [and] how much we [should] extend to him or her. (Lorina, 42)

> …the mayor will just order … that [someone] be given AICS although … [the] MSWDO [found] that he was not telling the truth (Annie, 60)

These statements suggest that the most common concern among practitioners is their superiors overriding their discretion over the dispensing of services and provisions. Similar sentiments were echoed by interview and focus group participants. Lamenting how the role of the social work professional has been eroded in the devolved regime, an interviewee explained: '*…nawala na yung social work nating… para tayong duktor na dina-diagnosis…* […the social work that we know, where we are like doctors diagnosing, is gone…]' (Nene, 48). A focus group participant verbalised the same concern saying '*…iyong mga gumagawa ng … certificate of eligibility, hanggang doon na lang kami, pirma… iyong assessment hindi na…* [… the issuance of certificates of eligibility, that is all we do, we just sign them… we no longer do assessments…]'. What is revealing is that most of the responses revolve around judgements over the exclusion rather than the inclusion of citizens as can be gleaned from the responses of two interview participants below:

> '*Di ba tayo, kung sino yung eligible, kung sino lang yung dapat na tulungan, iyon lang? Pero sila, binababali nila iyon, eh.* [Is it not that for us

(social workers), only those who are eligible and deserving are the ones who should get help? But they violate that principle.]' (Lani, 48)

'*Gusto ko yung priority ko yung mahirap. Kaya makakasama doon yung mga nirerefer niyang kliyente na gusto niyang bigyan…* [I want to prioritise the poor. This principle gets compromised when he refers clients that he wants served…] (Lourdes, 50)

Of course, some of the participants may be merely concerned with scarce resources going somewhere else but what seems to bother others is how such practices upset the organisational balance with one interviewee explaining the problem this way:

'*Kami ang mag-aassess… Kami mismo yung magsasabi kung magkano mismo and ibibigay diyan sa tao na iyan pag may nangangailangan, di po ba? …ang nangyayari, sila ang nagsasabi. Nabaliktad!* [We should be the one to assess… It is us who should say exactly how much should be given to a particular person if there is someone in need, is that not right? …what happens is that it is they who dictate. The roles have been reversed!]' (Lani, 48).

In considering the reported conflicts of the practitioners, it is important to point out that, as seen in the discussions in Chapter 2 and the immediately preceding section, professional values and principles and the practice of social work itself can be conservatively constructed. Most of the reported incidents do not involve what may be considered intrusions on discretionary powers that resulted in the denial of services and provisions to deserving citizens. Instead, the main complaints covered discretionary intrusions that forced the extension of services and provisions to people who, in the practitioners' judgements, were not entitled to services. The practitioners were mainly concerned about the undermining of their professional authority and status with the grant of entitlements to what were thought to be

undeserving recipients. In other words, the practitioners were concerned with the conservation of what they saw as their rightful power. Noting earlier discussions, it appears that practitioners are not particularly disturbed when mayors play politics. On the contrary, this may be seen by many as being the exclusive domain of mayors. It is when mayors play social work that practitioners begin to feel unease. This is seen by practitioners as an offensive and an almost intolerable intrusion into their professional sphere. Thus, one way of looking at the situation is to see the conflict as a power struggle not between marginalised people and dominant interests but between professional social workers as a class and what may be termed as a contending class composed of, for lack of a better term, professional politicians personified by mayors. The mayors may be seen as being engaged in the colonisation of social work roles through their mayoral authority and the practitioners defending their professional territory. In such a struggle, no space is given by either social workers or politicians to the people.

Like the previous section, this exploration of practitioner-constructed conflicts provides a partial answer to the research question. The data suggests that only a limited set of participants experience conflicts in mandates in their work under mayors. Of those who do, most refer to orders and expectations that undermined their professional status. The identified problems largely revolve around misgivings over the curtailment of discretionary powers of social workers particularly in terms of the power to exclude citizens from certain privileges. The conflicts can therefore be seen as tensions arising out of a perceived or actual challenge to professional relevance and survival. If the preservation of professional relevance and survival is the impetus for the development of strategies, then the strategies generated by practitioners will revolve around reinforcing their organisational position. This presents problems for structural social work practice. By framing conflicts as disputes over professional discretion and autonomy, practitioners evade what would be considered as more substantive issues from a structural perspective. Moreover,

the actions of practitioners can reinforce some of the oppressive practices and power relations that a structural perspective would challenge.

STRATEGIES

The relatively low number of practitioners who reported receiving problematic orders narrowed down the sources of information for the question on the ways by which practitioners manage conflicts in mandates. But instead of simply looking into the experiences of those who have experienced conflicts, this study considered the practices and contexts of practitioners who have reported no conflicts. This expanded the scope of the study by providing space for the exploration of the research question beyond the context of practitioners in problematic situations. This section will first survey the general ways by which practitioners responded to conflicts before presenting a more in-depth exploration of the practice experience of four practitioners.

Practitioner-Reported Strategies

Survey participants who reported receiving orders that were 'demeaning' or 'in conflict with professional values and principles' were asked to relate how they responded to such orders. They were given a range of choices roughly corresponding to the four role adaptations to conflicting demands of professional and bureaucratic roles identified by Gilbert, Miller and Specht (1980) namely alienation, compliance, resistance and integration. Only thirteen responses were received for this item (see Table 8.3 for details). Of the thirteen responses received, only one reported letting their superior or others make the decision and take action, a response that indicates alienation. No one reported trying to comply with orders without violating values as a sole strategy, something that could be seen as a form of integration. These two strategies represent polarised orientations, the first suggesting that the practitioners feel no commitment for the demands of their professional or organisational roles and the latter suggesting a high commitment to both. Six or 46% of them said that they actively resisted the order while 3 or 23% said that they carried the order as

instructed. As indicated earlier, the former represents a high professional and low bureaucratic orientation while the latter suggests an antipodal profile.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
(1) Actively resisted the order, discussing reasons for doing so	6	46.1
(2) Carried out the order as instructed	3	23.0
(3) Let superiors/others make the decision and take the action	1	7.6
(4) Tried to comply with orders without violating values	0	0.0
(5) Combination of 1 and 4	2	15.3
(6) Combination of 1, 3 and 4	1	7.6
TOTAL	13	100.0

Responses to Demeaning and Questionable Orders
Table 8.3

Given the limited amount of data that came into this section, any interpretation would, at best, be tentative. But what this limited data set seems to suggest is that it is more likely the case that practitioners have a dominant as opposed to a balanced orientation. This implies that MSWD Officers most likely do not deal with internally generated contradictions (that is, contradictions between values and principles that workers hold) as often as they deal with tensions generated by contradictions arising out of externally imposed and enforced mandates. This makes the research question all the more relevant. If most tensions arise out of impositions from mayors who wield substantial power in the local government bureaucracy, are workers not bound to act in certain ways?

Focus group participants maintained that work in local government entailed a special skill in relating with politicians. 'You have to play', and 'you should know how to dance' (suggesting the need to go along with the preferences of the mayor) was how focus group participants phrased it. Considering the power of mayors as discussed in the previous chapter, the practitioners' ability to play is vital for their continued professional survival and the budgetary sustenance of their units. Explaining her compliance, one questionnaire participant expressed fear that the

mayor would take action against her for 'insubordination' if she did not cooperate (Lorina, 42). An interview participant explained that her assistant was favoured by the mayor over her and eventually appointed in her place saying: '*Pag sa akin kung hindi eligible eh ayoko. ... Eh di iyon ang gusto nila yung hawak nila sa leeg, parang robot…* [If it were up to me, I would not grant a service if the person is not eligible. … They prefer her who they hold by the neck like a robot…]' (Nene, 48). The need to maintain a good working relationship with mayors was characterised by one focus group participant as 'developmental politics' – that is, '*namumulitika* [playing politics] … for developmental purposes'. An interview participant elaborated on this by saying: *Kasi kung walang pakinabang sa kanila, hindi ka bibigyan ng funding…* [You see, if there is no benefit to them, you will not get funding…] (Marilyn, 48).

The need for compromises is mitigated by the thought that these were temporary inconveniences, with one questionnaire participant rationalising compromise by saying '*Anyway, there is nothing permanent in politics, except change'* (Annie, 60). This assumption of the permanency of change can be problematic considering how compromises and unquestioning adherence to mayoral authority can reinforce the hierarchical organisational culture and, in the process, sustain the questionable practices they hold to be temporary.

The 'play' and 'dance' need not be active. It can be as simple as avoiding potential points of conflict. Describing the organisational ecology in her municipality, one participant dissociated herself from the rest of the senior staff by saying: '*Talagang inner circle sila. …sila ang tinatawag ng mayor… Pero sila, may transactions sila na kung ano bang hindi mo alam. Hindi ko alam.* [They are really the inner circle. …they are the ones whom the mayor calls… They have transactions of the sort no one knows. I do not know.]' (Marilyn, 48). The precision of her statements trailed off as she steered clear of the topic, sounding as if any such apparent irregular transactions, if any, were none of her business. Other examples of this are featured in the next sub-section.

Having a high professional orientation sets one up for conflict with one's superior which could lead to disciplinary action and so it is surprising, given the centrality of the mayor, to note that resistance as the most oft-quoted strategy among the few who indicated a response. This apparent inconsistency can be accounted for by considering how these participants framed their resistance. An apparently strong professional orientation is evident in how the concerned participants explained their actions. Most of the practitioners pointed to the unassailability of their 'capacity' and 'skill' (Janet, 48), the value of preserving their 'professional' identity (Kaye, 43; Sophie, 50), the sanctity of their professional 'ethics', 'principles' and 'values' (Jet, 47; Milaine, 44; Perpie, 46). Some simply saw the differences as a result of the lack of 'knowledge' (Anissa, 46) or understanding of social work on the part of mayors, requiring only that workers 'explain well' (Mia, 48) to their mayors the nuances of their work. From these perspectives, resistance on the basis of professional principles is framed by practitioners as a manifestation of competence and commitment to their organisation in the form of adherence to one's designated role and responsibilities and not disloyalty. With this comes no acknowledgement or recognition of irreconcilable interests and values. Instead, practitioners' resistances simply amount to reclaiming their formally conferred authority in the local government bureaucracy.

The Practice and Contexts of Four Practitioners

A more in-depth exploration of the practice of social workers will give us insights as to how practitioners conduct themselves in relation to their work and their superiors. Four practitioners were interviewed for this purpose, two of whom reported experiencing no problem in relation to their mayors while the other two reported conflicts with their mayors over what appeared to be among the more substantive issues reported by survey participants. The way the practitioners talked about their work and the challenges they face illustrate some of the dynamics that come into play in the management of competing mandates.

Of the two who reported no conflict with their superior, one could identify no specific work-related challenge or problem except that intercessions from municipal council members or the mayor on behalf of certain persons made it difficult for them to prioritise what are thought of as more deserving clients. Stella (42) emphasised the value of good communication and coordination in maintaining a smooth working relationship with her superior. She said she tries to accommodate requests from her mayor for the extension of services and provisions to his political allies as far as practicable so long as it does not violate policies. She added however that her mayor has never really insisted on anything, explaining that the mayor was not able to exert too much pressure on her since most of their funds that they had at that time did not come from the local government. They reportedly were given 700,000 Philippine pesos by the municipal government for that year which was well below the two million pesos they were getting from the national government for the implementation of a special program which became the focus of their efforts. If the situation was reversed, she said she doubts if the mayor would be as restrained as he was. While acknowledging that there were unwritten expectations to deny services and provisions to citizens who did not support the mayor, Stella (42) argued that all she needed to do was to give a good explanation to the mayor. The main problem she identified in her community was poverty which she attributed to the low educational attainment of the population. Her key roles were '*pag-a-identify ng mga tao na talagang nangangailangan* [to identify people who really need help]', '*nag-i-screen* [screening]' them, and serving as intermediary between the mayor and citizens. '*Pag sinabi ng mga tao na baka sila'y hindi pag-bigyan ni mayor dahil hindi sila kay mayor bomoto, kami yung nagpapaliwanang kay mayor*' [If some people are apprehensive that the mayor may not grant their request because they did not vote for him, we are the ones who explain to the mayor], she said.

Although she has not had any conflict with her superior, Minnie (43) complained about their low budget and the lack of 'transparency' in budget allocation which she blamed on the budget officer. As with Stella, good

communication was key to the maintenance of a good working relationship with her mayor. She said that she involved the mayor to the furthest extent possible in all the activities of her office, inviting the mayor and orienting her about their programs and services from time to time, and making sure that she never bypasses her. She recalled with a deep sense of pride how the former mayor, the incumbent's husband, described her as '*ang akong empleyado nga masulundon* [my obedient employee]'. '*Dili magbuut-buot* [She does not do as she pleases]', she quoted him as saying. Low income and limited livelihood opportunities were the main social problems facing her populace. Apparently, these problems which she attributed to the remoteness of their location, poor roads and drought were not among the most pressing concerns she dealt with on a daily basis. On average, most of her time – about '80%' according to her – is spent monitoring day care centres while the rest goes to administering services. Minnie intimated that the mayor's family dominates town politics and vote-buying determined the outcome of elections but these apparently were not issues that took any of her time.

The top three social problems in Sharon's (50) municipality were: poverty, prostitution and drugs. According to her, these problems persist mainly because people were unaware of or were indifferent to them and partly because of the misprioritisation of services as a result of interventions from the mayor. She said she found it particularly frustrating when the mayor tells her to extend services or assistance to people who she thought were not entitled to such assistance. She did try to resist such orders but this only incensed the mayor. This was perhaps among the reasons behind the mayor's attempt to remove her from her position three years earlier. The mayor reportedly filed trumped-up criminal and administrative charges and, at one time, padlocked her office and suspended her for two months. The cases were eventually decided in her favour and she was reinstated but, since then, her unit has had to subsist on a very meagre budget. As if this was not enough, the mayor would sometimes block the release of allocated funds which placed her in compromising situations on several occasions. She learned to cope by setting up an

alternative fund drawn from her private network in the municipality. This is the fund she relies on. The mayor purportedly prioritises infrastructure because he was in the construction business himself and most of the public infrastructure projects end up with his construction firm. But this, however, was apparently not among her official concerns. 'Casework' on mostly marital and family concerns was what took up most of Sharon's time.

Anne (46) blamed 'dirty politics' for most of her troubles, particularly mayoral interventions in the administration of services. There were imposed limitations on the service she can extend to people who could not be '*masaligdan sa election* [relied upon in elections]' by the mayor (Anne, 46). Just to secure a certificate of indigency which enable citizens to access discounted medical services and medicines could be a problem for someone who was identified with the '*kabila* [the other side]' because the mayor often opts not to sign them. She said that all she could do in such situations is to work covertly such as by asking someone else to bring in the documents for signature although she knew that helping a supporter of the mayor's political rival could cost her job. Conversely, the mayor would sometimes tell her '*Unahon mo ni i-serve kay 100% ko dira...* [Serve this (area) first because I got 100% from there…]' or '*Tagaan ta siyang priority kay mga tao ko ni diri…* [Prioritise them because these are my people]' (Anne, 46). The mayor reportedly intervenes in favour of political allies in the handling of special cases such as those involving sexual abuse and rape. As a general rule, the mayor wanted limited engagement with such cases. Just a week before the interview, the mayor reportedly called on Anne three times to make sure that she kept her hands off a case of child sexual and physical abuse involving a teacher. Apparently, he was doing it as a favour to his office assistant who was the spouse of the school principal. Anne did refer the family to proper agencies and authorities but denied doing anything and feigned ignorance when the mayor confronted her. Besides this, Anne also intimated how her mayor profited from their Core Shelter Program and financial aid to indigents. She had been verbally abused by the mayor several times before and to avoid further conflicts, she said she chooses

not to question the irregular transactions that accompany the administration of the Core Shelter Program and financial aid to indigents. In the case of the financial assistance to indigents, she opted to perfunctorily sign all the documents and vouchers which allow the mayor to extract financial profits. This, according to Anne, is where most of her time is spent.

A comparison of the experiences of these four practitioners indicates that workers can face similar work-related problems (like low budget and mayoral intervention) yet have different working relationships with their respective mayors. It appears that perceived conflicts can be generated in the absence of a structural perspective. All four workers projected a conservative construction of work as suggested by their preoccupation with circumscribed tasks such as the monitoring of day care centres, the screening of clients, casework, preparation of case studies and dispensing of provisions. Most of their analyses of social problems seem to reflect a non-structural perspective, with an emphasis given to natural causes and personal deficiencies. Also noticeable is how workers selectively responded to the problems they identified. Apart from volunteering the information on the predominance of vote-buying, Minnie gave no indication that she was actively concerned with the problem. Besides mentioning the apparent corruption and irregularities involving their mayors and the use of municipal resources, both Sharon and Anne basically steered clear of such issues. However, a contrast in the strategies between those who reported no conflict with their mayors and those who did can be noted. Both Minnie and Stella emphasised good communication while Sharon and Anne resorted to covert action. In line with the critical perspective employed in this study and at the risk of devaluing the efforts of the practitioners, it is necessary to point out the shortcomings of the way they position themselves and the strategies they employ. 'Good communication' can only go so far in resolving the problem of mayoral interventions in the screening of clients, the handling of cases, and the administration of social welfare services. Moreover, the way Stella saw herself as a vital intermediary between citizens and their mayor conjures up images of a powerful

intercessor not unlike the Virgin Mary and the Christian saints who, in this predominantly Roman Catholic society, represent the common person's revered access to God Almighty. From this perspective, social work becomes a source and symbol of power. Such a position in the local bureaucratic order then becomes a space for professionals to claim and advance if they themselves are to remain potent helpers. Even the resistance mounted by Sharon and Anne falls short of challenging the bases for how mayors can impose patently questionable orders with impunity. The strategies employed by practitioners with and without problems, it seems, cannot adequately support social work practice anchored on a structural perspective.

EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES

The exploration of the Philippine local government practice environment in the previous chapter showed a mandate and practice milieu where problems in the practice of social work can be generated by a structural perspective. We noted, however, that the generation of the challenges is contingent on the ideological perspective of practitioners. In this chapter, we examined the MSWD Officers' construction of social work, the conflicts they encounter in working with mayors, and the strategies they employ to manage the conflicts. It was noted that practitioners generally held an individualist view of practice which, in itself, would preclude the generation of conflicts that could arise from a structural perspective. By pre-empting the occurrence of conflicts, their construction of social work, in effect, serves as a passive strategy for managing some of the conflicts that a structural perspective would generate. In constructing social work within the parameters of the dominant ideology, practitioners ignore some crucial issues that could be raised by a structural perspective such as questions concerning the state's role and responsibilities in relation to social welfare and citizen rights. As their construction of their work hinted, most workers experienced no conflict or tension in their work in relation to the expectations and demands of mayors.

The practitioners' constructions of conflicts also suggest that a key assumption behind the research question was not well founded. It was assumed that practitioners experience tensions as they grapple with organisational demands and expectations that are grossly incongruent with what they see as their disciplinal mandates. As it turns out, there is not much problem in this area. It appears that there is a general agreement between what is demanded by their organisational mandates and what they view as their professional responsibilities which, as we saw earlier in this chapter, are largely confined to the operative level and revolve around the dispensing of packaged programs and services. The main point of contention, if there is any, is where the authority and power resides. The few reported conflicts were mostly in the form of misgivings over perceived intrusions into their professional domain and the erosion of their professional status and identity. The few practitioners who found themselves apparently at odds with mayors were not really concerned about questionable ideological orientations as they were with maintaining their position and power within the prevailing organisational order. This brings us back to the seemingly irreconcilable contradiction noted earlier about the practitioners' theoretical valuing of political action and its apparent absence in practice. It seemed puzzling to note that while most practitioners considered engagement in mass action and policy development as integral parts of practice, they apparently were not actively engaged in them. But if we look back at the practitioners' construction of social work and of conflicts, we find that the participants do actively engage in politics and do advance certain notions that shape local social welfare policy. In their arguments against unwanted intrusions from the mayors, practitioners are in effect asserting their political space in the form of their professional territory. And the scope of this territory, as we have seen in the discussion of their construction of social work, is bounded by the parameters of expertise that they have staked themselves such as knowing the right kinds of values (like their unexamined claim of knowledge on marital relations and parenting) and having exclusive ownership of the proper training, skills and authority to assess individuals towards the end of denying or according to them certain citizen

privileges and entitlements. In short, they engage in politics and policy development to the extent that this is demanded by their institutionally prescribed mandate as well as their self-ascribed professional expertise in the realm of residual, individualist intervention. Any intrusion into this field becomes a rallying point for action. But beyond this are political territories, policy concerns and powers that lie outside professional competence and properly reside in other institutions and groups. We can therefore look at the construction of social work and of the conflicts practitioners face in practice within the power ecology of the Philippine political economy. The claim of professional competence and expertise constitute an assertion of political space and power over others. Thus, the very construction of social work itself by practitioners can form part of the reproduction and perpetuation of privilege in a social order where privilege matters. In this process, practitioners help maintain inequality and oppression.

