Re-imagined communities

The radical imagination from Philippine independence to the postcolonial present

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Abstract

What becomes of the dream of freedom and equality for Third World peoples when, after independence, only an indigenisation of colonial structures takes place? The advent of newly-independent Third World nations after World War II additionally coincided with the rise of global capitalism, against which they found themselves powerless. This postcolonial quandary is the starting point of this thesis, with special attention given to the Philippine experience. Today, the idea of the nation-state as the locus proper of the political, and as the inevitable form that human community should take, is being increasingly questioned by the younger political generation in the Philippines and beyond – not solely because of its internal hierarchies, but also because a fixation on the national is inadequate in the face of global capitalism. My concerns in this work are with how the nation-state is being un-imagined or re-imagined in light of globalisation and postcoloniality; and more significantly, with the new forms of community coming into being. As such, the three motivating questions behind this inquiry are: 1) If the nation-state was the form of community upon which national liberation movements were predicated, what are the imagined communities that underlie today’s anational social movement practices?; 2) If national communities are underpinned by the value of ‘homophily’ – the preference for associating with one’s ‘own kind’ – what are the values that inhere in newer forms of community?; and 3) If the nation-state is characterised by its territorial insularity, what kind of spatial sensibilities are emerging in opposition to it?

To address these questions, I conducted a total of twelve months’ ethnographic fieldwork across two fieldsites. The first was San Francisco in the United States, where I participated in a range of Filipino American activist groups – the rationale being that the diaspora has been instrumental in re-imagining community beyond the nation-state. My second fieldsite was Manila, Philippines, where I worked with the feminist, environmentalist, and anarchist movements most especially, since these struck me as sites of considerable innovation. Working with members of both the older and younger political generations, I sought to understand their critiques of inherited forms of community on the one hand, and their proposals for new and more just forms of community on the other. Beyond the standard ethnographic toolkit, I also employed a methodology that I have named the futurology of the present. My concern was to attend not simply to what is, but more importantly to what is becoming; to the alternative futures embedded in the present.

My fieldwork data revealed two interrelated aspects of contemporary communities-in-the-making. The first is a novel political value that I dub xenophilia. By this I refer to a new openness towards difference, both within and between inherited social categories, which stands in contrast to the nationalist preference for sameness. The second is a novel spatial sensibility that I have chosen to call translocalism. Translocalists see the world, not as a patchwork of nation-states, nor as the kind of totality in which the local is superseded by the global and ceases to matter. Rather, they imagine the globe as a constellation of place-based communities, seeking to empower them against the overarching apparatuses of national and supranational sovereignty alike. I found that xenophilia and translocalism were common across the
four main movements I worked with: the diasporans, the feminists, the environmentalists, and the anarchists. They are conceived as antidotes to past unfreedoms, as well as responses to the challenges posed by the global, postcolonial present.

In summary, what emerged from my research was a picture of large-scale collective learning through time, with changing circumstances prompting a new political generation to reinvent what ‘changing the world’ means. Where once it was synonymous in the Third World with nationalism, it is now becoming increasingly cosmopolitan. Where once it meant seizing power so as to bring about change from above, it is now increasingly signifying the empowerment of communities from below. I suggest that activists could perhaps take this collective learning process to be the very point of their work. The goal then becomes the continual cultivation of a more habitable present, rather than a utopic future that can never be realised. Social movements renew society, but their work is never done.
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### Abbreviations

*In the event that readers need to backtrack in order to reacquaint themselves with a given abbreviation or group, the page numbers on which each is first introduced are provided in the right-hand column. Furthermore, for an explanation of the use of the ‘@’ symbol below, see the ‘Author’s note’ on p. xv.*

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Author’s note

Pseudonyms

To protect the identities of interlocutors who figure in this narrative, I apply pseudonyms both to themselves as individuals and to the organisations they are part of. Original names are used only in accounts already known to the public record. To allay confusion, each first mention of a pseudonymous group is accompanied by an asterisk, while factually-named groups remain unmarked.

Language

Interviews for this project, inside and outside the Philippines, were conducted in English. I did learn some Tagalog, but not at the level of being able to carry out an in-depth political conversation. My interlocutors’ speech is presented here using United States spelling, in line with the register of English in which they themselves operate. Elsewhere, Australian spelling is used.

Gender

‘Filipin@’ is preferred over the standard ‘Filipino’, since the latter is a gender-specific descriptor used to stand in for all Filipin@s – a grammatical inheritance from Spanish. I instead neutralise gender by synthesising the feminine (‘-a’) and masculine (‘-o’) suffixes into the new suffix of ‘-@’. This device was first introduced to me in San Francisco, where it is becoming increasingly popular in Latin@ and Filipin@ American activist circles, perhaps partly for its Digital Age chic. The ‘-@’ suffix will additionally be extended to other peoples whose demonym derives from Spanish. I considered the alternative suffix of ‘-o/a’ but decided against it for its clumsiness, as well as for its embodiment of the gender binary by which transgendered persons are marginalised. Exceptions to ‘Filipin@’ are made when referring specifically to self-identified women or men, in which cases ‘Filipina’ and ‘Filipino’ are retained (or their equivalents in Tagalog slang: ‘Pinay’ and ‘Pinoy’ respectively). ‘Philippine’, meanwhile, is reserved mostly for abstract entities.
Acknowledgements

Who says loved ones should be acknowledged last? ‘First and foremost’, rather than ‘last but not least’, feels more appropriate in the case of my dear partner, Anamaine. *Maraming salamat sa lahat* – for your uplifting love, for believing in me, and for always making me laugh. Thanks, too, for your thoughtfulness and patience in the face of my glacial progress with this work. *Mahal na mahal kita*.

Sincerest thanks to my Mum and Dad as well, who have been similarly supportive and patient with me over the years. I will be endlessly grateful for everything you have done, and continue to do, for me and Ana. The same goes for my new parents, Mama Bochay and Papa Erik, in Manila. *Salamat din po sa inyo*.

Friendships, current and lapsed, have also sustained me – emotionally, intellectually, and otherwise. From me, in all your many tongues, a heartfelt thanks, *salamat*, *agyamanak*, *terima kasih*, *nuhun*, *matur nuwun*, *matur suksma*, *mh goi*, *dank u*, *spasibo*, *obrigado*, *gracias*, *grazie*, *merci*, *mersi*. I owe a special shout-out to Eric Pido, who provided much inspiration in the early stages of this project.

Deepest thanks to all of my research participants too – for allowing me into your lives and generously sharing your reflections and stories with me. You cannot be named for privacy reasons, but you know who you are. Thank you for the hope and inspiration that your activisms, in all their diversity, have given me. Perhaps it is the collective imagination of our movements that is the true author of this work.

At the University of Western Australia: thanks to my supervisors Debra McDougall, Nick Harney and Michael Pinches; my mentors Victoria Burbank and Malcolm Fialho; and my other esteemed colleagues in the School of Social Sciences. Cheers, too, to the Graduate Research School, the Centre for Advanced Teaching and Learning, and all the unsung librarians and administrative assistants. Not least, thanks to the various funding bodies – Convocation and the Grace Vaughan Fund included – for furnishing me with the grants that made this research possible.

To the venerable institutions that have hosted me as a Visiting Research Fellow – the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California in Berkeley; the Centre for Third World Studies at the University of the Philippines in Diliman; the *Filippijnengroep Nederland* in Utrecht; and *Vrije Universiteit* and the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam – thank you. For my stint in the Netherlands, I must also say thanks to the Australia-Netherlands Research Collaboration for its confidence in me and invaluable financial assistance.

I have additionally benefitted from informal relationships with a number of institutions as follows: in the Bay Area, the Ethnic Studies departments at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley; in Quezon City, the Women and Gender Institute at Miriam College and the Institute for Philippine Culture at Ateneo de Manila University; and elsewhere, the anthropology department at the University of Indonesia in Depok, the Barengi Gadjin Land Council in Horsham, and the New South
Wales Aboriginal Land Council in Parramatta. To all those concerned, my warmest thanks for everything.

Lastly, thank you to my examiners Cheryll Alipio, Allan Punzalan Isaac and Uri Gordon for their close readings of this work and their astute and insightful feedback.
Declaration

This thesis contains **only sole-authored** work, some of which has been published under sole authorship. Parts of the following articles appear in this thesis on the pages indicated in the right-hand column:


Student signature: ___________________________
Map 2: The San Francisco Bay Area

Map 3: Metropolitan Manila
Map 4: The Philippine Archipelago
Introduction

Why independence, if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow?

José Rizal, *El filibusterismo* (1891, p. 314)

How does newness come into the world? How is it born? Of what fusions, translations, conjoinings is it made? How does it survive, extreme and dangerous as it is? What compromises, what deals, what betrayals of its secret nature must it make to stave off the wrecking crew, the exterminating angel, the guillotine?


Perhaps it is only from within the thick of things that I can hope to untangle the many threads comprising this story. I hence begin from the middle, in the small office of an environmentalist coalition in Quezon City, the former capital of the Philippines lying just northeast of Manila. It was August 2007, the historical context at that time bookended by the events of September 11, 2001 and the global stock-market crash of 2008. In the room with me was a group of young Filipin@ Americans, or ‘Fil-Ams’ as they commonly refer to themselves, one of whom was visiting the Philippines for the very first time. She, along with the six others, had made the trans-Pacific crossing to participate in a two-week solidarity tour of the Philippines. Run annually by the California-based Filipin@ American Environmental Justice Initiative* (FAEJI), one of the trip’s aims is to strengthen political ties between Filipin@ and Fil-Am environmentalists from either side of the Pacific. My presence as a Filipino Australian made for an interesting triangular dynamic.
Joining us by invitation was Cesar, a prominent intellectual in the Philippines and a veteran of the communist resistance against former dictator, Ferdinand Marcos.

‘What is it you’d like me to talk about?’ Cesar asked after settling into his chair.

Lupe, the programme facilitator, responded: ‘The, um, political landscape of the Philippines’.

‘The political landscape? It’s very simple. It’s a wasteland. That’s it. That’s all you need to know’, replied Cesar only half-jokingly.

‘We need more details!’ cried Lupe as the room erupted with laughter, her youthful exuberance a stark contrast to our guest’s jaded air. ‘Why is it a wasteland? How did it become a wasteland?’

‘Okay, okay’, sighed Cesar wearily.

As he proceeded to narrate the political situation in the Philippines as he saw it, it struck me that he was coming from a very particular perspective. Here was someone, I thought, who had dedicated his life to an ideal that was never realised. Here was someone from an entire political generation still trying to come to terms with its momentous failures.
Contours of the inquiry

What follows is a story of generational change in the Philippine and Filipin@ American social movement landscape, albeit one very much related to the upheavals in other parts of the Third World – alternatively, the Global South – during the same period. This will not, however, be a story that pretends to hover above the world or to offer any kind of definitive account from on high. Rather, it will be one that is necessarily narrated personally.

