LUND UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Social Sciences

Surviving Poverty in the Philippines

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Master's thesis, Sociology: SOCM04, 30 hp
Spring term 2013
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Abstract

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Basic human rights are not being met in many parts of the world. People in poverty suffer from hunger, ill-health, poor education and low standards of living which negatively affect their well-being. These reasons and poverty as a wide spread social problem that undermines the economy and development of entire nations, make poverty socially relevant and important to study.

To understand how poor people experience and survive limitations in their quality of life, I came closer to their realities and observed the areas where poverty is accumulated in a town in the Philippines. I took into account the behaviours and appearances of poor people as well as listening to their stories. The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse their situations and the definitions of issues related to poverty. The objective is to gain more understanding and knowledge about poor people.

This is a qualitative research in which Symbolic Interactionism is used as a framework. Data gathering includes participant and non participant observations as well as semi-structured interviews.

The study reveals that poor people in addition to poverty also suffer from stigmas. Poor people implement a variety of strategies to survive, some are creative and others are norm-breaking. To cope with poverty social relations are important. There are differences in the way poverty affects women and men due to culturally defined gender roles. Religious beliefs against divorce and family planning through contraceptives contribute to more poverty among the poor people.

Keywords: Poverty, the poor, stigmas, strategies, survival, norm-breaking, the Philippines

Surviving Poverty in the Philippines

What are the consequences of poverty and how do poor people deal with them? In what way do the poor themselves describe their situation and how do people who are not poor perceive the poor? These are some of the question that are emphasised in this essay.

Underneath the face of poverty there are individuals with hopes, dream and frustrations. Through direct contact with the poor in areas where poverty is rampant in Hagonoy, a town in Philippines, I have been able to follow the views of poor people and raise some of their most persistent concerns. Problems related to surviving on an everyday life basis, the difficult conditions in which the poor are forced cope with and prejudices towards them reveal aspects of poverty that you may not be aware of. Because poverty undermines basic human rights, affects the economy of entire countries and is not unique to one nation, it is a relevant problem to societies around to world.

Poverty in this study has shown to be associated with stigmas such as criminality, dirtiness and laziness. People who are not poor therefore often expressed a certain level of suspiciousness towards the poor. Areas where poverty is accumulated are described as dangerous areas because of violence. The poor who are aware of these stigmas agree that there are problems in their community but they also argue against stigmas that include everyone who are poor. In contrast to the negative associations with poverty, the poor underlined hard work, resilience and sources of strengths such as God and their family.

To survive poverty the poor showed an ability to be creative in their strategies to find job and income opportunities. There were several examples in which the poor involved themselves in an informal economy, for example, they could receive a little money for various kinds of services, such as cleaning the windscreens of vehicles as they stopped in front of the red traffic lights. In some cases the poor would put into practice law-breaking strategies in order to survive like, fishing illegally with homemade fishing rods in some of the local fishponds. These norm-breaking strategies stigmatised to poor even more.

Friends and family help each other to cope with the limits of resources they as poor experience. Relying on each other to receive help is important. It is an obligation to try to help those who ask for help. Yet in some cases the poor also encounter help from people who are not poor and who feel empathy.

There are differences in how poverty affects women and men. This is partly because of the different roles women and men are expected to play in the household and in society.

Thank you

I would like to thank, in random order:

The participants of this study, their contributions have been valuable for gaining more knowledge about poverty in the Philippines. Thank you for sharing your perspectives and thoughts.

Malin Åkerström whose advices inspired me to do a better job. I am happy to have had you as my preceptor, thank you for your time, I am sure the things I learned from you will benefit me in the future.

My beloved partner and interpreter, having you by my side has always been of great value to me. Your contributions to this study have been important, your language skills have improved the efficiency of this study. P.s mahal kita.
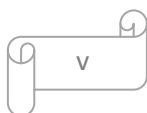
My partner's family for all their support when doing my fieldwork, it has been a pleasure to have gotten to know you better. I hope we will meet soon again, until then my best wishes to you always.

My family who always supported me in my goals and who I know I can count on in regards to my future goals.

The faculty of Sociology in which I have met many educators who inspired me in my studies of Sociology.

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Introduction

Purpose of study

According to the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 2012);

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

What the general media reports about inequalities and my own observations suggest however that these basic rights are not met in many parts of the world, the struggles and sufferings of millions of people make the issue of poverty important. It can undermine the economy and development of entire nations (Spicker 2007 p.98) and affect the global market through, for instance unequal distribution of wealth and labour (Potter et al. 2004).

In this study I seek to come closer to the realities of poor people by listening to their stories, observing their ambiances, behaviours and appearances. My purpose is to describe and analyse their situation and the definitions of the situations related to the struggle with the lack of resources in their daily life and by doing so, strive for a deeper understanding and knowledge of how people survive limitations in their quality of life.

Who is considered to be poor, what is the notion of "real poverty" in the Philippines and is the label "poor" a stigma people try to avoid even though they may carry all the traits associated with poverty?

The idea of poverty may vary but what do the people who have firsthand experience say about it and what can people who have not lived in poverty learn from the former? How does poverty affect the individuals and categories of people in a society where the lack of resources is wide spread? What are the consequences of poverty and how do local cultures affect the situation of the poor?

To study poverty in the Philippines is beneficial for my research since the topic in question is defined as a widespread social problem (Osias, 2011 p.2) and I therefore can expect to have the opportunity of finding rich information. The town of Hagonoy in the province of Bulacan where I conducted my study provided me with a location distanced from the popular tourist areas.

My hope is also to find a way this research may become beneficial in some way for the interviewees considered to be poor, whom I will keep anonymous in the essay.

Structure

The overall structure of this essay consists of four sections. The first section incorporates introduction and backgrounds, the second section discusses methodologies, the third section corresponds to theoretical framework relevant to this study, and the fourth section deals with analysis. I end the essay with a conclusion.

Theory and methods

Symbolic Interactionism does not only identify one cause of social phenomena but many (Charon 2010). Its methodological approaches underline face to face interaction with social actors and observations of their daily life. Interviews, ethnography, observations are intrinsic methods of this theoretical approach through which the sociologist develops an analysis to make sense of how people understand their social world. It neither states that everyone understands social interaction adequately nor that all notions of everyday life can serve as scientific ones. The aim is to increase understanding on how everyday concepts work and how actors or individuals help construct the social world where they act (Calhoun et. al. 2007 p. 30). There exists a correspondence between my purpose of study and Symbolic Interactionism, where I try to understand the construction of poverty at an everyday basis and how interaction generates definitions of poverty as well as suggested solutions and causes to this social problem.

Background

In this part of the essay I take into account several facts about the Philippines and the town of Hagonoy. To have some knowledge about the area has been beneficial for me when learning more about the local cultures. I include a summary of my pre-understanding and conclude with previous researches related to poverty.

The Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of 7,100 islands in the Southeast Asia in the western Pacific Ocean. Manila is the capital of the country, located in Luzon which is the largest island. The Philippines got its name from King Philip II of Spain, who ruled during the colonization of the islands in the 16th century. Since the Philippines remained under Spanish rule for 333 years and further 48 years under U.S guardianship, there are western cultural influences that prevail within the islands such as having English as an official language and Roman Catholicism as the predominant religion. Yet people identify themselves as Asians. The country has a history of political agitations and is often hit by natural calamities such as

floods, typhoons and earthquakes. It is a society of extreme contradictions where tremendous poverty exists alongside great wealth and although rich in resources and the potential to become a strong industrial economy, most parts of the country still remains agricultural. Towards the end of the 20th century industrial expansion was induced by high domestic and foreign investments. This growth was however entailed by a grave degradation of the environment (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2012). According to an article published by BBC (2012) the country is moving away from agriculture to electronics, petroleum and other goods and is one of the most promising newly industrialized countries.

Regarding its population, The Philippines has the highest birth rate in Asia and could double within three decades. The Philippine government has not taken strong measures to decrease the birth rate to avoid a clash with the Catholic Church, but the present administration aim to make birth control methods more widely available (ibid. 2012).

Hagonoy, Bulacan

The town of Hagonoy is located in the province of Bulacan which is located in the island Luzon (see appendix 1). The dialect spoken in Hagonoy is Tagalog. It is a fishing town and has the Manila bay areas as its fishing grounds. There are two main fishing ports from where the catch is sorted and sold in the local market, in the nearby towns and Metro Manila. Yearly there are fiestas related to religion to honour the town's patron saints. The religiousness of the town is shown on the names of its barrios or town districts which are named after saints (Bulacan, 2007b). As the rest of Philippines, Hagonoy is also affected by calamities such as floods which have serious impacts on the inhabitants (Dizon 2011). In my own experience; on the narrow roads of Hagonoy the main mode of public transportation are tricycles and mini buses called jeepneys. There are squatters' areas and shanties spread around the town where poverty accumulates. Although it is a town some of my interviewees described it as rural area.

Pre-understanding and previous experiences

Having been born in El Salvador and raised there until the age of six before my family and I migrated to Sweden and then travelled back to El Salvador twice in the years 2004 and 2005, I argue that some issues related to poverty in the Philippines is comparable to poverty in El Salvador such as beggars, street children and squatters' areas. These issues are easy to observe when travelling through countries such as El Salvador and Philippines where poverty is part of the society. I remember thinking to myself the first time I visited the Philippines for a week in 2010; 'this is so much alike El Salvador'. Analyzing the two countries, there are many differences between them, but at that time I was referring to the poverty related aspects

of what I saw. Since that time, I have maintained in the back of my mind the idea of studying poverty in the Philippines. This type of study allowed me to understand the social phenomenon of poverty better and gain knowledge about a culture I had not yet been familiarized to. The Philippines has been a possible alternative to El Salvador for me, although poverty may differ somewhat between the two. Regardless of my previous experiences, El Salvador is still part of my interest, but for now I am saving it for another future study.

Previous researches and literatures

One of the first books I encountered while being in the Philippines is the book *Sociology: Focus on the Philippines,* written by the Filipino sociologists Isabel Panopio and Adelisa Raymundo (2004). Although this book is rather basic in its section about sociology, the insight it gave me about the culture and society of the Philippines was of great value for a foreigner like me. The book does not only describe the culture and social problems in the country, but adds a critical point of view. It also helped me understand common sayings in Tagalog related to the philosophy of life, which I encountered among the locals.

Besides this book there are several articles on poverty in the Philippines that have been useful for my study;

"Those who were born poor: A qualitative study of Philippines poverty" by the Psychologist Teresa G. Tuason (2008), is an article which highlights the experiences of Filipinos who identified themselves as poor. It compares the perspectives of poverty seen among Filipinos who managed to escape poverty and those who remained poor. Topics such as family, education, life possibilities, religion and how to cope with the lack of resources are brought forth, which I also encountered in my own study.

"The poor in the Philippines: Some insights from Psychological research" by the same author (Teresa G. Tuason) from 2010, is a study which examines the lack of resources in the Philippines in relation to how poor people confront poverty and their perspectives on the issue. The writer points to mental and physical health concerns due to socio-economic marginalization. Social inequalities are underlined through topics such as, homelessness, violence, street children that maintain or worsen poverty. It describes, as Tuason writes, the face of poverty.

In "Poverty, Conversion, and worldview in the Philippines", David Stravers examines how a specific cultural worldview can limit the poor, affects his or her behaviour and increases the experienced power inequalities, such as the feeling of powerlessness to outside forces. Culture

traits related to reciprocity (*utang na loob*) affects the economy of the poor since it is expected that any gained wealth should be shared among friends and family. In coping with poverty God is declared an important source of strength to the poor in Stravers' study which is also something I encountered when interviewing the subjects of my research.

Furthermore, my interest in poverty as such, has led me to read the following analysis of the meaning of the phenomenon;

The idea of poverty, written by Paul Spicker (2007) deals with poverty from the materialistic, economic, morally and social point of view. Spicker comprehensively examines possible definitions of poverty, the effects and causes of poverty, both on a micro and macro level and the reasons why people and countries stay poor. The topics and arguments in this book have shown to be highly relevant in my research.

"Sociology of poverty; to the memory of Georg Simmel" by Lewis A. Coser (1965), emphasises how poverty is constructed by society and how the poor are stigmatised. The poor are embedded in an unequal power structure which further on degrades them for being dependent of government relief. Too much dependency can create passivity that can retain the people in poverty.

"The myth of the culture of poverty" by Paul Gorski (2008), refers to Oscar Lewis' (1961) term 'culture of poverty' which Lewis coined in his book *The children of Sanchez.* Here Gorski states that a universal culture of the poor is a myth. According to him, previous researchers concluded that *there is no such thing as culture of poverty (Gorski 2008 p.33).* The culture of poverty portrays the poor as guilty for their on poverty.

In "Poor people, poor places and poor health; the mediating role of social networks and social capital" Vicky Cattell (2001) explores the relations between poverty and exclusion. According to the author three factors influence social networks and social capital;
1. neighbourhood characteristics and perceptions, 2. poverty and social exclusion and 3. social consciousness.