The strategies that practitioners employ in managing the challenges that could be generated by a structural perspective generally fail to question the organisational ecology and social order that creates some of the conflicts in the first place. This applies even to those who worked covertly because, as they do so, they largely leave unchallenged the questionable practices and unequal relations that allow such practices to occur. The authority and excesses of the mayor who imposed a 'hands-off' policy on such cases as child sexual abuse in the case of Anne, for example, went unquestioned even as the mayor further entrenched himself with the patronage he dispensed to new and evermore indebted allies. The resistance of workers through their insistence on professional autonomy and discretion leans more towards an affirmation of the status quo as they themselves struggle to appropriate space and negotiate their accommodation in the established order. Recalling the cases cited in the introductory chapter of the town mayors who espoused a high-handed approach towards suspected criminals and youthful offenders, most of the strategies that have been named would prove wanting. Ensuring good communication and coordination with the mayors (which may require the exclusion of sensitive topics), covertly

helping individual victims and their families, constructing social work so as to exclude the issue of human rights, and asserting one's professional status and identity all fail to challenge the fact that the mayor is openly able to compromise the human rights of citizens. The prospect brings to mind the failure of mainstream social work to contest the flagrant violation of human rights under martial law as discussed in Chapter 6. The predominant ways by which practitioners manage competing mandates largely leave unequal relations and practices unchallenged. It is hardly conceivable how such kinds of practice could reshape the Philippine political economy (as outlined in Chapter 4) that, in the first instance, merits a structural practice of social work and, in the second instance, makes for the precarious environment for practice of MSWD Officers.

MSWD Officers manage the challenges that can be raised by a structural construction of social work in at least two ways and levels of reflexivity (or the amount of thought and consideration). The accounts of practitioners show that challenges can be avoided or mitigated reflexively or non-reflexively. These dimensions are juxtaposed in Table 8.4 which contains examples from earlier discussions given in each cross section. The strategy of those who make it a point to ensure good communication and coordination with their mayors appear to be both reflexive and aversive. The strategy of those who resorted to covert action and ignored irregularities appears to be reflexive and mitigative. There are strategies that can either be reflexive or non-reflexive such as the conflict pre-emptive strategy of constructing social work in conservative terms consistent with the dominant ideology. The concern over the erosion of professional discretion can also be reflexive or non-reflexive ways of mitigating the challenges that a structural perspective would raise.

Of equal importance to the strategies are the motivations that generate them. We found that aside from being informed by concerns over citizen interests and

welfare, the responses of social workers to the challenges posed by their practice environment can also be informed by their very own interests.

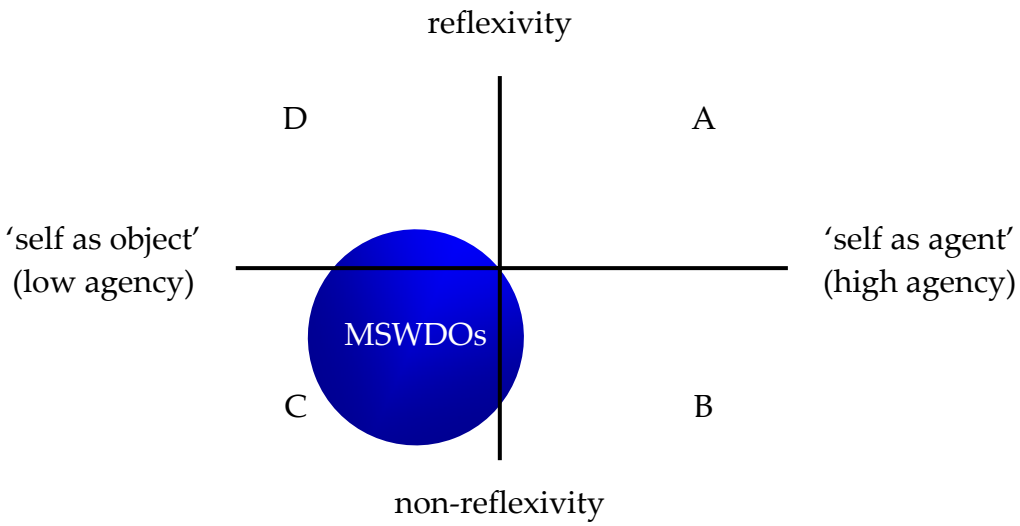
		Ways	
		Avoidance	**Mitigation**
Reflexivity	**Reflexive**	Maintain communication/ coordination Construct work in conservative terms	Undertake covert action Ignore irregularities Construct conflicts in conservative terms
	Non-Reflexive	Construct work in conservative terms Hold conservative values Gain fiscal autonomy	Construct conflicts in conservative terms Locate conflicts elsewhere

Juxtaposed Strategy Options
Table 8.4

In the absence of patently critical strategies in the accounts of practitioners, the question behind the research question remains unanswered. The research question was prompted by a structural construction of social work, one that could conceivably pit practitioners against dominant interests and powers, such as those represented by mayors. If practitioners acted decisively in the practice situation cited above, it is likely that they would end up with the fate of the six displaced practitioners featured in the previous chapter. How then can practitioners with a structural view of social work manage competing mandates in practice environments like those of Philippine MSWD Offices where the centrality of the mayor's powers pose an ever-present threat to one's tenure?

The accounts of the study participants do not provide a direct answer to the question. To answer the question, we need to go back to the data. The first thing we need to consider is the agency of practitioners. If we are to plot the agency of MSWD Officers within the local government bureaucracy in terms of Hogget's (2001) model, it seems to be primarily within quadrant C as shown by the shaded area in Figure

8.1. The accounts of practitioners show that their level of reflexivity can vary although the predominant conservative construction of social work would conceivably constrain it to a lower level. The limited extent to which practitioners can impose their will on their practice environment, given the extent of the power of mayors, largely confines MSWD Officers to a 'self as object' level of agency. While this suggests that practitioners have a limited reflexive control over their practice environment, relegating them almost as mere subjects, their experiences show that they do have control over their actions and their environment to some potentially significant extent.



Plotted Agency of MSWD Officers
Figure 8.1

The ways by which MSWD Officers manage conflicts that can be generated by a structural perspective cannot be seen solely in terms of a strict, objectivist model of agency. It is helpful to note that while 'rocking the boat' could very well lead to the removal of a practitioner, the experiences of MSWD Officers show that their actions are not mechanistically governed by unassailable rules of conduct. The accounts of practitioners show that they do have control over their actions. The emphasis on good communication by some practitioners, the use of alternative resources, and the surreptitious extension of service done by others clearly illustrate this. Recognition of this control is important because it is only when practitioners start seeing themselves

as active, creative agents, and not passive objects, that they would find value in pursuing reflexive action which is the basis for any purposive strategy. The same examples above show a level of agency that slightly extends beyond that of 'self as object' in the way Stella and Sharon's relative fiscal autonomy partially reconfigured the playing field, so to speak, allowing them more leverage in their transactions with their mayors. These examples show that practitioners can and do shape their practice environments to some extent which leads us to a partial but crucial answer to the question behind the research question.

The servility of MSWD Officers and of local government staff in general, epitomised by Minnie's unapologetic sycophantic attitude in being *masulundon* (obedient), reflects their subservient position in relation to mayors. The overriding power of mayors is what makes the research question relevant and this may be where the solution lies. In the context of local government units, such level of power may be borne by policy, in which case appropriate policy action can be taken by practitioners to remedy the situation. However, apart from possibly being embedded in policy, the power imbalance is also embodied in the workers themselves, their organisation and the larger social order.

Habitus plays an important part in the obsequious 'play' and 'dance' that MSWD Officers (and apparently most local government staff) do within the local government bureaucracy. While their habitus marks their slavish status, it is also this that gives them the 'feel for the game' which allows them to produce the appropriate actions needed to stay in the game. One can very well imagine the fate of a practitioner who fails to kowtow and say 'yes' on cue. Given the gross power imbalance in local government bureaucracies, the play in this setting requires finesse in the ability to produce actions at the right moment and in the right manner in the way Anne's gut feel, for example, told her if it was a 'good day' or not. It is only by their impeccable sense of timing and judgement that practitioners are able to hurdle the day-to-day loyalty tests constituting a veritable Damoclean sword over their

heads. In this sense, the practitioners who manage to retain their position for decades could be considered, to borrow a term from Bourdieu (1990a: 11), 'virtuosos' who have a mastery of the rituals, symbols, practices and the general 'art of living' in local government bureaucracies characterised by hierarchy. However, it should be pointed out that the habitus of practitioners does not evolve and operate in a vacuum. How practitioners end up doing what they do is not a purely deterministic process but neither is it purely random or arbitrary. It comes with daily iterations and rehearsals of the rituals, practices and symbols played out and affirmed in, among other fields of practice, the hierarchical organisational order in local governments. Those who do not have the right habitus may not even be given the chance to join the organisation and occupy a position in the first place. In view of this, it could be argued that a change strategy confined at the level of practitioners would be inadequate. If any change is to take place, there would have to be changes at the level of the organisation as well which relates to what Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) refer to as administrative level interventions. Yet others would go on to argue that both the habitus of practitioners and their organisational culture evolve out of and merely reflect the larger social order, invoking the need for societal and policy level interventions as specified by Jamrozik and Nocella. From this viewpoint, for MSWD Officers to work towards simply changing their organisational culture would also be inadequate because the organisational culture of local government bureaucracies does not author but merely reinforces their embodied reflexes even as it is reinforced by their practice. The habitus of MSWD Officers, as with other local government staff, comes from a lifetime of training and practice in the larger society. It was since childhood (and not only at the time that they joined the local government bureaucracy) when practitioners began to be ingrained with the skills and reflexes that today define their virtuosity. In a way, the organisational culture and habitus of MSWD Officers may be seen as merely reaffirming each other in sync with the larger social order. And so the solution, it would seem, is instantly inaccessible to the practitioners. From the purview of the here-and-now, that may be so but the experiences of the practitioners evince the potency of strategic vision and action.

The actions or, from another viewpoint, inaction of practitioners help shape their organisational and social environments. To paraphrase Hogget, practitioners 'do produce the structures which provide the conditions for (their) own agency' (Hogget 2001: 51). While their organisational environment makes it seem that they are subjects of serfdoms lorded over by mayors, they contribute to the preservation of the order that makes their struggle necessary to begin with through the ways they construct and practice social work and in the manner in which they iteratively assert themselves and claim control over the conservative role appropriated for them. Their very claim to professional expertise can reaffirm, reinforce and recreate inequalities within their work and social environment and help sustain some of the very conditions and system of relations that necessitate structural social work.

CHAPTER 9

MANAGING MANDATES, MANAGING TO SURVIVE

Kung ano ang itinamin ay siyang aanihin. (What was sown is what will be reaped.) – Filipino proverb

One of the first and perhaps most enduring lessons Filipinos learn about Jose Rizal, the quintessential national hero, is how his mother inculcated the value of obedience through the story of the moth and the lamp. As the story goes, a moth warns one of its offspring not to fly too closely to the lamp lest it burn its wings but the younger moth, enamoured by the flickering light, fails to heed the older moth's counsel and flies too close to the flame, thereby plunging to its death. A more subtle yet equally poignant wisdom from this tale points to the folly of tempting fate. Like the moth, Rizal did not heed his mother's counsel and tempted fate. But careful as he was in appearing not to directly challenge the established order, colonial authorities saw through him and saw to his death. Had he obediently kept the wisdom of his mother, he may have lived to a ripe old age. But then he would have had to live with the disquieting inequities that so disturbed him. Given the record of human rights and politics in recent Philippine history, to tread the path of a structural perspective would be tantamount to playing with fire. What would happen if the practitioners of social work today were faced explicitly with a similar choice as Rizal did? One is led to wonder if such professionals would live to tell the tale.

This chapter summarises what has been accomplished through the study and surveys what lies beyond it. A review of the study (its rationale, the research question, the perspective and the approach) will be made. The review will be followed by a summary of the study's findings and an appraisal of their implications for social work practice and education. The chapter ends with a note on directions for practice and further research.

THE STUDY

This study explored the ways by which social workers manage competing organisational and professional demands, both of which are intrinsic elements of social work practice. The ways by which social work professionals manage such demands is important because they have implications for the practice of social work and the provision of social welfare benefits and entitlements to citizens. The study focused on social work practice in Philippine municipalities where social workers serving as MSWD Officers are under the direct control and supervision of municipal mayors. The local government bureaucracy was hypothesised as a potentially challenging practice environment, particularly for those acting on the basis of a structural perspective and concerned with politics and the balance of power, considering how it placed the social worker in direct day-to-day contact with mayors who may be seen as representing the established order and dominant interests. The devolution of local social welfare and development services from the national government to local governments gave the latter more power and control over the administration of local social welfare policy thereby placing many policy decisions firmly within the organisational and administrative domains of the practitioners. While the devolution was promoted as a democratising and empowering process where the discretion and autonomy granted to local governments would result in more responsive programs and services, the accounts from practitioners point to the erosion of local social welfare initiatives as they give way to the interests and preferences of mayors as parties of interest and as agents of political power.

The research question posed in this study was: In what ways do social workers working as Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in the Philippines manage competing mandates? This question was raised within the broader Philippine political-economic context and was informed by a particular construction of social work.

At the outset, a structural perspective was outlined to serve as the analytical framework for the critical approach employed in this study. The outline of a structural construction of social work pointed to the significance of the political-economic context, particularly in how it shapes constructions of realities and relations. This construction, set against the Philippine political-economic milieu, was argued as being at odds with the practice context and the mainstream construction of the profession. A review of the mainstream construction of Philippine social work established how a conservative construction of social work resulted in practice that fails to challenge but instead legitimises inequality.

A structural construction frames social work as political, with the practice of social work being in and of itself an exercise of power. This construction points to the generative potential of social work and the political significance of the choices that practitioners make. This study of social work in Philippine municipalities illustrates some of the ways by which practitioners construct their practice and respond to the challenges posed by their practice environment. Their accounts of responses and strategies provide a rich source of lessons and insights which can be drawn from a critical analysis of their practice. Before moving any further, there are key limitations of this study that must be taken into account in order to put in perspective any discussion of the study's findings and implications.

FINDINGS

In critically examining social work from a structural perspective, the study underscored the importance of the political-economic context in shaping social policy and social work practice. The study uncovered three important themes, namely (1) that Philippine social welfare policy and social work practice are historically and materially rooted in the Philippine society's colonial past and neo-colonial present, (2) that social work practitioners can be thought of as a class with a set of collective interests around self-preservation and the advancement of disciplinal status and territory; and (3) that this professional identity can shape their construction and practice of social work and their response to the demands that could be placed on them by their organisational and larger social order. The literature review outlined the historical and political-economic foundations of Philippine social welfare policy, characterised by a residual, individualist orientation. It also portrayed a conservative construction of mainstream social work. The review revealed the interplay between the country's colonial experiences, the unequal relations marking contemporary Philippine society and the place ascribed to social work within the established order. It was noted that a critical perspective was conspicuously absent in mainstream social work accounts of Philippine social welfare history, policy and practice. One of the more immediate outcomes of this study is its contribution to the building of a critical discourse in Philippine social work.

This study of social work practice in Philippine municipal governments confirmed the initial suppositions held by the researcher about this field of practice. An examination of the policy and organisational environment of MSWD Officers revealed that social work practitioners operating from a structural perspective are bound to encounter difficulties in negotiating their mandate and the dominant organisational culture in Philippine municipalities. The establishment-ascribed mandate of MSWD Officers and the post-devolution policy regime form a constricted work environment, with their functions confined to residual interventions even as collective and rights-based principles embodied in the previous nationally-

administered social welfare and development programs and services are being continually eroded in the devolved regime. With powers centred on mayors in a hierarchical organisational order, the local government bureaucracy itself becomes a challenge for the practice of structural social work.

The examination of the practitioners' construction of social work, however, suggests that they do not necessarily encounter some of the tensions and conflicts that can be raised by a structural perspective. The study found a conservative, operative level orientation in how they constructed social work interventions and their role in local governance and social welfare administration. The interventions specified by the participants in relation to certain practice problems were, by and large, residual and individualist in orientation, focusing on individual inadequacies, while a structural view would have underscored for them the need for structural interventions. The practitioners mainly saw themselves as implementers (as against crafters) of social policies and programs which distances them from any conflict that may be generated by ideological differences attending the formulation of social welfare policy and program directions. The examination revealed a conservative construction of social work practice that, in a way, precludes practitioners from sensing the tensions and conflicts that a structural perspective would generate. The problems that would be raised by a structural perspective would largely be unproblematic from such a construction and a corresponding unproblematic positioning by practitioners would occur. The tensions and conflicts that would be generated by a structural construction need not be avoided or ignored because, from a conservative construction, no such tensions and conflicts exist.

The examination of the few reported conflicts belied a key initial assumption. The research question had placed the conflicts within social workers as ethical dilemmas over competing values with which they identify. However, most of the reported conflicts pointed to concerns over professional status and identity. Rather than being in conflict with mayors over ideological matters relating to egalitarian,

collective and rights-based principles in line with a structural construction of social work as discussed in Chapter 2, practitioners framed conflicts as contentions over professional discretion and autonomy as seen in the way they struggled to assert their professional authority to exclude citizens from services. The conflicts constructed by the few practitioners who reported conflicts were mainly about power – their power – particularly in relation to their struggle to maintain and assert their place and position of privilege in the local government bureaucracy, without necessarily providing space for the interests of citizens. It was noted that such a construction of conflicts also served as a way for practitioners to purposely or inadvertently manage the challenges that could be generated by a structural perspective. It allows practitioners to overlook important issues and advancing claims that could more easily be accommodated by the established order such as the grant of more power and authority to social work professionals.

Finally, the examination of the strategies reported by practitioners in managing conflicts pointed to conservative responses. Summing up the findings with reference to the theoretical propositions informing this study as outlined in Chapter 1, it was found that practitioners reflexively or non-reflexively employed various strategies to protect their professional discretion and autonomy over their institutionally-defined mandate that is largely confined to operative level interventions. Even among those who reported resisting orders that were at odds with their professional values and discretion, practitioners failed to directly challenge the organisational arrangements that allowed such orders and expectations to be imposed upon them in the first place. Instead, practitioners resorted to covert, evasive actions that, on the one hand, allowed them to fulfil their self-ascribed professional responsibilities to a certain extent but, on the other hand, left unchallenged or strengthened the primacy of mayors in the local government hierarchy. Altogether, the ways by which social workers overlook, sidestep or mitigate the challenges that could be raised by a structural construction of social work in their practice setting evince a conservative stance.

The conservative stance of practitioners was linked with their habitus. Practitioners displayed a markedly subservient attitude towards mayors even in the way they resisted, tending to accommodate mayors even as they struggled to make do with whatever little they were given or left with. It must be stressed that Philippine mayors cannot really be thought of as despotic. In fact, most would probably be extremely pleasant to interact with in public. This may seem contradictory to the picture that has been painted by the accounts of the practitioners as put together in this study but it need not necessarily be so. Given the prominent place that mayors occupy in Philippine society, a tyrannical stance would not be necessary. Mayors do not have to fiercely and vigilantly impose their will because, as the way things are, it is not necessary for them to do so. With hierarchical political power and social relations being part of the social fabric of Philippine society, instilling discipline is not necessary because subordinates are there to discipline themselves. In the analysis of the strategies that practitioners employ in managing competing mandates, we found that, more often than not, they do not find the need to do so and, when they do, it is not to challenge disadvantage or inequality. Such disposition is not surprising. It was argued in Chapters 4 and 5 that inequality underpins contemporary Philippine social welfare policy and practice. With inequality taken as a given, the accommodation of questionable demands and expectations from the mayor, even to the detriment of the interests of citizens, would not be unbecoming. In the process, however, they recreate and reinforce the dynamics and systems of relations that a structural construction would aim to challenge.

In the absence of distinctively critical strategies that could be directly drawn from the experiences and accounts of the practitioners, a critical analysis of the agency and reflexivity of practitioners was made. The experiences and accounts of practitioners showed that they were largely confined to a low reflexivity, 'self as object' agency within the local government bureaucracy. But it was argued that, in

spite of this, there was space for action and change. The structural perspective pointed to changes needed in the workers themselves, their work environment and larger society. This leads us to a number of implications for social work practice and education.

The experiences of MSWD Officers show that social workers do not operate in a vacuum. Social work is undertaken within organisations shaped by the larger political-economic context. Such environments mould and constrain social work practice by dictating what the problems are and how the problems are to be framed and addressed. The context sets the standards by which one's efficacy as a professional is valued and, in effect, the practice context limits the range of actions that can be legitimately pursued. Through this process, dominant ideologies shape practice. And so, in a sense, the practice context defines the profession and the values that it represents.