I will be drawing upon ethnographic research that I carried out amongst activists\(^1\) in both the Philippines and Filipin@ diaspora; more specifically, in the Pacific Rim metropolises of Manila and San Francisco. Once linked through colonial ties, these two cities remain closely bound-up with one another through continuing postcolonial ‘after-effects’ (Hall 1995, p. 248) and multifarious processes of globalisation. In each fieldsite, the people I worked with fell largely into two groups. The first were the movement veterans; those whose political formation took place in the 1960s and 1970s. The second were those who came of age in the 1990s and early 2000s in a radically-transformed global context.

What I found prevalent amongst the veterans, Cesar included, was a certain existential angst; a sense that all the old lodestars of traditional leftist thought and practice are

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\(^1\) The activist, for me, is not an elite specialist of social change to be contrasted from ordinary folk, but is a role open to anyone who acts together with others on their political desires, no matter the form or scope of their actions.
today proving inadequate to the task of effectively navigating contemporary realities. One such lodestar was the nation-state, which complex postcolonial and globalising processes are now rendering increasingly untenable. This has prompted a widespread rethinking of ‘national liberation’ (Rocamora 1991) – the concept that animated decolonising projects across the Third World in the wake of World War II. The Philippines was no exception.

The starting point of this dissertation, then, is the fate of national liberation movements under conditions of globalisation and postcoloniality. What I will focus on most especially are the tentative green shoots poking up from their remains, but not before first providing some necessary context.

**Historical background**

The Philippines, although having been granted formal independence from the United States (US) in 1946, is still considered by many Filipin@s to be under the thumb of US imperialist control. As such, the Maoist insurgency against the US-backed Marcos dictatorship – led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People’s Army (NPA) (see Image 1) – was imagined as a war of national liberation, in much the same vein as those which arose throughout Africa and Asia during the same period. It was hence characterised as much by its opposition to US imperialism, as by its opposition to Ferdinand Marcos (see Image 2).
Image 1: NPA guerrilla unit on the move

Image 2: Protest denouncing US imperialism
From the late 1960s through to the early 1980s, the ‘CPP and its associated organizations were truly hegemonic on the Left’, writes Kathleen Weekley (2001, p. 259). However, despite having mobilised hundreds of thousands of people on countless fronts for almost two decades, the CPP-NPA was ironically absent in the developments that finally brought down Marcos in February 1986. What toppled the dictatorship in the end was a military mutiny, accompanied by a popular though bloodless uprising. This dramatic turn of events became known as the ‘People Power’ or ‘EDSA’ Revolution – the latter being the acronym for Manila’s Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the epicentre of the movement.

In adherence with Maoist orthodoxy, the CPP-NPA’s focus was guerrilla war in the countryside, and yet the uprising that culminated in the evacuation of Marcos and his family to Hawai’i on US Navy helicopters took place in urban Manila. Long accustomed to proclaiming themselves as the ‘vanguard’ of the movement, these developments came as a shock to many. The Maoists’ absence in the midst of an insurrection meant that what replaced Marcos was not the long-prophesied communist seizure of state power, but the restoration, at least nominally, of Liberal Democracy. These events plunged the Philippine Left (in which the CPP had for so long been dominant) into a full-blown crisis.

This was further compounded by the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989-1991, therefore dovetailing with the generalised ‘crisis of the Left’ (Bello 1992; Tadiar 2009,

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2 People active in the movement were estimated to number 500,000-1,000,000 (Chapman 1987, p. 215). These activists were led by a core of CPP-NPA cadres numbering somewhere between 25,000-35,000 (Liwanag 1988; Stanmeyer & Lopez 1999, pp. 26-27).

3 The title of the CPP’s *Lead the masses* (1990) paper is indicative of this approach, patterned after Vladimir Lenin’s (1902) theory of the vanguard party.
that had, by that point, become a global phenomenon. By that time, too, the national liberation movements that won independence had proven themselves incapable of bettering the lot of the populations they now presided over as governments, often running ‘the new countries with a callous, exploitative tyranny reminiscent of the departed masters’ (Said 1994, p. 20). The same problems associated with statism persisted, and imperialist logics were indigenised and reproduced in the form of exclusionary nationalisms – just what Frantz Fanon (1961, pp. 147-148) had warned against at the cusp of decolonisation.

In 1993, the CPP imploded, with a reported 60 percent (Tadiar 2009, p. 300) of its members defecting en masse, rejecting not only the authoritarianism of party founder and chairman, Jose Maria Sison, but also Maoist ideology as a whole. Since that time, writes Joel Rocamora (1994, p. 204), there has been a ‘constant struggle to break out of a theoretical framework that served the movement for a decade then became a fetter on its further growth’. At the core of the framework to which he refers is the notion of the nation-state as the locus proper of the political.

*Rethinking the nation-state*

The nation-state is today being increasingly questioned, especially by activists of the younger generation, on account of factors both internal and external to radical politics. With respect to internal factors, many have come to realise that ‘the flip side of the structure that resists foreign powers is itself a dominating power that exerts an equal and opposite internal oppression, repressing internal difference and opposition in the
name of national identity’ (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 106). The CPP, for one, has displayed despotic tendencies, precisely on account of its nationalist and statist logics (Garcia 2001).

With respect to external factors, it came to be realised that even if the CPP-NPA was able to win power and declare the Philippines independent from US political control, the nation thus ‘liberated’ would still find itself under the economic control of the new supranational regime of global capitalism. ‘Is not the control exerted by the world market’, ask Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000, p. 133), ‘the opposite of the nationalist dream of an autonomous, self-centred development?’ Giving a recent example, East Timor’s hard-won political independence meant little for its economic independence, constrained as it is by conditional loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), not to mention by multinational oil and gas companies.

For these reasons, the old imperatives of national liberation are resonating less and less with today’s revolutionaries. ‘The question of generational change’, writes Rocamora (1991, p. 44), is ‘not just one of age, but of moving away from ways of thinking sanctified by victorious national liberation struggles’. In the past two decades, there has hence been a concerted effort by many activists in the Philippines and Filipin@ diaspora to imagine alternative forms of community beyond the nation-state, and invent new practices that break from both its ‘homophilic’ (Gandhi 2006) and hierarchical logics.
The flipside to the crisis of the Left, then, has been a vibrant regeneration of radical politics. With Marcos gone and the Maoists a spent force, there occurred a flowering of new ideas and practices throughout the 1990s, continuing to the present day. The disintegration of the CPP in 1993 in fact coincided with the beginning of a boom for the feminist, environmentalist, and anarchist movements in the Philippines. The Filipina@ diaspora too has become home to a diverse array of nascent subjectivities, similarly constitutive of efforts to re-found transformative politics on new grounds.

If Cesar saw fit to describe the Philippine political landscape as a ‘wasteland’, it may well be owing to the traditional leftist habit of equating diversity with fragmentation and impotence. Although one of the CPP’s staunchest critics, he seemed in our conversations to yearn for the days when there was such a thing as a unified mass movement. In contrast, I follow Filipina feminist, Mari Luz Quesada-Tiongson (2006), in reading the profusion of new ideas and practices positively, seeing it as a liberation of ‘subversive multiplicities’ (Butler 1990, p. 19) from the limits within which past generations had been confined. This phenomenon did not escape the attention of as unlikely a commentator as French theorist, Félix Guattari (1989, p. 43), who wrote in 1989 of the ‘spectacular social changes’ taking place in the Philippines, where ‘thousands of value-system revolutions are progressively percolating their way up through society’. That this was not hyperbole will become clear in time.
Key questions

The exigencies of the present are vastly different to those which gave rise to the movement cultures of earlier times. While the political generation of the 1960s and 1970s was shaped by the Cold War and the clamour for decolonisation, the current generation is coming of age in a context defined by postcoloniality, globalisation, unbridled corporate power, climate change, and so forth. What makes a cohort of people a generation in the first place is, according to Shahram Khosravi (2008, pp. 3-4), ‘its connection to... shared historical and social experiences’. Intergenerational change was in fact an early motivation for this inquiry, since my own political formation within the Alternative Globalisation Movement had given me the sense that there was something distinctly new in the air that had yet to be fully thought through.

I hence set out with such questions as: How are philosophies and practices of change being reconfigured in the post-dictatorship period in the Philippines and Filiphin@ diaspora? How are leftist veterans rethinking old certainties? Can classical notions of national liberation still hold water? How do younger activists imagine their place in the world and their capacity to change it? How are activist subjectivities changing with greater global integration?

Over time, I gravitated toward more specific questions relating to community. Benedict Anderson’s (1991) insight that the nation-state is an ‘imagined community’ is a given

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4 For those not familiar with the argument, Anderson (1991, p. 6) regards national communities as imagined ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their
throughout this thesis; the problem, however, is that the nation has long been perceived by many Third World revolutionaries as the only way of imagining community (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 107). My concerns are rather with how the nation-state is being un-imagined or re-imagined in light of globalisation and postcoloniality; more significantly, with the new forms of community coming into being. If the nation-state was the form of community upon which national liberation movements were predicated, what are the imagined communities that underlie today’s anational social movement practices? Here, I treat social movements as inseparable from the question of community, since, as Richard Day (2005, p. 11) asserts, ‘activism exists only in relation to established and emerging communities’. Each social movement is a kind of community in its own right, entailing, at one and the same time, a critique of ‘inherited communities’ on the one hand, and a proposition for ‘new and better forms of community’ on the other (Gandhi 2006, pp. 6-7).

What eventually emerged as central during my fieldwork, then, was the ‘redefinition of collectivity’ (Tischler 2008, p. 166) being undertaken by dissenters of the once-hegemonic model of national liberation. I found that those who reject nationalist logics do so not only to challenge a global capitalism unmoored from nation-state sovereignty, but also to avoid perpetuating the hierarchies of nationalist majoritarianism. To reiterate, however, my principal interests lay not in mere critiques

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5 To have oriented my work around ‘society’ instead of ‘community’ I felt would not have been viable, since the former is closely associated with the nation-state and therefore less amenable to being re-imagined along non-nationalist, non-statist lines.
of the nation-state, but in the alternative forms of community being proposed or 
enacted in its place.