The sociologist Margarethe Kusenbach (2009) studied strategies of poor people in mobile home residents which, she presents in her article "Salvaging decency: Mobile home residents' strategies of managing the stigma of "trailer" living". Kusenbach argues that mobile home residents' strategies of salvaging decency are both similar and different in comparison to how other marginalised groups deal with stigmatisation.

1. Methods: Qualitative tradition_____

In this chapter I will discuss qualitative research and methods. I will give an account on how I have gathered my data, how it has been analyzed and what ethical guidelines I have followed. I conclude with some critique that has been directed towards qualitative research.

Qualitative research

 Qualitative research consists of three noteworthy features these are; 1. the view of the relationship between theory and research is *inductive*. This means that theory is generated out of research. 2. The *epistemological* position is interpretative entailing a focus on the understanding of the social space through the interpretations of that space by its participants. 3. The *ontological* stance implies that social qualities are the results of human interactions and not of phenomena "out- there" separate from those taking part of its construction (Bryman 2008 p.366). Although this is not a quantitative research I do mention numbers because they, I argue, do not only have a quantitative value but also a contextual subjective meaning.

There are several qualitative methods used to produce knowledge and through which the researcher can have greater insights into the complexities and contradictions of social phenomena surrounding us. The consensus between the aims of this research and the qualitative tradition is why I have chosen to do a qualitative research of poverty.

Idioms

There are different interpretative idioms within the qualitative research (Gubrium & Holstein 1997 pp.3, 5) that I have considered when approaching the reality of the poor. The idiom I have mostly used is *naturalistic,* which refers to the importance of being out in the field interacting with the participants and to see their reality which is assumed to exist naturally. But I have also been inspired by *ethnomethodology,* which points to how field participants construct their social reality through language and conversations.

I also consider two types of generalizations namely; Natural and analytical (theoretical) generalizations where the former refers to knowledge grounded on experience of how the world functions and the latter to explanations of social phenomena through theories (Lindgren 2008). Thus I make use of accumulated knowledge in the field.

Grounded theory

In this methodological tradition the researcher is assumed to construct knowledge through an open mind in the course of the research out in the field. The final aim is to develop a theory based on the collected material (Glaser & Strauss 1967). To initially have limited knowledge

of the field may facilitate the intake of new impressions, since an already pre-existing knowledge of the field may blind the researcher of the field participant's everyday realities (Lundin 2008 pp.92-93). Applying this method has been necessary since I had limited knowledge of the field. Inspired by the perspective of grounded theory, I was able to reverse that into something beneficial for my research. I am however only constructing knowledge and not developing a new theory.

Semi-structured interviews

There are usually specified questions in a semi-structured interview, however the researcher does not limit himself to these. Instead he or she is free to explore and enter into a dialogue with the interviewee, and thus adds, removes, changes or alters the order of questions as he or she moves beyond the answers to elaborate or search for clarification. This type of interview is open to interviewees answering in their own terms yet still provides some structure for comparisons. Some interviews have given me more useful information than others. Still, each interview adds to the research. Behind the strategies of many qualitative interviews exists a notion that interviewees may be answering to questions other than those the interviewer asked. Interviewees could be making sense of their realities in ways the researcher may not have thought of (May 2011 pp .134-135).

   For the interview to be successful there should be a good inter-subjective comprehension between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewee should be aware of their role in the interview and if they feel valued, their participation can be enhanced (ibid. 2011).

Interviews

I interviewed 23 individuals which I have divided into three groups for the sake of clarity (see appendix 2 for detailed list). The first group consists of 14 interviewees who consider themselves poor. Most of these people live in a squatter's area called Mababang Lupa in Hagonoy. One person from this group has acted as my first interviewee and my guide in poor areas. In the second group there are four interviewees who are neither considered to be poor nor rich. They all have experiences with poverty through work, previous personal issues, and from other social interactions with poor people. The third group with five interviews has been conducted with various people whose actions may have implications on the lives of the poor people, such as a; patrolling police officer, social welfare secretary, firewoman, priest and a high ranked politician. In three occasions I interviewed two individuals in the same interview.

The three groups of interviewees have provided me with both an inside and an outside perspective of poverty. I am therefore able to get an insight both on how the poor themselves define poverty and their situations and how they are regarded and addressed by other non-poor people from several social stratums. To know how the poor are addressed and defined helps me understand why they could have inherited certain worldviews, gives me insights on how poverty is tackled between the social stratums and reveals the potential consequences of these social dynamics.

Technicalities of the interviews

Seven of the interviews were conducted in English and the rest in Tagalog with an aid of an interpreter. All of the interviews were recorded, translated (Tagalog interviews), transcribed and codified according to recurrent themes, their relevance to poverty and salient issues.

Regarding the language, both my interpreter and I had several opportunities to check for any inconsistencies, if there were any, and acquired a second or third opinion.

I would like to remind the reader, following Borchgrevink´s (2003) arguments that, translations are not pure mechanical where one word corresponds to another in a second language. Culture of language and culture in overall must also be taken into consideration because they are enmeshed into each other. There are no correct or accurate translations, these will depend on the objectives. For instance, where the focus is on factual content, more literal translation may be preferred. This may however fall short on conveying expressive aspects (ibid. 2003 p.106). All of the interviews are semi-structured, the lengths have been from 40 minutes to one hour, in one case two hours. I came in contact with my interviewees through snowball method, direct contact and through my host family's acquaintances.

Field observations

To understand the social world, observers record their own experiences. To gain access to the field, the researcher must acquire some degree of acceptance. Ethnography as it is often referred, leads to a process wherein the researcher establishes a multi-sided, long-term relationship with field participants in their natural setting (May 2011 pp.166, 175). An aspect that marks the benefits of observations is its ability to uncover unexpected themes or issues (Bryman 2008 p.466). The level of participation in the everyday reality of the field participants determines whether the observation is participatory or not.

Participatory observation encourages the researcher in becoming involved with the daily life of the field participants in order to understand them (May 2011 p.163). Taking part of a

social life in the field is in a sense a rejection of what is known as *armchair research* (Sjöberg 2011 p.11).

Observations and fieldwork

Field observations allowed me to come closer to the subjects of my studies and deepen my understanding of their life situations and perspectives. My emotional experiences in the field such as empathy, frustration, happiness, boredom, and sadness have further added other dimension to my comprehension of poverty. 'Going along' (Kusenbach 2003) refers to material (observations and field interviews) collected during long walks with my guide and my interpreter through areas such as squatter's areas where poverty is explicit. These types of observation showed to be intensive and difficult because of the physical conditions of the areas, the hot climate and the feelings they generated. Yet observations served as a way for me to interact with potential research participants and become more familiar with poverty in Hagonoy.

Staying in the field for a longer period of time inevitably involved me in many different casual conversations with people and events which allowed me to see poverty and cultural aspects both from a distanced and close range. Hence I argue that my field observations consists of both participatory and none participatory observations.

I have included all of the conducted semi-structured interviews in my observations. According to ethnographic arguments, every interview should be an observation since the interviewer does not only hear but can also see and reflect about what is before him or her (Persson 2008 p.43). This includes the space wherein the interview is conducted since the interviewee has a relation with the environment through personal history and social status. If knowledge is situated like this then space cannot be ignored (Tweed 2002).

Parallel to my two months field observations (19 Sept. - 18 Nov. 2012) in Hagonoy, I took photos that became components of my written field notes as well as sources of information in their own right.

Cultural observations

My knowledge of the local culture improved when I interacted with the people surrounding me. Reducing any cultural misunderstandings and confusions that may have underlined cultural differences between me and the locals has been part of my learning process. The cultural differences helped me in my observations of gender constructions, hierarchies, family constellations, notions of respect, survival strategies, worldviews and beliefs. Borchgrevink

(2003 p.108) writes; "It is sometimes claimed that it is easier to do fieldwork in foreign places, as the very foreignness facilitates the questioning of what local people take for granted". The perceived cultural consensuses in the interaction with the locals, and the guidance of my interpreter and her family (also my host family) added to my understanding of the field.

Interpreter and language issues

The use of interpreters in cross-cultural researches has not been discussed to an extensive amount, there seems to be a quietness regarding the issue of using interpreters in fieldwork, for instance does Borchgrevink (2003 p.102) state; "anthropologists seldom explicitly admit their degree of dependence on interpreters, these shadowy figures frequently crop up in fieldwork anecdotes, sometimes under the name of 'field assistants' ". The contributions of these so called social assistants are therefore not enough appreciated (Jentsch 1998 p.176).

In a discipline where one of the main goals is to gain deep understanding of other societies, often through long periods of fieldwork and where, such as in the anthropological tradition, the researchers aim to learn the language of the studied, some researchers fear that bringing up language problems may undermine their authority and credibility (Borchgrevink 2003). The issue of language and its implications have also been neglected in fields other than the social sciences, for instance in the medicine field, by not mentioning that an interview has been conducted in a language foreign to the researcher (Jentsch 1998 p.176).

In reality however, to learn a language fluently and be able to follow a normal conversation takes long time, even an unusual gifted person will need at least a year for this. It should therefore not be surprising that, using an interpreter is necessary for an ethnographer being a stranger to the language, especially in a short time fieldwork where the use of an interpreter can increase the pace of collecting information (Borchgrevink 2003 p.100; Jentsch 1998 p.97). Due to time limits which are often present, it is not always possible for ethnographers to, by themselves, do a linguistic sensitive ethnography. It is then better to recognise the use of interpreters (Borchgrevink 2003 p.104).

Although the benefits of knowing the language of the society in regards to understanding the studied people, complications that might appear when using an interpreter can be mitigated through training of the interpreter, seeking for second opinions regarding language issues and learning the language (on the ethnographer's part) parallel to the research (Ibid. 2003 p.112-113).

Although English, apart from Filipino, is an official language in the Philippines, not all people know it fluently. Some are only able to understand it a bit but do not speak it and others have absolute no knowledge in English. During my observations, I found that whether the person could speak English or not often depends on education background. It is something poor people often find themselves deprived of. Other aspects that might influence English proficiency are work experiences.

Not being able to speak Tagalog using an interpreter has been necessary. Although one could point out the disadvantages of using an interpreter, I have found that the pros have outweighed the cons. The initial benefits of training my partner, who is a Filipino and someone I know well, as my interpreter means that I have received a lot of help because she, is well familiar with the local culture, possess a high level of language competence in both English and Tagalog[1], was able to help me in my learning process of the local language parallel to my study and who is also familiar with sociology and the goals of my research. The fact that my interpreter is a pharmacist has meant that I can also consult her in regards to common medical issues, such as illnesses encountered in the field and her experience has shown to be helpful, especially during donating medicine to a less fortunate couple.

The disadvantage of not understanding the language was the sense of not being able to interact in Tagalog. This I have tried to remedy by learning the most common words and phrases around me, by doing this I was able to deduce in several occasions what people around me where speaking about. Since Tagalog has some Spanish and English words in its vocabulary, it helped me since I speak both languages.

It was clear that an interpreter who is familiar with the local culture can serve as a gate-opener. From a gender point of view, it could be easier for a female interviewee having another female present and re-assuring the good intentions of the interview creating a more relaxed ambience. These statements are supported if the interviewee feels closer to the interpreter (Borchgrevink 2003 p.109; Jentsch 1998 p.284). Since the interpreter and researcher may be perceived as a team, considering the value of the interpreter as a cultural consultant, the interpreter comes to play yet another role; that of a key informant (Temple & Young 2004 p.170; Borchgrevink 2003; Jentsch 1998 p.280). Thus in my case, I would like to add that it is not only the researcher training the interpreter in line with the aims of the research but also the interpreter training the researcher's cultural sensitivity of the field. To be

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[1] Her competence in language includes a degree from IELTS (International English Language Testing System), native speaker in Tagalog, and degrees from previous studies in both languages.

sensitive towards the local culture may thus help me liberate the mind from possible previous cultural biases (Gade 2001 p.379).

Ethics

In the interest of protecting the subjects of this research, I have taken into consideration the six key principles of the "Framework for research ethics" outlined by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2010) (see appendix 3).

All interviewees have been informed verbally (and in written form when this has been possible) of the type and purpose of my research (see page 1) and that after having been reviewed, it will be published at the University of Lund as a Master's student paper available to the public and also possibly sent to different NGOs. Their anonymity is protected throughout the essay. All interviews have been conducted and recorded with the consent of the interviewees. They have thus been informed that they can interrupt the interview at anytime or refuse to answer any questions if they wish so. I have also been active in asking if they are comfortable answering my questions. Any explicit close range observations conducted in the research such as when entering and photographing someone's private property have been done so with the consent of the subjects. The participating subjects were also given the possibility to ask questions regarding the research at any point. I have also been active in asking them if they have any enquiries or doubts.

The research was also conducted with the consent of the local government office, the so called 'Barangay' (see appendix 4).