Necessarily, practitioners learn to orient themselves towards the organisational environment. Their ability to be attuned to the rhythm of the workplace helps them enter it (with a key screening criteria for many jobs being the 'ability to work in a team environment') and retain their jobs. Embedded in organisations such as those in Philippine municipal bureaucracies are values that, more often than not, do not complement the principles underpinning a structural construction of social work such as collegiality and equality. Having evolved within the larger societal order, social welfare organisations may reflect and embody dominant values such as hierarchy, status, and privilege. The organisational environment, within the larger order, can therefore orient practitioners to a set of values, practices and principles, such as the preservation of the organisational order, distinct from that of structural social work. With employment security and chances for professional advancement attached to one's ability to abide by such values, practitioners who may have been theoretically trained in structural social work can end up being reoriented or, more precisely, disoriented. The result may be a loss of

sense of direction in terms of the bases for evaluating practice and one's efficacy. This has implications for social work practice in Philippine municipalities, in Philippine society in general and for social work education.

IMPLICATIONS

A key starting point is to recognise the centrality of the mayor's power within Philippine municipalities and to acknowledge this not as a given but as a legitimate point of contention in practice. This may not make much sense to practitioners who only see their role as being confined to what they have been traditionally mandated to do which is to dispense provisions and services that meet residual needs. But a critical view of practice would ask: 'Who defines this mandate?' and 'Who determines to what extent such specified mandate is fulfilled by the workers?'

Under the *modus vivendi* in Philippine municipalities, the mayor's preferences and interests primarily serve as the index by which decisions and actions of practitioners are measured against. The competence of professionals is ultimately judged on the basis of their ability to meet the demands and expectations of mayors. When what pleases the mayor and what the mayor approves of become the primary reference points for action, practitioners will have to orient themselves to the established code of conduct and discipline. Such a code, marked by hierarchy and status, need not be totally disorienting for most practitioners whose upbringing and life-long socialisation came about in a social environment that mirrors the organisational environment that they find themselves in. But practitioners holding a structural view of social work would certainly find problems in the practice environment in Philippine municipalities. If, as Lipsky (1980) asserts, professionals construct policy by their practice, then the organisational culture in Philippine municipalities would be problematic and unacceptable. By working within the mayors' preferences and interests, practitioners would only be reaffirming dominant ideologies and legitimising the status quo.

The investigation of the strategies employed by practitioners in dealing with conflicts established that resistance and covert action are not sufficient indicators of critical practice. Their accounts show that professional values can be conservative and resistance can be uncritical. The experiences of MSWD Officers tell us that social workers can focus on status and privilege and leave unquestioned the conditions that create problems in their work. In a way, it is similar to the resistance put up by some of Marcos' foes with the view of wresting power from him without the intent of changing the political-economic conditions that gave rise to the dictatorship. Like mainstream social work under martial law (as discussed in Chapter 6), MSWD Officers can have self-serving values and interests that are shaped around the prevailing political order and dominant ideology. There are ways of dealing with this. Reflective self-awareness can help practitioners generate an awareness of these values (Mattison 2000). Those who have taken refuge in silence can start by finding their voice as an act of resistance in itself (Hooks 1989).

The analysis also pointed to the need to transcend the habitus of subservience. The actions of MSWDOs do not only embody the mandates and purpose of their organisations, they evolve it. From a structural perspective, practitioners can be the target as much as the medium for interventions. This is not as simple as it seems. Habitus does not refer to the wilful observance of norms and rules as much as embodied reflexes. As Bourdieu's (1990a, 1990b) theory suggests, what marks their excellence is their elegance in improvisation, not mechanical execution. This is seen in how Anne, confronted with competing mandates, dextrously negotiates dilemmas by undertaking covert action even as she upholds the mayor's preferences and abided by his rules. Thus, it is not simply a matter for the professional to decide to act differently. To ask Anne to openly challenge and override the legitimacy of the mayor's orders and authority would be like asking an experienced cyclist to take a fall. While it is possible, one would need to practice. Obviously, the local government bureaucracy is not the most conducive venue for such practice. Since the local government unit is not amenable to such practice, practitioners may have to start

with venues where they have more 'self as agent' agency (that is, where they have more power to influence their environment) like within their units in relation to their staff and the citizens they work with, in their family, in their circle of friends and acquaintances, and perhaps in their community. In the process, practitioners can create a counter culture where the emerging habitus can be cultivated.

MSWD Officers, however, cannot simply choose to transcend the limits imposed by their practice environment. A delicate balance must be struck. On one hand, practitioners with a structural perspective would want to resist disorientation in order to keep their agenda in sight, but on the other hand they would have to develop and orient themselves with the reflexes that can help them maintain their presence in the local government organisation. If individual changes are to be sustained, there would have to be corresponding changes in the culture of the organisation and the larger society. But with the centrality of the mayor, loyalty plays an important part in the professional survival of practitioners in local government units. When their loyalty comes into question, practitioners can be constructively dismissed or sidelined. Either way, they can be effectively disciplined with no reliable source of relief as far as their accounts reveal. The rulings of the Civil Service Commission, for example, are mainly recommendatory in relation to local government officials but mandatory in relation to employees. Countless inventive ways can be found to subdue recalcitrant workers. Direct confrontation, therefore, would not work in all situations all the time. Given the extent of powers that mayors hold, such a strategy could be professionally and even literally fatal. Given their weak position, practitioners may have to skilfully harness the strategies and resources within their reach to work towards changes in line with a structural perspective. Jamrozik and Nocella (1998) point to the importance of administrative and policy level interventions.

The accounts of practitioners suggest that they can work towards reconfiguring the balance of power within the local government environment. With

organisations being in a perennial state of becoming, social workers can make their workplace amenable to human intervention in line with the fulfilment of social change through their 'everyday practice' and day-to-day activities (Hough 1999: 52). An important step is for practitioners to rethink their role in local social welfare administration. Practitioners need to have their own vision that is independent of the local decision makers and more in line with structural social work. Otherwise, they are left with only that of their mayors. As it is, local social welfare and development initiatives are contingent on administration changes. The fact that local social welfare initiatives are virtually subject to the whims of mayors raises the spectre of an erratic, uneven, unassured and iniquitous response from government to people's social welfare needs across the archipelago. This can lead to equity and access issues which cannot be adequately dealt with myopically, within the confines of their traditionally-ascribed functions and the local context. A structural conception of social work, driven by collective and rights-based principles, demands an alternative strategic vision. As with social workers, the local government bureaucracy can be the target as much as the medium of interventions. The experiences of practitioners have shown us that the organisational environment can constrain action, and that organisational discipline can reaffirm and recreate inequality and disadvantage. This now brings us to the realm of second order agency (Hoggett 2001). Second order agency involves changing the rules of the game in contrast with playing within the rules of the game (first order agency) as characterised by most of the strategies we noted in the accounts of participants. Second order agency in Philippine municipalities would entail questioning not only impositions and expectations but also the system of relations. If warranted, rules will have to be rewritten. Practitioners can ill-afford to leave the unquestioned veneration of mayors unchallenged. There seems to be wisdom in 'restoring dissent' in the workplace (DeMaria 1996: 24). An irreverent organisational culture may need to be fostered for workers to create a collegial, nurturing environment consistent with a structural perspective. Social workers already have the basic tools for this. For example, undermining oppressive beliefs is a key principle in social work on gender relations

(Wood & Roche 2001). Such principles can be applied to management and governance interventions in the local government environment with, say for example, practitioners challenging a hierarchical culture in their organisation in the way they may challenge hierarchical relationships that affect the lives of the citizens they work with. Practitioners can begin by auditing the local government bureaucracy for rituals, beliefs, and practices that promote oppression and reinforce inequality and disadvantage. Among these may be jokes, unwritten rules, and impositions that exclude or disadvantage others. This can then serve as basis for change efforts in the local government bureaucracy. Social work interventions might be needed at the administrative level not only in the management of social services and provisions but also in local governance and politics. Among the more concrete aims would be the institution of transparency in governance through the passing, for example, of a local if not national freedom of information act which, at the moment, is yet to be seen although there have been moves towards this direction both from within and outside government.

Beyond changing the organisational culture in Philippine municipalities, there is a need to forge a strategic vision of citizenship. Social work practitioners will have to work towards the rethinking and reshaping of Philippine social welfare policy, politics and economy. This would take practitioners beyond the traditional role of MSWD Officers. It involves looking at expanding and equalising life chances of citizens in terms of education, health care, economic opportunities, and the like. It would require the reconstruction of the work of MSWD Officers from dispensing social welfare provisions and services to shaping local social welfare policy. This would mean replotting and redefining the boundaries of social work practice, perhaps extending it beyond social welfare policy to governance and even economic policy. There is a strong argument for this. Practitioners decry how corrupt practices drain their limited resources, yet they overlook how the undermining of people's voices in electoral exercises translates to ideology and their government's social welfare initiatives. Beyond scouring for scholarships, practitioners would do well to

look into the reshaping education policy. Beyond the dispensing of medicines and certificates of indigency, practitioners can pursue the more strategically substantive agenda of reconfiguring health policy. Beyond peddling livelihood skills, practitioners can work on the interrelationship between education and economic policy and the quality of life of the citizens that they work with. In other words, practitioners may have to extend their vision and rethink what their work is all about.

So far, we have discussed the implications of a structural perspective for practice within the specific organisational setting of MSWD Officers and within the larger political economy. Among those highlighted were the perspectives and approaches that need to be put in place towards a structural practice of social work. It needs to be pointed out however that a structural practice of social work cannot be an individual enterprise in the sense that many of the changes that need to be introduced are only possible through collective effort amongst and beyond social work practitioners in this particular practice setting. For one, there are limitations as to what individual practitioners can do in engendering dissent in the workplace. It can be more difficult for a practitioner to work towards a more collegial work environment when most local government bureaucracies are permeated a hierarchical organisation culture dominated by mayors. Conversely, if practitioners work in concert with each other and other staff across all local governments towards challenging the culture of hierarchy that apparently permeates Philippine local government bureaucracies, they may have a better chance of doing so or, at least, surviving the struggle in the way labour movements help protect dissenters. Beyond administrative interventions, there is the challenge of working at the political/social sphere based on Jamrozik and Nocella's (1998) framework. After all, mayors are themselves representatives/agents of political power which is not confined in their position and the hierarchical organisational culture and relations in Philippine municipalities merely reflect those of the larger Philippine society. There are severe limitations in this respect for individual practitioners acting on their own. The

discussion of the ideological change introduced with the devolution (where citizen rights and entitlements to social welfare provisions have been reconfigured such that they are now contingent on the ability and willingness of local governments to allocate resources for such) pointed out how the fragmentation of efforts results in relativist responses to social problems. Moreover, if social problems are indeed structurally rooted in terms of how class, gender, racial and other relations are structured in society, then change efforts cannot be confined to individual localities and, therefore, to individual practitioners. Structural social work practice in Philippine municipalities will thus go beyond the individual practitioner. This points us towards the view of work in this practice setting as requiring collective action amongst social work practitioners in local governments and perhaps all social workers in the Philippines. Practitioners may have to look into how they can address structural issues as an organised collective (that is, as a professional association or some other embodiment). This means building an alliance within the occupational group. Moreover, there may even be a need to transcend disciplinal lines so that practitioners can carry out the struggle in solidarity with other local government staff and other collectivities and social movements that are engaged with similar and related struggles. This would mean building alliances with labour unions, women's movements, advocates of Indigenous peoples' rights and the like. Collective action would thus form an important part of structural social work in this setting. Practitioners who are confined to individual action may find themselves experiencing the very same powerlessness and vulnerability experienced by the citizens that they work with.

The immediately preceding discussions point to a perspective of practice that goes beyond the local. Strategic change in organisational culture can only be sustained with change in the larger society. The advancement of collectivist and anti-oppressive practice at the local level may only be feasible as part of a national agenda. The professional association can have a key role in this. At the very least, a close linkage among social welfare and development officers nationwide could give

them the strength and the voice needed to offset some of the excesses that could be directed against whistleblowers. This means that practitioners would have to acknowledge power, including their own, as a key element in their practice. The denial of their position of privilege would only allow practitioners to claim an imagined commonality with the citizens that they serve while concealing what the practice of social work itself is: an exercise of power.

Implications for Practice in Philippine Society

At the very core of a structural conception of social work is an understanding of social problems as being mainly rooted in power and politics. A conservative construction of social work ignores this dimension, and there is a need to 'resocialise' social work by having practitioners internalise a power perspective (Bar-On 1995: 74). With this comes the need for critical engagement with one's self, social work and society.

A power perspective takes us beyond the romanticised notion of social work as being a process of engendering 'a thousand tiny empowerments' (Mowbray 2000: 24). To teach clients how to navigate their way into the government bureaucracy would merely be palliative and even deceptive because the access afforded by such interventions to some citizens would be access that others will be denied. And so interventions associated with social action, particularly the theories of Alinsky, can turn out to be conservative (Ife 2002). How much different would it be to enable people to demand readily available services and resources than, say, how Stella saw herself as an indispensable intermediary between the mayor and some hapless citizens? Such a practice puts the social worker in a safe, if not privileged, vantage point but the reality is that it does not change the position of citizens in terms of the distribution of power and resources. What seems needed is a strategic engagement with government and society directed towards changing policy and the distribution of power.

An implication that readily presents itself is for practitioners outside the local government bureaucracy to see Philippine municipalities, and local governments in general, as legitimate targets for intervention. Instead of shunning government, social workers with a structural view should look into critically engaging state mechanisms to institute systemic changes. This is important because local government units are often the first and only point of contact that majority of citizens have for social welfare provisions and services. Local governments embody and operationalise national social policy which is at the heart of structural level interventions. The patchwork of initiatives of countless non-government organisations throughout the country cannot replace this strategic position.

The findings also point to the need to integrate social policy in practice. From a structural perspective, such practice will have to extend way beyond the traditional boundaries ascribed to social welfare. A structural perspective tells us is that the 'social' in social welfare is not necessarily confined to what may be regarded as social dimensions of societal life because such apparently non-social issues as the economy, the environment, governance, foreign policy and so on have very great implications for social welfare. The findings suggest that many practitioners do not often recognise this. One can imagine that many of the practitioners in this study go about scrounging for kind-hearted individuals and institutions willing to extend educational opportunities to needy children even as it has been pointed out that the repudiation of behest loans such as the Philippine Nuclear Power Plant could allow the government to reallocate billions of pesos a year to education (Galicia 2000). And yet the professional association has never been known to take a definitive stand on such issues. Many of the practitioners featured in this study conceivably spend their days dispensing paltry sums for medical assistance and second-guessing the whims of mayors in order to obtain certificates needed by citizens to gain access to the most basic of health care without realising that 'the battle for health care is a political battle' concerning political choices on the life chances in health of citizens (Congressional Commission on Health 1993: 14). It is lamentable how many

practitioners struggle to better the lives of citizens with the limited resources that they are given for social welfare services without realising that the prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment may be due to the lack of commitment on the part of government rather than a lack of financial resources. This would then require a radical rethinking of the practice field of social work. The single biggest employer of social workers in the Philippine today is the Department of Social Welfare Services whose personnel and mandate in local social welfare provision was handed down to mayors who now have direct control and supervision of the work of MSWD Officers. This mandate, as we found out, is the provision of largely residual, individualist interventions to the poorest sectors of society. But if the lack of well-being of citizens is rooted in their disadvantaged position in accessing opportunities in housing, employment, education, health and other aspects of life that make up people's life chances, then action must be directed towards this. This has profound implications to how social work practice should be seen. The most basic among these is the realisation that social work goes far beyond the traditional mandate ascribed to the work of MSWD Officers. In the context of government, social workers will have to look beyond the DSWD and MSWD Offices as legitimate fields of practice. It would do well for social workers to think about how other departments and policy concerns like education, health, housing, and employment can become venues for social work intervention. Being concerned with the social well-being of citizens, the battlefront for social workers is not only confined to the issues represented by the work of the DSWD but extends to a whole range of issues that have been constructed in mainstream social work as beyond the realm of social work.

Lastly, reflecting on the ways by which social workers in Philippine municipalities manage competing mandates and the extent to which this mirrors the mainstream construction of social work as outlined in Chapter 6, vigilance will be needed in discerning the values that practitioners impose or enforce in and through their practice. There is a need to disclaim the posture of unquestionable beneficence. A worker's ability to exercise reflexivity in this area depends, to a large extent, on

their professional training and education. Thus, part of a social worker's responsibilities would be the iterative and vigilant evaluation of their practice and the values represented in it.

Implications for Social Work Education

The accounts given by practitioners on their social work practice and constructions of practice point to the need to develop critical reflexivity, a structural perspective, and the ability to integrate policy in practice among practitioners. Instilling critical reflexivity, as we noted earlier, is not as simple as it sounds. How do social work educators undo in two of three years of training what has taken a lifetime of rehearsals? Yet we do know that there are those who are able to discern the implications of their actions. This is an important first step in breaking the unquestioning acceptance of hierarchy in the social order and transcending a habitus of subservience. Just how this is done will be among those issues with which social work educators will have to grapple. As with the participants, a good starting point may be their own practice. How the learning environment of social workers is structured and what kind of learning environment is being nurtured by social worker educators are some of the things they would have to take into account. If social work educators occupy a privileged position as educators generally do in Philippine society, then it will not be surprising for social work graduates to carry with them the unquestioning acceptance of authority and hierarchy as an integral part of life and practice. Social work educators cannot claim to instil values of equality amongst their students in highly unequal learning environments. Reflexive awareness comes with reflexive practice, the seeds of which are planted in the training of social workers.

Part of the process of instilling critical reflexivity involves equipping practitioners with a structural perspective. Under the framework of Jamrozik and Nocella (1998), the teaching of social work would have to go beyond the residual and into the political level. The review of the ideological roots of Philippine social welfare

made in Chapter 5 revealed how all current mainstream accounts overlook the ideological dimensions of practice. It is not surprising that this apolitical view, embedded in most of the introductory textbooks used in the teaching of Filipino social work students, would be carried on in the training of social workers. What is needed, it seems, is nothing short of a rethinking and rewriting of the history of Philippine social welfare history and theory in line with what has been attempted in Chapter 5.

Taking social work beyond the residual and administrative levels to the political level requires the treatment of policy as an integral part of practice. The way many of the research participants distanced themselves from policy and program development suggests that they do not see these as integral to social work practice. This orientation may be arguably linked to their professional education as well. Social work education equips practitioners with the basic framework and skills for social work practice. By and large, however, social policy is taught apart from social work and this limits the training of social workers in policy orientation (Mendes 2003b; Pawar 2004). A structural perspective requires the teaching of social policy as an inalienable part of practice. If structural interventions are to be expected, Mendes (2003a: 24) suggests that social work educators must effectively prepare social work professionals for engagement in social policy 'within their everyday practice'. A structural perspective necessitates a critical understanding of policy. This includes that recognition of policy as political in the sense that it involves the exercise of power. The training of social workers in policy practice in the positivist tradition, with a pluralist conception of power, would be inconsistent with a structural conception of social work. There would need to be a holistic understanding of social policy from the local to the international level. A structural conception points to the need for an international perspective in social work that would enable practitioners to, among other things, challenge hegemonies and mount alternative visions (Ife 1997b; Midgley 1997, 2001), with George and Wilding (2002) arguing that a global economy, that in which Philippine social work finds itself in, needs global social

policies. Given the discussions in Chapter 5 on the lack of recognition of the ideological dimensions of practice, social work educators in the Philippine may need to reflect on and perhaps rethink their construction of policy practice and the way they teach it. While changes in the curriculum will not ensure the generation of graduates who espouse a structural construction of social work, it can however provide those who choose to pursue structural social work practice with the framework and training to do so.

Social work is not neutral, it is political. One of the most important steps for professional action towards a structural social work practice would be to recognise the political dimension of social work practice. The construction of social work by professionals is a political act – it is a claim of being and a claim of political space. It can be used as a tool in the assertion of privilege and status within the community of professions in society. The act of dispensing provisions and services is political because it involves decisions over the use or non-use of societal resources. In other words, it involves decisions over the allocation of economic resources and the shaping of society. The act of 'helping' others is political in the sense that it is an exercise of power. It comes with the notion of the professional as having the power of expertise in terms of knowledge of proper ways of living and interactions over certain segments of society, particularly the poor and other disadvantaged sectors. Discourses are advanced, resources are allocated, and power is appropriated through its practice. Through social work, citizens are cast into 'clients' and 'consumers', social problems are framed, stability-promoting safety nets and safety valves are set in place, and the legitimacy of the established order is reaffirmed with the message that it can be responsive and that 'the system works'. By this, social work takes a position within the larger social order. What this position is varies according to how practitioners construct their practice. Some forms of social work practice can end up affirming dominant interests and values. A structural construction of social work calls for the challenging of such values. The implications largely point to the need for social workers to individually and collectively rethink their construction and practice

of social work. Moreover, we are reminded that professional values cannot be taken at face value. Considering how social workers are positioned in society and how society positions social work, practitioners can end up simply managing to survive even as they endeavour to help others do so without changing the way society is ordered and without challenging but even reinforcing inequalities.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While the study answered the research question, it also raised other questions for further research. One concrete project that directly arises from this study is the exploration of the limits of second order agency in local government units. This research established that there is potential for second order agency in Philippine municipalities and it would be helpful to explore the range of possibilities for rule-changing action. One of the ways this can be done is to identify whistleblowers and document their experiences. Another would be to look into approaches towards organisational change to explore limits and identify principles to guide practice in the direction of fostering an egalitarian culture in Philippine local government bureaucracies. In view of the changes in structure that came with the devolution, the professional association has a key role in driving such research forward because (with DSWD out of the picture) it is now the only collectivity under which the practitioners can work together in solving the problems they encounter in practice.