As a way of talking about the novel forms of community hinted at above, I employ in 
this thesis the somewhat slippery concept of cosmopolitanism – not as defined by 
Enlightenment thinkers like Immanuel Kant (1794), but in the sense in which it has 
been reinvented by contemporary theorists of globalisation and postcolonialism. Since 
no single theory of cosmopolitanism seemed adequate, in and of itself, to my 
purposes, I undertook considerable remixing, eventually resulting in an idiosyncratic 
theory of my own. This will be elaborated in Chapter 3, but what I can say for now is 
that my fieldwork data revealed two interrelated aspects of emergent cosmopolitan 
communities. The first pertains to re-imaginings of the Self-Other relationship; the 
second to re-imaginings of social space.

With regards to the former: If national communities are underpinned from the outset 
by the value of ‘homophily’ (Gandhi 2006) – the preference, that is, for associating 
with one’s ‘own kind’ – what are the values that inhere in newer cosmopolitan forms 
of community and how is the Self-Other relation reconfigured accordingly? As regards 
the latter, the question becomes one of how such values are manifested spatially: If 
the nation-state is characterised by its territorial insularity, what are the spatial 
sensibilities that define nascent cosmopolitan collectivities? These are the questions 
that will help scaffold this dissertation.
The Pacific Rim

Having outlined my principal theoretical concerns, I will now provide greater detail on the cultural-geographical contexts in which the knowledge presented here was produced. Of the two axes comprising my field of inquiry, only one has so far been emphasised; namely, the temporal axis running between the twentieth and twenty-first century political generations. Here, I will turn my attention to the spatial axis connecting my two fieldsites on either side of the Pacific.

My first fieldsite was San Francisco, or, more accurately speaking, the San Francisco Bay Area\(^6\) (see Map 2) – a conurbation comprised of numerous cities, including Berkeley, Oakland, Daly City\(^7\), and San Francisco proper. I resided in Berkeley from January to June, 2007, where much of my fieldwork took place. Additionally, I made frequent trips to San Francisco, Daly City, and Oakland, all easily-accessible by rail.

Just as I had hoped for, the inclusion of a diasporic component in my research design afforded me with invaluable insights into how cultural-political subjectivities are being reconfigured through globalisation and postcoloniality. The oft-cited claim that global migration upsets traditional notions of national identity (e.g. Perttierra 1995, p. 198) became very real to me in the Bay Area embedded in Filipin@ American activist life.

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\(^6\) This region is often referred to as the ‘Bay Area’ or simply ‘the Bay’. There will also be times when I use ‘San Francisco’ as shorthand for the San Francisco Bay Area as a whole.

\(^7\) Daly City is of particular significance, being home to one the highest concentrations of Filipin@s (immigrant and US-born) anywhere in the United States. Benito Vergara (2009), author of a recent ethnography on the Filipin@ community in Daly City, reports that no less than 35 percent of its residents claim Filipin@ heritage.
Having gotten a sense of the challenges posed to nationalist ideology by diasporic Filipin@s, the next phase of my research involved an exploration of similar such challenges within the Philippines itself. Participating in the FAEJI solidarity tour, introduced in the opening of this thesis, helped ease the transition between fieldsites considerably. I conducted six months’ ethnographic fieldwork in the Philippines, spread across two visits: July-December 2007 and May 2008.

My fieldsite was Metropolitan Manila\(^8\) (see Maps 3 and 4) – a megalopolis composed of no less than seventeen cities, including Manila proper, Makati, and Quezon City. Most of my time was spent in the latter, which was where I resided and where the majority of activist groups operate, much of this having to do with the presence of the flagship Diliman campus of the University of the Philippines (UP Diliman).

Given that my fieldwork took place in multiple locations, my project largely aligned with what George Marcus (1995) calls ‘multi-sited ethnography’, in which the traditional ethnographic imperative of ‘being there’ is replaced by the imperative of ‘being there and there and there’ (Hannerz 2003, p. 201). This innovation rests on the recognition that globalising processes require a rethinking of traditional methodologies. Proliferating translocalisms mean that the idea of places as self-contained entities is becoming untenable. No site is, or ever has been, isolated from its outside.

\(^8\) In this thesis, I will at times use ‘Manila’ to stand in for Metropolitan Manila as a whole. ‘Metro Manila’ will be another commonly used variation.
In the case of the US-Philippines relationship, the constant back-and-forth flows of people, of imports and exports, and of knowledge and ideas, have all helped, over time, to render the Pacific as a single, albeit immensely variegated, space of cultural production (Wilson & Dirlik 1995). The same is true of all such bridges between Asia and the Americas. Just as Paul Gilroy (1993) wrote of the ‘Black Atlantic’, so too can we speak of the ‘Asian Pacific’, involving, amongst other processes, ‘the Westernization of Asia and the Asianization of the West’ (Ang 2001, p. 8). Interestingly, what I refer to in this thesis as the ‘eastern Pacific’ coincides with the so-called West, while the ‘western Pacific’ coincides with the East. Old East-West distinctions are being blurred with increasing Pacific Rim integration, the study of which forms a large part of the *raison d’être* behind the newly-established field of ‘Transpacific Studies’ (Hoskins & Nguyen 2014).

Clearly, it was never my intention to undertake a comparative study of discrete places, so much as a *relational* study of two interconnected locales occupying a common cultural-geographical space (see Map 1). The Pacific will hence function as a recurring motif throughout this dissertation. To confer this motif with greater resonance, I will turn now to the historical processes by which the lives of Pacific Rim peoples became bound up with one another in the first place.

One place to begin would be the year 1565 when the Philippine Archipelago fell to Spain and came to be governed from present-day Mexico. The scope of my inquiry, however, demands that I fast-forward to the Spanish-American War of 1898. Having lost most of its Latin American colonies to independence movements in the decades
prior, Spain’s colonial empire was already in terminal decline. With its defeat in the
Spanish-American War, its remaining colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the
Philippines were ceded to the United States. Having just fought a hard-won battle for
independence against Spain in the Philippine Revolution of 1896-1898, the Filipin@
people suddenly found themselves under a new colonial ruler. Filipin@ revolutionaries
subsequently launched Round Two of their independence struggle in 1899: the
Philippine-American War.

Historians have noted that the US annexation of the Philippines was part of the same
continuum as its westward expansion across the North American continent (Isaac
Americans at Wounded Knee in 1890 marked the last of the Indian Wars... the
conquest of nature from the Atlantic to the Pacific was complete. Americans had to
look beyond their western shores for a new frontier’. Many of the US military
personnel who served in the Philippines had in fact been veterans of the Indian Wars.
Wrote one soldier (cited in Ignacio et al. 2004, p. 82): ‘We had been taught that the
Filipinos were savages no better than our Indians’.

Following its victory in the Philippine-American War, which resulted in ‘a conservative
count of a hundred thousand Filipino dead’ (Isaac 2006, p. 179), the US consolidated its
position as the new world hegemon. Its interests in the region were made clear by
Senator Alfred Beveridge (cited in Tadiar 2004, pp. 39-40): ‘The Pacific is the ocean of
the commerce of the future. Most future wars will be conflicts for commerce. The
power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world.’ Significantly,
the US invasion fleet that President William McKinley dispatched to Manila Bay in 1898 set sail from Fort Mason on the San Francisco waterfront. This was the main headquarters of the United States’ Pacific operations over many decades, making San Francisco the veritable ‘capital of the Pacific’ (Calvino 1974, p. 138).

The story of the Filipin@ diaspora in the US is inextricably tied up with the story of the United States’ Pacific empire. In 1906, the US began dispatching tens of thousands of Filipin@s workers to plantations in Hawai’i and California (Bonus 2000, pp. 35-37). Though the Philippines is now independent, large numbers continue to emigrate to the US in search of a better life. The scale of this migration reached unprecedented levels after 1965, when the restrictions on Asian immigration implemented in the xenophobic atmosphere of the Great Depression were overturned (Dufoix 2008, p. 47). This coincided with the Marcos regime’s labour-export policy in the 1970s – an effort to capitalise on a globalising world economy increasingly dependent on migrant labour (Tigno 1990). By 1990, Filipin@s constituted the largest Asian minority in California, and the second largest Asian minority in the US, after the Chinese (Lott 1997, p. 15).

This has been a potted history of Pacific Rim integration as enacted by the agents of capitalism. In the remainder of this dissertation, I will examine the anti-capitalist side of things, aligning myself with Neferti Tadiar’s (2004, p. 65) call for a re-imagining of the Pacific Rim ‘not as an economic network of dominant classes, but as an emergent political constituency composed of peoples desiring an alternative community’. One of my Fil-Am interlocutors, Paloma, put it succinctly when she said of her work in FAEJI: ‘We’re addressing the traditional US impact on the Philippines and saying “maybe we
can have a different impact” — one in favour of social and environmental justice, as opposed to the inequalities of business-as-usual.

The futurology of the present

I have established thus far that my concern is with the novel forms of community emerging amongst Filipin@s and Fil-Ams in the common cultural-geographical space of the Pacific. What has yet to be given due attention, though, is the methodology by which I sought to grasp the emergence of new forms of community in the first place.

In keeping with my disciplinary training in cultural anthropology, my research took the form of ethnographic fieldwork. I relied in large part on the core ethnographic methods of participant observation – or what I preferred to think of as ‘advanced hanging out’ (Gottlieb 2006, p. 49) – and in situ interviews, attending in particular to the interplay of biography and history (Mills 1959). I strove to remain as open and receptive as possible in the field, while filtering the constant stream of new encounters and experiences through my journals. It was impossible to know in advance what was wheat and what was chaff, so I took it all in and learnt to revel in the aleatory process. The thrill was in the ‘a-ha!’ moments that would follow, with new connections seemingly forming of their own accord.

I cannot say my fieldwork methodology differed very much from standard ethnographic practice – except, that is, in one key respect; namely, the futurological sensibility I brought to bear in the field. Before explaining what I mean by this, I must
firstly provide some context on the methodological shortcomings that I feel warrant a fresh approach.

Past ethnographers often tended to see their task as the discovery of laws presumed to underlie all cultural formations. Take Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963) for example, whose structuralist project was characterised by one obituarist as the search for a ‘schema that existed behind human phenomena as they presented themselves’ (Fox 2010, p. 5). Such endeavours elide the question of ‘how the production of something new in the world might be possible’ (Deleuze 1992b, p. 163).

As structuralism yields to poststructuralist critique, ethnography is being imagined as something other than the search for hidden order. Ethnography today, write Paul Willis and Mats Trondman (2000, p. 9), must have an eye ‘for picking up and theorizing the... outlines of “emergent” cultures’. The ethnographer then ceases to treat social life as an object to decode, and instead seeks to grasp the processes by which newness enters the world. This is what Bruno Latour (2005, p. 27) means when asserting there is ‘no group, only group formation’.

