Sarkar Game and Macrohistory

Figure 10. Participants reflect after playing the Sarkar Game.

Sarkar's theory of the Social Cycle is concerned with the ways that humans, and their social organizations, have dealt with the existential problems of how their physical and social environments relate to one another. His theory of macrohistory proposes that civilization has cycled through four major 'states'… [that are] both material power structures and epistemic or paradigmatic forms of individual and collective psychology.

Further, each state has a beneficial phase (vidya) and a perverse phase (avidya); thus, even though each state is successful in managing existential problems, it also contains the seeds of its ultimate decline. P.R. Sarkar's Social Cycle elegantly demonstrates how easily 'social roles' are adopted and how these roles bring forth partial and limited understandings of change and change processes. Both as a macrohistorical model of social change and the embodiment of the process of social construction, it is a pivotal learning element in the subject…. By 'creating' the experience of the Social Cycle in the classroom, the students learn of their own social constructions and roles. They experience the frustration of how these roles and constructions limit the effectiveness of their actions. They can also recognize the qualitative difference in the potential of actions that arise from adopting an 'integral' stance in participating in social change. (Hayward and Voros 2004)

Figure 11. Chaos, complexity and contradictions as the four social groups clash in the Sarkar Game

Ariana Luterman and Shermon Cruz facilitated the Sarkar game and macrohistory sessions, divided the participants into four groups: workers, military, intellectuals, and merchants. The workers are guided by basic instincts. They are preoccupied with survival and mundane pleasures. They want safety, security and reasonable comforts. The military's physical strength and courage are their greatest assets. They embrace challenge and struggle, value honor, discipline, and self-sacrifice. They protect society from danger and chaos, by enforcing order. The intellectual's developed mind is their greatest asset. The search for truth, removing errors and confusion, is your purpose. They debate hard so that the best ideas win and create enlightenment. The merchants make money easily and invest it wisely. They excel in administration and organization. Through wealth and power, they can help everyone. There are both positive and negative aspects of each archetype.

The game started when the workers entered the scene and called out for equality, demanded for higher pay and rallied for the recognition and observance of their labor rights as enshrined by the constitution. The military intervened with the expectation that they alone have the right to set and define public order, of what is peaceful or not. They are the wielders of authority and discipline. They demanded the laborers to cease their disruptive and nuisance creating rallies and were threatened to be arrested if they refuse to comply with the law. At this point, the intellectuals entered the game and immediately offered a solution to resolve workers' demand and concerns. They taught that compromise was necessary to ensure the peace and maintain public and social order. It was here that the merchants came in and made a bold offer of loan instruments for the workers with interest and capital generation in mind. With these offers, the workers opted to continue their strike and the military immediately arrested and imprisoned some of the workers for failing to comply and observe peace. It was at this instance that a worker would grab a gun and threatened to fight back if demands for better pay and labor practice were not given. The intellectual would come to the rescue by challenging the military and the merchants to observe their rights and to give in to their demands. The merchants here would ask if the intellectuals also needed money, but the intellectual would decline to affirm the need. As the merchants and intellectuals entered into a negotiation, the military would arrest the workers with guns who and intellectuals again would intervene and tried to protect the worker with a gun. At this point, the military would shoot the workers and intellectuals and everybody else and the crowd would disperse for safety. One intellectual was shot dead, and the worker who took the gun was finally in prison. The merchants came in and presented their alternative solutions by giving the workers non-monetary and fringe benefits. A surprising turn of event occurred as one of the workers chose to switched side and turned to the military for protection.

Figure 12. Workers poses for the camera after voicing out their sentiments to the media.

By the end of the game, everybody had a chance to voice out their concerns through the media, which was claimed to be owned by the merchants. Everyone, all of the social classes in fact, claimed that they were right and that all of their suggestions were just and wise and necessary to resolve the social conflict.

Lutterman and Cruz later on explained the context and purpose of the game and the theory as a tool and concept that enables participants to enter other ways of knowing, audit their worldviews and leadership styles and gain insights into the challenges of social and transformational change. The four types of power and its dynamics were articulated and felt by the participants here and learned that clash and cohesion is natural or essential to social change; that each of the four ways of knowing has different and diverse ways of relating to the social and political environment and that this may define or contextualize or inform their preferences, strategies and solutions they offer or that they insist to create. The four worldviews of power also suggest a distinction on how different class

concepts and interactions disrupts the status quo, define and interpret power and create alternative and preferred futures. It suggests that societies have four basic social desires, outlook of the real, driven by the basic nature or desire of the human mind to create, influence and innovate; that social change is not linear but rather complex, chaotic and fluid. Lessons learned were:

- Tolerance for other worldviews and ways of knowing the real is crucial to peace and progress.
- Negotiation is an essential to social change. While conflict and clash is constant and perpetual (at the personal and social levels), cohesion (unity) and cooperation is imperative to moving forward; in changing the shape and contour of the social cycle. Society is too complex to be controlled by one or two social class or worldviews.
- The game affirmed that that the labor class is the most marginalized, disowned or ignored social class in the Philippines. The military are the game changers and could, by choice, re-set the social cycle. Merchants are status quo driven and intellectuals are instinctively social disruptors.
- Discontented workers and disgruntled intellectuals could dismantle a defective system and create alternatives.
- Leadership and decisiveness is a must if we are to challenge expansive and exploitative notions of and accumulation of wealth and power.
- Women are courageous and do have a tendency to offer blood and life for an ideal or a vision. Welfare and compassion is central to their narrative of social change.