The research question located the conflict within the social worker, with an image of a practitioner struggling with organisational and disciplinal loyalties. But the accounts of practitioners located the conflict somewhere else. Instead of practitioners struggling with how to reconcile organisational and professional mandates, the accounts of practitioners showed how social workers struggled to maintain or enhance their status in their organisation as they jockeyed for position in the local government bureaucracy. There are important implications of this positioning. How is this hierarchy-bound habitus reflected in the ways practitioners relate with colleagues, clients, and the community in general? For example, what

sorts of environments do such practitioners nurture within their own units and in other realms where they have more self-as-agent agency such as their families and community? As a corollary to this, what unquestioned assumptions, beliefs, values and attitudes do such professionals hold in relation to disadvantaged sectors? If hierarchies and inequality are taken as a given, how do professionals view gender relations, ethnic/race relations, class relations and other dimensions where inequality and disadvantage exist? An exploration of the attitudes they hold along these issues would deepen our understanding of their construction and practice of social work towards the building of critical social work theory and practice. Given their views of social problems, for example, it is conceivable that sexist jokes, racial slurs, and elitist putdowns run undiscerned in their workplace.

The questions also go beyond the specific practice setting on which the current study was made. For social workers working from the outside, the question of how to critically engage local governments arises. In addition, the way the practitioners' 'culture of subservience' can be linked to the larger social order raises the question of the extent to which such dynamics apply in other settings such as those where the immediate superiors are social work professionals themselves like in the DSWD and even in non-government organisations. Practitioners with an aversion towards hierarchy have traditionally opted to work in non-government organisations and stayed away from government. But if indeed there is a link between individuals, organisations and the larger societal order, then non-government organisations would not necessarily be devoid of such practices. In other words, non-government organisations are not necessarily free of the hierarchical culture and relations that characterised Philippine municipal bureaucracies. To what extent such culture and relations are reflected in such settings would be one question worth exploring.

The questions also take us beyond direct social work practice and into policy. The review in Chapter 7 showed how devolution had reconfigured national social welfare policy by placing community-level initiatives squarely in the hands of local

chief executives. It would be helpful to examine systematically the extent of variations across municipalities and the impact of such variations, if any, on the well-being of citizens. Equally significant would be an exploration of the ideological shifts that accompanied the devolution, particularly in terms of how social work practice, social welfare, and social welfare policy have been reconstructed.

Finally, the findings of the study raise questions for social work education. One question that immediately presents itself is: What kinds of culture are nurtured in social work education institutions where future practitioners are born and bred? It would be unreasonable to expect practitioners to challenge and transcend hierarchical boundaries if they owe their very training to professional mentors who, situated in a society that reinforces and is reinforced by such relations, uphold inequality and hierarchy in their pedagogical practice and philosophy. While the nurturing of a hierarchical culture does not end with social work educators, it is with them that professional practice that challenges inequality and hierarchy is supposed to begin. An exploration of social work teaching and learning environments might offer insights as to how social work education reinforces or challenges unequal and hierarchical relations. Further, considering the role of habitus in shaping practice, an important question for social work education would be how to prepare practitioners for practice that actively challenges hierarchical boundaries. Apart from courses in cultural competence, gender responsiveness and structural analysis, what teaching strategies are needed to equip practitioners for critical reflexive practice?

These, of course, are just some of the questions that someone from the outside sees. A critical perspective requires practitioners, both direct service and educators, to critically reflect on their practice and generate the questions to drive future research. While some may argue that this goes without saying, the accounts of practitioners suggest that this needs to be said.

CONCLUSION

Through a review of literature and a study of social work in Philippine municipalities, this research identified the ways by which social work practitioners manage competing organisational and professional mandates. The experiences of practitioners in this particular practice setting expanded our understanding of the range of strategies, reflexive or non-reflexive, that social workers employ in avoiding, resolving or mitigating the potential conflicts inherent in such settings. The predominantly conservative ways by which practitioners reflexively or non-reflexively manage such conflicts hold important implications for social work practice and education within the given field, in other contexts as well as for the wider profession. Considering how well-entrenched the cultural, political and economic roots of such ways are, it is likely that concerns generated by such kinds of practice environments and practices will persist. Such practice settings will require vigilant critical engagement from social workers, both from within and from without, operating with a structural perspective.

The value of obedience that assures survival, however, will certainly restrain some practitioners from tempting fate. After all, those who defiantly approach the flame do get burned. And some would argue that it is difficult for practitioners to avoid the disorientation that occurs as they are thrown into the midst of hierarchical organisational and societal orders. Indeed, it would be difficult to see the forest through the trees. But the insights gained from this study would hopefully arm practitioners with a critical understanding of practice that will allow them to collectively as well as individually navigate and negotiate the veritable jungles that constitute their practice environments with the view of challenging structural inequality and disadvantage. Whether or not they will live to tell the tale would be different question altogether.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire - Random Sample

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITIES

The intended participants of this survey are professional social workers serving as heads of Municipal and Social Welfare and Development Offices (MSWDOs).

A. Self-check

1. Do you serve as the head of an MSWDO? __ Yes __ No
2. Are you a licensed social worker? __ Yes __ No

If you answered YES to both questions, proceed to part B. If you answered NO to any of the questions, it means that you are not an intended participant and need not accomplish the rest of this questionnaire. If there is another person in YOUR office who can answer YES to both questions, please refer this questionnaire to him/her. In any case, we request you to return this questionnaire even though you answered NO to either of the two questions and will not be answering the other items.

B. Demographics

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: __Male __Female
3. Item: __SWO III __SWO IV __ MSWDO __Other (specify)_____
4. Highest educational degree: __Bachelor __Masters __PhD
5. Number of years as head of the MSWDO: _____ years
6. Number of years as a registered professional: _____ years
7. Class of Municipality: __ 1st __ 2nd __ 3rd __4th __5th
8. Number of fulltime social workers employed in MSWDO: _____

C. About Community Problems

1. What are the 3 most prevalent social problems in your municipality?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
2. Which of these problems can your Office address? *(check all that applies)*
   __a __b __c __None

3. Which of those problems you identified is the most crucial problem?
__a __b __c __No answer

D. About the MSWDO

1. What are the 3 most frequently availed programs/services of your Office?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

2. Of all the devolved DSWD programs, which are not being implemented, if any?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

3. Why have these programs been discontinued?
___ Budget ___ Others (specify)_____

4. What programs beyond those devolved by DSWD are you implementing, if any?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

5. Who introduced these programs?
___ MSWDO ___ Mayor ___ Others (specify)_____

E. Budgets and Items

1. Can you provide the budget figures for the entire local government unit (LGU), the MSWDO, and the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO)?

	2002 Budget	**2003 Budget**
LGU	₱	₱
MSWDO	₱	₱
MPDO	₱	₱

2. In 2002, was any MSWDO budget rechannelled to unrelated purposes?
___ Yes ___ No (if YES, please specify approximate amount: ₱ _____)

3. In the last 5 years, has there been an attrition of position items in the MSWDO?
___ Yes ___ No

F. On Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS)

1. Is there a maximum amount that can be given to persons under the Aid to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS)? ___ Yes ___ No (if NO, proceed to F.4)

2. How much is the maximum amount? ₱ _____

3. Who fixed/decided on the maximum amount?
__DSWD __Mayor __MSWDO __Others (specify)_____

4. How much was the total AICS disbursements in the last fiscal year? ₱ _____

5. How many AICS recipients were there in the last fiscal year? _____ persons

G. Tenure and Challenges

1. While it may be unlikely to happen, does the Mayor have enough power to remove you from your position for no justifiable cause if s/he wanted to?
___ Yes ___ No

2. In the last 5 years, do you know of any senior officer (e.g., MPDO, MSWDO) who was floated, suspended or fired for no known justifiable cause? __Yes __No

3. In the last 2 years, has an LGU staff reportedly been sexually harassed by a superior?
___ Yes ___ No

4. Has your LGU adopted policies and procedures in handling sexual harassment?
___ Yes ___ No *(If NO, please identify who should be responsible:_____)*

5. In the most recent election, were you asked or made to participate in activities (for example, rallies or gift-giving) that favoured the incumbent Mayor?
___ Yes ___ No

6. Is there an unwritten rule to give special consideration to the political supporters of the Mayor? ___ Yes ___ No

7. Is there a risk on your tenure/status if you extend assistance to known supporters of the Mayor's political rival? ___ Yes ___ No

8. Has your superior ever asked you to do something that you felt was demeaning to your professional status? *If yes, answer the next item. If no, proceed to G.11.*
___ Yes ___ No

9. How many times has this happened? __1 __2 __3 __4 or more

10. In 50 words of less, can you specify the worst thing you were asked to do?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Has your superior ever given you an order that was in conflict with your professional values and principles? *If yes, please answer the next item. If no, please proceed to G.17.*
___ Yes ___ No

12. How many times has this happened? ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 or more

13. In 50 words or less, can you explain the most difficult conflict?

_____
_____
_____
_____

14. How did you respond/act?

___ I carried out the order as instructed
___ I let my superiors/others make the decision and take the action
___ I actively resisted the order, discussing my reasons for doing so
___ I tried to comply with objectives without violating my values
___ _____

15. Why did you respond/act in such a manner?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

16. What would have happened if you responded/acted in ways other than what you indicated?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

17. Do you know of ANOTHER Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer who was given an order that came in conflict with their professional values and principles such as participation and social justice? __Yes __No *(If NO, proceed to part H. If YES, please answer the next item.)*

18. Please provide sufficient contact information of a particular person you have in mind so that s/he can be invited to fill out this questionnaire:

Name: _____
Position: Municipal Social Welfare & Development Officer
Address: _____
_____
_____

NOTE: The person you will be naming will not be informed of your identity. Furthermore, the same measures will be undertaken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of the person you will name.

H. Views on Social Welfare and Social Work

Please indicate your position on the following statements, ranging from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA).

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
The government should be more of a facilitator and less of a direct provider of social services.					
Government should only serve those who can not afford basic services like health and education.					
It is unprofessional for social workers to join rallies.					
The development of social policy is part of social work.					

I. Political Activities

a. Put an "X" mark if you did any of these activities at least once in the last 2 years:

Activity	Yes
Kept informed about political and social policy issues and/or engaged in electoral and political discussion with family, friends and colleagues	
Provided advocacy services for or on behalf of individuals, groups, or organisations and/or advocated for or influenced co-workers' opinions about organisational policy change.	
Voted in at least one election (local or national)	
Undertook at least one contacting activity such as calls or correspondence to government officials on a local or national policy problem and/or engaged in an organisation's lobbying campaigns.	
Attempted to persuade others how to vote. Used professional skills and expertise to influence public opinion about a government policy issue.	
Participated in, organised, or maintained an organisation or group for resolution of government or agency policy problems.	
Actively worked for a political party or candidate, participated in a political organisation and/or attended constituent meetings held by congressional representatives.	
Contacted government officials on policy issues of personal concern.	
Attended or testified at public or congressional hearings on local or national policy issues.	
Participated in an organised demonstration in support or in protest of a government policy.	

b. Did any of the actions you indicated come in conflict with the Mayor's personal or political interests? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, please describe the nature of the most intense conflict in 50 words or less:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Please describe in 50 words or less the most significant policy change, if any, that you have introduced or helped introduce in your local government:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

J. Program Development and Management

1. Who is primarily responsible for developing new programs and services?
___ DSWD ___ Mayor ___ MSWDO ___ Others (specify)_____

2. Who exercises direct supervisory powers over the MSWDO?
___ Mayor ___ Municipal Council ___ Others (specify)_____

3. Aside from MSWDO staff, who are the next three most centrally involved in preparing the MSWDO's annual plan?
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

4. Who ultimately approves the MSWDO's annual plan?
___ Municipal Council ___ Mayor ___ MSWDO ___ Others (specify)_____

5. How are clients and citizens primarily involved in your Office's annual review/ evaluation of accomplishments?
__Not involved
__Source of feedback/information
__Represented in evaluation team
__Others (specify) _____

6. Does your Office/LGU have a written policy mandating citizen involvement?
___ Yes ___ No *(if YES, please quote the relevant provision)*
_____
_____

7. Do you allow individual clients access to their own case records? ___ Yes ___ No

K. Case Situations

NOTE: Below are short case situations. Please enumerate no more than 5 key actions/objectives social workers should take in each case. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. A woman was referred to Mrs. Nuñez, the MSWDO, by the local police desk officer who said that it was an MSWDO concern since it involved a family matter. The woman was severely beaten by her husband. A medical examination revealed a number of concussions as well as a dislocated joint. These incidents seem to be prevalent in her community.

   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

2. Mrs. Bala, an MSWDO, is concerned about Lena, a 10 year old girl, who was dropping out of school though she had been performing quite well. Kids in Lena's indigenous community face great challenges: being looked down by lowlanders, having inadequate nutrition, and lacking money for books and school projects.

   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

3. A farmer is applying for financial assistance for the burial of one of his children. He explained to Mrs. Cruz, the MSWDO, that he no longer earns as much from farming because of declining yield saying that the weather must have changed over the years. Anxious to obtain her approval, he explained that he tried but could not get a job in any of the factories sprouting along the river bank right across his farm, as part of the municipality's economic development plan.

   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

L. Invitation for Case Study Volunteers

Would you be willing to be interviewed for an in-depth discussion of your experience to be featured as a case study (disguised using pseudonyms) in the research report? ___ Yes ___ No *(If yes, please provide your name and contact details below)*

I am willing to be interviewed for a case study. I understand that the researcher will be selecting two interviewees from all participants who volunteer for an interview. I understand that the researcher will take every measure to protect my identity and maintain confidentiality. This includes the use of pseudonyms for persons and places in the research report, with no reference to my identity whatsoever. Below are my contact details:

Name: _____
Position: Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer
Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone: _____

NOTE: By indicating your personal information here, your participation in this study is no longer totally anonymous BUT the researcher will take every effort to safeguard your identity. This includes detaching this portion of the questionnaire containing you identifying information as soon as the encoding is completed in order to prevent anyone else from identifying you as a participant during and after the conduct of the research.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in participating in this study.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire - Snowball Sample

CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITIES

This questionnaire is intended for those who serve/served as heads of City or Municipal and Social Welfare and Development Offices (C/MSWDOs) who were referred by colleagues in an earlier survey. You may answer in English, Tagalog or Bisaya/Visayan.

A. Self-check

1. Do/did you serve as the head of a C/MSWDO? __ Yes __ No
2. Are you a licensed social worker? __ Yes __ No

If you answered YES to both questions, proceed to part B. If you answered NO to any of the questions, it means that you are not an intended participant and need not accomplish the rest of this questionnaire. If there is another person in YOUR office who can answer YES to both questions, please refer this questionnaire to him/her.

B. Demographics

1. Age: _____

2. Sex: __Male __Female

3. Item: __SWO III __SWO IV __ MSWDO __Other (specify)_____

4. Highest educational degree: __Bachelor __Masters __PhD

9. Number of years as head of the C/MSWDO: _____ years

10. Number of years as a registered professional: _____ years

11. Class of Municipality: __ 1st __ 2nd __ 3rd __4th __5th

C. Tenure and Challenges

1. While it may be unlikely to happen, does the Mayor have enough power to remove a C/MSWDO from his/her position for no justifiable cause if s/he wanted to?
   ___ Yes ___ No

2. In the most recent election, were you asked or made to participate in activities (for example, rallies or gift-giving) that favoured the incumbent Mayor?
   ___ Yes ___ No

3. Is there an unwritten rule to give special consideration to the political supporters of the Mayor? ___ Yes ___ No

4. Is there a risk on your tenure/status if you extend assistance to known supporters of the Mayor's political rival? __Yes __No

5. Has your superior ever asked you to do something that you felt was demeaning to your professional status? *If yes, answer the next item. If no, proceed to G.9.*
___ Yes ___ No

6. How many times has this happened? ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 or more

7. In 50 words of less, can you specify the worst thing you were asked to do?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Has your superior ever given you an order that was in conflict with your professional values and principles? *If yes, please answer the next item. If no, please proceed to G.14.* ___ Yes ___ No

9. How many times has this happened? ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 or more

10. In 50 words or less, can you explain the most difficult conflict?
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. How did you respond/act?
___ I carried out the order as instructed
___ I let my superiors/others make the decision and take the action
___ I actively resisted the order, discussing my reasons for doing so
___ I tried to comply with objectives without violating my values
___ _____

12. Why did you respond/act in such a manner?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. What would have happened if you responded/acted in ways other than what you indicated?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. Do you know of ANOTHER Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer who was fired or floated without any basis or given an order that came in conflict with their professional values and principles such as participation and social justice?
___ Yes ___ No *(If NO, proceed to part D. If YES, please answer the next item.)*

15. Please provide sufficient contact information of a particular person you have in mind so that s/he can be invited to fill out this questionnaire:

Name: _____
Position: Municipal Social Welfare & Development Officer
Address: _____
_____
_____

NOTE: The person you will be naming will not be informed of your identity. Furthermore, the same measures will be undertaken to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of the person you will name.

D. Invitation for Case Study Volunteers

Would you be willing to be interviewed for an in-depth discussion of your experience to be featured as a case study (disguised using pseudonyms) in the research report? __Yes __No *(If yes, please provide your name and contact details below)*

I am willing to be interviewed for a case study. I understand that the researcher will be selecting two interviewees from all participants who volunteer for an interview. I understand that the researcher will take every measure to protect my identity and maintain confidentiality. This includes the use of pseudonyms for persons and places in the research report, with no reference to my identity whatsoever. Below are my contact details:

Name: _____
Position: Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer
Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone: _____

NOTE: By indicating your personal information here, your participation in this study is no longer totally anonymous BUT the researcher will take every effort to safeguard your identity. This includes detaching this portion of the questionnaire containing you identifying information as soon as the encoding is completed in order to prevent anyone else from identifying you as a participant during and after the conduct of the research.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in participating in this study.

Appendix 3: Guide for Interview with Practitioners in Active Service

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS IN ACTIVE SERVICE

The research designed called for interviews with four practitioners in active service, two who reported problems and two who did not report any problem in their working relationship with their superiors. This is the guide used in the semi-structured interviews with all four participants.

A. Background of Informant

1. Personal info will be taken: age, sex, education background, number of years in position, number of years work experience in social work.

2. What relevant training and experiences did you have prior to this position?

B. Nature of the Locality and Organisation

1. What are the predominant social problems confronting your locality? What do you think are the causes of these?

2. How would you characterise the political environment in your locality? What issues dominate politics?

3. How would you characterise the culture of your work environment? Is the environment conducive for initiative and creativity? What factors impinge on your work?

4. How does the local chief executive relate with you in particular?

5. What are the key non-government organisations operating in your municipality? What are they doing?

6. What is the nature of your relation to other professionals or NGOs in your locality?

C. Programs and Services

a. What programs and services are offered by your office?

b. Which of these take up most of your time?

c. Which of these take up most of the discretionary financial resources of the office?

D. View of the Work

1. What is the role of social welfare and development work in local government?

2. What do you see is your role in local government? What do you consider as your key result areas?

3. What is social work and what is its place in local social welfare and development work?

4. How different or similar is what you are actually doing to what you think you ought to be doing? What accounts for the difference, if any?

E. Autonomy and Discretion

1. How different or similar is your conception of social welfare and development work to that of your superiors? How does this affect your work, if any?

2. To what extent do you have discretion over the nature of programs and services?

3. How do you see yourself in relation to your superiors and the entire organisation?

4. Apart from the established policies and programs that were in place prior to your appointment to the position, what specific innovations have you introduced?

5. Is there a genuine security of tenure in your organisation (i.e., you cannot be removed except for due cause and only after due process)? Explain.

F. Relationship with Clients

1. What is the most common form of service that you provide your clients?

2. Can you describe the nature of contacts you have with clients in general? You may want to consider length, frequency, level of interaction.