In my own fieldwork, I attended not simply to what is, but more importantly to what is becoming. It was not structural constants that concerned me, but rather, the alternative futures immanent within the present configuration of things. The present could at once be seen as the repository of memory and the font of potentiality; a threshold between what has been and what could be, each intimately bound up with the other. By this I mean that the contingent processes by which the present is
constructed are the same as those by which alternative futures are brought into being.

While Michel Foucault’s ‘history of the present’ (1977, p. 31) centres on the former set of processes, I realised the latter would necessitate a different, though complementary, methodology: the ‘futurology of the present’ ( Cuevas-Hewitt 2011).

This concept is also a response to Guattari’s (1995, p. 12) call for a novel methodological sensibility attuned ‘towards the future and the emergence of new social and aesthetic practices’. His argument, in short, is that the old maps will no longer suffice for the shifting terrain upon which we move, and therefore that the work of mapping must begin afresh. Paul Rabinow (2008, p. 4) makes a similar case when stating that emergent phenomena ‘can only be partially explained or comprehended by previous modes of analysis or existing practices’. Such phenomena demand a different approach, and for Rabinow (2008, pp. 1-2), this takes the form of an ‘anthropology of the contemporary’, with the ‘contemporary’ understood as a ‘moving ratio’ between ‘the recent past and near future’.

My own interest is in the pathways between contemporaneity and futurity more specifically. If social movements are ‘crucibles of human sociability and creativity out of which the radically new emerges’ (Day 2005, p. 183), then the futurology of the present can be considered particularly apposite to their study. Activists are those who are already ‘dreaming other worlds in other ways’ (Tadiar 2004, p. 65). By participating alongside them in their activities, I was able to get a sense of the alternative futures they desired and how they sought to prefigure them in their practice. Simply hanging out and discussing the issues over coffee was a big part of my fieldwork too.
My goal in all this was to detect newness in the very contexts of its production, starting with small things and learning to connect the dots. As Penny Harvey and Soumhya Venkatesan (2010, p. 130) argue, it is only ‘through attention to detail that we can find different kinds of collectivity in formation’. From day-to-day encounters in the field, patterns gradually became apparent – the emerging outlines of nascent communities and ‘collective sensibilities’ (Guattari 2009, p. 140). The fact that the latter only sometimes added up to fully-baked ideas that were codified into political programmes did not compromise their importance for me; on the contrary, it was at the level of ‘unconsciouses that protest’ (Deleuze cited in Guattari & Rolnik 1986, p. 19) that the most significant of my insights were gleaned.

Aside from its attentiveness to novelty, the futurology of the present also involved for me a considerable blurring of the lines between ethnography and philosophy. In traditional philosophy, ‘the corpus itself... is its own laboratory, and doesn’t have to include any external input’, effectively operating ‘in vitro’ (Ponsonnet 2006, p. 3). In contrast, the kind of philosophy required for a futurology of the present operates in vivo, drawing from the ‘ever-virgin landscape of phenomena’ (Camus 1942, p. 92) outside the merely textual. This is where ethnography comes in, with Maia Ponsonnet (2006, p. 5) proposing that ethnographic data serve as the very source material for philosophical analysis.

Where traditional philosophy works with the a priori, the ethnographic-philosophic practice for which I advocate takes its lead instead from the a posteriori. The difference can be demonstrated with respect to the notion of community. If I have
thus far avoided defining community in too rigid a manner, it is for the precise reason that *a priori* circumscriptions are anathema to what I set out to do; namely, to pick up on the ways in which activists themselves are defining and redefining community. As Latour (2005, p. 29) writes, either we 'begin our travel by setting up at the start which kind of group and level of analysis we will focus on, or we follow the actors’ own ways and begin our travels by the traces left behind by their activity of forming and dismantling groups’.

My project also shares affinities with Richard Gilman-Opalsky’s (2011, p. 28) ‘philosophy of praxis’, in which ‘the field of human action’ becomes ‘the delivery mechanism for philosophy’, directly raising ‘questions about the... morality of the existing state of affairs’. Gilman-Opalsky (2011, p. 124) asks: ‘Who better raises questions about the public and private spheres of influence and control – Jürgen Habermas or the water war activists who made a rebellion in Cochabamba, Bolivia in the spring of 2000?’ In the case of my own work, I could equivalently ask: Who better raises questions about globalisation and corporate capitalist expansion – Ulrich Beck or the Filipin@ and Fil-Am activists contesting the toxic operations of the multinational oil giant, Chevron? Who better raises questions about colonial legacies and postcolonial conundrums – Homi Bhabha or the activists on the ground who fought for the closure of the US military’s Philippine bases in the 1990s? (see Image 3)

I do practice a postcolonialism of sorts, albeit one that commences with the ethnographic. This contrasts with the traditional tendency of postcolonial studies to treat the ‘colonial encounter primarily as a textual contest, or a bibliographical battle,
between oppressive and subversive books’ (Gandhi 1998, p. 141). What is lost to theorists of the library-bound kind are the formative processes by which newness enters the world. Some presume that activists take their lead from high theorists, but in many cases it is the latter who are left having to catch up with mutations of subjectivity unleashed at the grassroots. This is what happened with the May 1968 uprising in France (Deleuze 2006) and what is happening today with the efflorescence of anational sensibilities in Philippine and Filipin@ American social movements. The value of the futurology of the present, then, is that it can attend more receptively to such moments, allowing novel phenomena to reconfigure our taken-for-granted understandings, rather than simply slotting them into existing schemata.
The thesis ahead

Pared down to basics, this is a story of the generational changing-of-the-guard in Philippine and Filipin@ American social movements – part of a paradigm-shift in social change projects throughout the postcolonial world. It is simultaneously an ethnographic-philosophic investigation into the genesis of novelty, and the part that activists play in the birthing of the new. After independence, then what? After the nation-state, then what? After colonialist, capitalist, communist, militaristic, racist, and patriarchal forms of sociality, then what? These are questions being answered in practice through the collective creativity of activists and the communities-in-the-making they compose. In mapping the alternative futures immanent within these milieux, my hope is for a virtual atlas of escape routes from the status quo. This is what my work aims to be, though very shortly I will also make clear what it is not. I will then endeavour to make transparent the character in this tale that is me, before closing out the Introduction with an overview of how this dissertation is structured.

Caveats

For all the material this text is laden with, it is also, like a sponge, full of holes. I thought it best to acknowledge these gaps from the beginning, not wanting to be faulted for neglecting to cover areas I quite consciously evaded. Omission was often necessary to keep the text to a palatable length and avoid straying too far from my chosen focus or sphere of analysis. This was the case with the role of religion in
Philippine political life, as well as with the place of internet technologies in contemporary activism.

I should also clarify that this is not really a work of social movement studies, even despite my interest in social movements. This is because I was less interested in the mechanics of social movements than with the ideas contained therein, meaning my work shared more in common with the history of ideas. Moreover, mine was a thinking with and not just about social movements.

Just as one can study social movements without deferring to social movement studies, so too can one study the Philippines without necessarily being bound by Philippine studies. While I have found much of value in area studies approaches, this is not where I feel most at home intellectually; much less than, say, the anthropology of globalisation. One reason is that area studies can often entail a ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer & Schiller 2002) that sits uneasily with the kind of anational processes I sought to investigate. Every territory, as John Law (1999) argues, is formed by a network of flows that exceed it. This is less a work of Philippine studies, then, than an investigation into global, postcolonial processes for which the Philippine experience serves as an illuminating case study. Filipinists will find interest in it, but I hope for it to have broader applicability too, since many of the ‘issues that Philippine progressives are grappling with are relevant to the experience of progressives in other countries, especially in the Third World’ (Quimpo, Rocamora & de la Torre 1991, p. 5).
Readers with no connection to the Philippines are encouraged, therefore, to interpret this work in a way that speaks to their own situations. This might mean letting go of the still-common assumption that matters pertaining to colonised and formerly-colonised peoples are relevant only to themselves. In what appears as a colonial hangover, studies of and on the West are frequently assumed to have universal significance, while those of and on the non-West tend to be ‘ghettoized in an exotic particularity’ (Garcia 2007, pp. xx-xxi). It is likely for similar reasons that many of my fellow activists in Australia readily look to Europe and North America for inspiration, while showing comparatively little interest in the struggles of our Asian and Pacific neighbours. Western activists’ neglect of what non-western radical history might offer them is beginning to be atoned for with publications like *Asia’s Unknown Uprisings* (Katsiaficas 2013), though the movements covered therein were certainly not ‘unknown’ to the millions who participated in them.

A final caveat is that this is neither a work of specialism or generalism. Rather, I seek to remain sensitive to both the micro- and macroscopic scales from an intermediary vantage point. I am a specialist in my attention to ethnographic detail, but a generalist in my bird’s-eye surveys of space and time. My favourite instances are those when a single interaction in the field reveals something of the larger currents of the human predicament, the intimate and the epic momentarily entwined.
The intimate in this thesis consists not just of the lives of my interlocutors, but also of my own. I hence turn next to the ‘reflexive turn’ (O’Reilly 2009, pp. 187-193) in ethnographic writing.

Reflexivity

Continuing the theme of what this thesis is not, it is not a work of detached scholarship cloaked in the pretence that one can remain segregated from the world one studies. Rather than erase myself for the sake of a faux-objective account, I have endeavoured to make transparent my own subjectivity and its unavoidable entanglement in the processes by which the knowledge herein was produced. My narrative therefore represents, not people, places, and things in themselves, but the personal relationships I developed with them.

Rather than undermining the scholarly enterprise, the ‘admission that observations are filtered through our own experience’ (O’Reilly 2009, p. 191) arguably renders a given work more accountable. Taking my lead from Donna Haraway (1991, p. 191), I am advocating here for ‘situated and embodied knowledge and against forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims’. With this in mind, I offer below a short autobiographical sketch, with just enough detail for readers to be able to make sense of where I am coming from; my positionality, that is, in relation to the subject matter at hand.
I was born in Melbourne to an Anglo-Australian father and Filipina mother⁹, who migrated to Australia on a nursing scholarship in the early Seventies – part of the first wave of Asian immigration after the White Australia policy was dismantled. My father’s work as a geologist saw me attend kindergarten in Papua New Guinea and primary school in Indonesia, before seeing out my high school and university years in Perth, Australia.

The Nineties were not an easy time to be brown in such a conservative city. Anti-Asian sentiment was on the upswing, thanks largely to One Nation, a xenophobic far-right political party. The Liberal Party’s John Howard – Australia’s Prime Minister between 1996 and 2007 – later usurped One Nation voters by playing the race-card at every election, also benefitting from the reactionary climate following the September 11 attacks. Rendered a virtual foreigner in my own country by an insidious white nationalism that took ‘Australian’ to mean Anglo-Australian, and faced with constant racism at school with little empathy from teachers, I found myself becoming a troubled young man.