Emotions

Walking through Mababang Lupa I thought about the consequences of living there in one of its shanties. Since not all people could afford buying medicine, illnesses are hard to cure. Although there are cheaper generic medicines and medical volunteers in Hagonoy, the extent to how far illnesses can prevail in Mababang Lupa is exemplified by Pedro who lost his brother and did not grow up with his own parents:

My twin brother and I grew up with our aunt and grandmother. For me it was ok if my parents would visit us, of course we would be indifferent, because other people raised us. My father would visit me but I don't feel close to him because when I was younger and needed him, he wasn't there. When we were younger my twin and I were sickly and often infect each other. My twin died because we didn't have money to buy medicine (250912).

Pedro expressed resentfulness towards his father and described himself as abandoned. Not having enough money limited the help his brother received and therefore he died. It is

difficult having the will and not being able to help someone who is sick, my interpreter and I experienced this in several occasions. I will exemplify with the following field note where the interviewee brought his toddler brother to the interview, and which at the time was sickly:

I felt touched by Julius' humbleness as he held his one year old brother in his arms and fed him with small pieces of bread from the food we had served them. He was looking after his little brother while his parents were working. I was surprised when he mentioned that he found the interview enjoyable. I tried to keep the interview short and casual. I also let Julius raise any topics that he wanted to talk about.

I noticed that the toddler was uneasy. I was therefore keen to know if they both were as comfortable as possible. Yet, I felt sad when Julius told me his brother was sick with diarrhea and was vomiting. After 15 minutes in the interview the toddler vomited in front of us. I wondered if it was because of the food we had served them. At this point I needed to stop the interview while keeping my calm. I needed to discuss with my interpreter in her role as a pharmacist regarding any possible help we could provide. I wondered if we could help Julius' brother with medicine, but my interpreter, the pharmacist said that not having any knowledge of the case, buying salts to rehydrate the toddler without consulting a doctor could be dangerous if he is not dehydrated. I felt frustrated, I wanted to do something but I did not understand the situation from a professional medical point of view and in my frustration I felt helpless in my desire to help the little child. (111012).

We had previously helped an elderly couple with medicine. In their case however they had a prescription we could follow.

2. Symbolic Interactionism_____

I will now go through key principals of my theoretical framework. I emphasise issues such as perspectives, society, symbols and reference groups. This chapter will clarify Symbolic Interactionism for the reader who is not familiar with the theory.

Five principal conceptions

The following five concepts are fundamental of Symbolic Interactionism according to Charon (2010 p.28). 1. *The human being is a social being and should be understood as such.* People do what they do because of constant lifelong social interaction. Thus Symbolic Interactionism focuses on the interactions among actors as the basic unit of study rather than on the individual's personality or how the overall social structure causes human behaviour. Both individuals and society are created through social interactions. What individuals do is related to earlier interactions with other people and their interactions at present.

2. *The human being is a thinking being.* Human action is both interaction within the individual and interaction among individuals. The thinking process is referred to as *mind action* through which actors indicate to themselves what is important in the situation and then guide their actions. When noticing some aspects of a situation, others are ignored. The constant ongoing processes of *mind action* is emphasised because human beings are not influenced or conditioned merely by others in the surroundings and are not just a product of society. We are thinking creatures and are constantly conversing with ourselves while we interact with others. Depending on the action, a person who is acting is perceived as someone who thinks carefully, quickly or deliberately, for example, if begging or fighting. *Mind action* is part of all social interaction because other people must be defined and understood like everything else and it has the ability to execute and control overt and covert actions (ibid. pp.28, 93-99).

3. *Humans define the situation and environment they are in and do not sense the external world directly.* The definition of the situation is dependent on ongoing social interaction and thinking. An individual's action is related to his or her definition of the situation, experiences, perceived future and the other people in the situation.

4. *The cause of human action is the outcome of what is taking place in the present situation.* Our past experiences and encounters with society do not cause our actions. It is rather the social interaction, the definition of the situation and the thinking that happens in the *present.* Our past affects our actions chiefly because we think about it and use it in our definition of the present situation. Consequently an individual engage into a specific action as

a result of how he or she defines aspects of the present situation. The action is motivated by the present social interaction and the definition of the situation.

5. *Symbolic Interactionism perceives humans as active beings towards their environment.* Human beings are not passive towards their environment hence they are not simply described as conditioned, controlled, responding, formed and imprisoned. Humans are able to control what they do depending on their social interaction, thinking, and definition of the situation. Although Symbolic Interactionism suggests that individuals have the potential to overcome forces put upon them by the environment and form their own actions instead of merely responding to the physical world, it is not to say that they are completely free. The way an individual acts are therefore decisions out of choices he or she perceives as possible (ibid. pp.28-29).

The conceptual framework of perspectives

Perspectives are socially created. People share perspectives because they interact over a period of time, and what they experience or observe is then interpreted through those perspectives. However, perspectives are not omniscient and a single perspective does not reveal the whole reality. A perspective is an angle through which people see reality and limits what can be seen. Many angles can be accurate but they cannot be considered simultaneously. It is not possible to see reality in its raw condition since we always use perspectives to experience it. To have a perspective is to be sensitised to certain aspects of the world and be de-sensitised from the rest which then determine how we understand our environment.

A perspective is dependent on language since words are used by the observer to define situations and organize physical reality. The words that an individual use reveal his or her perspectives of reality (Charon 2010 pp.3-5). You may for instance compare how a religious person describes the origin of human kind and how an evolutionary biologist would explain it.

Perspectives are infinite since we can never claim to have found all possible ways to describe something. It is an ongoing process because we use several perspectives to understand the environment. We are taught new perspectives, our perspectives change and we use different perspectives in different situations. Symbolic Interactionism is an academic perspective among others and has its limitations. It can nevertheless be used to study any human experience, even poverty (ibid. pp.6-10, 207, 209).

Society

The existence of society begins with interaction. If there is no interaction society cannot exist. Participants of a society take each other into account and adjust their acts because of compromise, force, necessity, the intention to use each other to reach their respective goals or because it is the sensible thing to do. To understand and feel empathy towards other people we imagine ourselves in their situations, this is called *taking the role of the other*. The more relevant experience and communication we have, the more successful we are in *taking the role of the other*. However, when there are too many differences and no communication, the process can fail and create conflicts (Charon 2010 p.105). Society is thus characterized by interdependence and cooperation where the individual's goals and interests most often are complementary, compatible and sometimes the same. Society maintains itself partly by developing a shared culture (ibid. pp.153-154, 158-159). But culture and society are not static, they antedate and outlive the individual and are always changing (ibid. p.161).

There are many societies in which individuals can participate. A smaller society within a society can for example influence the latter and vice versa. Thus, a location where poverty is accumulated can be seen as a society interacting with another society (ibid. pp. 154, 164).

Symbols are social constructions

Interaction produces definition of objects, language, culture, actions and perspectives which are all types of symbols that help us understand the world (Charon 2010 pp.59, 67). We label objects with symbols and develop ideas about them such as what they are, how they are, how they should be used and bring these ideas into the situations we encounter (ibid. p.59). The labels we give to 'social objects' affects the way we act towards them. We can therefore discriminate, generalize and make distinctions about them (Ibid. pp.64-65, 67). Symbols are essential to the human reality, society and individual life because people act towards a symbolic reality which enables cooperation. Our knowledge is passed on to the next generation through symbols. For individuals, symbols are part of *mind action*, problem solving, memory, creativity, abstract reality and the ability to think back in time or future (ibid. pp. 61-68).

Any concrete or abstract object can become a 'social object' because we define them and give them meaning, we do not see objects in their raw form. Animals, shanties, our past, our self, emotions and words such as poverty can all be social objects (ibid. pp.45-47).

Reference groups

Reference groups are groups whose perspective the individual use in the way they interpret reality. Each individual has several reference groups. They could either be membership groups such as family and friends or social categories like, ethnic group, social class, community and society. In regards to time, reference groups could also be future groups; groups that they believe they may be part of in the future, such as planning to become members of special professions. Individuals may even try to take on the perspective of unborn generations. It is thus possible that past or distant societies could be reference groups. "A reference group is an individual's society, and its significance is not membership but the fact that its culture −or perspective− is used by the actor" (Charon 2010 pp.36-37). The reference groups that individuals use to interpret reality are linked to them through communication. For example, the poor in Mababang Lupa constitute a society as they interact, if their perspectives are used then they are a reference group.

To understand individuals, their unique perspectives are important, since these are the basis of how they define situations, as well as the society in which they act. The interaction of an individual within a certain society leads to a particular perspective that in the hand of an active defining actor becomes a tool (ibid. pp.36-37).

The Analysis

In the following chapters I use the mentioned theoretical framework to analyse the field data. I make use of previous researches and other literature to clarify the analysis. I consequently emphasised the complexities of poverty and multidimensional facets through the research participant's views and experiences related to poverty. I also consider my own experiences in the field to understand the ambience and its people.

The analysis is structured as follows:
Chapter three focuses on Mababang Lupa, as an example of poor areas, and the people who live there. Chapter four raises the question of stigmas and poverty. Chapter five explores some of the strategies the poor implement to cope with poverty. Chapter six deals with some of the frustrations and concerns of the poor and how some of Hagonoy's influential people responded to these issues.

I summarise my conclusions in the final chapter.

3. Poor areas_- Stigmatised areas_____

Areas with concentrated poverty are not only perceived as places where deprivation is severe, but by some, as fertile environments for social problems. Living in an unfavourable environment is associated with stress, depression and bad physical health. The neighbourhoods' history, physical structure, employment opportunities and local resources affect relationships of trust, norms of cooperation and perceptions of safety and crime (Cattell 2001 pp.1502, 1512).

Spicker (2007 pp.38-41) writes that, due to the lack of resources and exclusion, the poor are brought together into less desirable areas by their inability to choose better places. Problems that arise in poor areas can be worsened by poverty. This occurs partly because poor people have other problems like unemployment, mental illness, low education status or single parenthood. The concentration of poor people in a specific area entails a concentration of these problems and the place itself develops a bad reputation. According to Cattell (2001 p.1502) however, not all poor areas suffer from a depleted social cohesion. Perceptions of inequality could co-exist with solidarity and mutual support.

Spicker (2007 p.41) points out that, poor areas are not defined solely by the number of poor people. Poor areas are also identifiable through characteristics they inherit such as a rundown environment, poor housing, low status and a lack of security. The economic base, the social status and the infrastructure of services of these areas are oriented towards a local level. Even if one could argue that it is not the areas that are poor but the people who live in them, the lack of community resources and the effect of stigmatisation can make non-poor people who live in these areas worse off. There is thus an inter-related deprivation that must be understood at an area level. This is not to deny that small localities, the residents' perspectives and social interactions exist in space, time and bigger socioeconomic structures that also influence community life (Cattell 2001 p.1504).

Poor areas in Hagonoy

I found that poverty in Hagonoy is wide spread. Although not all its residents are poor, a tricycle ride to the town proper means encountering several social objects related to poverty. The noisy roads of Hagonoy are narrow and heavily trafficked by jeepneys, tricycles and other vehicles which seriously pollute the air. Shanties and beggars are numerous. Street vendors and "sari sari" stores line up the roads where all kinds of items are sold from candy and food to cheap plastic toys and school supplies. During my field observations and beyond, large parts of Hagonoy suffer from recurring high tides and monsoon rains that provoke

floods. Through the photo on this page (fig. 1) I provide the reader with a visual example of a flooded road due to high tide wherein tricycle drivers and street vendor perform their daily duties despite the inundation. There is a consensus among my interviewees that floods are common. In 2011, one year earlier to my field observations a typhoon called "Nesat" brought worse flood conditions in the area resulting in casualties and ruined houses (see e.g. CBCNEWS 2011).

Fig. 1 Flooded road in Hagonoy

Mababang Lupa

One of many poverty concentrated areas within Hagonoy is a small community called Mababang Lupa which means low ground. This area is affected by floods to the extent that when other areas of Hagonoy are dry, the residents of Mababang Lupa still have water inside their homes. Mababang Lupa reflects the way poor areas are discussed earlier in this paper, and is also described as such by some locals in my study.

Evelyn for instance, a housewife and part time 'labandera'[2] from Mababang Lupa argued that there are prejudices towards the people in her community because it is believed that some of the residents are rapist, criminals, thieves and robbers. Although Evelyn underlined that the people of Mababang Lupa are being prejudiced, she agreed that some of the residents are undoubtedly engaged in criminal activity. Evelyn also mentioned that some tricycle drivers have refused to drive her to Mababang Lupa. She stressed that Mababang Lupa is too dirty, people throw trash everywhere. The trash settles and clogs the creek that runs through the area and is not dredged. In turn, the creak cannot contain the water when the high tides arrive, which results to over flowing. In regards to the trash, there was a dominating view among my interviewees from Mababang Lupa that there are no proper waste disposals. According to my guide this is why there are piles of trash accumulated in random places of Hagonoy. Consequently, the trash will be scattered around the area in times of floods.

To better understand poor people's social reality, poor areas and the issues Evelyn is speaking about, I did several observations in Mababang Lupa. In the following excerpt of my field notes I describe one of these observations:

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[2] Women or girls who wash other people´s clothes in exchange for money are called labanderas.