3. Aside from clients receiving services from you, in what other ways do you work with the community?

G. Conflict Between Organisation and Professional Values

1. What conflicts, if any, have you encountered between organisational demands and professional values? You may want to consider these categories:

    a. Limited autonomy;
    b. Excessive authority;
    c. Limited organisational mission

2. What do you think caused these conflicts?

H. Management Strategies

1. How do you manage conflict between organisational demands and professional values? What specific strategies do you employ?

2. What factors do you consider in the selection of your strategy?

3. What conflicts have you found to be very difficult to manage? What conflict in demands and values have you found to be irreconcilable?

I. Results

1. What specific accomplishments can you cite with respect to the management of conflict between organisational demands and professional values?

2. What would have been the result if you failed to take action?

J. Impact and Prospects

1. How has the experience of conflict of work demands and professional values affected your work relationships and professional prospects?

2. How has the experience of conflict of work demands and professional values affected your personal life?

3. How do you think should Municipal Social Welfare Officers position themselves in the local bureaucracy?

Appendix 4: Guide for interviews with practitioners who have been fired/floated

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS WHO HAVE BEEN FIRED/FLOATED

The main objective is to obtain an account of the experiences of some social work professionals on being fired/floated. The interview is expected to last between 1 to 1½ hours.

A. Background Info

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: __F __M
3. Number of years in MSWDO: _____
4. Number of years as a professional: _____
5. Undergraduate degree: _____
6. Graduate degree: _____
7. Class of municipality: __1st __2nd __3rd __4th __5th

B. On Work In Local Politics and Social Work

1. How would you characterise politics in your municipality/city?

2. Can you describe the organisational environment in your local government unit, with special focus on decision-making and power?

3. What is social work for you?

4. How would you characterise your professional practice?

5. How do social work and politics go together? How about social workers and politicians?

C. On Being Fired/Floated

1. You were reported to have been fired/floated. Can you give an account of the case?

    a. Why did it happen?
    b. When did this happen?
    c. How did it happen?
    d. Who were involved?

2. How did you respond to the action?

    a. Did you contest the action?
    b. How was the matter resolved?

3. How did this affect you?

    a. What were the effects on your personal life?
    b. What were the effects on your professional life/career?

4. Looking back at what happened, what lessons have you learned? What would you have done differently?

D. On Tenure and Challenges

1. In local government, can a C/MSWDO be removed from office/position without a valid cause? If yes, in what ways can this be done?

2. What issues involving professional duties and bureaucratic/organisational expectations have you had difficulty dealing with?

3. To what extent and in what ways did the mayor expand/contract the social welfare and development services in your municipality?

4. To what extent did the mayor extend/limit your professional power and responsibilities?

5. Is there a chance for a social work professional to do what social workers should be doing and yet survive in the local government?

Appendix 5: Guide for Focus Group Discussion

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

This focus group discussion seeks to explore the views of practitioners about social work practice in local government units in terms of their key responsibilities/ contributions and challenges.

A. What is social work in local government units like?

1. What is social welfare and development or the work of MSWDOs? What are the key result areas and contributions of the office?

2. What is the role of social work in MSWDOs? What are the top five skills of social workers that are especially useful in this context? Why do you say so?

3. What are the top five key training resources that would prepare social workers for work in MSWDOs (it may include book titles and/or training programs)? Why do you say so?

B. What is it like working under politicians?

1. What is social welfare and development or the work of MSWDOs for mayors and local politicians? What do they think are the key result areas or contributions of the office?

2. What is the role of social work in MSWDOs? What do they see as your key skills?

3. How should social workers relate with politics and politicians? Why do you feel that way?

C. What are the key challenges of social work practice in local government units?

1. What is the most time-consuming work in MSWDOs? How much of your time go to this/these?

2. What is the most difficult work in MSWDOs? Why do you say so?

3. How have mayors and local politicians changed social welfare and development policies, programs and services?

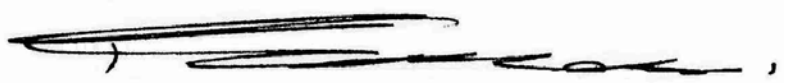
4. How have mayors and local politicians affected your practice of social work?

5. How have these changes/effects taken place? Why did they happen?

Appendix 6: Application for Ethics Approval to the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

ETHICS PROTOCOL – UNISA HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Section 1: **Coversheet**

Researcher's name	**Nilan G. Yu**
Researcher's School	**School of Social Work and Social Policy**
Researcher's Division	**Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences**
Postal address for Correspondence	**Room MH2-10 Murray House** **University of South Australia - Magill** **5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia**
Telephone number/s	**8302-4741**
Email	**nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au; nilan_yu@yahoo.com**
Type of research	**PhD**
Title of research project	**Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers**
Plain English title (For inclusion on material provided to research participants)	**The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values**
Proposed commencement	**15 July 2003**
Researcher's signature	*I certify that the protocol is complete and the research will be conducted in accordance with the protocol and in an ethical manner.* **(SIGNED)**
Supervisor's signature (if researcher is a student)	*I certify that this protocol has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the Uni SA's protocol guidelines. I have considered the ethical implications of the proposed research and believe that the research will be conducted in accordance with the relevant local, state, national and Uni SA policies, guidelines, regulations and legislation.*  **Frank Tesoriero – Associate Supervisor** **[Principal Supervisor – On leave]**
Supervisor's name (if researcher is a student)	**Adrian Vicary, Principal Supervisor** **Frank Tesoriero, Associate Supervisor**
Supervisor's contact details (mail and email addresses, telephone number/s)	**School of Social Work and Social Policy** **University of South Australia – Magill** **5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia** adrian.vicary@unisa.edu.au; frank.tesoriero@unisa.edu.au

Section 2: **Checklist**

Please circle your response to each of the following questions:

Does the research involve participation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who have been selected as research participants because they are indigenous Australians?	NO
Does the research involve any artifacts that are of cultural, spiritual or religious significance to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people?	NO
Does the research involve an unusually dependent relationship between the researcher and any of the research participants?	NO
Could the research place research participants in an unusually vulnerable situation?	NO
Is there any potential risk (physical, emotional, social or legal) to individual participants' well being, beyond that normally encountered in everyday life, as a result of their involvement in the research?	NO
Does the research involve the administration or application of drugs and/or Clinical Trial Notification Scheme (CTN) documentation?	NO
Is there any reasonable likelihood that the research will result in the reporting of suspected child abuse?	NO
Is there any potential risk to the researcher's safety, beyond that normally encountered in everyday life, as a result of their involvement in the research?	NO
Do you plan to vary the usual written consent processes?	NO
Is the study known to involve research into illegal activities?	NO
Does the study have potential legal implications for the researcher or the University?	NO
Have you applied for funding for this research (other than Divisional funds)?	NO

If YES, please give the name of granting body applied to and the type of grant sought.

What research methodologies will you use (tick those applicable)

Anonymous questionnaires	☐	Questionnaires requesting intimate personal, identifying, or sensitive information	☐
Internet questionnaires	☐		☐
Other questionnaires	☐		☐

Face to face interviews which do not request personal or sensitive information	☐	Face to face interviews which request personal or sensitive information	■
Observation of participant's usual activities	☐	Focus groups	☐
Observation of an activity set up for the purposes of the study	☐	Action Research	☐
Access to medical records (or records which contain intimate personal information, and are individually identifiable and are not publicly available)	☐	Experiment or testing of a procedure, drug or equipment	☐

Other (please specify)

Please tick the group/s from which your sample of participants will be drawn for this study

General public	☐	Children or young people under the age of 18	☐
Friends or family	☐	Patients of a hospital or clinic where you need approval to do the research	☐
Work colleagues	■	Prisoners or people in the care of correctional services	☐
People with whom you have an ongoing professional relationship (eg students or clients)	☐	Members of the armed forces	☐

Other (please specify)

In which country is data collection to take place? Philippines

List the organizations where the research will be undertaken. (Please note that written approval from all organizations must be obtained before the research can commence).

Association of Provincial, City, and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines

Will the research involve access to individuals, clients or records required from any organization? NO

If YES, has approval been received from these organizations? N/A

Will you access individually identifiable information about participants from any government department? NO

or

from another organization (for example a state based register, education department, hospital, health department, correctional services)? NO

If YES, list the government department(s) and/or organization(s)

Have you received approval to access this information from the government department(s)/organization(s) listed above? N/A

Are the following attached?

- Attachment 1 **Reference list** YES
- Attachment 2 **Research tools** YES
- Attachment 3 **Recruitment material** YES
- Attachment 4 **Information sheet** YES
- Attachment 5 **Consent form** YES
- Attachment 6 **Correspondence** YES

Language of the consent form, information sheet and any other material provided to research participants if other than English. _____

How do you intend to report your research?

Thesis/dissertation	■	Conference presentation	☐
Journal article/s	☐	Commissioned report	☐
Research paper	☐	Other (please specify)	_____

Will research participants have the opportunity to receive a copy of your final report if they wish? YES

Will research participants receive any payment in relation to their participation? NO

Section 3: **Ethics protocol proforma**

1 RESEARCH AIMS

1.1 **State the aims of your research**

The research aims to:

1. Analyze Philippine social work practice with special focus on the principles of participation and social justice;
2. Assess the work conditions of selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines (the Association);
3. Explore the conflicting demands and values selected members of the Association encounter in their work; and
4. Develop a framework for the management of competing demands and values in the practice of social work by Association members.

1.2 **Explain the need for, and value of, your research.**

Members of the Association encounter work demands that come in conflict with professional values in the course of their practice. Among those are the values of participation and social justice. Such conflicts can affect the performance of the members. For example, how are they to uphold participation in situations which require immediate action but where clients are not technically and socially prepared to engage in participatory processes? How can social justice be upheld in societal situations where one's own personal safety is at risk?

This research hopes to provide information and insights as to how members of the Association can manage the conflicts of such nature in their own practice. The research will not claim generalizability of the findings but will instead offer an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of selected situations and cases, a critical analysis of which may inform practice in other situations.

Attached as **appendix 1** is a list of 10 key references.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 **List your research questions or hypotheses.**

The key question in this research is as follows: With professional values on one hand and work demands on the other, how can members of the Association effectively manage competing demands? This can be broken down in three sub-questions:

1. What is the nature of the work conditions of the members of the Association?
2. What specific conflicts in work demands and professional values have been encountered?
3. How have such conflicts been managed by some members of the Association?

2.2 **Outline your research design and methodology.**

In order to address the aims of the study, the following will be undertaken:

1. A literature review and secondary data analysis to set the context of the study;
2. A mail questionnaire will be fielded to 50 members of the Association selected through stratified random sampling to obtain information on their general work conditions and to obtain referrals for a snowball sample for a second mail questionnaire (see 3);
3. A second mail questionnaire to be fielded to 30 members of the Association selected through snowball sampling to obtain accounts of specific experiences pertaining to conflicts between work demands and professional values and to serve as the pool from which two interview participants will be selected (see 4);

A semi-structured audio-taped interview with two participants selected from the snowball sample to explore in-depth their experiences in managing competing work demands and professional values.

A copy of my research tools are attached as **appendix 2**.

2.3 **Indicate whether your research is the first stage of a larger project**.

Not applicable.

3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

3.1 **Who will be approached or recruited to be research participants? How many participants will be involved in your study?**

For the first mail questionnaire, 50 participants from a subset of the members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines will be selected by stratified random sampling. The subset will be the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers. Thirty (30) participants referred by the respondents of the first mail questionnaire will be invited as participants for the second mail questionnaire. From these 30 mail questionnaire participants selected through snowball sampling, 2 participants will be invited for semi-structured in-depth interviews.

3.2 **List the selection and, if appropriate to your study, the exclusion criteria for participants.**

For the first mail questionnaire, only Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers will be included in the roster that would serve as basis for the stratified random sampling. Provincial and City Social Welfare and Development Officers will be excluded.

For the second mail questionnaire, the following criteria will be used to select participants:

1. Must be a member of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines;
2. Must be a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer;
3. Must be a licensed social worker;

For the interviews, the following criteria will be used:

1. Must be a member of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines;
2. Must be a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer;
3. Must be a licensed social worker;
4. Must demonstrate a social justice orientation and client/community participation in practice;
5. Must have given and account of a politically significant conflict in work demands and values;
6. Experience has the potential to inform practice; and
7. Must be willing to be interviewed;

3.3 **How will you recruit participants for your research?**

All participants will be recruited by mail (see **appendix 3**). The date, time and place for the interview will be established via consultation with each of the participants.

3.4 **How will you provide detailed information about your study to potential participants?**

For the mail questionnaires, detailed information will be given through the information sheets (see **appendix 4** for the information sheet/s I will use). An information sheet would accompany the written invitation for interview participants and a verbal explanation detailing the contents of the information

sheet will be given before the start of the interview itself.

3.5 **Describe how you will obtain consent to participate from those volunteering as participants for your research.**

This concern only applies to the two semi-structured interviews. I will be inviting potential interviewees by mail, asking them to sign the accompanying consent form if they are amenable. The invitation will include an information sheet and the guide questions for the interview. Then, on the actual interview itself, I will reread the pertinent conditions and verbally ask for a reconfirmation of consent.

3.6 **If your research participants will be drawn from any dependent group (people who have an unequal power relationship with you or with an organisation which is cooperating in the research) please detail how will you ensure that participants do not feel under any obligation to assist you with your research as participants.**

Not applicable.

3.7 **Describe how you will preserve participants' confidentiality as you collect and analyse the data and when you report the results.**

The following measures will be taken to preserve participants' confidentiality in the conduct of the research. The participants in the mail questionnaires will not be required to provide their names in the questionnaire. There is a small chance that the accomplished questionnaires can be traced back to them through the postal marks on the return envelopes and so, as added measure, all envelopes will be destroyed as soon as they are received. There will be no identifiable names or numbers in the interview transcripts. Pseudonyms will be employed to refer to people and place in all records and reports, including the thesis.

3.8 **If there are any potential risks (physical, emotional, social or legal) to individual subjects' well being (beyond those normally encountered in everyday life) as a result of their involvement in the research, detail the steps that will be taken to address these risks including any support facilities such as counselling, debriefings or referrals.**

The research, as designed by the researcher, will pose no potential physical, emotional, social or legal risk to individual subjects' wellbeing beyond those encountered in everyday life. In the event that sensitive material may arise that is particularly upsetting to the interview participants, the interview will be stopped at the participants' request or the researcher's discretion and time will be made available for debriefing. The participants will be free to withdraw from the project at any stage and/or request that all or any of the information provided be destroyed. Appropriate agency referrals will be made in any case where it is deemed necessary.

3.9 **If there are any potential safety implications for yourself as the researcher (beyond those normally encountered in everyday life) please indicate how these will be addressed.**

There is no apparent safety implications for the researcher beyond those normally encountered in everyday life.

3.10 **If research participants will receive any payment, reimbursement or other benefit from participation in the research, please detail this and provide a justification for the level of compensation.**

Not applicable.

4 RECORDING, REPORTING, STORAGE AND ACCESS TO THE RESEARCH DATA AND RESULTS

4.1 **Describe briefly how the research data will be recorded, for example, audiotape,**

videotape, or written notes.

Some of the data will be in the form of mail questionnaires. Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed with minimal notes during the interview. Soft copies of the interview transcripts will be kept in the computer files of the researcher until the completion of the study and hard copies will be kept in a locked filing cabinet of the researcher's office.

4.2 **Describe what you will do with the recorded data once it has been analysed. In order for the University to comply with Australian Freedom of Information legislation your research data must be stored securely for seven years in a safe environment. Describe how and where the data will be stored.**

Upon completion of the study, a hard copy of the data generated will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the Social Policy research Group at the University of South Australia, Magill. All of the used audiotapes will be erased and computer files deleted.

4.3 **Specify who apart from yourself (and your supervisors if applicable) will have access to the research data and results, and any conditions to be placed on that access.**

Access to raw data and summary results will be restricted to the researcher and his supervisors.

5 OWNERSHIP OF THE RESEARCH

5.1 **Detail who will own the data and the results of your research**.

The student researcher will solely own the data and the results of the research.

6 APPENDICES

- Attachment 1 **Reference list**
- Attachment 2 **Research tools**
- Attachment 3 **Recruitment material**
- Attachment 4 **Information sheet**
- Attachment 5 **Consent form**
- Attachment **Correspondence**

Attachment 1: Ten Key References

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Institute of Planners, 35*(4), 216-224.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y., eds. (2000). *The handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Gilbert, N., Miller, H., & Specht, H. (1980). *Introduction to social work practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, pp. 177-220.

Hawkins, L., Fook, J., & Ryan, M. (2001). Social workers' use of the language of social justice. *British Journal of Social Work, 31*(1), 1-13.

Ife, J. (1997). *Rethinking social work*. Sydney: Longman.

Jacobson, W. B. (2001). Beyond therapy: bringing social work back to human services reform. *Social Work, 46*(1), 51-61.

Jones, A. & May, J. (1992). *Working in human service organisations: a critical introduction.* Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Michielse, H. C. M. (1990). Policing the poor: Vives and the sixteenth century origins of modern social administration. *Social Service Review, 64*(1), 1-21.

Mullaly, R. (1997). *Structural social work: ideology, theory, and practice, 2nd ed*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Watt, S., Higgins, C., & Kendrick, A. (2000). Community participation in the development of services: A move towards community empowerment. *Community Development Journal, 35*(2), 120-132.

Attachment 2: Research Tools

Data collection will comprise of two kinds of mail questionnaires in the first two stages and semi-structure in-depth face-to-face interviews in the final stage.

The first mail questionnaire is meant to (1) gather basic information about work conditions that could be used to makes generalizations to a certain degree about the work conditions of the participants and (2) facilitate the snowball sampling of member of the population with experiences related to the central concern of the research. Thus, the first questionnaire will be fielded to 50 selected members of the estimated 1,600 population using stratified random sampling. The information gathered through this questionnaire will be included in at least two chapters of the thesis.

The second mail questionnaire, as mentioned earlier, will be fielded to participants selected through snowball sampling initiated through the first mail questionnaire. Much of the second mail questionnaire is actually a subset of the first. This second mail questionnaire is specifically meant to: (1) gather accounts of specific experiences of conflict between organizational demands and professional values and (2) serve as basis for the selection of two participants for the semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews. This step is needed since it is assumed that the random sample taken in the first mail questionnaire may be able to identify a more focused set of participants that have pertinent information to offer. The data gathered through this questionnaire will be included in at least one chapter of the thesis.

The central purpose of the interviews is to gather insights into the dynamics of competing organizational demands and professional values and the ways by which two participants have attempted to manage these conflicts. The data gathered through the interviews will be presented as case studies in the thesis.

Needed Information	Method
General Practice Conditions	First Mail Questionnaire
Practice Experiences Involving Competing Demands	Second Mail Questionnaire
Strategies in Managing Competing Demands	Semi-structured Interviews

The thesis will then draw insights from information gained through the three data-gathering stages as well as secondary data in developing a framework for practice in the work of the members of the Association (the population).

Please see the accompanying data-gathering instruments.

Attachment 2a: Research Tools - First Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE NATURE OF PRACTICE OF MUNICIPAL SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELEOPMENT OFFICERS

A. Self-check

1. Are you are Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer? __ Yes __ No
2. Are you a licensed social worker? __Yes __No

If you answered YES to both questions, proceed to part B. If you answered NO to any of the two questions, it means that you are not an intended participant and need not accomplish this questionnaire.