If I did not belong in Australia, I belonged even less in the Philippines – a country I had never lived in and whose language was practically as foreign to me as any other. On our occasional family visits there, people’s questions about why I could not speak Tagalog sometimes felt accusatory. Although a fun place for a holiday, I only regarded the Philippines as my mother’s land, never as The Motherland. Deficient in the eyes of

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⁹ The fact of my dual heritage meant I faced all of the complexities peculiar to the ‘halfie anthropologist’, as discussed by Lila Abu-Lughod (1991), herself half-Palestinian and half-Jewish American. In light of anthropology’s origins as ‘the study of the non-Western other by the Western self’, Abu-Lughod (1991, pp. 139-140) asks: ‘[W]hat happens when the “other” that the anthropologist is studying is simultaneously constructed as, at least partially, a self?’
both Australian and Philippine nationalisms, I instead sought solace and belonging in
nature. After school and on weekends, I took off by myself to go walking or kayaking
along the Swan and Canning Rivers, finding company amongst the paperbarks and
magpies. I now look back on my adolescence as containing the seeds of both my
environmental and anti-racist commitments.

My social withdrawal probably would have continued had I not been fortunate enough
to spend 1997 on high school exchange in Brazil. It was comforting being in a place
where it was okay to be brown, and that felt much more flexible in its accommodation
of difference – though of course there was racism there too, not to mention extreme
class disparity. The experience gave me as much of an education into social injustice as
did my formative years in Australia.

Fluent in Portuguese, I returned home with a new lease on life. Brazil was still fresh on
my mind when East Timor entered into the final stages of its independence struggle in
1999. Chancing one day upon an East Timorese reggae band singing in Portuguese
made quite an impression on me. I befriended the band members and began to take
an interest in their cause as political exiles, as well as in Lusophone postcolonialism
more broadly. Keeping abreast of developments in the fledgling nation-state of Timor-
Leste was likely what first attuned me to the promises and perils of national liberation.

As an undergraduate student, I threw myself into campus activism, joining a range of
environmental and social justice campaigns. These early years of the new millennium
were marked by the rapid rise of the Alternative Globalisation Movement. I came to
realise that the movement’s critiques of the World Bank and IMF could not have been more relevant to my earlier political concerns, since these institutions were present in East Timor from Day One of independence, ensuring its compliance to the supranational capitalist order.

Incensed by John Howard’s xenophobic scapegoating of asylum-seekers and his support for George Bush’s ‘War on Terror’, I was politicised further still. This made me susceptible to the courtship of a certain Trotskyist sect with pretensions to being a vanguard party. I joined the group for almost a year, perhaps partly in rebellion to my Howard-voting parents, until its internal authoritarianism became too unpalatable. I submitted my resignation and from then on took the autonomous route.

Unaffiliated but no less active, I found myself one evening in a heated debate with my mother. In an effort to get her to understand why most of my energy went into activism, I surprised myself by saying: ‘Well, what about the People Power Revolution in the Philippines? You supported that, so why can’t you support what I’m doing?’ It sounded like I knew what I was talking about, but I had only the vaguest understanding of the historical episode in question. Having become aware of this gap in my knowledge, I set about filling it in with films and books – and much later, through the doctoral research on which this thesis is based. It was thus that I commenced bringing my activist side and my Filipino side together.

I wanted to build the same kind of intimacy with the Philippines that I had with Brazil – and I confess that guilt played a part. Why was it that I could speak Portuguese, but
not my mother’s own tongue? How could I know so much about Brazil and East Timor, but so little about that archipelago to the north with which I had familial ties? It was never a question of relinquishing my cosmopolitanism for an exclusive identification with the Philippines; I just wished for it to be on par with the other places I felt an affinity for. I resolved, thenceforth, to study Tagalog, ignoring naysayers like my Anglo-Australian housemate who trivialised my efforts when remarking, ‘But why? It’s a bit of an obscure language, isn’t it?’, despite it being the ninth most spoken language in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006).

When it came to deciding on a PhD research topic, I knew I wanted to work with fellow activists and was keen to continue my explorations of the Philippines, but for a time could not shake Brazil as an alternative option. Said one academic whose counsel I sought: ‘I would’ve thought that, given your Filipino background, you’d be better positioned to work on the Philippines, wouldn’t you?’ However true that may have been, I objected to being typecast in this way. My Anglo-Australian colleagues faced no comparable expectations that they carry out fieldwork in England or white Australia, but were rather given free rein to pursue their interests. As irksome as I found the idea that my horizons should be confined to my mother’s country-of-origin, I did choose Philippines in the end, albeit with anti-particularistic intent.

When I tried to demonstrate to my cohort that my interests were in postcolonial and globalisation studies, and not in area studies (as many had initially assumed), I was faced with a new kind of frustration: ‘You’re wasted on the Philippines!’ exclaimed one colleague, after reading one of my papers. In her mind, the calibre of my work was
incongruous with what she seemed to consider a lowly and inconsequential backwater. Although meant as a compliment, I took it more as an ethnocentric insult.

A case study chosen for personal reasons may not always be the best fit for the issues under investigation. In my case, however, it was fortuitous that there was hardly a better place than the Philippines (and her diaspora) through which to explore the questions that interested me. As Benedict Anderson (cited in Rafael 2000, p. 1) remarked, the Philippine uprising against Spain in the 1890s made it ‘the visionary forerunner of all other anti-colonial movements in the region’. I would add that the Philippines’ subsequent war of liberation against the United States foreshadowed the widespread resistance to US imperialism in the ensuing century. There is a wealth of lessons that can be drawn from these struggles, as well as from those that only began when formal colonialism ended.

The relationship between my subject matter and my subjectivity should, by now, be sufficiently clear. I offer only my truth, not The Truth. With that, readers are now in a position to interpret my interpretations against the backdrop of my own life story.

**Overview**

One task remains for the Introduction, and that is to sketch a map to help orient the reader through the coming terrain. The chapters are grouped into three parts, each tracing an arc from the twentieth to the twenty-first century political generations, albeit with differing emphases in so doing. Part I (‘National liberation and after’) lays
the historical and theoretical groundwork, while Parts II (‘The eastern Pacific’) and III
(‘The western Pacific’) are primarily ethnographic, centring on San Francisco and
Manila respectively.

The first of three chapters comprising Part I, Chapter 1 situates the history of the
Philippine Left within a global context, relating it to developments in the Soviet Union,
China, and elsewhere. It builds on the history contained here in the Introduction, and
is itself built upon in ensuing chapters. Relatively short in length, it presents no more
detail than is necessary to adequately set the context. The same is true of Chapter 2,
which surveys in broad brushstrokes the responses from both postcolonial studies and
globalisation studies to the failings of revolutionary nationalism. It also finds a
complementarity between postcolonial and globalisation scholars, merging their
differing critiques of nationalism into a common theoretical framework. The focus of
my work, however, is not on critiques of what was or is, but on the alternative futures
being constructed at the grassroots. Chapter 3 is hence painted with a much finer
brush, theorising as it does the cosmopolitan challenges to nationalist inheritances.

Of the suite of theoretical concepts introduced in Chapter 3, *xenophilial Sexenophilial and
translocalism* merit special mention. Where the former pertains to the cosmopolitan
valorisation of difference, in contrast to the nationalist valorisation of sameness, the
latter denotes a cosmopolitan spatial imaginary at odds with the insularity of nation-
state space. Although these terms predate my usage of them in this thesis, I seek less
to build on their lineages than to take them as empty vessels into which I pour my own
meanings, regardless of what others may have meant them to mean in the past. In
other words, I imbue them with significances derived, not so much from other theorists, as from my own experiences and observations in the field. Xenophilia and translocalism are simply the names I settled on for hitherto unnamed tendencies that I picked up on in my research. Underpinning this act of naming is my belief that ‘new social formations’ demand new vocabularies, the lesser option being to inaptly ‘slot developments into the categories of the past’ (Fischer 2003, p. 8).

With the historical and theoretical elements necessary to the thesis as a whole laid out in Part I, I then proceed to operationalise them ethnographically in the three chapters that make up Part II. The first of these (Chapter 4) sketches the general features of the Filipin@ American presence in the San Francisco Bay Area, including the key activist groups and political fault-lines that I encountered during my fieldwork. From there, Chapter 5 draws upon oral history interviews to trace the shift in Filipin@ American politics from nationalist to cosmopolitan conceptions of social space. Chief amongst the latter is the translocalist imaginary. In Chapter 6, I turn my attention from translocalism to xenophilia, examining the tensions in Fil-Am activism between nationalist and cosmopolitan attitudes around sameness and difference.

From the eastern Pacific, I then head westwards to Manila, where I remain for the four chapters comprising Part III. I consequently turn from the challenges being posed to nationalist ideology in the Filipin@ diaspora to those being posed within the Philippines itself. Part III continues in a largely ethnographic vein, with historical and theoretical threads nonetheless woven throughout. Commencing with an overview of Manila’s social movement landscape in Chapter 7, I pivot next to the feminist milieu in
Chapter 8. There, I find that contemporary Philippine feminism came into existence when women who had been part of the national liberation struggle in the Sixties and Seventies grew dissatisfied with its patriarchal norms and deprioritisation of women’s issues, eventually defecting and forming their own autonomous organisations. This passage from nationalism to feminism – or, from Red to Purple – I liken to an ecotone; a term from ecology describing the ‘transitional area of vegetation between two different plant communities’ (Rafferty 2012, p. 1). As feminists developed their intersecting critiques of nationalism and sexism, they took on a cosmopolitan-feminist outlook as much opposed to ethnic hierarchies as to gender hierarchies.

I follow a similar line of inquiry in Chapter 9, albeit this time with reference to the ecotone between Red and Green. As with feminism, environmentalism emerged out of, and in opposition to, the once-dominant nationalist tendency in Philippine social movements. Proto-greenies within nationalist milieux likewise found that their concerns were treated as marginal, prompting them to assert a new style of politics that was as much cosmopolitan as environmentalist.

While Philippine feminists and environmentalists fused their critiques of nationalism with their critiques of androcentrism and anthropocentrism respectively, the anarchists’ contribution was to bring a resolutely anti-statist critique into the new cosmopolitan zeitgeist. The ecotone between Red and Black – nationalism and anarchism – is the subject of Chapter 10, the last chapter before the Conclusion.
Readers will likely notice an asymmetry between the San Francisco chapters in Part II and the Manila chapters in Part III, particularly in terms of the social movements taken into consideration. I had every intention when commencing my fieldwork to give a more-or-less symmetrical treatment of the two sides, but things worked out differently in light of on-the-ground circumstances. By this I mean that what I had access to as an ethnographer and what presented itself most strongly to me in the field differed across my two sites of study. Rather than try to artificially square things out, I decided to stay true to the jumble of data I managed to collect, but attempt to create a cogent and compelling (if not always tidy) narrative out of it nonetheless.