I was able to employ a local boy [my guide] through my host family whom they trust, a scrap collector from Mababang Lupa. We met on Monday morning for the first time and held a small interview. He seemed nervous. He would for instance cover his mouth with his hand and speak softly. The interview was characterized by his short answers and the crowing roosters surrounding us. My purpose with this interview was however, to get to know him better and gain his trust. Afterwards, we were on our way towards Mababang Lupa, which I had been advised to visit because of its poverty and the floods affecting the area. Before entering Mababang Lupa, my interpreter and I borrowed two pairs of rubber boots. My guide however, wore rubber slippers only which initially surprised me. I later understood that slippers were the common footwear in the area even during floods, buying boots was not an alternative for the poorest. My guide went ahead to show me the depth of the water which reached his legs, I then followed him together with my interpreter. I realised that Mababang Lupa and its shanty houses was the same area I had been observing from the window of my host family's house.

While walking inside Mababang Lupa, I found myself having difficulties maintaining my balance because of the murky waters which did not allow me to see my steps clearly. I felt clumsy in comparison to my guide who was used to the waters. I appreciated my guide being concerned for both me and my interpreter pointing out the deepest spots that we should avoid so we would not fall into the water.

My first encounter with a local inside Mababang Lupa, was with a store owner who asked what we were doing there, to which my interpreter explained that we were doing a research for my thesis. He invited me to take a look at how the water inside his store covered the floor like in many other homes around the area.

My guide, my interpreter and I proceeded to a small elevated concrete bridge which according to my guide passed over the creek that was over flowing. By now I could see locals wandering around, often women carrying their small children in their arms, most of these women wore slippers and only a few wore boots. I saw children playing in the water and young men sitting together outside the shanty houses.

I felt how people's eyes were drawn to me. I encountered this often in Hagonoy but it seemed more intense inside Mababang Lupa. Being a foreigner I often assumed this was one of the reasons. I seldom saw other foreigners in Hagonoy, much less inside Mababang Lupa.

Eventually we reached my guide's home, into which me and my interpreter were invited to hold an interview with his mother Janice. We spoke about the living conditions in her community and the floods. I could barely see the floor inside the house as it was submerged in

water that reached halfway our legs. She and her family lives in a small shanty house. Inside I noticed a small television, some old chairs, a "papag" (a bamboo bed) on which we were sitting. Further inside, a coal-fired oven made of stone on which they cooked their food. She pointed to a part of their roof that was just a blanket supported by bamboo sticks and said that when it rains they have more water inside.

After the interview with Janice we continued walking through Mababang Lupa. We had to make sure we were following the narrow path and not deviate, since there were deeper waters on each side. Several times we encountered people, that would ask what we were doing there, but they never stopped to have longer conversations with us. Now and then people would turn around and say good morning. It was by now noon time and very warm, making us sweaty. The flies would bother me whenever they touched my arms. Some houses were made of concrete and seemed stable, but most houses were shanties and some were abandoned and destroyed by the flood. There were soiled diapers floating in the water, in one occasion also excrement, possibly from some of the free roaming dogs in the area.

We walked through the whole area until reaching a small preschool for children, where I scheduled an interview with one of the teachers. At the time there was no water inside the school, I was glad to know that. The school was nevertheless surrounded by water and some parts of the building were covered with card boards to protect the children from the rain. One of the teachers told us that several of her students are mal nourished because their parents have too little money. Usually the children would share their food with those who were not able to bring any to school. Another teacher stressed the importance of education to eradicate poverty. In the back of my mind I wanted to know how I could contribute with something, as we conversed for about an hour.

It seemed that some people were sceptic to my presence in Mababang Lupa, on our way out of the area, my interpreter noticed two middle aged ladies who had wondered about our presence in the area saying behind our backs, "what can these researchers do" (field observations in Mababang Lupa 240912).

Perspectives of Mababang Lupa

Symbolic Interactionism argues that it is not possible to claim to have found all the possible ways of describing something and that we use several perspectives to understand the environment. Although there seems to be an overall perspective about the area, involving the residents of Hagonoy in its social construction, Mababang Lupa in time and space is not entirely the same to everyone.

Totoy an interviewee for instance, sees Mababang Lupa as a dangerous place that one should avoid although he has never been there. Rodel, a Mababang Lupa resident, share some of Totoy's perspectives, describing the area as I asked him;

A.R: How would you describe Mababang Lupa to someone who doesn´t know the area?
Rodel: Flooded, dirty, crowded and a lot of quarrels among drunken people.
A.R: Why do you think there are fights?
Rodel: Because the youth got hooked on bad habits and vices (091012).

Other interviewees such as my guide would however emphasise the floods in Mababang Lupa and feel indignation and disappointment at the government for the unsanitary and bad physical conditions of the area due to the floods.

However Mababang Lupa is not only defined by the negativities mentioned above. It is also a place where people live, where they have their homes, their livelihoods, their friends and their families. It is where they carry on their everyday life. Although there are accumulated problems in the area, one is able to see children playing and hear laughter. Mababang Lupa constitutes of a social inclusion among its residents who are also subjects to social exclusion through prejudices and poverty. It is however in the social inclusion among the residents of Mababang Lupa where it is possible to find more perspectives other than the ones that highlight the social problems to the outsider.

Floods – benefits and problems

As stated earlier Mababang Lupa was characterized by more floods than Hagonoy in general. The way we humans see reality rest on how we define our situations. William and Dorothy Thomas (1928 cited in Charon 2010 p.125) argued that "if people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". It is to say that although there may exist a reality "out there", people define the world they live in and their definition is important to understand their actions. Whether someone defines floods as dangerous or not will affect that person's actions in the situation. According to Symbolic Interactionism, reality is partly social. What we see around us and within ourselves is developed through interaction with other people.

I was surprised that some of my interviewees would relate severe floods, like those where the water is deeper than a man's length, with people being happy. Totoy for instance who despite of encountering many problems with the floods stated:

Totoy: Well actually, especially in Hagonoy, during flood season, most people are happy, you know why? Because of the flood the fish ponds are all overflowed. A lot of fish are caught even on the roads.

A.R: There is a lot of fish then.

Totoy: Yeah that is why I tell you, that all people are happy because many of those fishponds are overflowed, that is why they catch the fish and they sell it and most of us eat it. During those times, everybody is happy and you can observe people drinking [alcohol] outside and all people may tell you that people are happy.

A.R: So the fish becomes food for you.

Totoy: Yeah abundant, the food it is very abundant (051112).

For some people in Hagonoy aquaculture is their business. When there are floods, fish escape from the fishponds, which is not good for business. Totoy a businessman himself makes a point that people in Hagonoy are able to catch the fish and eat it. Rodel agreed with Totoy when responding to my question:

A.R: How do you survive during floods, where do you get food?

Rodel: From fishponds, we fish. Sometimes there is free food, some give rice and sardines.

When Rodel is saying that some gave rice and sardines he is referring to the relief goods people receive from aid workers during calamities. In a later part of the interview Ricardo who also took part in this interview and Rodel gave a broader experience of the floods:

A.R: Do you agree that some people are happy during the floods?

Rodel: Yes, when we were kids, we were happy because we had no classes and received free food. But now it is different. When there are floods it is not fun anymore. But the kids they still like to swim.

Ricardo: People lose their jobs especially in the fields and fishponds. A lot is aggravated.

A.R: You received food, you say?

Rodel: Relief goods – canned goods, rice, noodles, coffee, milk.

A.R: Did you received more than once?

Rodel: Twice only, it was often my mom who received.

A.R: Was that enough?

Rodel: No (091012).

Floods however also brought diseases and illnesses, I was able to see that several of my interviewees suffered from "alipunga" or athlete's foot because of the water.
Through the interview above it became clear that even if Rodel and Ricardo could see some benefits with the floods when being kids, their perspectives and definition of the situation has changed and they now see the seriousness of the calamities. Totoy exemplified with some of his experiences relating to the floods:

A.R: Did you experience any sickness during the floods

Totoy: Yeah, there are diarrhea, cold, and fever. Most kids have fever. Are you familiar with dengue? [I nod yes as he continues]. When the floods subside, the next is dengue because of the mosquitoes. They affect, especially when there are no screens on the windows of the house. That is why I put screens on all of our windows. I don't want my kids and my family to get sick. It is hard to be sick when there are calamities, especially for children. It is hard to go to the doctor when there is a flood. That is why… have you experienced seeing a coffin floating in the stream of water? For example, our neighbour's wife died during a flood, how could he bury his wife? There was a flood so he had to wait for two weeks for the flood to subside. Imagine two weeks with your wife inside the casket in your home! Very unsanitary (051112).

Although it is possible for some people to see positive issues associated with the floods, Totoy in the quote above underlines the dangers related to the floods. Even when the floods subside there are still risks with mosquitoes. The subsided waters will also leave mud and dirt inside people's homes. The issue is that both rich and poor people will be affected by the floods and experience water inside their homes. It is only that the poor are less protected in their shanties.

Shanties

Housing, however, was not described in such "pros" and "cons" manner (as was the floods). My interviewees from Mababang Lupa stressed their concerns with the bad housing. Shanties do not provide enough protection and can get destroyed by the floods or typhoons.
In the following interview quote Julius describes some of his experiences during the floods and their house not giving enough protection:

A.R: How do you feel when you are inside the house during the floods?
Julius: We slept while sitting down since our roof had a big hole [not enough space to lay down]. Our roof leaked when it rains. Now we have covered the house with another roof.
A.R: Do you get enough sleep when there are floods?
Julius: When it is too hot or when our backs get wet then we cannot sleep.
A.R: Do you also get cold?
Julius: Yes (111012).

Janice gives another account of her experiences:

A.R: How does your house protect against wind and rain
Janice: When it rains it leaks, we stay here [she points to a place inside the house].
A.R: Did you have many things destroyed during the floods?
Janice: Our roof, we don't have many things anyway. Everything was submerged.
A.R: Did your family build this house with own hands
Janice: Yes, my husband (240912).

Shanties are usually built with metal sheets, cardboards, sacks, plastics, wooden boards and other materials that people themselves can find. In some cases shanties are also partially built with cement. In my observations I had the opportunity to witness a variety of shanties. On an elderly couple's home whom I visited, the walls were made out of thin plastic sheets, wooden boards and the roof out of metal sheets (fig. 2). It was noteworthy that none of the walls completely isolated the inside from the outside since they were too thin and had small openings in random places.

Fig. 2 Inside Noel's and Alma's Shanty house

Drawing parallels to previous observations of shanty houses in El Salvador that resemble the ones in Philippines (fig. 3), I also know that when metal sheets are used to construct shanties, it will get very hot indoors as the sun heats them up. Metal sheets create a very loud noise when it rains. The holes on the walls allow animals and insects such as rats and cockroaches to enter the house. These pests can damage the weak materials of which the shanties are built. Sometimes cats and other animals are clearly heard inside as they walk on top of the metal roof. In fact, on one occasion in the Philippines, despite that I was on the second floor and not in a shanty house, a toad startled me inside the bathroom while I was taking a bath.

Fig. 3 Shanty houses in Mababang Lupa

Kusenbach (2009 p.402) writes that homes are more than protective shelters, they are powerful symbols of individual and collective identities and relationships. The way shanties are perceived by the larger society may have prompted Janice to say that she felt ashamed when she invited me to her house, to which I responded how honoured I was that she welcomed us into her home.

4. The stigma of being a poor person

The notion of poverty inherits a stigma on those who are identified as poor. The experience of poverty is a problem prone to degradation, humiliation and rejection (Spicker 2007 p.71).

Stigmas permeate poverty itself as well as many situations wherein people are poor. According to Goffman's (2007b p.12) typology there are three kinds of stigmas. Stigmas are classified based on; 1. physical characters or deformations, 2. personal qualities and experiences and 3. group affiliations such as ethnicity, religion and nation which can be passed from one generation to another. When the poor are stigmatised it is thus because of third kind – they belong to a group, or rather a category which is stigmatised.

Poor people can be stigmatised for any of these reasons, in addition to poverty itself. According to Spicker (2007 p.71) there are strong links between social status, respect and economical resources. It is then possible that people are treated with contempt for belonging to what is defined as the lower strata of society. It is not unusual that poor people reluctantly describe themselves as poor, taking into account that poverty is perceived to be associated to crime, dirt and immorality. The following quotes from an interview with two 20-year old male scrap collectors from Mababang Lupa manifest their feelings when being called poor, their submissive stance to those with "higher status" and their associations of the label poor with misdeeds:

A.R: How does it make you feel when someone calls you poor?
Juan: It hurts, because they shouldn´t say that. You are already poor and then people will say it more. One should have a higher status before they can say that to me. But if we are of the same level, I will just laugh at them. However if I do something wrong or bad, and then they call me poor, that is their right.
Pedro: It hurts but we just take it. It's ok for rich people to say that you are poor even though it hurts, but if we belong to the same group I will just laugh at them (250912).