The Past, Cultural Memory and Mapping Women City Futures

Figure 1. Cruz explains the how's and why's of mapping the future using the futures triangle.

According to Shermon Cruz who facilitated the session on futures triangle, emerging issues and the S curve with Ariana Lutterman and Meimei Song, the Philippines has a rich history and tradition of using the past and cultural memory to anticipate future possibilities. This was obvious in the works and writing of its national hero Jose Rizal who wrote an essay entitled "The Philippines a Century Hence" and the novel "Noli Me Tangere" in the late 18th century Spanish colonial era. These two texts could be most relevant and significant decolonized texts on the future of the country relevant to futures and foresight studies and work published in those period. A bit of history was essential so as to properly contextualized and provide a background to the discussion on Filipinos ways of knowing the past, the present and future according to Cruz. To quote the Philosopher Tacio in Rizal's

novel Noli Me Tangere as an implicit message to us in the present (from a mythic, metaphorical and philosophical purview (perhaps it could also be taken literally):

> "I do not write for this generation. I am writing for other ages. If this could read me, they would burn my books, the work of my whole life. On the other hand, the generation which interprets these writings will be an educated generation; they will understand me and say: 'Not all were asleep in the night-time of our grandparents'."

And Rizal's take on history and the future of the Philippines (from a scenaric standpoint):

> "Will the Philippine Islands continue to be a Spanish colony, and if so, what kind of colony? Will they become a province of Spain, with or without autonomy? And to reach this stage, what kind of sacrifices will have to be made? Will they be separated from the mother country to live independently, to fall into the hands of other nations, or to ally themselves with neighboring powers? … Perhaps the country will revive the maritime and mercantile life for which the islanders are fitted by their nature, ability and instincts, and once more free, like the bird that leaves its cage, like the flower that unfolds to the air, will recover the pristine virtues that are gradually dying out and will again become addicted to peace—cheerful, happy, joyous, hospitable and daring."

> "It is impossible to reply to these questions, for to all of them both yes and no may be answered, according to the time desired to be covered. When there is in nature no fixed condition, how much less must there be in the life of a people, beings endowed with mobility and movement! So it is that in order to deal with these questions, it is necessary to presume an unlimited period of time, and in accordance therewith try to forecast future events." Jose Rizal, 1898

Cruz also discussed briefly the works of contemporary writers and futurists such as Sohail Inayatullah, Tony Stevenson, Cesar Villanueva and Shermon Cruz on Filipino futures to name a few.

The purpose here was to present to the participants a historical narrative and evidence of foresight work in the Philippines and if it is relevant, as a context to imagining alternative futures of Philippine cities.

After a brief presentation, Cruz facilitated a futures triangle workshop to map the pushes, pulls and weights of Philippine cities from a women's perspective:
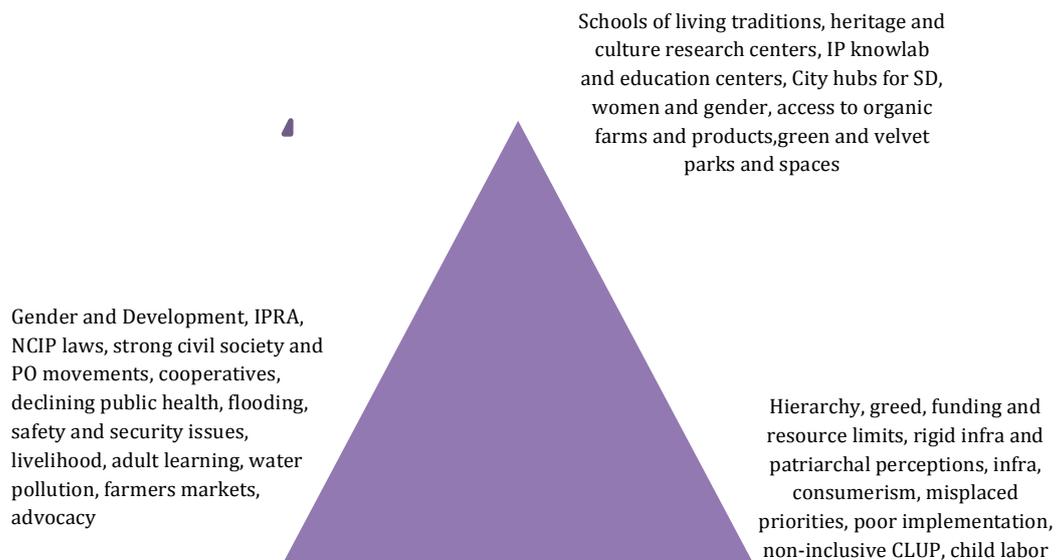
Figure 2. Futures Triangle of Philippine City Futures from a Women Perspective

Pulls of the Future – Traditional hospitals, schools of living traditions, libraries for IPs, research centers, educational landscapes, state universities as partners and facilitators and learning hubs of the sustainable development, gender and women education, access to organic farming and products, parks and green spaces

Pushes of the present – Relevant laws on GAD, IPRA, NCIPs, NGO and POs, Social movements, Cooperatives, declining public health, flooding, safety and security concerns, livelihood and adult learning education, water pollution, farmer markets, advocacy groups

Weights of history – top down policy, corporate greed, funding limits, rigid infrastructure and perceptions, transport infrastructure, consumerist culture, misplaced priorities, lack of implementation, not so inclusive comprehensive land use plans and development programmes, child labor.

The futures triangle mapped the primary issues and drivers shaping the future of Philippine cities. These factors and variables emerged when future cities were viewed or perceived from a women lens.