In summary, the national liberation framework is everywhere springing leaks, and in this thesis I examine four of them; namely, those pertaining to the diasporans, the feminists, the environmentalists, and the anarchists. Each are developing their own styles of ‘cosmopolitan sociability’\textsuperscript{10} and political engagement, inclusive of both xenophilic and translocalist tendencies. Embedded therein are intimations of new forms of community beyond the nation-state, as will be shown in good time.

\textsuperscript{10} This is defined in Schiller, Darieva & Gruner-Domic (2011, p. 402) ‘as consisting of forms of competence and communication skills that are based on the human capacity to create social relations of inclusiveness and openness to the world’.
Part I

National liberation and after
Chapter 1

A history of the Philippine Left

Given that the Filipin@ American Left has historically taken much of its lead from the Philippine Left, it is necessarily the latter that is focussed on in this chapter. Fil-Am radical politics does have a dynamic of its own, but an investigation of this will be postponed until Part II. In proceeding with the history of the Philippine Left, I intend not to simply narrate the course of events, but also to give a sense of the ideas and theories that have informed Filipin@ activist practice over the years. Most pertinent here is the revolutionary nationalist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, or simply Maoism for short. I will, in addition, endeavour to situate this history within a global frame of reference, the relevance of which becomes clear in a statement from Danilo, a veteran of the Philippine Left whom I interviewed in Quezon City:

The Sixties were an era of liberation movements in Africa: Lumumba\[11\] in the Congo, the struggles in Angola, Mozambique. The different struggles for liberation in the former colonial countries were very vibrant. Vietnam, Indochina... We were very much influenced, of course, by the liberation war of the Vietnamese. Of course, at that time, there was not yet a rift between Vietnam and China... Those liberation movements were an influence on us and a reaffirmation of the line that we took, the Maoist line.

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\[11\] Patrice Lumumba was a leading figure in the Congolese liberation struggle against Belgium, later becoming the Congo’s first post-independence Prime Minister in 1960. Lumumba's assassination the following year transformed him into a 'Third World icon and martyr' (Hobsbawm 1999, p. 435).
Danilo, once a high-ranking member of the CPP, has since defected, now aligning himself politically with an RJ Social Democratic formation named the Philippine Socialist Organization* (PSO). In a sense, his life path is mirrored in the course that this chapter will take: It begins with a discussion of the advent of Philippine Maoism, before then inquiring into how the movement came to be challenged from within by figures like Danilo, leading eventually to its dissolution in 1993. This will help set the stage for an exploration in subsequent chapters of the array of new movements and subjectivities that have been blossoming in its place.

**The Maoist turn**

Revolutionary nationalism first crystallised in the Philippines during the anti-Spanish uprisings of the 1890s, and was further consolidated in the subsequent war against the Americans\(^\text{12}\). After the Russian Revolution of 1917, however, many Filipino revolutionaries began to aspire towards the new model of the nation-state instituted by the Soviets. The *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*\(^\text{13}\) (PKP) led this charge from its formation in the 1930s through to the mid-1960s when Philippine revolutionary nationalism took a decidedly Maoist turn. An explanation of the latter is what will

\(^{12}\) In the English-speaking world, ‘American’ of course pertains to people or entities from the United States of America, but I do not use it without reservations. As I learnt on a backpacking trip through Central America, many Latin Americans resent the monopoly that the US has claimed on the term, stressing that it is the property of everyone who resides in the Americas – South, Central, and North alike. In Spanish, there exists the term *‘Estadounidense’* (the translation of which would be ‘United Statesian’), but one finds no adequate alternatives in English.

\(^{13}\) Although *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* translates from Tagalog as the ‘Communist Party of the Philippines’, it is not to be confused with the CPP. The PKP and CPP are two separate organisations falling on opposite sides of the Sino-Soviet split. It is not unusual in the Philippines for organisations to at times draw their names from English and at other times from Philippine languages.
constitute my principal focus in this section. The relevance is that it is precisely the Maoist legacy that many Filipin@ revolutionaries are today trying to escape.

Many Moscow-aligned communists the world over grew disillusioned after the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary. A popular uprising that managed to depose Hungary’s Stalinist government was crushed by the invading forces, with the Soviet Union thereby reinstalling a loyalist regime and consolidating its control over Eastern Europe. These events rendered the imperialistic ambitions of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) clear and gave lie to its claim that it was a force for worldwide workers’ liberation. The idea of the working class nevertheless remained central to Soviet orthodoxy (Mills 1960, pp. 18, 22).

In the 1960s, fault-lines other than that which divided workers from capitalists – for instance, those of colonised and coloniser, black and white, woman and man, and so forth – began to come to the fore. These developments often further lessened the appeal of Soviet-style Marxism, since many saw it as incapable of addressing the new challenges afoot. Hence, the upsurge of national liberation movements after World War II was accompanied by the advent of new forms of Third World Marxism. Maoism, in particular, became ‘a rallying point for leftists worldwide’, with China claiming to have pioneered ‘a new grassroots model of socialism’ (Elbaum 2002, p. 4). Beijing sought to supplant Moscow as the ideological centre of the international Left, with
Mao Zedong (1960a; 1956) calling on revolutionaries, particularly those in the Third World, to reject the USSR’s model of worker-led urban revolution in favour of China’s peasant-oriented, rural strategy.

The Beijing-Moscow relationship was tested over a number of other questions as well. Nikita Khrushchev, who took over the leadership of the Soviet Union after Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953, introduced a policy of ‘peaceful coexistence’ with the West which Mao opposed, advocating instead a vigorous anti-imperialism. These and other differences culminated in the Sino-Soviet split of 1963. Mao (1964) denounced Khrushchev as a ‘revisionist’ counterrevolutionary, believing that he was steering the USSR back onto the ‘capitalist road’.

Inspired by ‘China’s militant anti-imperialist stand and advocacy of armed struggle’, Jose Maria Sison (1989, p. 29) led a breakaway faction from the PKP in 1964 and went on to found a new Maoist grouping called the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), or, ‘Patriotic Youth’ (Saulo 2002, pp. 79-85). This new organisation constituted the nucleus of what eventually became the CPP in 1968. To implement Mao’s strategy of encircling the cities from the countryside in a protracted ‘People’s War’ (Mao 1938), the CPP would also need a guerrilla army. It was hence that the NPA was established a year later in 1969 (see Images 4 and 5).
Image 4: NPA camp in northern Luzon

Image 5: NPA shooting practice
Luana, an interlocutor of mine who had been active in both the KM and the CPP in the early years, gave clues as to Mao’s appeal in the Philippines. The fact that he was a fellow Asian was important for her at the time, as was his emphasis on the rural:

Personally, Mao was very attractive to me - articles like "Serving the people", "The five golden rays". You know, Mao's writings show some rural color, some rural taste, and Philippines being backward and rural, we identified with what he was talking about. For the foolish old man in the mountains, these are like stories from the rural areas [laughs]. So it caught our attention and we liked it.

Mao's championing of the cause of national liberation also ensured his ready acceptance in the Philippines, particularly amongst those contesting the United States’ lingering hegemony over the country’s affairs. Indeed, the CPP-NPA saw as its brief not simply the liberation of the masses from the Marcos dictatorship, but also the liberation of the Philippines from US imperialism, of which Ferdinand Marcos was seen as a puppet (Guerrero 1970, pp. 51-59).

Here, a key inspiration for Philippine nationalists was Mao's (1937, p. 87) theory of contradiction, explained in his own words as follows:

In capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie... are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction. In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture. When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, apart from some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what
was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to secondary or subordinate position.

In short, Mao complicated Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels’s (1848) original privileging of the capital-labour relation by introducing into the picture the added dialectic between imperialism and Third World nationalism. He argued that in Third World contexts, it was the contradiction between nations that must necessarily take primacy (Žižek 2007, p. 2). Only once that had been resolved, could the class question then be addressed.

Replicating this analysis, Sison (writing as Guerrero 1970) called for a two-stage revolutionary strategy in the Philippines. The first step would be to resolve the primary contradiction between the US and the Philippines by way of an anti-imperialist revolution that would usher in a transitional phase of National Democracy. The next step would be to resolve the class antagonisms that remain by way of a second revolution projected to finally bring about a socialist society.

These ideas took root in the Philippine Left, giving many a clear programme around which to base their political practice. In addition to those who were actual members of the CPP-NPA, there also emerged a throng of front groups, support groups, and sympathisers across all sectors of Philippine society. Together they comprised what became known as the National Democratic Movement (NDM).
The National Democratic Movement

Largely in response to both civil and guerrilla unrest, Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972 and maintained a dictatorial hold over the Philippines for almost fifteen years.\(^{14}\) During this time, he abolished congress, took over the media, monopolised the military, and imprisoned thousands of dissenters without charge or trial, many of whom were tortured and murdered (Gaerlan 1999; Thompson 1996). All the while, Marcos enjoyed the support of the US, who found him a reliable Cold War ally in the effort to contain the spread of communism in the Asia-Pacific region (Bello & Chavez-Malaluan 1996).

Rather than extinguishing popular support for the CPP-NPA, the Marcos regime’s repressiveness played a part in inflaming it. Under conditions of Martial Law, the Maoist rebellion achieved a legitimacy that otherwise would have been difficult to muster. It was in this way that the NDM, comprised of both the CPP-NPA and its civilian support base, grew into one of the world’s largest communist movements never to have seized power (see Images 6, 7, and 8).

The CPP’s active supporters included ‘farmers, workers, teachers, priests, nuns, fishermen, office-workers, students’, and so on (Chapman 1987, p. 215). The NDM was hence, at one level, incredibly diverse. At another level, however, the movement was marked by a certain homogeneity, since what the Party demanded of it was adherence

\(^{14}\) Marcos’s authoritarian response to a society in revolt could be seen as part of broader global trend in the 1960s and 1970s. As Eric Hobsbawm (1999, p. 436) noted, whenever radical movements became enough of a threat that their victory no longer seemed unlikely, they were stopped short by military coups, martial law, and state terror, as was the case in Indonesia, Brazil, Chile, and elsewhere.
Image 6: Women on strike confronting soldiers in Iligan City (1985)

Image 7: Stand-off between protestors and soldiers

Image 8: Student leader Lean Alejandro addressing a rally (1984)
to Maoist ideology. In practice, this meant that the particular concerns of each of the aforementioned sectors tended to be deemed secondary to the armed struggle in the countryside (Garcia 2001, p. 93).