Additionally the stigma of being a poor person is, according to Gorski (2008), emphasised by theses such as 'the culture of poverty' which Oscar Lewis' (1961) wrote about in his book *The Children of Sanchez*. Although Lewis bases his thesis on his ethnographic studies of a small Mexican community, the idea is that people who live in poverty share an observable and consistent culture, with attributes such as, lack of a sense of history, frequent violence, and neglect of planning. According to Paul Gorski (2008 p.33) researchers who have tested the culture of poverty concept, raise a variety of questions and come to a variety of conclusions about poverty, the consensus is however that there is no evidence that sustains the existence of a universal culture among the poor. Gorski emphasises, that the "differences in

values and behaviours among poor people are just as great as those between poor and wealthy people". The culture of poverty is hence pointed out as a construction of smaller typifications that can be found in the mainstream thinking as if they were facts.

Spicker (2007 p.114) writes that the behaviour of people in poverty is more of an adaptive response to their situation and not a universal culture. Poor people behave differently from more affluent people because of the formers inability to participate in society on equal terms.

Laziness as an account

Typifications manifest themselves in my empirical data when poor people are described as not willing to work or lazy, thieves and lacking faith in God. I will use laziness as an example. Consider the following interview with a guard at a trash dump where some poor people go to scavenge metals and plastics to sell:

A.R: Can you tell me about your encounters with people who are struggling financially? Andres: All I can say, that we tried to hire them to work here to sort the trash. But they refuse because they claim that they earn more if they collect scraps than accept the job offered by the government. We offered them many times, but they refused. We need to segregate the trash. That is why we need people. We are hiring them to do it but they refuse. They prefer to scavenge. It's like one-day millionaire- collect for two hours and it covers food for lunch, then they will stop. That's the life they prefer (250912).

Andres argued, that the poor who scavenge are unwilling to accept employment and would rather work only as much as it is needed for short time solutions to their everyday needs such as a meal. What Andres is not taking into account in his statements however, is the difficult working conditions for the scavengers at the trash dump which lead to various diseases. When asking another interviewee, who considers himself poor, about what people can do to end poverty he gives a different meaning of working. *Ronaldo: They have to work hard. They must do all the jobs they know* (250912). As mentioned earlier, stigmas permeate poverty itself. Later the same interviewee pointed to a man sleeping outside a church in the middle of the day, referred him as lazy to exemplify the reason poverty exist. It is interesting that although there are many possible questions in relation to the sleeping man such as, his background, physical and mental health, my interviewee simply chose to describe him as lazy.

People who are poor are aware of the stigmas. Stigmas about poverty and typifications can be accepted by poor people. But they can also argue against stigmatising understandings. Again, Juan points the importance of being informed before judging:

It would be better if they knew where the person comes from. When they know where the person comes from and what the person do to live everyday then they can judge. I start work every day in the morning to earn money, because we need money immediately in the morning. It is not proper that you will be called a low-grade. One should be proud for being responsible (250912).

In this way Juan rejects the simple idea of laziness and stress why it is important to be responsible and work, "*we need money immediately in the morning*". For the poor people in Hagonoy a daily income means they will have food for the day, having food for the day requires responsibility and if one is responsible then it is not acceptable to be described as a person of low class, Juan argues.

In the next quote of an interview with a young man from Mababang Lupa it emerges that some individuals will include themselves in stereotypical explanations to poverty and its existence, in this case laziness. *Me: why does poverty exist? Ricardo: Because of floods. People are also lazy, like me* (091012). However, it is a myth that poor people have poor work ethics and are more unmotivated than wealthier people, Gorski (2008 p.33) argues. Low incomes mean that poor people often need to have two or more jobs. My guide for instance stated that he alternates between three different jobs and works for twelve hours (from 4 am to 4 pm) when driving tricycle, 8 am until the next day when drying up fishponds and six hour (6 am to 12 pm) when scrap collecting. Scrap collecting has the least working hours because it is too painful on the skin when the temperature becomes too high. From my observations however I noticed that my guide would also accept other jobs if offered when he was not working in the fishponds, driving or scrap collecting. When I asked him about having three jobs he answered *I try hard to help the family, so we can eat. I am not complaining or bothered by hardship* (240912). Panopio et. al. (2004 p.347) recognises that occupational multiplicity is common among the poor. It is a necessity to get by day- to- day. In Tagalog this kind of life is referred to as *isang kahig, isang tuka* which means one scratch, one peck or hand to mouth existence. Family members accept any possible job such as, vendors, number runners in 'Jueteng'[3], road workers and combing water courses for fish, crabs and snails.

Stigmas are socially constructed

The perspectives about the poor are socially constructed and since perspectives are not equal in the hierarchies of society, failed role-taking and communication within and between the poor and affluent people may create conflicts and misunderstandings (Charon 2010 pp. 9-10,

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[3] Jueteng refers to an illegal Philippine lottery game.

105). Inevitably, different life qualities of affluent people and poor people will create different perspective of life, priorities, dreams and justice. The stigma of being poor is attached to the label 'poor person' because language is a symbolic system that has meaning and associations, and is a part of how people see and represents their social reality (ibid. p.52). How poor people are represented in the social reality of Hagonoy and other parts of Philippines, may be due to that people are socialized into a certain perspectives. Moreover, cultures are learned and passed down to the next generations. Charon (p.62) writes "It is by means of symbols that the past is recorded- knowledge and wisdom are not lost but accumulated", however not all accumulated knowledge is wise, accurate or just. A misguided *natural generalization*[4] is being used against those who are defined as poor and who are assumed to have "flaws".

Stigmas are not only humiliating but can create a sense of threat, as my guide explained when I asked him if he feels safe in Hagonoy: *No, I am scared that I might get confused with someone who uses drugs and will get killed. My family will suffer. I don't use [drugs]* (240912).The social associations that the poor carry, are prominent which is also why they easily become visible both to others and to themselves. Goffman (2007a) argues that actors are able to be active in presenting their identity to other people in subtle and obvious ways. Actors may for instance put on a smile, express honesty and dress for work. The poor in my research have fewer options to alter their self presentation through physical appearance because of lack of resources. They dress in tattered clothes and kids wander around naked because the only sets of clothes they have are being washed by their mothers. The lack of resources affects what the poor can own, where and how they live. Yet it is not only what the poor lack that attach them to certain social objects but also what they have and the kind of jobs they do. Tricycle drivers for instance, usually wear a piece of cloth around their mouth to filter the smoke from their own and other vehicles and construction workers who are part of an informal economy, wrap a t-shirt around their head to protect themselves from dust, sun and heat. These symbols in part, reveal to others the identities of those in the category of "tricycle driver" or "construction worker" which in turn are associated with the category of "poor people".

Robert Merton (2010) referred to the self-fulfilling prophecy', when labels put on people eventually affects their identity and behaviour. Labels such as "dumb and lazy" may influence the individual or group to think of themselves as such and behave accordingly. If the poor start internalizing common typifications of themselves, then it could clarify why one of my

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[4] See page 6 for explanation and reference

interviewees described himself as lazy and perhaps even acted accordingly. The self-fulfilling prophecy serves as a confirmation to the labellers who claim that there is evidence to their arguments.

The stigma of being dependent

One of the consequences of poverty is that the poor become dependent on relief when they have no other means to support themselves. In my field material, the need for relief was manifested among flood victims, beggars and people who applied for social welfare. To receive relief is to be identified as poor which in turn is stigmatising.

The relationship between the poor and those who give relief is a unilateral dependency because the poor do not have the means to return the favour back to society. When the needy address their wants to those who are able to give relief, the asymmetry in the relationship implies not only feelings and attitude but also power. Poverty cannot be eliminated unless the poor are able to give as well as to receive, which in turn would give them more equality in their society as they become interdependent with others (Coser 1965). Tanya a local administrator of social welfare states that, the ones who become poor are:

/.../the illiterate, those who don't go to school, and those who come from poor families. Their mentality is that they are contented with their present life style or their situation; they don't even try their best to uplift their economic situation (241012).

As Tanya underlines the lack of resources such as the access to equal education creates more poverty and expands the unilateral dependency. Without education it is difficult for the poor to compete for jobs that can sustain them and reject what Coser (1965 p.148) refers to as; the role of the passive aid recipient.

According to Symbolic Interactionism, the lack of cooperation between the poor and the givers can create conflicts. If there is no clear communication between the giver and the poor then the person who wishes to help might not be aware of what the poor in the specific context really needs. The argument is that if the poor people's understandings of their own situation are not taken into account, then there is a risk that their problems will not be met (Spicker 2007 p.151). It is not simply that some poor people are ungrateful, it is just that their unmet needs become too apparent when their voices are not heard.

As Totoy, said about giving relief when he tried to help the poor, but did not receive gratefulness as the response he expected:

Totoy: *You know, that is very complicated. Sometimes it costs you humiliation because you give, but not enough. They will complain. You already give, and then their comment is not good. Sometimes you will get angry. That is why, every time there is flood I close my eyes* (181012).

When I asked Juan from Mababang Lupa, how he feels when he received relief from the government during the floods (which in Mababang Lupa lasts for months) he answered:

I'm happy but it's not good because if you want to help do it well, it [the aid] was little. And those they choose [to help] are those who live near the roads. During floods, it's hard to enter Mababang Lupa they [aid workers] could not reach the far side to help the people living there (250912).

Juan makes clear that when floods are affecting the people, not all the victims receive help. The floods have thus greater impact on some people than others. He also underlines that the relief is not enough. I asked my guide's mother about the relief they received during the floods and she gave a similar answer:

A.R: Have you and your family received rations?
Janice: seldom.
A.R: What have you received?
Janice: rice, noodles, sardines.
A.R: Are you happy to receive that food or would you prefer to receive something else?
Janice: of course for someone poor like us, we are happy because it relieves hunger.
A.R: How much is there in a ration?
Janice: 2 kilo bigas [rice], 3 noodles, 3 sardines.
A.R: Doesn't seem to last.
Janice: Sometimes all of my children received. Four of us received here, that is if they are really decided to give. But sometimes only one of us received (240912).

If all the needs of the poor are not met through public assistance then begging seems to be an option. Begging however means being suspected of belonging to criminal networks or as Totoy called it "syndicates", and is an activity that is highly stigmatised.

Moreover, poverty in Hagonoy reflects a lack of resources among those who give relief, Tanya for instance manifest a lack of financial funds and manpower and there is a consensus among my interviewee's from Mababang Lupa that the government is corrupted, which would indicate a faulty cooperation among parts of the government in regards to helping the poor. It is nevertheless important, Spicker (2007 p.151) says, to keep on doing something despite the limitations of the implemented anti-poverty strategies.

5. Surviving poverty‎_____

Creating job and income opportunities

When arriving to Manila, Philippines for the first time, the first thing I noticed that I could relate to poverty was a group of children begging. Although I could not understand what they were saying, I could deduce by their body language that they probably wanted money as they stretched out their hands and repeated the same words in Tagalog, 'palimos po', which I later learned it means " give me money please". Since this was my first hour of being in the country, I was not entirely aware of what to expect. I was not sure yet of which issues were related to poverty. In the following field note I describe the first moments in the country outside the airport:

When walking towards the car together with my partner and her mother, a group of children approached us asking for money. It was obvious that both my partner and I had just arrived to the Philippines. Both of us were carrying baggage and were dressed differently from the majority of the surrounding people who wore T-shirts and shorts.

For some reason the children only asked money from my partner and her mother. Not being a Filipino and not being able to speak the local language I could only hear the children repeating the same words that I could not understand as they stretched out their hands.

When reaching the car the children had already left and we were surrounded by several young men who started to pick up our bags into the trunk of the car. I did not understand who they were or what they were doing there. I thought that maybe they were relatives or acquaintances of my partner's family. As I tried to understand who the young men were I asked myself why their clothes seemed to be dirty and their skin burnt by the sun. Not being sure of who they were I started to think they were very polite who wanted to help us with our baggage and basically insisting that we let them help us. The situation became clear to me when the young men started to ask for money for their services. I understood then that they were offering themselves to help carry people's baggage as a way to earn money. It was interesting that both the children and the young men approached us in groups and that the children left as we were approached by the second group (200912).

This observation revealed to me an example of how people create jobs in an informal economy. The young men who insisted on helping us with our baggage for a fee were not someone's formal employees. I do not know if the begging children and the young men knew each other or if they were cooperating, yet what they had in common is that they seemed to have learned a way of earning money and were persistent in their aims. Another example I

encountered was at the cemetery during All Saints' Day (Nov. 1). People visit their dead relatives and place lighted candles on the tombs. As the candles melted, children scraped with a spoon the melted wax on the ground to sell it so that it can be recycled to make new candles. The cooperation between people and those who work in an informal economy, suggest that it is a known procedure for receiving certain services as well as a way of earning money.

The cooperation between the people and the "informal workers" can be exemplified with an observation I did during road maintenance in the outskirts of Hagonoy. Half of the road was closed and cars took turns in passing through the narrow space that remained open. As each car passed through, they followed the hand signals from a group of young men who were standing by the side of the road instructing when it was possible to pass through. For each car that passed, the young men received coins from the drivers.