B. Demographics

1. Age: _____
2. Sex: _____
3. Highest Educational Degree: ___ Bachelor ___ Masters ___ PhD
4. Number of years as MSWDO: _____ years
5. Number of years as a registered professional: _____ years

C. About Community Social Problems

1. What in your opinion are three of the most prevalent social problems in your municipality?

   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

2. Which of these problems do you consider as the most crucial problem that you can help address? _____

D. About Programs and Services

1. How many fulltime social workers are employed in your office? _____

2. What are the three of the most frequently availed programs and services of your Office?

   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

3. Taking into consideration all the work hours of social workers in your Office, how much percentage of time is spent on the following activities:

Activity	Time (Percentage)
Casework	
Group Work	
Community Organizing	
Administration/Paperwork	
Others (Specify)	
TOTAL	**100**

E. On Tenure and Values

1. Does your superior have enough power to remove you from your position for no justifiable cause if s/he wanted to?
   ___ Yes ___ No

2. In the most recent election, were you asked or expected to participate in partisan activities in favour of your superior?
   ___ Yes ___ No

3. Has your superior ever asked you to do something that you felt was demeaning to your professional status? *If yes, answer the next item. If no, proceed to D.6.*
   ___ Yes ___ No

4. How many times has this happened? _____

5. In 50 words of less, can you specify the worst thing you were asked to do?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. Has your superior ever given you an order that was in conflict with your professional values and principles? *If yes, please answer the next item. If no, please proceed to D.11.*
   ___ Yes ___ No

7. How many times has this happened? _____

8. In 100 words or less, can you explain the most difficult conflict?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

9. What specific principle/value was involved? _____

10. How did you respond?
    ___ I carried out the order as instructed
    ___ I let my superiors/others make the decision and take the action
    ___ I resisted the order
    ___ I tried to comply with objectives without violating my values
    ___ _____

11. Do you know of ANOTHER Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer who was given an order that came in conflict with their professional values and principles such as participation and social justice? *If no, proceed to part F. If yes, please answer the next item.*
    ___ Yes ___ No

12. Please provide sufficient contact information of a particular person you have in mind so that s/he can be invited to fill out this questionnaire:
    Name: _____
    Position: Municipal Social Welfare & Development Officer
    Address: _____
    _____
    _____

F. Work Challenges

1. What do you consider as the biggest challenge/problem in your position as Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer?
   _____

2. Please explain the challenge/problem in 50 words or less:
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

G. Others

1. How many non-government organizations (NGO) do you currently have formal working relationships with? _____

2. How many staff of in NGOs in your municipality have you had official work contact with in the last three months? _____

H. Program Development and Management

1. Aside from MSWDO staff, who are the next two critically involved officers or units/groups in the design of programs and services?

   a. _____
   b. _____

2. Aside from MSWDO staff, who are the next two critically involved officers or units/groups in the evaluation of your programs and services?

   a. _____
   b. _____

I. Practice Problems

NOTE: Below are short case situations that might be encountered. Please discuss in no more than 150 words what action(s) you will usually take, given work constraints, in each situation. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. A woman is referred to your office by the local police desk officer who explained that it was more of your concern since it involved a family matter. The woman went to the police station after her husband beat her up. A medical examination revealed a number of concussions and open wounds as well as a dislocated joint. You have come across a number of similar cases in your municipality.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. A mother accompanies her 10-year old son to your office for assistance in the treatment of a wound of the boy. The wound, cause by an accident while the boy was at work, was months old and has developed gangrene. The mother is very much concerned especially since the family depended on the boy's daily earnings which is barely enough to meet their needs.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. A farmer is applying for financial assistance for the burial of one of his children. He explained that he no longer earns as much from farming because of declining yield. He thinks that the weather may be to blame for it. Anxious to obtain your approval, he even explained that he tried but couldn't get a job in any of the factories that have sprouted along the river bank right across his farm since the municipality started its economic development plan.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

J. Would you be willing to be interviewed for an in-depth discussion of your experience to be featured as a disguised case study (using pseudonyms) in the research report? If yes, please provide your name and contact details below:

Name: _____
Position: Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer
Address: _____
_____
_____
Phone: _____

NOTE: By including your personal information above, your participation in this study will no longer be TOTALLY confidential. But as a measure of protection of your identity, the researcher will detach this portion of the questionnaire so as to remove any identifying information in order to prevent anyone else from identifying you as a participant during and after the conduct of the research.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in participating in this study.

Attachment 2b: Research Tools – Second Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE REPORTING OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN WORK DEMANDS AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES

A. Self-check

1. Are you a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer? ___ Yes ___ No
2. Are you a licensed social worker? ___ Yes ___ No

If you answered YES to both questions, proceed to part B. If you answered NO to any of the two questions, it means that you are not an intended participant and need not accomplish this questionnaire.

B. Program Development and Management

1. Aside from MSWDO staff, who are the next two critically involved officers or units/groups in the design of programs and services?

   a. _____
   b. _____

2. Aside from MSWDO staff, who are the next two critically involved officers or units/groups in the evaluation of your programs and services?

   a. _____
   b. _____

C. Case Situations

NOTE: Below are short case situations that might be encountered. Please discuss in no more than 150 words what action(s) you will usually take, given work constraints, in each situation. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. A woman is referred to your office by the local police desk officer who explained that it was more of your concern since it involved a family matter. The woman went to the police station after her husband beat her up. A medical examination revealed a number of concussions and open wounds as well as a dislocated joint. You have come across a number of similar cases in your municipality.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. A farmer is applying for financial assistance for the burial of one of his children. He explained that he no longer earns as much from farming because of declining yield. He thinks that the weather may be to blame for it. Anxious to obtain your approval, he even explained that he tried but couldn't get a job in any of the factories that have

sprouted along the river bank right across his farm since the municipality started its economic development plan.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

D. Local Government and the Law

1. Do you know of any local government (not necessarily your own), that failed to implement certain laws in relation to social work concerns? *If no, please proceed to part E. If yes, please answer the next item.*
   ___ Yes ___ No

2. In 50 words or less, can you describe a particularly troubling incident (i.e., what law was involved, who were affected, etc.)?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

E. Conflict of Demands and Values

1. Has there been any instance when you were given an order by your superior(s) that was in conflict with your professional values and principles such as participation and social justice? *If no, please proceed to section E.6. If yes, please answer the next item.*
   ___ Yes ___ No

2. How many times has this happened? _____

3. In 100 words or less, can you describe the most difficult conflict?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. What particular professional value(s) was involved? _____

5. How did you respond?
   ___ I carried out the order as instructed
   ___ I let my superiors/others make the decision and take the action
   ___ I resisted the order
   ___ I tried to comply with objectives without violating my values
   ___ _____

6. Do you know of ANOTHER Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer who was given an order that came in conflict with their professional values and principles such as participation and social justice? *If no, proceed to part F. If yes, please answer the next item.*
   ___ Yes ___ No

7. Please provide sufficient contact information of a particular person you have in mind so that s/he can be invited to fill out this questionnaire:
   Name: _____
   Position: Municipal Social Welfare & Development Officer
   Address: _____
   _____

F. Would you be willing to be interviewed for an in-depth discussion of your experience to be featured as a disguised case study (using pseudonyms) in the research report? If yes, please provide your name and contact details below:
   Name: _____
   Position: Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer
   Address: _____
   _____
   Phone: _____

   NOTE: By including your personal information above, your participation in this study will no longer be TOTALLY confidential. But as a measure of protection of your identity, the researcher will detach this portion of the questionnaire so as to remove any identifying information in order to prevent anyone else from identifying you as a participant during and after the conduct of the research.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in participating in this study.

Attachment 2c: Research Tools – Interview Guide

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

A. Background of Informant

1. Personal info will be taken: age, sex, education background, number of years in position, number of years work experience in social work.
2. What relevant training and experiences did you have prior to this position?

B. Nature of the Locality and Organization

1. What are the predominant social problems confronting your locality? What do you think are the causes of these?
2. How would you characterize the political environment in your locality? What issues dominate politics?
3. How would you characterize the culture of your work environment? Is the environment conducive for initiative and creativity? What factors impinge on your work?
4. How does the local chief executive relate with you in particular?
5. What are the key non-government organizations operating in your municipality? What are they doing?
6. What is the nature of your relation to other professionals or NGOs in your locality?

C. Programs and Services

a. What programs and services are offered by your office?
b. Which of these take up most of your time?
c. Which of these take up most of the discretionary financial resources of the office?

D. View of the Work

1. What is the role of social welfare and development work in local government?
2. What do you see is your role in local government? What do you consider as your key result areas?
3. What is social work and what is its place in local social welfare and development work?
4. How different or similar is what you are actually doing to what you think you ought to be doing? What accounts for the difference, if any?

E. Autonomy and Discretion

1. How different or similar is your conception of social welfare and development work to that of your superiors? How does this affect your work, if any?
2. To what extent do you have discretion over the nature of programs and services?
3. How do you see yourself in relation to your superiors and the entire organization?
4. Apart from the established policies and programs that were in place prior to your appointment to the position, what specific innovations have you introduced?
5. Is there a genuine security of tenure in your organization (i.e., you cannot be removed except for due cause and only after due process)? Explain.

F. Relationship with Clients

1. What is the moat common form of service that you provide your clients?
2. Can you describe the nature of contacts you have with clients in general? You may want to consider length, frequency, level of interaction.
3. Aside from clients receiving services from you, in what other ways do you work with the community?

G. Conflict Between Organization and Professional Values

1. What conflicts, if any, have you encountered between organizational demands and professional values? You may want to consider these categories:

    a. Limited autonomy
    b. Excessive authority;
    c. Limited organizational mission

2. What do you think caused these conflicts?

H. Management Strategies

1. How do you manage conflict between organizational demands and professional values? What specific strategies do you employ?
2. What factors do you consider in the selection of your strategy?
3. What conflicts have you found to be very difficult to manage? What conflict in demands and values have you found to be irreconcilable?

I. Results

1. What specific accomplishments can you cite with respect to the management of conflict between organizational demands and professional values?
2. What would have been the result if you failed to take action?

J. Impact and Prospects

1. How has the experience of conflict of work demands and professional values affected your work relationships and professional prospects?
2. How has the experience of conflict of work demands and professional values affected your personal life?
3. How do you think should Municipal Social Welfare Officers position themselves in the local bureaucracy?

Attachment 3a: Recruitment Material for First Mail Questionnaire

University Letter Head

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072
Australia

Date

Dear…

My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia and I am conducting a survey with randomly selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines as part of a larger study that looks into the various ways by which competing organizational demands and professional values are being managed.

I understand that you are a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer and I would like to invite you to participate in this survey where you will be asked certain questions about your work conditions. Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may opt not to participate by simply not returning the enclosed questionnaire.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118.

I look forward to your participation.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 3b: Recruitment Material for Second Mail Questionnaire

University Letter Head

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072
Australia

Date

Dear…

My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia and I am conducting a study with selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines that have been referred by respondents in an earlier survey as part of a larger study that looks into the various ways by which practitioners manage competing organizational demands and professional values.

I understand that you are a Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer and I would like to invite you to participate in this study by filling out the enclosed questionnaire soliciting your personal knowledge about specific incidents involving conflict between work demands and professional values. Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of this particular study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may opt not to participate by simply not returning the enclosed questionnaire.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118.

I look forward to your participation.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 3c: Recruitment Material for Interview

University Letter Head

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072
Australia

Date

Dear…

Hi! You were one of those who responded to a questionnaire I fielded in connection with my study of selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines. This study calls for an in-depth look into the experiences of two Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in managing competing organizational demands and professional values. These experiences will be documented through interviews and will be developed into two case studies to be featured in the final report of the research.

May I again invite you to participate in this study by agreeing to an interview to discuss details of your work and your experiences in managing competing work demands and professional values. Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of this particular study as well as the guide questions I will be using in the actual interview. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will be free to withdraw from the interview at anytime if you feel the need to do so. Your identity will be protected in all stages of the process. To ensure confidentiality, I am hoping to arrange an interview outside of office hours and office premises. Furthermore, the report will employ pseudonyms for people and places to protect your identity. Your personal identity will not be revealed in the final report or through any other means.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118.

I look forward to your participation.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 4a: Information Sheet for Survey Participants

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4771
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

This study aims to explore the ways by which social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities manage conflict between work demands and professional values. The first part of the study is a survey that hopes to give a general view of the working conditions of Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers (MSWDOs) like you. Participants will be asked to accomplish a questionnaire and they may opt not to participate in the research by simply not returning the said questionnaire.

The research will hopefully inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by way of drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values encountered in similar situations.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants of this survey. Their participation will be anonymous unless the participants indicate their willingness to be interviewed, in which case they will be asked to write down their contact information. Given the chance that the postal marks on the return envelope might be traced to them, the envelopes will be destroyed as soon as they are received. In the unlikely event that participants should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of your participation in this research, they may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

In accordance with University policy, the filled-up questionnaires will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to the identification of participants will be released.

Attachment 4b: Information Sheet for Second Mail Questionnaire Participants

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4771
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

This study aims to explore the ways by which social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities manage conflict between organizational demands and professional values. This part of the study is aimed at gathering specific accounts of conflicts between work demands and professional values to show that range of issues that arise in the work of Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers (MSWDOs) like you. Participants will be asked to accomplish a questionnaire and they may opt not to participate in this research by simply not returning the said questionnaire.

The research will hopefully inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by way of drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values encounter in similar situations.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants whose participation will be anonymous unless the participants indicate their willingness to be interviewed, in which case they will be asked to write down their contact information. Given the chance that the postal marks on the return envelope might be traced to them, the envelopes will be destroyed as soon as they are received. In the unlikely event that participants should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of their participation in this research, the may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

In accordance with University policy, the filled-up questionnaires will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to the identification of participants will be released.

Attachment 4c: Information Sheet for Interview Participants

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy
Research Title: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values
Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group Telephone: +618 8302 4771
University of South Australia nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia

This study aims to explore the ways by which social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities manage conflict between organizational demands and professional values. This part of the study seeks to develop case studies that demonstrate the ways by which some Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers (MSWDOs) manage the conflict in demands and values that they encounter in their work. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 2 participants based on a set of guide questions. If at anytime during the interview they decide not to continue, they are free to withdraw from the research without any risk on their part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by way of drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that you encounter in your own work setting.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants in this study. In the unlikely event that they should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of their participation in this research, they may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921)

The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcripts will not contain any identifying information about participants. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to participants' identification will be released. Pseudonyms will be employed for persons, places and institutions in the final report to protect their identity.

Attachment 5: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Project Title **The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values**

Researcher's name **Nilan G. Yu**

Supervisor's name **Adrian Vicary and Frank Tesoriero**

- I have received information about this research project.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during the interview.
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

Name of participant .....

Signed ..... **Date** .....

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature and date .....

Attachment 6: Correspondence Seeking Approval for the Conduct of Research

University Letter Head

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072 Australia

Date

_____
President
Association of Provincial, City and Municipal
Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines
Cavite, Philippines

Dear…

My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia and I wish to seek written permission from you to conduct a study among selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines. The study aims to explore the experiences of your members in the management of competing work demands and professional values that they encounter in their work. The members of the Association will directly benefit from the study by way of drawing insights and strategies from the study's findings for use in their own work settings.

The data-gathering process will be done in three stages: the first will be a mail questionnaire to be fielded to 50 randomly selected members of your Association, the second will also be a mailed questionnaire to be fielded to 30 members of the organization selected through snowball sampling, and the third will be semi-structured in-depth interviews with two members of the Association selected from the snowball sample. Enclosed herewith are the information sheets containing the details of each of the three stages in the data-gathering process. The participation of your members in this study will be voluntary and their identities will be kept confidential with the use of pseudonyms in the final report.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118. I look forward to your favourable action on this request.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Appendix 7: Approval of Ethics Protocol by the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

Human Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: + 618 8302 3118
Facsimile: + 618 8302 3921
Email: Vicki.Allen@unisa.edu.au

8th July 2003

Mr Nilan G Yu
Room MH2-10 Murray House
University of SA
Magill Campus

Dear Nilan,

Thank you for submitting your ethics protocol **P165/03 Managing competing work demands and professional values: the experiences of selected members of the association of provincial, city and municipal social welfare and development officers.**

The University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) considered your protocol at its meeting held on 30th June 2003.

I am pleased to advise that your protocol has been approved.

Ethics approval is always made on the basis of a number of conditions detailed in the attachment; it is important that you are familiar with, and abide by, these conditions. It is also essential that you conduct all research according to UniSA guidelines, which can be found at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/index.htm.

We look forward to receiving your amendments in the near future. In the meantime, please contact Vicki Allen if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Eimear Muir-Cochrane
Chair, HREC

Enc
Cc Associate Professor Adrian Vicary (Magill Campus), Dr Frank Tesoriero (Magill Campus)

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CONDITIONS FOR ETHICS APPROVALS

Human Research Ethics Approval is always made on the basis of a number of important conditions:

- **Your research MUST NOT commence until the University's Human Research Ethics Committee has granted full approval.**

- **Any serious or unexpected adverse effects on research participants must be reported immediately to the Ethics Officer.**

- **Any unforseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the research project must be reported immediately to the Ethics Officer.**

- **The Ethics Committee must be notified of, and approve, any changes to the original protocol.**

- **The Ethics Committee must be notified of any changes in membership of the research team.**

- **In Australia there is a legal obligation for raw data arising from human research to be held securely**. The University requires that research data be retained for a period of seven years. If your school does not store your data, the school must be aware of its location.

- **Information for participants should include the name of the Executive Officer of the UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee** as a person who is able to discuss any concerns about the research project. These details should read:

  The University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed this study. Should you wish to discuss the project with someone not directly involved, in particular in relation to matters concerning policies, information about the conduct of the study, or your rights as a participant, please contact the UniSA Ethics Officer, Ms Vicki Allen on 8302 3118; fax 8302 3921; email: Vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

- **Approval is for a period of twelve months only.** Masters by Research and PhD students will be granted extensions, if necessary, through the annual review of progress process. Other researchers should make annual requests for extension using the Application for Extension form available at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/guideform.htm

- **A project completion report** must be made to the Human Research Ethics Committee or Divisional Ethics Committee (whichever granted the original approval) within three months of the project's completion. The Project Completion form is available at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/guideform.htm

May 2001

Appendix 8: Application for Ethics Approval of Additional Methods to the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

From: Yu, Nilan - YUYNY002
To: Vicki Allen
Subject: Request for approval of additional methods in the study "Managing competing work demands and professional values ..."

Dear Vicki,

I would like to request for permission to add the following two methods to my study:

- Focus Groups
- Interviews with Key Informants.

Attached herewith are the following:

- Recruitment flyer/poster for the Focus Group Discussion
- Information Sheet for the Focus Group discussion
- Guide for the Focus Group Discussion
- Recruitment Letters for Interviews with Key Informants
- Information Sheets for Interviews with Key Informants
- Guide for Interviews with Key Informants

I look forward to your favourable action on this matter.

Warm regards,

Nilan G. Yu

Attachment 1a: Recruitment flyer/poster for the Focus Group Discussion

SOCIAL SERVICES and ...

messy local politics!?!

Does local politics interfere with your work?
Are social services being used for political purposes?
Do you think that you ought to be doing more than what you are made to do?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions above and your are a member of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc., you may want to volunteer to be a participant in a focus group discussion (FGD) that will tackle the issues mentioned above. The FGD will be held during the annual conference of the Association in October 2004.

For more details on the FGD, please ask for the 'information sheet' for this activity from conference organizers or see the Association president, Mr. _____.

Attachment 1b: Information Sheet for the Focus Group Discussion

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: Managing Competing Mandates: Social Work Practice in Philippine Municipalities

Researcher:

Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4771
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

This study looks into the experiences of social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities. This part of the study explores the interaction between local politics, social policy and social work practice. A focus group discussion will be conducted using a set of guide questions with around 10 to 12 volunteers. If at anytime during the interview the participants decide not to continue, they will be free to withdraw from the discussion without any risk on their part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by way of drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that they encounter in their own work setting.

The focus group discussion will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcript will not contain any identifying information about the participants. All records containing personal information will remain confidential. The identity of the participants will be protected during and after the research through the use of pseudonyms for persons, places and institutions in the final report to protect their identity.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants in this study. In the unlikely event that they should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of their participation in this research, they may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

Attachment 1c: Guide for the Focus Group Discussion

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

A. Participants and Selection Process

The FGD participants shall consist of members of the Association for Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc. selected from a cohort of volunteers who will respond to an invitation to be announced during the national annual conference of the Association in October 2004. As many as 16 participants will be accommodated for the FGD. If the volunteers exceed 16, the facilitator will employ random sampling to select a group of not more than 12 participants.

B. Purpose

The focus group discussion aims to (1) explore the extent to which local politics has reshaped social policy and social work practice; (2) discern the processes by which this reshaping is taking place; and (3) explore viable strategies for reshaping social policy and local politics.

C. Guidelines

1. Before the discussion begins, each participant will be given an information sheet detailing, among others, the purpose of the activity, the voluntary nature of their participation and an assurance of confidentiality.

2. Participants will also be informed that the discussion will be recorded on tape (the assurance of confidentiality will be restated), and their individual written agreement to the taping of the discussion will be sought. They will also be asked to respect the confidentiality of the discussion by stating that they will not reveal any personal information gained from the discussion unless given express permission by persons concerned.

D. Guide Questions

1. What is social welfare and development or the work of MSWDOs for you? What are your key result areas?

2. What is social welfare and development or the work of MSWDOs for mayors and local politicians? What are the key result areas?

3. What is social work's key contributions/roles in MSWDOs and local government for you?

4. What is social work's key contributions/roles in MSWDOs and local government for mayors and local politicians?

5. How have the views of the mayor and local politicians on the role of social workers in MSWDOs and local government affected your practice of social work?

6. What changes can mayors and local politicians introduce in the social welfare and development work of local governments?

7. How have social welfare and development policies, programs and services changed since the devolution?

8. How have these changes in social welfare and social work practice, if any, taken place?

9. What factors facilitated or enabled these changes to take place?

10. What role did you play in these changes?

11. What key social welfare policies or policy changes can/have social workers in MSWDOs introduced in their local governments?