As touched upon in the Introduction, the fall of Marcos in 1986 ironically marked the beginning of the NDM’s decline (Rocamora 1994, p. 40). Since it played no part in the ultimate undoing of the dictatorship, the doctrine of People’s War around which the movement was centred turned out not to be as indispensable as the Party had claimed (Raquiza 1994). Sister Vanessa, a Catholic nun and former NDM organiser who I interviewed in Manila, explained that for this reason ‘the CPP sort of lost credibility after 1986; the revolution that the CPP was advocating – it doesn’t work’.

With the Maoists marginalised, it was the ‘middle forces’ (Bello 1992; Abinales 2001, p. vii) – a common designation in the Philippines for the middle class – that manoeuvred their way to power after 1986. Replacing Marcos was a centrist government headed by Corazon Aquino, the charismatic widow of prominent opposition figure, Benigno ‘Ninoy’ Aquino, assassinated in 1983 upon returning from exile in the US (see Image 9). The new president managed to serve a full six-year term – an achievement given that she ‘faced six coup attempts, natural disasters and assorted other economic and political crises bequeathed by 14 years of dictatorship’ (Rocamora 1994, p. 43).

While many leftists sought comprehensive social and political reforms, President Aquino ‘saw herself mainly as an instrument for rebuilding the institutions of elite democracy’ (Rocamora 1994, p. 44). As a result, the peace negotiations between the
CPP and the new Aquino administration achieved little. Before long, the Maoists decided to again take to the countryside and resume their armed struggle. The government responded fiercely, implementing a policy of ‘total war’ on the insurgency in an effort to maintain its hold on power in the uncertain post-Marcos context (Garcia 2001, p. 30).

Amidst these renewed hostilities, the CPP-NPA began to be overcome with paranoia, even ‘mass hysteria’ (Garcia 2001, p. 41), about military intelligence operatives within its ranks. The Party subsequently launched a number of anti-infiltration campaigns resulting in the detention, torture and even execution of hundreds of its own members believed to have been secret agents (Garcia 2001). Altogether, at least one thousand lives were lost (Sarmiento 2003). As the scale of the purges surfaced, the disillusionment with the Party that set in after 1986 grew further still. Many resigned in
protest, but even amongst those who remained, there emerged a number of dissident factions holding out the hope that it could yet be rescued from Sison’s leadership and steered in a new direction.

The purges by Philippine communists could be seen as smaller-scale repetitions of those undertaken by Maoist regimes in China and Cambodia in the decades prior. One biography makes the case that Mao himself directly and indirectly caused the deaths, through starvation and near-slavery, of a mind-boggling 38 million Chinese (Chang & Halliday 2005). If, for some, this was not enough to break the spell of China’s romantic revolutionary image, then the pro-market reforms of Deng Xiaoping, who assumed power after Mao’s death in 1976, were.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent advance of capitalist globalisation, debates about the way forward within the CPP and wider NDM only further intensified. Two main positions on the collapse of the Eastern Bloc developed within the NDM. The hardliners believed that what brought about the collapse was that ruling parties in Eastern Europe had succumbed to ‘revisionism’ and effectively sold out to the West (Liwanag 1992a). Those who had grown critical of the CPP’s increasing authoritarianism, however, applied the exact same critique to the communist parties of the Eastern Bloc: It was not that they had become capitalist, but rather that they had overseen the development of a distorted and authoritarian form of socialism that their subjects no longer found tolerable (Quimpo 2008, p. 60).
With the CPP in disarray, Sison, writing in exile from the Netherlands under the pseudonym of Armando Liwanag (1992b), intervened with a position paper entitled ‘Reaffirm our basic principles and rectify the errors’. In it, he accounted for the movement’s internal crisis by pinning the blame on those whom he felt had strayed too far from the original Maoist principles upon which the CPP was founded. For Sison, what was needed was not to update the party line in light of changing circumstances, but rather to rehash a set of truths presumed given for all time. His now-infamous ‘Reaffirm’ document was considered by many a fundamentalist and inadequate response to the challenges the Party faced, leading directly to the mass defections of 1993. Those who stayed became known as ‘Reaffirmists’ and those who left, ‘Rejectionists’, often referred to as ‘RAs’ and ‘RJs’ respectively. While Sison and his followers branded the RJs as ‘military agents’ and ‘counter-revolutionaries’, the RJs attacked Sison for being a ‘dictator’ and ‘Stalinist’ (Ebro cited in Lloyd et al. 1993, p. 249; Quimpo 2008, p. 62). This split has forever altered the landscape of the Philippine Left, with animosities between the two factions still everywhere in evidence today, including in the diaspora.

Although the CPP and NDM still exist, their strength and influence have greatly diminished. The thousands of RJs who defected from their ranks have, in the meantime, redirected their energies into a slew of new initiatives. Rejecting Mao, some turned instead to Ho Chi Minh’s version of revolution (Melencio & Mohideen 2001); others pushed for a Sandinista-style strategy of the kind that brought socialism to Nicaragua in 1979 (Quimpo 2008, p. 59). Those who questioned violent methods of achieving change meanwhile gravitated towards Social Democracy (Akbayan 1998;
Boudreau 2001; Ciria-Cruz 1992) and Popular Democracy (Magno 1988, pp. 90-91). Yet others still, as mentioned in the Introduction, were drawn in feminist, environmentalist, and anarchist directions. During my fieldwork, I also heard anecdotal reports about RJs who had rediscovered religion and become born-again Christians. Large numbers have fallen into inactivity as well – Relaxationists, or RXs, as the joke goes.

As it turned out, the CPP went ‘from being the lead player on the Left political stage to being but one player amongst many in an expanded cast – a rump defender of an outmoded revolutionary strategy’ (Weekley 2001, p. 259). Beyond the question of strategy, however, many also saw cause to challenge the Maoists’ adherence to nation-state logics. The contention that revolutionary nationalism is becoming increasingly untenable in the current era will be closely examined in the following chapter.
Rethinking revolutionary nationalism

Revolutionary nationalists, Philippine Maoists included, have tended to cast the nation-state as the inevitable form that political community should take, overlooking its contingency in the process. Although conceding that nationalism played an important role in historical struggles against colonialism, many postcolonial theorists today are loath to perpetuate what they regard as an oppressive discourse with roots in the imperial metropole (Chatterjee 1986). As Leela Gandhi (1998, p. 113) reminds us, ‘nation-ness and nationalism are European inventions which came into existence toward the end of the eighteenth century’. The seeds of the nation-state were already present in the early Enlightenment, but only after the French Revolution of 1789 did the thesis ‘that unites the theory of sovereignty with the theory of the nation’ (Hardt & Negri 2000, pp. 99-100) really take root. There occurred, at that point, a perfection of the binding of the state’s ‘juridical system of norms and laws’ with ‘the symbolic force of the nation’ (Gonzaga 2009, p. 17). The former effectively functioned to delimit vertical space, thereby instituting hierarchy; the latter meanwhile delimited horizontal space, separating one national community from another, thereby instituting homophily. With space compartmentalised in this way, there emerged a three-dimensional grid of power.
In the Philippines and Filipin@ diaspora, many of the critiques of the CPP are underpinned by an increasing rejection of both the nationalist and statist logics inherent in its politics. There is a pervasive sense that the old categories and constants of traditional leftist thought and practice, the nation-state amongst them, are proving inadequate to the task of comprehending contemporary realities, let alone acting effectively within them. It will be the task of this thesis as a whole to flesh out how activists are apprehending today’s changing global environment, but what this chapter will seek to do is set some of the terms for the discussion. A conversation I had with Simon, a veteran Fil-Am activist whom I met in the Bay Area, will help to introduce what is at stake. I was his dinner guest, and hanging on the living room wall was a photograph of him being arrested at a San Francisco rally in the 1970s.

‘You know, we didn’t choose that life’, said Simon of his heady days as a grassroots organiser. ‘We were compelled to fight because of the injustice and the climate of the times. We just had to do something... We were all feeling like revolution was just around the corner. Revolution was something that we all felt strongly about, knowing that that would be the answer, but really, we were very idealistic’.

‘Do you still think revolution is possible?’ I inquired.

‘Well, um, I don’t know’, he replied pensively. ‘The fact that you have globalisation – how do we work in that context? Maybe it’s not so much like it was during the war in Vietnam and wars of liberation – the anticolonial wars that were fought after World
War II... I mean, look at Zimbabwe. I’m just so pissed off about Mugabe\textsuperscript{15}, I can’t believe we supported that guy’.

The story of the rulers of newly-independent nations perpetuating the tyrannies of the departed colonial masters has become a familiar one. Another problem that Simon associated with the current context was the rise of unchecked corporate power. He lamented that even if authorities try to regulate greenhouse emissions, ‘it doesn’t mean jack, because those oil companies and those automobile companies – they’re gonna come back and they’re gonna try and fight tooth and nail to make sure that they limit the [Environmental Protection Agency]’s authority, you know?’

Within the space of this small snippet of conversation, Simon encapsulated what I later recognised were the two principal reasons that many of today’s activists are refusing nation-state-centric logics. They are refused in the first instance on the basis of their link to authoritarianism and ‘ethnic absolutism’ (Gilroy 1993, pp. 2, 5). In the second instance, it is now realised that for a national liberation movement to seize power would mean little in the face of transnational corporate machinations. The new nation-state would find itself nominally independent, but still subjugated by supranational economic forces beyond its purview.

The first critique is largely associated with postcolonial theory (Gandhi 1998; Said 1994); the second with critical globalisation theory (Appelbaum & Robinson 2005; Hardt & Negri 2000). Given that each commingled within the movements I worked in, I

\textsuperscript{15} Robert Mugabe was a guerrilla fighter against British rule in Zimbabwe and has been president of that country since 1980, the year it gained independence.
have seen fit to draw upon the resources of postcolonial and globalisation studies in equal measure. In 1995, Stuart Hall (1995, pp. 257-258) commented how remarkable it was that the ‘two halves of the current debate about “late modernity”’ had, up until that point, ‘proceeded in relative isolation from one another’. The publication in 2007 of the interdisciplinary collection, *The postcolonial and the global* (Krishnaswamy & Hawley 2007), indicates that this is now changing – and to both fields’ benefit.\(^{16}\) In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus my attention on critiques of revolutionary nationalism and the nation-state from the perspectives of postcolonial theory and globalisation theory respectively, before then concluding with an exposition of the way I merge the two into a common framework.