I was impressed by the way people could think and create opportunities in different situations to earn money. How much these "informal workers" earn is variable.

People's creativity extends itself beyond their actions and to the way they use tools and vehicles to generate incomes. Tricycles are not only used for transporting passengers but also as carriers for transporting goods as well as vehicles for rent. There are several examples of tricycles being modified to be able to carry more loads. Some people, mostly children, with a bucket of soapy water and a cloth, try to earn money by wiping the windscreens of vehicles during traffic stops.

Through reference groups such as parents and friends, individuals observe and learn from each other more formal work skills, as Ronaldo stated, when describing how he learned to drive tricycles: *I just look at what the other drivers are doing and from there I learned (250912).* Ronaldo underlines the importance of other people to make an income. Other people may not just have something to teach but they may have connections to future employers or like in Ronaldo's case, who did not own his own tricycle but borrowed one from his father's or friends. Yet although a social network provided Ronaldo with the means to be a driver, he still wished for his own tricycle;

A.R: How do you imagine your future in five years?
Ronaldo: I will have my own tricycle.
A.R: So this one is not your own?
Ronaldo: It's my father's, I only borrow it.
A.R: So your father used to be a tricycle driver and now he is a fisherman (250912).

Another issue related to reference groups is according to Panopio (2004 p.92) imitativeness or *gaya gaya* this means that, people will try to replicate other people's success.

For example, if someone is able to run a successful shop, another person might try to open a new shop hoping that it too will be successful.

I sometimes asked myself why there were so many tricycles and small shops in Hagonoy. Considering Panopio's argument, *gaya gaya* might be one of many possible reasons. Imitative behaviours however, create more competition among the workers. Erwin, a local priest who mentioned that there are too many tricycle drivers in the town stated:

Here in Hagonoy there are a lot of tricycle drivers, because it is an easy way to earn money, but you also have to see the consequence. If there are many tricycle drivers, your income will be less and it will not suffice your family and the costs for the motor cycle. Do you see my point? If there are many tricycles the income will not suffice to feed your family and to answer the terms of instalment [housing], to pay the rent every month (261112).

A part from having several jobs to increase the income, poor families might encourage their children to work at an early age to survive (Zulueta 2006 p.54). Children are often seen selling rags, newspapers and jasmine flowers in order to help their families.

Analyn a retired teacher, founder of Mababang Lupa's preschool argued that to increase one's possibilities in the labour market and have a better life quality, hard work and education is crucial. Yet for some working children going to school is a distant project. Poverty interferes with their education as Juan and Pedro experienced when they were children:

A.R: What would you want to tell other people about your experiences?
Juan: Even though I didn't finish my studies, I have found ways so that I won't get stuck. You need to work hard. Even though I am not educated, it [the limitations] is part of growing up because of my family's financial crisis. I find ways and solutions. I mustn't be angry with my family because of poverty. I'll push myself forward instead. Try until success!
Pedro: I'm the same, I didn't finish my studies. I work hard to survive. If my family becomes better financially, maybe I can study. If I don't have money, I won't be able to study.
Juan: No one else can help us, only our families and ourselves. Our parents have no money. Our parents [mothers] sell fish only (250912).

Limitations to education are not unique to Juan and Pedro. According to Panopio (2004 p.331) dropout rate is higher among students who experience socioeconomic disadvantages.

Because of high unemployment rates some Filipinos, educated or not, go abroad which in turn affects family life and causes brain drain (Tuason 2010 p.307).
In Tuason's (2008) studies it is emphasised among the poor who became successful that rejecting poverty, having dreams of becoming successful and the desire to help the family helped them get out of poverty. Juan and Pedro emphasise similar arguments in the quote above when he says: *I'll push myself forward instead. Try until success!* Pedro reveals that he

still ponders on education for the future if there would be a chance: *If my family becomes better financially, maybe I can study.* Thus, hope and aspirations might function as a way to go on struggling.

Children who grow up with families that struggle financially develop awareness about the value of things and money. They also learn how to confront the limitations in their everyday life by excluding themselves from things that they know are too costly for their family (Jacobsson et. al. 2010 p.45). Juan and Pedro who grew up with poverty expressed the value of being good with money as they mentioned they wanted to be good in math so they cannot be fooled by anybody when selling and buying scraps.

Grace, the mother of Julius gave another account on how she tries to raise money and provide for her children because her husband does not bring enough money to the household:

Grace: We have only coffee in the morning. Then if I have some things like bags [women's bags], I sell them so that I can buy bread.
A.R: where do you get the bags from?
Grace: Our personal stuff. Like now, we don't have an electric fan. The electric fan and the TV were sold because he [the husband] said he didn't earn anything. At night we use only carton [to fan ourselves] (121112).

Staying at home to take care of the household, unemployment and lack of resources puts Grace and her children in a dependency situation. The children's and her quality of life is affected negatively by her husband's low income to the extent that, she sells their personal objects to buy food.

Sources of strength
The experience of poverty among my interviewee's everyday life manifest sad stories about hardships and difficulties, some of which I already have written in this essay. To cope with challenges and find comfort in the midst of the pending worries that accompanies the lack of resources, the poor in my study resort to different activities and life philosophies.

There was a consensus among my interviewees that faith in God is important. Faith is described as a source of strength. In several occasions I was told that the church had been active in providing relief during the floods. Helping the less fortunate was also something Erwin, the priest underlined. The influences of Catholicism on its believers in Hagonoy are noteworthy. Every Sunday the church is full of people who want to hear the mass. The local priest plays a crucial role in the people's life since he (women are not allowed to become

priests in Catholicism) is in a position where many will listen to him. The church gatherings also serve as mean for people to interact with friends.

Parallel to the faith in God, family was also mentioned as a source of strength, as Monica, a teacher in Mababang Lupa exemplifies: *Family can be a source of strength because by being together with your family, you get more strength. God can also be a source of strength if you have a strong faith* (181012).

Ronaldo agreed with Monica that God is important, but he added jobs as sources of strength:

A.R: Where do you think people who struggle financially find strength or happiness to be able to go on with their lives?
Ronaldo: In their jobs because that is how they can survive.
A.R: What does God mean to you?
Ronaldo: For me, I can ask God for help when I have problems. I ask him for forgiveness when I've sinned, I can tell him my feelings. He helps me (250912).

Ronaldo mentions that he is able to express his feelings and find comfort by pray to God. The fact, that he has a job also gives him an assurance that he has an income although it may not be as much as he would like it to be, as he added, he would rather be in the navy instead.

In the midst of all the worries, it takes an effort to stay motivated and cope with poverty. This is called *pagpupunyagi* and means perseverance and fortitude. The poor expressed adaptability to deprivation and valued hard work in order to survive (Tuason 2010 p.313). As Juan told his story he pointed out that despite the misfortunes in his life, he is able to move on by clinging on to faith. He underlined that he was able to provide for his family despite the lack of education, he thus highlighted his achievements. By urging that one have to be kind to others he also stressed the importance of social relations:

A.R: Is there any other question that you would like me to have asked you in this interview?
Juan: How did I manage to do things without education? How did I come up with a solution? How do I manage to give my family their needs everyday and for the days to come? I am very thankful that even though I didn't study, I knew how to successfully provide the needs of my family and myself everyday despite the lack of education. How is the life of a man without a father?
A.R: Can you answer these questions?
Juan: Have faith in God. You must be motivated and hardworking even though the work is hard you must think that it is easy. You must have a heart, be kind to others (250912).

Parallel to resilience, acceptance of one's own life situation was partly expressed. Grace for instance described the floods as something normal and Janice summarised the common

feelings regarding the limitations of being poor: *I feel sad of course, we want to leave so that we can have a better life, we can't do it because we are poor. We have accepted this kind of life (240912).* Although there is an acceptance between the women, they clearly manifested that they would raise their voices and express their opinions and complaints if given the chance. Janice stated, that they wished for an improvement to their life quality which suggests that they did not accept, in the sense of being satisfied with, what they had. They are rather forced to live with bad housing and limitations such as, lack of food, money, education for their children and illnesses. Spicker (2007 p.102) add, "of course people who live in slums have to accept low living standards; that does not mean that they choose them". Poor people have to accept low living standards because they have no other choice.

In the Philippines acknowledging one's lack of control of fate is culturally defined as *bahal na*, meaning letting go and trust that God will intervene and help those in need. *Bahal na* is sometimes described as a fatalistic view because it can lead to a lack of initiative-taking and self-reliance, if there is too much reliance on divine intervention taking care of everything (Panopio 2004 p.90). Still, *bahal na*, could also refer to a feeling of comfort and consolation with the unknown due to positive beliefs and previous successes in the past it thus becomes a psychological shield that provides internal security (Tuason 2010 p.312).

Typifying the poor as having low standards can have negative effects and lead to objections on improving the poor's housing standards. Many poor people do not save money, but this is not because of lack of thrift, it is because they do not have any money to save (Spicker 2007 p.102).

Relying on each other
According to Tuason (2010 p.313) strong interpersonal relationships with families, relatives and friends are important to Filipinos, because of the help they expect from each other. Despite of the limited resources people may suffer, they nevertheless try to help those who ask so that in the future they can benefit from the same kind of help when in need. This kind of social relationships brings forth among the people a sense of security that is embedded in the knowledge that if they help, they too will receive help in the future. Not being able to return a favour is connected to guilt and disappointment because of *utang na loob* or debt of gratitude. Those who have been helped are expected to return the favour. Reciprocity is thus emotional and a social obligation. The social security that reliance on others brings is referred to as *pakikipagkapwa*, in Sociology Pierre Bourdieu referred to it as social capital (Broady

1990 p.179). This is how a Hagonoy resident described social relationships in his neighbourhood:

A.R: Do you know your neighbours around here?
Arnel: Of course, from here until the main road people know each other. Unlike in overseas, if you transfer house, you don't know you neighbour (091012).

Another example of *pakikipagkapwa* came from Grace who had to borrow clothes from other people because her children did not have many. She also reveals a division of responsibilities based on gender where she takes care of the household while her husband works elsewhere, which I often encountered in my observations:

A.R: what do you do at home?
Grace: Cook, look after the children, clean and hand wash clothes if we have none to wear. I just ask for clothes from others sometimes. Because we have none, the flood took them.
A.R: Why are the children not wearing underwear right now?
Grace: Because he has few. He doesn't have many clothes. I just wash, wear-undress-wash. All of them have few clothes ever since the flood (121012).

Tuason (2010) stated that family is important in the Filipino culture in which the sense of reciprocity and caretaking of parents and sibling are strong. It is thus common that Filipinos work abroad not only for themselves but also to help their family financially. The importance of the family is clear when for instance, the children of those who work overseas are taken care of by the family members that stay in the Philippines.

The obligations towards *barkada* or peers may have been revealed when my guide stopped coming in the morning for the "go along". Initially I did not understand why he had not shown up that particular morning, since I had been compensating him well for his contributions to the research. I was nevertheless told later on, that he had gone for another job to produce firecrackers by hand for a low income. Considering the working conditions and the low salary of the other job, my guide's decision seemed illogical. Yet as information was added, I was told that my guide had been persuaded by his *barkada* to accept the other job instead because, the employment required at least a group of five people so that the company would offer them free transportation to the workplace which was situated in another town.

Stravers' reports (1988 p.337) however, that reciprocity requires that newly acquired wealth is to be shared. This perspective discourage saving money because this would deprive the rightful share of others. Not sharing could thus be punished with gossip and exclusion. Stravers' argument and my own observations prompted me to wonder if my guide had felt

any kind of peer pressure, as I conducted the following interview with him before he stopped being my guide, I was already worrying for him, although I was not sure about his situation:

A.R: How have you felt this whole week?
My guide: I'm happy that I walked with you. This is the first time I accompanied a foreigner.
A.R: How did your friends react?
My guide: They ask…. He is American, I am a black. He is white I am dark [he smiles].
A.R: Why do people think I am American?
My guide: That's what they believe, I told them that you are not American. If they see someone white, they will think its American.
A.R: People expected money? Are they expecting money?
My guide: Some people, like those two [women] who came here.
A.R: Why do you think that, they think I am going to give money?
My guide: Some people, they thought that if they get interviewed they will receive money. I tell people that you don't give money.
A.R: How do they react when you said that there is no money?
My guide: They don't believe me, they said that I'm taking all the money.
A.R: Will you not have any problems? Are people arguing with you because of this?
My guide: no.
A.R: What's the common view about foreigners here?
My guide: That, if a foreigner approach or speak to you, you will receive money [Common view that foreigners have money] (280912).

My guide never explained why he left when I saw him again (often together with his peers), I am therefore not sure why he stopped coming. He did however point out how foreigners are perceived among some people. Luckily I had been doing enough observations to be able to continue with my interpreter only. In two occasions I also had my interpreter's mother stepping in as my guide.