12. What key political processes or reforms can/have social workers in MSWDOs introduced in their local governments?

Attachment 2a: Recruitment Letter for Interview with Former DSWD Secretaries

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road, Magill SA 5072
Australia

22 October 2003

_____
_____
_____

Dear ____,

Greetings! My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia. I am conducting a study with selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines that looks into the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities. Part of the study reviews the devolution and explores the ideological underpinnings of government policy during your incumbency as secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

In this connection, may I invite you to participate in an interview to be conducted at a time and place of your convenience aimed at exploring the above-mentioned topics? Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of the research as well as the guide questions to be used in the actual interview. Your participation in the interview will be voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time without any adverse effect on your part. Your participation may or may not be confidential, depending on your preference for which a written record will be sought. If you choose to participate anonymously, care will be taken to ensure that no identifying information leading to your identity will be reflected in any of the reports to be prepared arising out of the interview.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118.

I look forward to your participation in this study.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 2b: Information Sheet for Interview with Former DSWD Secretaries

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4741
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

This study explores the experiences of social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities. This part of the study looks into the devolution of social welfare and development services and the prevailing ideological climate in the executive and legislative branches of government during the incumbency of the interviewees. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted using a set of guide questions. If at anytime during the interview they decide not to continue, participants are free to withdraw from the research without any risk on their part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by way of drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that they encounter in their own work setting.

The interviews will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcripts will not contain any identifying information about the participants. All records containing personal information will remain confidential. The participation of the participants may or may not be confidential depending on their preference for which a written record will be sought. In the event that the participants choose to participate anonymously, pseudonyms will be employed for persons, places and institutions in the final report to protect their identity.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants in this study. In the unlikely event that they should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of their participation in this research, they may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

Attachment 2c: Guide for Interview with Former DSWD Secretaries

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH FORMER DSWD SECRETARIES

The objective of this interview is to obtain the interviewees' personal knowledge on the devolution and the prevailing views on economic policy and politics during their incumbency. The interview is expected to last from 1 and 1.5 hours.

A. On Devolution

1. To what extent were you involved in the implementation of the devolution of social welfare and development services?

2. What was the position of the department with regards to the devolution?

3. The devolution of social services was meant to promote empowerment. What other agenda, if any, interloped with the implementation of the devolution?

4. How did the devolution affect local social welfare and development work?

5. What key concerns did social work professionals raise in the process of implementation of the devolution?

B. On Policies in The Ramos Administration and Beyond

1. Beyond political rhetoric, what was the general view in the executive and legislative branches of government about the role of government regarding the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare?

2. Did you perceive any deliberate attempt to lessen the government's role in the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare? Please explain.

3. Did you perceive any deliberate attempts to lessen funding for the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare? Please explain.

4. To what extent did discussions on 'privatisation', 'market orientation' and 'contractualisation' impinge on social welfare and development concerns?

5. How do you assess the nature of ideological changes, if any, in the years after your incumbency?

Attachment 3a: Recruitment Letter for Interview with Current DSWD Secretary

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road, Magill SA 5072
Australia

4 November 2003

The Honorable _____
Secretary
Department of Social Welfare and Development
Batasan Complex, Quezon City
Philippines

Dear Secretary _____,

Greetings! My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia. I am conducting a study with selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc. that looks into the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities. Part of the study explores the prevailing ideological climate in the Philippine bureaucracy, reviews the effects of the devolution and explores the prospects for social work practice in Philippine municipalities.

In this connection, may I invite you to participate in an interview to be conducted at a time and place of your convenience aimed at exploring the above-mentioned topics? I will be in the Philippines starting 8 December 2003. Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of the research as well as the guide questions to be used in the actual interview. Your participation in the interview will be voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time without any adverse effect on your part. Your participation may or may not be confidential, depending on your preference for which a written record will be sought. If you choose to participate anonymously, care will be made to ensure that no identifying information leading to your identity will be reflected in any of the reports to be prepared arising out of the interview.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118. I look forward to your participation in this study.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 3b: Information Sheet for Interview with Current DSWD Secretary

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: **Managing Competing Mandates: Social Work Practice in Philippine Municipalities**

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu *(PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4741
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

The study explores the experiences of social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities. This part of the study looks into the prevailing ideological climate in the executive and legislative branches of government, the effects of the devolution of social services, and the prospects for social work practice in Philippine local governments. A semi-structured interview will be conducted using a set of guide questions. If at anytime during the interview the participant decides not to continue, she will be free to withdraw from the research without any risk on her part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that they encounter in their own work setting.

The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcript will not contain any identifying information about the participant. All records containing personal information will remain confidential. The participation of the participant may or may not be confidential depending on her preference for which a written record will be sought. In the event that the participant chooses to participate anonymously, pseudonyms will be employed for persons, places and institutions in the final report to protect her identity. We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participant in this study. In the unlikely event that she should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of her participation in this research, she may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

Attachment 3c: Guide for Interview with Current DSWD Secretary

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH CURRENT DSWD SECRETARY

The interview aims to draw the interviewee's personal knowledge the prevailing ideological directions during her incumbency, the effects of devolution on social welfare and development work and the prospects for professional work in the Philippine bureaucracy. The interview is expected to last from one to one hour and a half.

A. On Policies in the Arroyo Administration

1. Beyond political rhetoric, what is the general view in the executive and legislative branches of government about the role of government regarding the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare?

2. Do you perceive any deliberate attempts to lessen the government's role in the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare? Please explain.

3. Do you perceive any deliberate attempts to lessen funding for the maintenance of income, standard of living, health care, housing and social welfare in general in welfare? Please explain.

4. To what extent do discourses on 'privatisation', 'market orientation' and 'contractualisation' impinge on social welfare and development concerns?

5. How do you assess the nature of ideological changes, if any, over the years since the Aquino Administration?

6. What are the key concerns and current thrusts of the DSWD?

7. How would you characterize the work of the DSWD?

B. On the Effects of the Devolution

1. What effects has devolution had on local government social welfare and development work?

2. What have been the effects of the devolution on the larger social services sector/NGO community?

3. To what extent and in what ways has the devolution affected social work practice?

C. On The Prospects for Social Work Practice in Local Government

1. How is social welfare and development work in local governments currently defined?

2. Given your perspective as a professional, in what ways should social welfare and development work be redefined, if necessary? What should be the key result areas of MSWDOs?

3. What, in your view, are the key challenges for professionals working in MSWDOs?

Attachment 4a: Recruitment Letter for Interview with Fired/Floated Practitioners

University Letter Head

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072
Australia

Date

Dear…

Greetings! My name is Nilan G. Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia. In a survey I conducted earlier with selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, you were named by a respondent as someone who has reportedly been fired/floated from being the head of a City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (C/MSWDO). My research seeks to look into such experiences in the hope of gaining a deeper understanding of the work environment of professionals working in Philippine municipalities. In this connection, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview with the undersigned aimed at exploring your experience in this area.

Before you decide, I wish to stress two things: (1) your participation will be voluntary and (2) your identity will be protected. Your participation being voluntary, you will be free to withdraw from the interview at anytime if you feel the need to do so. Your identity will be protected in all stages of the research process, including the writing of the final report and thereafter. The report will employ pseudonyms for people and places to protect your identity. Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of the study as well as the guide questions I will be using in the actual interview.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118.

I look forward to your participation.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 4b: Information Sheet for Interview With Fired/Floated Practitioners

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: The Experiences of Selected Members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers in Managing Competing Work Demands and Professional Values

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu, *Master of Social Work (PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4771
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

This study explores the experiences of social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities. This part of the study seeks to explore the experiences of professionals who have been fired/floated. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted using a set of guide questions. If at anytime during the interview they decide not to continue, participants are free to withdraw from the research without any risk on their part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that they encounter in their own work setting.

The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcripts will not contain any identifying information about the participants. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to participants' identification will be released. Pseudonyms will be employed for persons, places and institutions in the final report to protect their identity.

We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participants in this study. In the unlikely event that they should experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of their participation in this research, they may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

Attachment 4c: Guide for Interview with Fired/Floated Practitioners

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH FIRED/FLOATED PRACTITIONERS

The main objective is to obtain an account of the experiences of some social work professionals on being fired/floated. The interview is expected to last between 1 to 1½ hours.

E. Background Info

a. Age: _____
b. Sex: __F __M
c. Number of years in MSWDO: _____
d. Number of years as a professional: _____
e. Undergraduate degree: _____
f. Graduate degree: _____
g. Class of municipality: __1st __2nd __3rd __4th __5th

F. On Work In Local Politics and Social Work

6. How would you characterize politics in your municipality/city?

7. Can you describe the organizational environment in your local government unit, with special focus on decision-making and power?

8. What is social work for you?

9. How would you characterize your professional practice?

10. How do social work and politics go together? How about social workers and politicians?

G. On Being Fired/Floated

1. You were reported to have been fired/floated. Can you give an account of the case?

    a. Why did it happen?
    b. When did this happen?
    c. How did it happen?
    d. Who were involved?

2. How did you respond to the action?

    a. Did you contest the action?
    b. How was the matter resolved?

3. How did this affect you?

    a. What were the effects on your personal life?
    b. What were the effects on your professional life/career?

4. Looking back at what happened, what lessons have you learned? What would you have done differently?

H. On Tenure and Challenges

1. In local government, can a C/MSWDO be removed from office/position without a valid cause? If yes, in what ways can this be done?

2. What issues involving professional duties and bureaucratic/organizational expectations have you had difficulty dealing with?

3. To what extent and in what ways did the mayor expand/contract the social welfare and development services in your municipality?

4. To what extent did the mayor extend/limit your professional power and responsibilities?

5. Is there a chance for a social work professional to do what social workers should be doing and yet survive in the local government?

Attachment 5a: Recruitment Letter for Interview with APCMSWDOPI President

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road, Magill SA 5072
Australia

4 November 2003

Mr. _____
National President
Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare
and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc.
Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office
Trece Martires City, Cavite 4109
Philippines

Dear Mr. _____,

Greetings! First of all I wish to thank you for approving the conduct of my research among selected members of your Association. I have sent out mail questionnaires and some have already been returned. As part of the research into the experiences of professionals working in Philippine municipalities, I am interested in gaining some information about your Association and your knowledge about the concerns confronting MSWDOs in their work.

In this connection, may I invite you to participate in an interview to be conducted at a time and place of your convenience aimed at exploring the above-mentioned topics? Enclosed herewith is an information sheet containing the details of the study as well as the guide questions for the actual interview. Your participation in the interview will be voluntary and you may withdraw from the interview at any time without any adverse effect on your part. Your participation may or may not be confidential, depending on your preference for which a written record will be sought. If you choose to participate anonymously, care will be made to ensure that no identifying information leading to your identity will be reflected in any of the reports to be prepared arising out of the interview.

If you need more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or, Ms. Vicki Allen, the Ethics Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118. I look forward to your participation in this study.

Very truly yours,

Nilan G. Yu
Researcher

Attachment 5b: Information Sheet for Interview with the APCMSWDOPI President

University of South Australia
Division of Education, Arts and Social sciences
School of Social Work and Social Policy

Research Title: Managing Competing Mandates: Social Work Practice in Philippine Municipalities

Researcher:
Nilan G. Yu *(PhD Candidate)*
Social Policy Research Group
University of South Australia
5072 Magill, South Australia, Australia
Telephone: +618 8302 4741
nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au

The study explores the experiences of social work professionals working in Philippine municipalities. This part of the study looks into the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc, and how it responds to the work-related concerns of MSWDOs. A semi-structured interview will be conducted using a set of guide questions. If at anytime during the interview the participant decides not to continue, he will be free to withdraw from the research without any risk on his part.

The research will inform the practice of social work in Philippine municipalities, providing practitioners some insights into what challenges others have dealt with and the ways by which they have done so. MSWDOs may directly benefit from this research by drawing from the findings insights and strategies for managing the conflicts between demands and values that they encounter in their own work setting.

The interview will be audiotaped and then transcribed. After the research is completed, the audiotape will be destroyed. In accordance with University policy, the interview transcript will be retained for seven years in a locked filing cabinet in the Social Policy Research Group. The transcript will not contain any identifying information about the participant. All records containing personal information will remain confidential. The participation of the participant may or may not be confidential depending on his preference for which a written record will be sought. In the event that the participant chooses to participate anonymously, information that can readily be traced to him will not be included and pseudonyms will be employed in the final report to protect his identity. We anticipate no risk or adverse effects on the part of the participant in this study. In the unlikely event that he would experience any risk or adverse effects as a result of his participation in this research, he may contract the researcher by phone, email or post using the above-stated contact information or the Executive Officer of the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, Ms. Vicki Allen (email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au; phone: +618 8302 3118; fax: +618 8302 3921).

Attachment 5c: Guide for Interview with APCMSWDOPI President

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEW WITH THE APCMSWDOPI PRESIDENT

The purpose of the interview is to obtain information about the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc. (APCMSWDOPI) and the concerns of its members. The interview is expected to last between 1 to 1 hour and a half.

A. On the Association

1. When and why was the Association formed? Can you give a short account of the formation of the Association?

2. What are the aims and mission of the Association?

3. What are the current key concerns of the Association?

4. What are the current key activities of the Association?

5. What is the Association's position on political activity? How do you define political activity?

B. On the Devolution

1. In what ways has the devolution affected social welfare services?

2. How did the devolution change the work environment and role of SWDOs?

3. In what ways has the devolution affected social work practice in local government?

C. On MSWDOs

1. Does the Association have a working definition of the role and/or key responsibilities of MSWDOs (or SWDOs in general) in local government? Please explain why it is so. If not, why no?

2. What work-related concerns/complaints about MSWDOs (or SWDOs in general), if any, have come to your attention?

3. What work-related concerns/complaints from MSWDOs (or SWDOs in general), if any, have come to your attention? *[The interview will delve into the details of cases to the extent required. This may thus be the longest portion of the interview.]*

4. To what extent are there discussions within the Association involving conflict/competition between professional values and principles and bureaucratic demands?

5. What mechanisms are in place to handle any work-related disputes affecting MSWDOs (or SWDOs in general)?

Appendix 9: Approval of Additional Methods from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

From: Vicki Allen
Sent: Thursday, 20 November 2003 11:54 AM
To: Yu, Nilan - YUYNY002
Subject: Ethics Protocol P165/03 "Managing competing work demands and professional values ..." - variation to approved protocol

Dear Nilan

Re: Ethics Protocol P165/03 "Managing competing work demands and professional values: the experiences of selected members of the association of provincial, city and municipal social welfare and development officers."

Thank you for submitting your request to add the following two methods to the approved protocol for approval:

- Focus Groups
- Interviews with Key Informants.

I am pleased to advise that the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the inclusion of these two research methods on behalf of the Committee. This approval includes approval of the following:

- Recruitment flyer/poster.
- Information Sheets for Focus Group discussion
- Guide for Focus Group Discussions
- Information Sheets and Recruitment Letters for Interviews with Key Informants
- Guide for interviews with Key Informants

Please regard this email as formal notification of approval of the above variation to your original protocol.

Ethics approval is always made on the basis of a number of conditions detailed in the attachment; it is important that you are familiar with, and abide by, these conditions. It is also essential that you conduct all research according to UniSA guidelines, which can be found at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/index.htm

Best wishes for your research.

Regards,
Vicki Allen
Ethics Officer
Research Services
University of South Australia - Mawson Lakes Campus
Mawson Lakes Boulevard, Mawson Lakes SA 5095
Telephone: + 61 8 8302 3118; Fax: +61 8 8302 3921
Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CONDITIONS FOR ETHICS APPROVALS

Human Research Ethics Approval is always made on the basis of a number of important conditions:

- **Your research MUST NOT commence until the University's Human Research Ethics Committee has granted full approval.**

- **Any serious or unexpected adverse effects on research participants must be reported immediately to the Ethics Officer.**

- **Any unforseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the research project must be reported immediately to the Ethics Officer.**

- **The Ethics Committee must be notified of, and approve, any changes to the original protocol.**

- **The Ethics Committee must be notified of any changes in membership of the research team.**

- **In Australia there is a legal obligation for raw data arising from human research to be held securely**. The University requires that research data be retained for a period of seven years. If your school does not store your data, the school must be aware of its location.

- **Information for participants should include the name of the Executive Officer of the UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee** as a person who is able to discuss any concerns about the research project. These details should read:

  The University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed this study. Should you wish to discuss the project with someone not directly involved, in particular in relation to matters concerning policies, information about the conduct of the study, or your rights as a participant, please contact the UniSA Ethics Officer, Ms Vicki Allen on 8302 3118; fax 8302 3921; email: Vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

- **Approval is for a period of twelve months only.** Masters by Research and PhD students will be granted extensions, if necessary, through the annual review of progress process. Other researchers should make annual requests for extension using the Application for Extension form available at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/guideform.htm

- **A project completion report** must be made to the Human Research Ethics Committee or Divisional Ethics Committee (whichever granted the original approval) within three months of the project's completion. The Project Completion form is available at http://www.unisa.edu.au/orc/ethics/guideform.htm

May 2001

Appendix 10: Approved Ethics Application to the Association of Provincial, City, and Municipal Social Welfare Officers of the Philippines, Inc.

University of South Australia

Educating Professionals • Creating and Applying Knowledge • Serving the Community

Social Policy Research Group
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of South Australia
St. Bernards Road
Magill SA 5072 Australia

25 June 2003

MR. RUFINO M. GAMAD
President
Association of Provincial, City and Municipal
Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines
Office on Provincial Social Welfare and Development Services
Trece Martires City, Cavite, Philippines (Telefax: +63-046-419-0252)

Dear Mr. Gamad:

My name is Nilan Yu of the Social Policy Research Group of the University of South Australia. I wish to seek written permission from you to conduct a study among selected members of the Association of Provincial, City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officers of the Philippines, Inc. The study aims to explore the experiences of your members in the management of competing work demands and professional values that they encounter in their work. The members of the Association will directly benefit from the study by way of drawing insights and strategies from the study's findings for use in their own work settings. The data-gathering process will be done in three stages: the first will be a mail questionnaire to be fielded to 150 randomly selected members of your Association, the second will also be a mailed questionnaire to be fielded to 60 members of the organization selected through snowball sampling, and the third will be semi-structured in-depth interviews with two members of the Association selected from the snowball sample. Enclosed herewith are the information sheets containing the details of each of the three stages in the data-gathering process. The participation of your members in this study will be voluntary and their identities will be kept confidential with the use of pseudonyms in all reports.

If you would like more information about this study, you can contact me on +618 8302 4741 or nilan.yu@postgrads.unisa.edu.au. If you have any questions or concerns about the ethics of this project, please contact Associate Professor Adrian Vicary on +618 8302 4382 or the Ethics Officer, Ms. Vicki Allen, Human Research Ethics Committee, University of South Australia on + 618 8392 3118. I look forward to your favourable action on this request.

Very truly yours,

NILAN G. YU
Researcher

St Bernards Road
Magill
South Australia 5072

Appendix 11: Article Accepted for Publication in the International Journal of Social Welfare[1]

INTERROGATING SOCIAL WORK:
Philippine Social Work and Human Rights Under Martial Law[2]

Introduction

Social workers have been accused of policing the poor and of preserving the status quo by providing a semblance of social reform and change (Cloward & Piven, 1972; Margolin, 1997; Michielse, 1990; Peirce, 1974). A construction of the profession that is anchored on social justice requires practitioners to vigilantly reflect on the ways in which this alleged complicity in legitimising inequalities is manifested in their own practice contexts. Otherwise, the practice of the social work would itself be oppressive, perpetuating the social injustices that it claims to challenge.

This article provides a critical view of the mainstream construction of Philippine social work as represented by the professional journal *Social Work* which was regularly published by the Philippine Association of Social Workers between 1956 and 1984. It does so by discussing a key historical event in Philippine history, namely martial law, and the mainstream professional community's response to the challenges that it posed as reflected in journal articles. In essence, this is an interrogation of the mainstream Philippine social work community regarding its actions under martial law. Questions may conceivably be raised about the relevance of the event and such a body of literature in today's world. I argue here that the dynamics between the particular political economic context and the professional response raises important issues that transcend chronological and national boundaries. Notwithstanding variances in social contexts, this particular experience offers relevant lessons and insights for international social work which Hokenstad, Khinduka and Midgley (1992: 4) define as 'the profession and practice in different parts of the world, …the different roles that social workers perform, the practice methods they use, the problems they deal with, and the many challenges they face.'

This article begins with a cursory glance at the assault on human rights under martial law in the Philippines. I will then outline the response of the mainstream professional community to the challenges that it posed, as reflected in the professional journal. Finally, I will explore the philosophical underpinnings of the response and end with a note on their implications for contemporary social work practice. The word 'interrogation' carries a negative connotation for those who witnessed the tragic drama that occurred during martial law.

---

[1] This article was drawn from Chapter 6 of this thesis.

[2] This is a preprint of an article accepted for publication in the International Journal of Social Welfare © 2005 Nilan G. Yu

Martial law and the assault on human rights

Marcos instituted martial law on September 21, 1972 ostensively to arrest lawlessness and violence. But it has been suggested that this was actually Marcos' strategic coup in an epic intra-elite struggle meant to curb the power of political rivals and consolidate his own. He disbanded private armies while appropriating greater power for himself by making the Armed Forces of the Philippines 'his own personal army' (Brillantes, 1987; Shalom, 1986: 173-182).

To maintain legitimacy, much of what was done under martial law was undertaken in the name of development including the construction of an extensive fish port, hydro-electric dams and a nuclear power plant and the exploitation of forest and mineral resources. Many of these, however, resulted in the displacement of marginalised sectors while favouring a select group, mostly relatives and cronies of Marcos. It became apparent that the impetus for development initiatives under the Marcos administration was the accumulation of wealth and prolongation of power (Miranda, 1999; Youngblood, 1990).

Resistance was met with repression. Marcos proscribed the freedoms of speech and assembly, suspended the right to strike, cancelled all existing media franchises, made rumor mongering punishable by imprisonment, and consolidated power by effectively abolishing Congress and holding the judiciary hostage by compelling its members to submit undated letters of resignation (Salonga, 2001: 225; Shalom, 1986: 170). The military was used to secure business interests and neutralise opposition to development projects through the harassment of protesting villagers and, in some cases, jailing, torturing or killing project opponents (Youngblood, 1990: 106). The human rights abuses that were committed against those who opposed the regime and its policies included hamletting, arbitrary arrests and detentions, tortures, unexplained disappearances, 'salvagings' or extrajudicial killings, and massacres. Kessler (1989) noted 21,561 cases of arrests, 737 cases of disappearances, and 2,427 cases of extrajudicial killings between 1975 and 1985 but higher figures have been cited. Kessler's figures are way below the 70,000 arrests and detentions and 3,257 extrajudicial killings noted by others (McCoy, 1999; Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, 1986). Marcos himself told Amnesty International in 1975 that 50,000 people altogether had been arrested and detained up to that time (Shalom, 1986: 170). These figures do not include the numerous cases of torture which was widespread and systematic (Amnesty International, 1988). According to McCoy (1999), there were about 35,000 cases of torture which mostly occurred during interrogations of prisoners who were arbitrarily arrested and detained.

The response of mainstream Philippine social work

The title 'social worker' is used in local professional culture and jurisprudence to refer to those who passed the board examinations and secured a license to practice social work. The term 'mainstream social work' is used here to refer to the dominant segments of the local professional community, primarily represented in this article by the professional association.

The Philippine Association of Social Workers (PASW), founded in 1947, was the first and – for almost half a century – the only national organization representing Philippine social workers. The association has kept no records of its membership during the time of Marcos and so exact figures cannot be quoted with regards to the actual number of members during the period in review. These figures would have been useful to establish the extent to

which the association membership represented the total number of social workers in the country. As an alternative reference, it can be noted that the association's biennial conference in 1980 mustered as many as 500 participants (De Leon, 1980) constituting almost 20% of the 2,982 social workers listed in the registry of the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission at the end of 1979, the figure representing all those who have been granted a professional license since it was made a statutory requirement about 15 years earlier. Considering how travel and related costs would have precluded the participation of some members from various parts of the archipelago, the actual number of association members would have been significantly higher. Most of the members of the association, however, were staff of the national Department of Social Welfare and Development where organizational culture and discipline virtually made association membership a requirement (Del Castillo, *pers. comm.*, 30 January 2004).

Since the beginning, the government played a significant role in the introduction and advancement of social work in the country and the sustenance of the professional movement (Almanzor, 1966: 321; What the government…, 1958: 137). The association was founded by a group of pioneering Filipino social workers who studied in the United States under government-administered scholarships. The passing of Republic Act 4373 in 1965 elevated the status of social work as a profession and further cemented the relationship between the government and the professional association which lobbied for the passing of the law. For decades, the professional association was not financially self-sustaining and largely depended on government funds, office space, administrative and other logistical support afforded by the overlap between the leadership of the association and the national Social Welfare Administration, (Del Castillo, *pers. comm.*, 30 January 2004). In the choice of officers, it made good sense for association members to elect those who had the political clout and connections to muster resources and these were often the high-ranking officials of the Administration (Fondevilla & Mendoza, 1973: 23).

The relationship between the state and the professional association peaked under Marcos. The ascension of Marcos to the presidency was of particular significance to the professional association because it was only under his watch that the Administration, the bulwark of the profession, was elevated to the level of a full-fledged department. An erstwhile social secretary of Imelda Marcos, the wife of the President, became the head of the Department of Social Welfare for the better part of the 70s. Although she was not a social worker, her personal ties with Mrs. Marcos served as a strong link between the establishment and the professional association. A board member of the professional association in the early seventies went on to serve as Assistant Secretary for Social Welfare in the late seventies. The president of the professional association from 1975-1976 concurrently served as Undersecretary for Social Welfare and later went on to serve as Social Welfare Secretary from 1981 until the Marcos dictatorship was deposed through 'people power' in 1986.

The Marcos dictatorship was 'exceptional' for the quantity and quality of its violence, embodying a systematic and brazen assault on human rights and human dignity (Amnesty International, 2003: 1; McCoy, 1999: 129). How did mainstream social work respond to it? Today, the professional journal stands as an enduring testament of the mainstream professional community's response to martial law. For this reason, a review of all existing copies of the professional journal was made covering the period 1972 to 1983, the latter being the last year the PASW published the journal. The archives of the Philippine Association of Social Workers, Inc. (the progeny of PASW) and the University of the Philippine's College of

Social Work and Community Development were scoured for all available copies of the journal. Since the professional journal contained anything from conference proceedings to news bits to research-based papers to anecdotal accounts to advice columns to tip sheets and a host of other forms of content, a quantitative approach to analyzing the contents of the journal in order to examine the response of the mainstream professional community to martial law was found to be impracticable. Instead, attention was focused on any reference made to the Marcos administration, martial law, human rights, social justice and other keywords that would yield articles pertaining to the issue of human rights under martial law. Martial law struck at the core value of the social work profession and so should have elicited an unequivocally critical response from the professional community. However, evidenced by the articles in the professional journal, the human rights violations under martial law were never directly questioned or contested by the mainstream social work community until the very end of the dictatorship. Instead, discourses on the virtues of Marcos' New Society and social work's role in the new order abounded.

There were articles that heaped acclaim and affirmation on the advances under martial law. An article by Lim (1973), who was then Secretary of Social Welfare, expounded on the New Society's policies that she said were meant to foster development. An article by Cardenas (1973: 15) pointed to the prominence gained by public policy as one of the 'benefits of martial law'. In an article about the philosophical base of the Philippine social welfare system, Lim (1976a: 20) elaborated on the 'reformist society under the leadership of a social revolutionary president'. Martial law was presented by Montes (1977: 59) as a 'democratic revolution'. An article by Corpuz (1977) extolled the New Society's agenda and exhorted support for it. Benitez (1980) lauded the national development strategy of Marcos.

The writers uncritically adopted the regime's language and rhetoric. Montes (1977: 59) suggested that 'The internalized change among people is the true change, the lasting change that we looked forward under the New Society.' Fondevilla (1977: 79) argued that social workers should 'seek no less than the creation of a new civic culture for the entire Filipino people' in the 'New Order'. The Marcoses themselves were invited as keynote speakers in the biennial national conferences of the professional association. While tens of thousands languished indefinitely in jail, the Marcoses were given a voice through the publication of articles in which the President (Marcos, 1977) reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare of children and expounded on the actions taken by his government along those lines and the First Lady and Minister for Human Settlements Imelda Marcos (1980: 6) talked about the 'ideology based on humanism' which served as the 'framework for social service' in the New Society. A number of articles suggest that the mainstream professional community espoused Marcos' vision. Abello (1973: 8-9), who was then president of the Council of Welfare Agencies of the Philippines, talked about gearing social services towards the objectives of the New Society 'as envisioned by President Ferdinand Marcos' without any hint of concern over concurrent events such as the curtailment of civil liberties. Lasan (1973), then president of the professional association, warmly acknowledged the support extended by the Marcos administration to the professional community and promised that the association would work closely with the government towards national development. Benitez (1980), Cordero (1980), and De Leon (1980) discussed the tasks of social work within the human settlements framework, a key concern of Minister Imelda Marcos. More than ten years after the declaration of martial law, Montes (1983: 6) would recount how Marcos 'established the New Society' that sought to bring peace and order, land reform, educational reform, employment and social services.

Overlooking the repression and inequities, articles in the professional journal written by government officials postulated social justice underpinnings in the new order. Cardenas (1973: 18) talked of a change in the role of the state beyond charity suggesting that the solution to poverty necessitated 'structural and institutional changes'. Marcos himself was quoted as saying that 'mass poverty and oligarchic wealth are the result of social arrangements' (Lim, 1976b: 6). Acknowledging that poverty was rooted in structures, Lim (1976b: 7, 27, 32) posited social welfare as an institutional function of society through 'development from below'. Montes (1977: 59) pointed to the 'institutional and structural changes' introduced with the imposition of martial law that were aimed at the 'diffusion and democratization of wealth'. The argument, it seems, was that the Marcos dictatorship was as vehicle for social justice.

Alternative responses

Not all social workers responded to martial law in the same manner. According to Soliman (*pers. comm.*, 16 February 2004), a prominent member of the NGO community who went on to serve as Secretary of Social Welfare from 2001 to 2005, many social workers stayed away from government and chose to work in non-government organizations to avoid being coopted and to 'fight the dictatorship' from below. Working with government was simply not an option for many of the new social work graduates at that time and not a few professionals took up arms and joined the underground revolutionary movement (Alcid, *pers. comm.*, 19 February 2004). A number of staff and students of the said university and some other schools were actively involved in protest actions and advocacy against the repressive regime (Guerrero, *pers. comm.*, 27 February 2004). But such exceptions only highlight the contrast between the position embodied by the professional journal and the principles and values that the profession supposedly represents.

In response to the challenges posed by martial law, segments of the student, peasant, labor and the religious sectors stood up against the dictatorial regime (Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, 1986). At the forefront of the fight against human rights abuse were members of the religious sector. Albeit majority of the Catholic Church hierarchy acquiesced to martial law (Parong, 1999), the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines established the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) in 1974 which became a cornerstone in human rights advocacy during and long after the dictatorship. The establishment of the TFDP was a bold move since it came at a time when involvement in most organizations was prohibited on the pain of imprisonment. The eighties opened with a resurgence of activism and protests. Students, farmers and labour from all over the country held ever growing marches that touched on such issues like the nuclear power plant, exploitative agrarian and labour relations, and repressive laws (TFDP, 1986: 134-148). When Marcos loosened control of the press in the early 1980s, an alternative press started to test the limits of the democratic space by touching on issues of plunder and corruption and drawing attention to calls for the end of the dictatorship (De Jesus, 1995: 193-94). Philippine Catholic bishops went on to issue a pastoral letter arguing that the fraud in the 1986 election denied Marcos the 'moral basis for holding on to power' (Carroll, 1995: 174). This was the environment that ended the dictatorship.

Explanations

The contrast between the mainstream professional community's avowed mission and its response to martial law suggests a contradiction that needs to be reconciled. Why did mainstream social work contribute to the legitimation of martial law and, in the process, condone the countless and unspeakable atrocities? Apart from the link between the professional association and the Marcos government, the following explanations can be inferred from the texts as well as the context: (1) concern for personal safety; (2) inadequate theoretical orientation; (3) value-free technocratic culture; (4) protection of the profession; and (5) ideological match.

Personal safety

The most obvious explanation is that there was a real and present threat to the safety of those who spoke against the regime. Under the repressive laws instituted by Marcos, organising an assembly or engaging in propaganda against the government 'which tend to destabilize... or undermine or destroy the faith and loyalty of the citizenry' attracted the penalty of death (Youngblood, 1990: 144). Even without such laws, disappearances and extrajudicial executions were constant reminders of the precarious state of affairs. Primitivo Mijares, Marcos' chief propagandist until around 1975, mysteriously vanished after he published a book entitled *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* which detailed how Marcos fraudulently justified martial law (Salonga, 2001: 224). Fear of such a fate may have been the reason why Veneracion (*pers. comm.*, 29 January 2004), an editor of the professional journal in the early 1970s, was censured by the board of directors of the professional association for her choice of articles and for the mere use of the colour red on the cover of the journal in one issue. The fear for personal safety may explain the silence of some social workers. However, fear for personal safety cannot fully account for the active legitimation of the regime and other explanations have to be explored.

Inadequate theoretical orientation

A second possible explanation is the lack of identification of the professional community with the issue of human rights. De Leon (*pers. comm.*, 11 December 2003) explained that Philippine social workers of that era had no exposure to the 'Western orientation' of human rights and were thus not trained to consider it as part of their professional responsibilities. This explanation is valid to some extent but it is worth noting that as early as 1960, the professional journal already featured an article that identified human rights as an integral concern of social work (see Human rights…, 1960). Moreover, World War II brought the issue of human rights into the public arena with the prosecution of those who committed crimes against humanity (Padilla, 1999). Therefore it cannot be said that Philippine social workers at that time were entirely unacquainted with the issue of human rights. A related issue that might be raised is that social work was just a young profession then and as such was still in the process of developing its theoretical and value base. This objection is not really valid because, while legal recognition came only in 1965, social work was introduced in the Philippines in the early 1920s (Fondevilla, 2000; Mendoza, 2002) and therefore had been practiced in the country for 50 years when martial law was declared.

Value-free technocratic culture

A third explanation that can be offered is that the mainstream professional community, dominated by government employees, assumed the value-free, technocratic culture instituted in the government bureaucracy under Marcos. It was in this environment that Socrates (1975), who was then undersecretary of the Department of Local Government and Community Development, talked about education to encourage the adoption of modern technology as a means for rural development. Exploring the problem of malnutrition, Montes (1976: 30, emphasis in original) suggested the introduction of changes in 'eating habits' arguing that 'it is a *sine qua non* to start discovering new food items'. The Council of Welfare Agencies (1976: 12) talked of social planning as a step towards building a 'more just society.' Such notions framed underdevelopment, malnutrition and social injustice as technical rather than political problems. Such a position made it easy for professionals to disassociate Marcos from the human rights abuses. A technocratic perspective would have overlooked power issues and the political dimensions of the policies adopted, allowing many social workers to ascribed good faith in the Marcos administration and unquestioningly accept the necessity of martial law.

Protection of the profession

A fourth explanation is that the professional community was concerned with maintaining its own legitimacy under the new order. The community had always been troubled with the nagging concern over the low public regard for the profession with the perception of the social worker as a 'voluntary worker', 'fund-raiser', 'giver of charity', 'disaster relief worker', or 'lady almoners' (Almanzor, 1966: 321; 1974: 7; Cardenas, 1973: 18-9; Paraiso, 1957: 38; Philippine National Committee, 1960: 355, 364; Quintos, 1965; Villamor, 1957: 76). The creation of a better public understanding of the profession and the push for professionalisation became vital tasks (De Leon, 1980: 8; Facts about…, 1964; Fondevilla & Mendoza, 1973; Isip, 1957; Philippine National Committee, 1960; The function of the…, 1964). The professional journal reflected this sentiment. The issues in the first ten years were riddled with articles on basic professional skills such as planning social work activities, hints for group work, scheduling interviews, supervision, undertaking eligibility studies, doing casework, conducting home visitations, case recording, coordination, and managing volunteers. While dealing with such concerns may be considered a legitimate use of a professional journal, this also substantiates the actions taken by mainstream social work in response to the perceived problem of low public regard mentioned earlier. The aim of strengthening public perception of the profession would have necessitated the orientation of the profession's system of ideas to those of the established order.

Ideological match

A fifth explanation is that there was ideological congruence between the Marcos regime and the prevailing professional culture. In this case, the professional community was not only protecting itself or its privileges but actually found an affinity between the values that it held and the principles that the Marcos regime represented. The class orientation of the local professional community in the early years had set it apart from the mass majority, bearing elements of upper class, conservative values (Amsterdam, 1962; Lutes, 1971: 5). In the eyes of some social workers, martial law was a welcome relief from the violence and disorder that prevailed before its imposition (Montes, *pers. comm.*, 12 February 2004). Noting the preceding unrest from the ranks of the students and the masses, Cardenas (1973: 17)

hailed the 'apprehension and detention of subversives' as one of the immediate benefits of martial law, equating it with 'rooting out of weeds'. The New Society was pictured as a 'cleansing process' serving as an 'essential groundwork for human and societal development' with the imposition of 'a new discipline' (Cardenas, 1973: 17).

None of these explanations are exhaustive on their own. But taken altogether, they suggest a professional community concerned with its own preservation whose values and orientation were congruent, if not integrated, with those who wielded power. With this, the response from the professional community to martial law helped sustain rather than challenge the unjust order.

Lessons from the past

For some time in the mid-1980s, with a shift in the leadership away from public sector employees, the Association took a more critical stance (Alcid, *pers. comm.*, 19 February 2004). Instead of being housed in the premises of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the association has since acquired its own office space – an indication of its growing financial independence. Leadership of the association has since been held only by mid-level Department staff at the most and so the current link between the association and the government is not as pronounced as it was under Marcos.

Still, the absence of a critical stance on the part of the association can be noted. When the Philippine government initiated broad-ranging policy changes in the 1990s in line with the neo-liberal agenda, including a host of privatization initiatives in the areas of public education, health, housing and social services, the association did not register a categorical stand. When it did figure prominently on a policy issue, it was with what may be considered a self-serving policy agenda. It waged a protracted struggle with other interest groups insisting that legislative proposals for a magna carta for social development workers be dropped in favor of a magna carta for social workers, to the exclusion of non-professionals. If we are to go by the account of a key figure in the professional association and the Marcos administration, there is nothing new to be said about the Marcos administration. Writing in the Philippine Encyclopedia of Social Work almost a decade and a half after the fall of Marcos, Montes (2000: 619), a two-term president of the professional association before serving as secretary of social welfare for five years until the end of the dictatorship, asserts that it was under Marcos, through the social welfare and development initiatives of government, when social work practice 'flourished'. There is no indication that the association itself has ever found the need to revisit and rectify its stand, or the lack thereof, on martial law.

After the fall of Marcos, some of those who fought the dictatorship gained prominence. Not a few of those who went underground were actually appointed in key government positions under the Estrada administration which ironically was abruptly ended in the same way as that of Marcos in the midst of allegations of corruption from the highest levels. Among social work professionals, the most prominent in government has been Corazon Soliman, appointed as secretary of social welfare and development in the Arroyo Administration. Curiously, she was among those who stayed clear of the Department and the professional association during the time of Marcos, believing that they represented the establishment. Their presence in government notwithstanding, the Philippine state continues to represent an ever present threat to human rights as its economic development agenda calls

for the unrestrained exploitation of natural resources and aggressive counter-insurgency in the name of peace, both resulting in the displacement of millions of people.

Weighed and found wanting

'*Ang hindi marunong lumingon sa pinangalingan ay hindi makakarating sa paroroonan* [They who do not know how to look back to whence they came from will not reach their destination]'. So goes a popular Filipino proverb from which this article borrows its wisdom. Reflecting on the past allows us to chart our future. Notwithstanding the exceptions, the Marcos dictatorship largely stood unquestioned by the mainstream social work community from its imposition to its end more than a decade later. Instead, the response of the mainstream professional community to the assault on human rights under martial law amounted to assent and legitimation.

Those who practice social work today have the privilege of learning from the experiences of those that came before them. However, such privilege can only be gained from a critical reflection on the lessons that can be derived from their experiences. From the review of explanations made earlier, a key question to consider is: What values underpin the actions of the professional community? Such reflection should interrogate our own personal conceptions of social work and the mainstream construction of the profession in our respective political economic contexts. It should identify gaps between the values we supposedly espouse and our practice.

The human rights violations under martial law were brutal and blatant and it is easy to take to task the Philippine social work community of that era for failing to respond critically to the challenges. But the issue of human rights is not limited to that era and to so-called underdeveloped societies. It is as relevant today and in other societies, including the supposedly more advanced. It may seem unthinkable that such actions would be manifested in this day and age and in more auspicious political economic contexts. However, the fact is that there are more subtle assaults on human life today that are no less potent. The human rights of noncitizens, asylum seekers, indigenous peoples, and marginalised sectors are being assailed in the ways some countries have chosen to respond to the threat of terrorism and the challenges of globalisation (Blake & Husain, 2003; Brysk & Shafir, 2004; Human Rights Commissioner, 2004; Joly, 2002; Manne, 2004; Williams, 2004). In what is supposed to be a more humane and just world, it is still relevant to think about the ways in which social work practice responds to inequalities and human rights abuses. Given the insidiousness of such oppressions, there is always the risk that the practice of the profession itself will help perpetuate them.

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