Relying on each other does not necessarily mean taking a passive stance and wait until one is asked for help. In Jay's case reciprocity means also sacrifices because he stopped studying and worked instead to help his parents financially and so that his siblings could have education. In the quote he describes the difficulties related to working:

Jay: Sometimes I help my parents, if someone lends me a tricycle. Every night I go and look for someone [friends] who can lend me a tricycle. It is really hard, especially when we experience the floods /…/.
A.R: Do you experience pain when driving tricycle?
Jay: Yes, especially when the road is bumpy.
A.R: Where, which part of the body?
Jay: Shoulders, the whole body.
A.R: Why do some tricycle drivers have a cloth covering their mouth?

Jay: Because of dust [or pollution]. It's hard. I stopped studying because of hardship in life. I let my younger sibling study instead (260912).

Yet, the poor do not always rely only on each other, in some occasions they can also encounter the help from people who are not poor and who feel empathy towards the less fortunate. Because of stigmas, the help the poor receive is however not always without suspicion. Michelle the firewoman expressed certain helplessness in regards to altruism. She described her perspective like this:

Michelle: I pity them because, I know I cannot do anything for them, I was hoping I could have more money so I can help the poor people, but in some cases when I meet kids or beggars I give them some [money] and my own happiness.
A.R: You, yourself give money to them?
Michelle: I choose the people I will give money, some are just member of syndicates.
A.R: Is it difficult to say who is in a syndicate and who is not?
Michelle: I look into their eyes (271012).

The local priest who is involved in social programs through the church aimed to help the poor argued that it is a duty to help the ones in need:

This is not an economic friendly town /.../ when I saw the situation here I realised there is something I need to do. /.../ I mean you do not stay in the pulpit as a priest, your work is not only in the church, but your work is also outside of the church, with the people (181012).

People who take initiatives in helping the poor play a role in the poor people's lives who are able, or according to Stravers (1988) expected, to share the help they receive with others in their group. In regards to Stravers however, I would like to point out an unselfish experience I had with two of my interviewees who did not eat the hamburgers I bought for them so that they could bring them home to their pregnant wives.

The examples of the interviews above, point to *pakikipagkapwa* or relying on others as beneficial for the poor in regards to material and social security. Yet relying on others is not simply a matter of give and take relationship. It implies duties towards the *barkada* or reference groups, and it can require sacrifices as in Jay's example who works so that his sibling can study.

Empowered by Music
Singing Karaoke is popular among people in many parts of the Philippines. Having a background as a musician, I felt happy to hear music. Every day I could hear singing voices coming from loud speakers outside my window. The popularity of Karaoke prompted me to

explore its functions through my interviewees. Juan and Pedro described their feelings about singing as follows:

A.R: You both sing karaoke? Can you tell me about it?
Juan: I lost my studies and school and buying scrap became my habit. While I work I listen to music with headset and memorize songs. I sing so that I can speak out all the things that I cannot say to my parents. It is nice to be able to sing, music comforts you…. You can express all your bad emotions, and forget all your problems.
Pedro: Sometimes when we sing there, we are like family. I sing to forget problems.
Juan: Of course we are like family. You don't have a father, you don't have a good life and you didn't study. At my age now, I already take responsibility for my family. There are some who establishes early work life because they have to meet their needs. I don't want my child to be like me who worked at an early age instead of going to school and carrying books.
A.R: What kind of music do you listen to?
Juan: I like love songs and rap [Pedro agreeing, nods his head] (250912).

Both Juan and Pedro experience music as a way to express their emotions. Expressing emotions through music is something I can relate to. Pedro pointed out the feeling of being a family with peers when singing together, which signals that the activity strengthens their social relationships. Music Juan explained, enables him to say things he cannot say directly to his parents. It is thus an empowering activity for him.

I had the opportunity to participate in karaoke singing together with at least three of my interviewees and my interpreter's father. As I sang, I also found myself singing songs I associate with my own feelings. We, as participants of the activity of singing constituted a temporary reference group which made me feel a belonging to the group of that moment.

Although my interviewees brought forth sad stories when speaking about singing, gathering together with friends is fun. In the midst of the fun however, it happened now and then that fights related to personal issues, broke out between some people.

Juan who composes hip hop lyrics tells some of his experiences in a very symbolic manner in one of his compositions which he performed in the interview (see next page box A.).

The pain that he feels because his father had been absent during his childhood was a recurrent issue. Although he writes, that his mother took care of everything and that he wants to thank her, he also expresses a certain disappointment because she caned him. Sometimes when I heard him raping I could hear frustration in his voice. Poverty seems to have influenced his perception about people, as he writes, *if you don't have money you don't have a loyal friend.* It is clear that Juan wants to convey the sadness he feels, which is hard to escape from. He is aware that his mother sees the "endless tears that falls from his eyes filled with

sorrow". He admits to have gotten lost and became distanced from the person he wanted to be. Some of his actions may have been dishonest, that is why he "developed horns". The path that he chose he then describes as something "worse than hell" and not suitable for the kid that he once was.

There is a "paradise" somewhere that he would like to reach. But with poverty, it is too hard to fulfil any dreams; one might as well forget them. He then explicitly reaches out to the listener to find a common story to share. Despite the sufferings related to his experiences, the life that he has is the only one he has. He is thus forced to live through his "destiny".

Other Strategies

According to Roy, a police officer, poverty can lead to crime among some people:

Roy: Some criminals, kidnappers, snatchers, robbers and people who indulge themselves to illegal gambling engage themselves with bad actions, because they are having difficulties financially in their lives.
A.R: So you mean that poverty can lead to crime?
Roy: Yeah it is very relevant to each other.
A.R: Do you feel sympathy for them, if they committed a crime because of poverty?
Roy: Yes, because the remaining action for them is to do unlawful things for money (271012).

Roy points to crime as one of few options for some people who need to survive and fulfil their needs. Crime is however not an absolute result of poverty as Roy used the word "some" when he said "some kidnappers, snatchers /.../ engage themselves with bad actions". All kidnappers do not kidnap because they are poor and all poor are not kidnappers. Since, Roy is a police officer and will regularly meet people in situations that involves the law his perspectives point to, poverty among other reason as causes to crime.

Howard Becker (2006), however points to crime as something people are socialized into through reference groups. Whether a person is rich or poor is thus not the determining cause to why some people choose to commit crimes but is related to reference groups and

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Box A.

Hip hop (translation from original Tagalog lyrics)

I lived in a world where I didn't meet a father,
and everything was taken care of by my mother.
I want to hug and thank her but instead I got caned.
I got lost and developed long horns.
Every time I eat she says my eyes show sorrow.
The path I chose is not for normal kids,
seems hellish, or probably worse.

The peaceful and promised paradise,
will not be reached if you only have a peso.
Forget everything, anything you wished for,
if you don't have money you don't have a loyal friend.

I ended up bad, did you end up bad too?
My story and yours could be similar.
Maybe we share the same experiences.
Tears keep falling in spite of how many times you wipe them.

One life…one life…you have one life… one life.

By Juan (2012)

perspectives. Also, depending on the specific reference group, what is seen as deviant by outsiders may be a norm for the insiders.

Robert Merton (1938 p.464) adds that, some people's actions, belong to a mode of adaption that he calls *innovation.* This means that the cultural definitions of success have been internalised, but with limited access to conventional means of attaining success or reaching the desired goals, other norm-breaking means are applied. Merton explicitly mentions crime in the following quote:

> Several researches have shown that specialized areas of vice and crime constitute a "normal" response to a situation where the cultural emphasis upon pecuniary success has been absorbed, but where there is little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful (ibid p.465).

Merton's and Becker's perspectives could thus give a clue to why some of the people Roy encounters in his job commit crimes. I wanted to compare Roy's perspectives with an actual prisoner. Unfortunately I did not manage to establish a satisfying contact with the prisoner who was accused of car theft, as he always answered my questions from the other side of the bars with: *everything is ok here sir*. His answers are unsurprising; he was probably influenced by the presence of other police officers who worked nearby. Due to the short conversation with the prisoner I will not develop any further arguments on this.

Merton (1938 p.464) argues that the people on the lower strata of society experience the highest pressure to deviate from the norms of the larger society. It is thus not surprising that some poor people will acquire norm-breaking strategies to survive.

One of the most obvious and frequent examples that I encountered in order to get food involves the fishponds. Children together with adults, hidden by the surrounding bushes fished illegally from the fishponds,. A different example refers to people who ride jeepneys and act as if being asleep in order to escape the travel fee. People who escape from the travel fee usually succeed when the driver does not have a so called *cobrador,* a helper who collects money from the passengers. Relating back to Roy, these are not extreme cases, yet still relevant. Alma and Noel an elderly couple mentioned that some people even attach wires to electric post to illegally acquire electricity for free, others will tamper and turn off the electric meter to reduce the electric bill. That is why the electric companies do routine checks.

During a casual conversation with my interpreter's mother, she revealed the possibility that some of the poor who beg money also implement strategies to win the sympathy of other people. For instance, the beggar can act weak or sick when approaching people and then walk

away strong and healthy as soon as they receive money. That appearance has an effect on whether a beggar will receive money or not, is exemplified by Totoy:

I know there is a syndicate here that attract a lot of beggars with drugs and they [the beggars] will ask every store for money. You can easily recognise them because they are very strong and why would you help those guys that are very strong. Some guys, especially women bring their newly born baby but their feature is not of a beggar. It looks like they just borrowed the baby and then just ask for money. I have a regular beggar in my store and you can see that the old man is really sick and that he has wounds. Every time he comes to my place and asks for help, I give him five, ten pesos (181012).

Totoy makes a distinction on whether the beggars who approach him look strong or weak. He referred to gang lords, syndicates and drugs and underlined that some beg because they are connected to criminal organisations and not because they are poor. To clarify how a "real beggar" looks like he described and old man he gives money to, as sick and with wounds.

Depending on how aware beggars are about the effects appearance can have on the people they approach, trying to give the impression of being sick and weak may be an unsurprising strategy to gain empathy.

Other strategies implemented to survive, are more related to material needs. Depending on the social definitions of objects, a piece of carton can be perceived as trash or a possible piece of a wall to someone who builds a shanty house. The extent to how some poor people will consider recycling objects could be exemplified by an elderly man I saw who carefully checked if the sandals he had found by the side of the road were still in good condition.

I had an experience which suggests that being observant to arising opportunities could also be understood as a strategy. My guide had informed that some people thought I gave money to interview participants. According to the rumour, I was supposed to give 30.000 pesos and help people repair their shanties. It is understandable that the poor would try to seize such an opportunity. In one occasion, there were two women I had never spoken to, looking for me in my host family's home, asking to be interviewed. I was already feeling the pressure from the misleading rumour and my interpreter who was worrying for me. My interpreter's father however, relieved the tension I was feeling as he jokingly said about me giving away such quantities of money: *Tell them it is true, tell them you will give it to them when you go back to Sweden*. I do not know how this rumour spread but I felt I managed to solve it by being clearer when introducing the purpose of my interviews. My guide and my interpreter's mother also helped me in informing approaching people that they had been mislead.

In regards to sickness, one of my interviewees stated that he managed to cure his athlete's foot with vinegar. The ability in problem solving is crucial to alleviate the effects of poverty.

6. Raising their voices_____

Some of my interviewees said they appreciated being able to express themselves and to have someone who listens to them. The interviews seemed to have served as an additional forum where they could share their stories and opinions. Juan, Ricardo and Rodel revealed they felt happy to tell their story because they did not often get that chance:

A.R: In the beginning you said you feel nervous...
Juan: Nervous when I am talking about myself. But as of the moment, not anymore, for me it is better that I share my experiences because, I don't usually tell my life story, I am open-minded. I want to be interviewed so that people will know our experiences and complaints here inside Mababang Lupa (250912).

Ricardo and Rodel also expressed their expectations with the interview:

A.R: How do you feel right now?
Ricardo: Sad but happy to share, my experience.
Rodel: Happy, we are able to tell our experiences so people in power may know (091012).

That poor people felt they did not receive enough attention from their government was a recurrent issue, Janice argued that they receive attention only when there is an election:

Here, you can only see people whenever there is an election. Sometimes, someone gives rations or donations, but not all of us will receive, only a chosen few. They said it's only for the elderly and malnourished (240912).

The fact that some interviewees wished to be heard by their government, prompted me to wonder how one of Hagonoy's high ranked politicians would respond to common opinions about the government among my interviewees. I therefore let the politician read the expressed opinions in the quote below from an interview I had with my guide:

Interviewee: Why aren't you doing anything for our area? Why are you forsaking us, especially the poor? The water doesn´t stop from rising. I don´t know why you let this happen to us, because we are poor. Is it because the people cannot do anything to complain to the government? The people are scared to complain.
A.R: Why are you afraid of the government?
Interviewee: Because we are poor and we cannot fight them.
A.R: Do you perceive yourself as poor?
Interviewee: Yes (240912).

After taking part of the statements in the quote, Marvin the politician stressed:

Marvin: I think this is a valid statement, I agree that not every poor person has an opportunity to directly communicate their concerns and I think that you must understand that in the government we cannot give individual attention to everyone, as [a government official] my work really is for the majority of a sector and not to individuals (091112).

The chief focus of reducing poverty in Marvin's statement is structural. What Marvin missed however is that my guide was not just speaking about his own individual situation, but about his whole community as he used words such as "our area" and pronouns such as "us" and "we": *Why aren't you doing anything for our area? Why are you forsaking us?* Marvin who is well known in the area, and whose name I initially heard from my interviewees as they referred to him, suggest that Marvin's statement: *my work really is for the majority of a sector and not to individuals,* is rather contradictive since the ones that are referring him as the main responsible in Hagonoy are the individuals who compose the society in which he; as defined, democratically bears a high ranked political position. Spicker (2007 p.9 8) argues that if poverty limits the capacity of the people it also limits the capacity of the society. A society's profile and experiences are damaged if poverty damages its people through ill health and slow development.

Since Marvin is part of a bigger socio-political structure, he is not the only one responsible for the welfare of Hagonoy. He highlighted poverty within the government itself, as an important issue to why they cannot help the poor all the way:

You must understand the scale of the issues and concerns. We are a community of one hundred thirty thousand citizens, if you compare the budget of a Philippine community of this scale, with western European community of this number. I think you will understand the reason why the government cannot give the massive response that is really required in order to serve the sectors in a full way (091112).

Marvin acknowledged that the government is not able to respond to all the needs of the people. Most of my interviewees alleged that it is because the government is corrupted. Some of the interviewees would agree but however describe Marvin as a good government official. There emerged a pattern among my interviewees where the poor expressed discontent with the government in contrast to the more affluent interviewees who tended to express a more understanding view towards the local government.

In regards to the floods Marvin disagreed with my guide:

In our community, yes we are trying to do things about the floods, in fact we are victims of floods. We have been flooded for two years and our response has been to shorten relief response. What we are looking for now are long term solutions, we can provide relief when

there is a flood, but what we really need is that the floods are given engineering and infrastructure attention (091112).

Marvin was clear about what is needed in regards to the floods. The government building in Hagonoy had also been affected by the floods but seem to have recovered already. While there are areas in Hagonoy that have recovered from the floods, the people in Mababang Lupa and other surrounding places are still suffering from the floods due to the tides. I know this because as I am writing this am still on contact with people in Hagonoy.

To clarify what my guide means, the photo (fig. 4), shows the depth of the water outside his house. Observe that the people do not have much cover on their feet. It is thus my guide's and his community's concern that they are being ignored by their government.

In regards to the help the poor could receive, what puzzled me during my observations in Hagonoy was that my interviewees from Mababang Lupa seemed

Fig. 4 Mababang Lupa, outside my guide's house

unaware of any presence of NGOs in the area. As Marvin listed the many government programs and international cooperation with NGOs to help the poor, I pointed out to him:

A.R: It is very hard to see, I have been here almost two months and doing observations in many areas, speaking to poor people and many are unaware of NGOs giving help right now.
Marvin: Of course because you are coming outside of the service network, you are like in a giant haystack, unless you know the official network, obviously not everybody in that haystack is aware of what is happening in certain areas.
A.R: So the poor are not aware of the help because they are not part of the service network?
Marvin: They are not in the program. It also has to do how you ask, what you ask (091112).

The different perspectives in the official network that Marvin is speaking about are highlighted by Tanya who is in the department of social welfare:

A.R: Do you have NGOs here? I have not seen any of them.
Evelyn: Just few, very few.
A.R: Because I have been doing observations and have not seen any.
Evelyn: Yes, very few only (241012).

Although there are government programs and NGOs directed to help the poor in Hagonoy, Marvin's statements that people have to be part of "the official network" or part of a social

program to become aware of the available help and that the limited resources prevent the government from helping the poor all the way, could to a degree, explain why my guide and Janice experienced that nothing or too little was being done to help the poor.

Many children and the women's situation

According to Adam Easton (1999) who writes in the medical journal *The Lancet,* the high population growth in the Philippines is a factor that hinders development and alleviation of poverty. Easton reports that "all efforts at population control in the Philippines have been thwarted by the influential Catholic Church".

Many children lead to an increase of expenses due to costs of clothing, medicine, and education. From an economic view it is hard for the poor to cover all the needs of their children (Zulueta 2006 p.50).

I noticed in my observations that poor women, often had children around the age of 20 or earlier. Women who were already around the age of 30 usually had two or more children. Considering the influence of the church and that abortion is illegal in the Philippines. Michelle, the firewoman who is Christian raised her opinion about the church prohibiting all contraceptives: *I think that the church is un-reasonable.* She also argued that families should have children according to their economy, not 4-5 children which they cannot support.

In my observations not all women wanted to become pregnant. The *Women's international network news* (2003) state, that teenage pregnancy is the major reason Filipinas drop out school. Not having education is associated with poverty among my interviewees.

Erwin, the priest blames media rather than acknowledging insufficient family planning, traditional factors and the church's own role:

Erwin: I cannot distinguish why they have many children at an early age. It happens, it is the reality. Perhaps there is a larger effect of the media. The media affect the minds of the people.
A.R: In what way?
Erwin: Everything is ok, when you look at the media and the lies of the TV stars (181012).

That the women's situations are ignored can be further emphasised with how women abuse is confronted. In the following quote the priest does not support divorce even when women are being hurt by their men:

A.R: Do think that women who are battered should stay with their husbands?
Erwin: I think a lot of women still do that. But nowadays there are movements in the society that brings up the awareness of the rights of the wives.
A.R: Would you ever support divorce?

Erwin: As a church leader I would never support divorce (181012).

Panopio stated that family honour and the perspective of the family can create a culture of silence that because of family honour tries to hide domestic violence. I let Marvin read a quote with Panopio's statements. Marvin However responded that family violence is no longer a private matter, but he also denies that there are problems of women abuse connected to cultural views of the family. Consider Panopio's statement and then the interview quote:

> The concept of the family as all important, as upheld in the family code, has been misused and distorted to justify an endemic Filipino culture or tradition of keeping it intact at all costs, purportedly for the sake of the children. A restrictive culture maintains that, whatever occurs in a marriage- even if it takes on a violent, criminal nature- is a private matter between husband and wife /.../ In the Philippines, the nature of violence against women and children within the home is usually covered by a culture of silence, underscored by a lack of information and proper understanding of the phenomenon. Revelations of intra-family violence bring shame and scandal to their victims, and they are continually under tremendous pressure to bear the fear, pain and rage in silence for the sake of family honor (Panopio & Raymundo 2004 pp.421-422).

A.R: Could the family code also be contributing to gender inequalities which oppress the females into more poverty?
Marvin: Ah, I will be franc with you, one of my most frequent observations is that; the woman is the pillar of the house, and I mean mothers and women in general, in our community they are very important in running the household, so I will not agree with that (091112).

In the following quote, Grace contradicts Marvin's denial of women being abused in his community. The quote also raise concerns related to religious beliefs that oppose divorcement despite the abuse Grace, her children and other women suffer:

Grace: *My husband and I have been living together for a long time. Even though I lived there [in Mababang Lupa] for a long time, sometimes we have been thrown out. He [the husband] said get out of here, you are useless. If you won't leave, he said, he would kill us. If he gets drunk he throws us out, beats us, points knife at me. I have nowhere to go. I don't have parents anymore. I am an orphan, I am the only child. I have nowhere to go* (121012).

Grace who lacks education, the support of a family and has no job finds herself in a relationship marked by financial dependency, inequality and abuse. The pressure of economic struggles has had a negative impact on Grace's private family life and even if she could leave her husband, divorce is not allowed in the Philippines. Because of issues that are specific to women such as pregnancy, gender roles and the discussions emphasised by the quotes above, it appears that there are differences in the way women and men are affected by poverty.

7. Conclusion_____

Referring back to my purpose of study and my initial questions, I have found that the poor in my study suffer from stigmas and poor living standards as a consequence of financial and material poverty. Social networks play an important role in order to cope with poverty, yet because of social marginalisation the poor find themselves cut from parts of the larger society. The poor in Mababang Lupa felt forgotten or ignored by their government.

In order to survive the poor find strategies, some of these strategies are norm-breaking which in turn stigmatises them more. Yet, the poor in my observations also showed an ability to be creative and find ways to earn money by creating job opportunities in an informal economy. In regards to material needs, they often build their own shanty houses and help each other through *pagkikipagkapwa.* Although, pagkikipagkapwa is a social capital they invest in to have social security, relying on each other is also related to social obligations and debt of gratitude. There are differences in how poverty affects men and women because of gender roles and women or teen pregnancy.

Through interviews and observations guided by qualitative tradition and symbolic Interactionism as my theoretical framework, I have been able to come closer to the perspectives of the poor in my study. As a benefit, I was able to witness the consequences of poverty on a daily life basis. Because of empathy towards the poor and to counter any claims that I conducted this study for the sole purpose of receiving a degree, I helped the poor in my study in various ways through donations, some of which I have mentioned in this essay.

During my fieldwork, parts of Hagonoy, especially the poor areas suffered from floods caused by high tides and heavy monsoon rain. Although the water reached the legs and people such as those in Mababang Lupa had water inside their shanty houses, Hagonoy has suffered from worse and deeper floods. The poverty of poor areas interrelates with the poverty of its residents. Many of the poor that I interviewed suffered from poor health, malnutrition and many cases of abuse.

There are several topics that I encountered in my field observations that could be part of a larger research such as, women in Mababang Lupa, informal economy, absent fathers, living in shanty houses, surviving floods, scavenging in trash dumps, and street children and poverty. Although, with the exception of street children, I wrote about these issues they are nevertheless parts of the bigger structure of my essay, they are therefore not "all including" in their character. This essay could be improved with more insight on the needs of the poor, the reproduction of poverty, and the impact of religion in relation to poverty.

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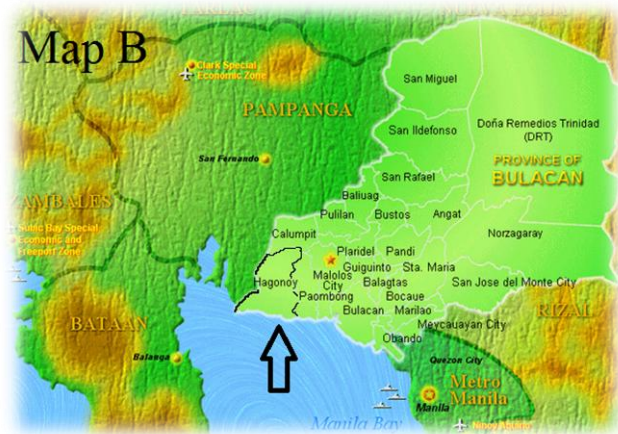
Appendices

Appendix 1.

Maps:
The appendix shows the location of Bulacan on the Island of Luzon (Map A) and Hagonoy in the Province of Bulacan (Map B, arrow inserted).

Zamboanga.com (2013)

Bulacan (2007a)

Appendix 2.

The appendix shows a detailed list of the interviewees in the study.

NAME	DESCRIPTION
THE POOR	
My guide	23 years old, father of 3, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a part-time tricycle driver, scrap collector and fishpond worker
Janice	Mother of my guide and his siblings, lives in Mababang Lupa Stays at home, full-time housewife
Monica	Mother of 1, lives in Mababang Lupa Works as a teacher
Ronaldo	19 years old, father of 1, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a tricycle driver
Juan	21 years old, single man, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a scrap collector
Pedro	19 years old male, living with a partner, no child, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a scrap collector
Jay	19 years old, single man, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a part-time tricycle driver
Noel	69 years old, husband of Alma, lives in San Agustin near Mababang Lupa Sick with pulmonary disease, stays at home, unemployed
Alma	69 years old, wife of Noel, lives in San Agustin near Mababang Lupa Sick with hypertension and angina, works as a money collector in Jueteng
Rodel	20 years old, single man, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a scrap collector
Ricardo	16 years old, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, works as a scrap collector
Julius	15 years old, eldest son of Grace, lives in Mababang Lupa School drop-out, sells jasmine flower and a beggar
Grace	32 years old, mother of 6, lives in Mababang Lupa Stays at home, full-time housewife
Evelyn	Mother of 2, lives in Mababang Lupa Works as a "labandera"
THE WELL TO DO'S	
Andres	Middle-aged man Abulalas trash dump's head of security
Totoy	59 year old, father of 3 Self-employed
Analyn	77 year old, A retired teacher, founder of the Mababang Lupa Preschool
Arnel	Elderly man, Fishpond owner
THE INFLUENTIAL PROFESSIONALS	
Erwin	Priest of St. Anne's Parish Church
Tanya	Social welfare secretary
Roy	31 year old police officer
Michelle	Firewoman
Marvin	Government official/politician in Hagonoy

Appendix 3.

Ethical Guidelines:

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.

2. Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.

3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.

4. Research participants must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion.

5. Harm to research participants and researchers must be avoided in all instances.

6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit (ESRC, 2010).

Appendix 4.

The appendix shows my letter of purpose with handwritten text stating:
"Sept. 24, 2012. Please assist the bearer, he will conduct interviews. Secretary, Barangay, San Augustin."   Officials name has been censured.