**The postcolonial critique**

Arguably, the founding moment of postcolonial studies was decolonisation. Far from political independence resulting in a ‘happily-ever-after’ scenario for the postcolonies, a plethora of challenges began to present themselves, which then became the starting points for postcolonial inquiry. Common across all strands of postcolonialism is a critique of the nation-state, owing largely to the failure of post-independence rulers to effect significant change from within its strictures. Hall (1995, p. 248) highlights ‘the persistence of many of the effects of colonisation, but at the same time their displacement from the colonised/coloniser axis to their internalisation within the decolonised society itself’. Gilroy (2004, pp. 10-11) points likewise to the complicity of Third World nationalists in ‘the very same moral economy within which Europe’s

\(^{16}\) See also Gikandi (2001).
colonial order had understood its own state-building adventures and imperial enterprises’. Although the nation-state was a mode of political community inherited from Europe, revolutionary nationalists in the Philippines and elsewhere nonetheless adopted it as their own.

In light of the continuities between Third World nationalism and its imperialist antagonist, postcolonialism could be seen as an attempt to more thoroughly divest Third World subjectivity of lingering colonial logics and carry on ‘the uncompleted struggle for decolonisation’ (Hall 1995, p. 244). The way these issues have played out in the Philippines will be briefly outlined below, before being revisited in Part III.

According to Filipino sociologist Randy David (2010, p. 2), ‘the supreme paradox of nationalism’ is that the ‘forces of emancipation can easily become the forces of tyranny and domination’. This became evident when the Philippines achieved independence in 1946, at which point the dominant Tagalog ethnic group began to use its position of privilege ‘to impose its culture on the rest of the populace, reducing the heterogeneity of the multitude to an illusory unity founded on cultural hierarchy’ (Gonzaga 2009, p. 26). One outcome has been a loss of linguistic diversity, with the national education system accommodating only Tagalog and English (David 2012).

Another outcome has been unrest amongst the Moros, an Islamic minority in Mindanao in the resource-rich yet socially-impoverished southern Philippines (see Map 4). A number of militant Moro outfits have waged a long-running separatist rebellion, preferring self-determination to continued relegation to the margins of Philippine
society. Similar struggles have been mounted by minority groups in most, if not all, of the postcolonies.

Although the bourgeois nationalism of the Tagalog elite has also come under considerable challenge from the revolutionary nationalism of the CPP, the bone of contention in that conflict was not ethnic majoritarianism, but the degree to which US influence should be tolerated in post-independence Philippines. The CPP, in fact, has been no less exclusionary in its emphasis on national unity than the rulers it has sought to supplant.17

As a final point, Chua Beng Huat (2008, p. 231) notes with some bewilderment that Southeast Asia ‘does not figure significantly, if at all, in the expanding archive of what is constituted as the academic field of Postcolonial Studies’. This is beginning to change in the Philippines with postcolonial scholars like Neil Garcia (2004; 2007) now emerging from the NDM’s long shadow.18 His gripe is with a form of ‘community whose differences have been elided, smoothed over, erased, or offered up in sacrifice on the altar of the hallowed corporeal unity called “the nation”’ (Garcia 2004, p. xiii). Instead, he holds out the hope that other, more generous forms of community are possible – a sentiment shared likewise by many of the activists I worked with.

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17 A more thorough examination of the ethnic repression engendered by Philippine nationalisms, bourgeois and revolutionary, will be presented in Chapter 7.
18 Also notable is the edited collection: *Philippine postcolonial studies* (Hidalgo & Patajo-Legasto 2007).
The globalisation critique

While cognisant of the absolutist proclivities of revolutionary nationalism emphasised by postcolonial scholars, critical globalisation scholars have instead tended to critique it on the basis of factors external, rather than internal, to the nation-state. By this I mean that seizing state power is seen to guarantee increasingly little in the age of global capitalism. Revolutionary movements around the world have grappled with this, but not all have grasped it as clearly as the Zapatistas of southern Mexico: ‘When we rose up against a national government’, recounted Zapatista spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos in a documentary interview (Eichert & Olmos 1998), ‘we found that it did not exist; in reality we were up against great financial capital, against speculation, which is what makes decisions in Mexico, as well as in Europe, Asia, Oceania, North America, South America, everywhere’. The novelty of the Zapatistas was their identification of a new enemy against which to rebel; namely, the new order of globalised capitalism to which individual nation-states have become subordinate (Hayden 2002, p. 2).

This recognition has been paralleled in academia by the work of scholars like Hardt and Negri (2000), who have argued that ‘neoliberal’ institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO) are constitutive of

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19 The basic narrative of neoliberalism is that the corporate drive for profits – as facilitated, for instance, through privatisation, deregulation, and the removal of barriers to cross-border trade and investment (not just import tariffs, but also laws designed to protect workers and the environment) – is a force for good in the world, since, as the slogan has it, ‘a rising tide raises all boats’. As with the concept of the ‘free market’, neoliberalism borrows from the language of traditional liberalism as a way of legitimating global capitalism. For further background, see Harvey (2005).
a new global regime of sovereignty that they dub ‘Empire’. No longer is there simply a series of nation-state-bound bureaucracies and bourgeoisies all competing to advance their own national interests, but also a *supranational* elite – at once political and economic – operating in the interests of global capitalism as a whole. ‘The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world’, assert Hardt and Negri (2000, p. xiii), ‘have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow’.

Those conditioned to the rhetoric of the ‘free market’ may find the association between global capitalism and sovereignty odd at first, but careful consideration reveals that no economic market can function without a political power structure to sustain it (Hardt & Negri 2006, pp. 167-168). As Mike Moore (cited in Colvin 2009, p. 1), the former Director-General of the WTO, himself attested candidly: ‘[P]eople equate... globalisation with the lack of rules; in fact the opposite is the truth in my view because the World Trade Organization sets these global rules... a world without walls is not a world without rules’.

Under the new dispensation, transnational corporations flourish, while nation-states become ‘at once everything and nothing’ (Guattari 2009, p. 258) – *nothing* insofar as ultimate decision-making power is delegated to Empire, and *everything* insofar as nationalism and statism remain indispensable tools for social control. Hence the oft-noted paradox that although the agents of Empire seek to remove barriers to the free flow of capital, barriers to the cross-border movements of ordinary people are kept firmly in place (Klein 2002, p. xxiii).
Although the concept of globalisation is sometimes confined to such phenomena as ‘free’ trade or the spread of McDonalds, I maintain that it should also be extended to long-distance ties not necessarily constitutive of global capitalism. Following Steven Flusty (2004, pp. 7-12), a useful distinction can hence be made between ‘sovereign’ and ‘nonsovereign’ forms of globalisation – the former denoting processes associated with Empire, and the latter denoting non-capitalist, or even anti-capitalist, processes outside of it. A salient example is the Alternative Globalisation Movement that burst on the world stage in the late 1990s. Although its detractors tended to characterise it as an anti-globalisation movement, this made little sense given that one of its key refrains from the beginning was that resistance must be as global as capitalism itself (Holmes 2008, p. 50; Teivainen 2004, p. 128).

It is the contention of growing numbers of activists and critical globalisation scholars alike that in an age when power operates globally, nation-state-centric frameworks become limiting and anachronistic. Although the national liberation framework might have served well in the past, the emergence of Empire has arguably rendered it impotent. It was ironically at the precise moment of decolonisation that processes of sovereign globalisation began to come into effect. This allowed territories no longer under direct colonial rule to continue to be ruled indirectly (Hardt & Negri 2000, pp. 264-269; Young 2003, p. 3).
Merging the postcolonial and the global

Having outlined in broad brushstrokes the critiques of nation-state-centric politics put forth by postcolonial and globalisation theorists respectively, I will conclude this chapter by elucidating the manner in which I combine both into a common frame of reference. To reiterate, postcolonial scholars are critical of nationalism mainly on account of its absolutist tendencies, critical globalisation scholars mainly on account of its relative powerlessness before global forces. Despite their differing emphases, theorists from both camps are at odds with scholars like Antonio Tuñon (2005) and Epifanio San Juan, Jr. (2008) who treat globalisation as a kind of juggernaut that can be resisted only by retreating into the national. These scholars seek to resuscitate the national liberation project for the age of global capitalism, which, from their perspective, amounts to the same old US imperialism under a different guise.

Postcolonialists highlight continuities in the operations of power from the colonial era to the present-day, but reject the idea of nationalism as the necessary vehicle of resistance, since it itself is regarded as an embodiment of such power. Globalisation theorists on the other hand tend to see less continuity than discontinuity between anterior and contemporary modes of capitalism. In addition to Hardt and Negri’s (2000) theory of the passage from national to supranational sovereignty, the changing workings of power since the 1970s have also been theorised in terms of shifts from Fordism to Post-Fordism (Harvey 1990); from industrial society to the network society (Castells 2000); and from discipline to control (Deleuze 1992a).
Given the nation-state’s close association with modernity, some regard the
untethering of capitalism from national sovereignty as indicative of a new era of
‘postmodernity’ (Hardt & Negri 2000; Jameson 1991). With this in mind, the difference
between postcolonial and globalisation theorists can now be reformulated as follows:
Where the former focus their critiques on modern forms of power, believed to persist
as colonial hangovers despite decolonisation, the latter mainly take aim at emergent
postmodern forms of power. That this is the principal fault-line between the two
camps becomes clear in Hardt and Negri’s (2000, pp. 137-138) unfavourable
assessment of the postcolonial project:

[Post]colonialist theorists never tire of critiquing and seeking liberation from
the past forms of rule and their legacies in the present... We suspect that
postmodernist and postcolonialist theories may end up in a dead end because
they fail to recognize adequately the contemporary object of critique, that is,
they mistake today’s real enemy... What if these theorists are so intent on
combating the remnants of a past form of domination that they fail to
recognize the new form that is looming over them in the present?

The argument, in short, is that in seeking liberation from modernity, postcolonialists
have too readily celebrated the postmodern, failing to grasp that it too comes with its
own set of oppressions. The resulting risk is that postcolonial strategies assumed to be
liberatory may ‘coincide with and even unwittingly reinforce the new strategies of rule’
(Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 138).

Postcolonial scholars have countered such charges by insisting that any shifts toward a
postmodern condition should not be taken to mean that modernist subjectivities have
been forever dispensed with (Gilroy 1993, p. 2). In India, for instance, the extreme
nationalism of the Hindutva movement has not been trumped by the globalist ideology of neoliberalism, but rather has entered into potently symbiotic relations with it (Harvey 2005, p. 85; Roy 2003, pp. 103-107). In light of such phenomena, Foucault (1984, p. 39) suggests that modernity may perhaps be better understood as an attitude, rather than as a period of history – ‘a way of thinking and feeling’, ‘of acting and behaving’, that continues to condition our political reality, even despite the advent of postmodernity.

Overcoming the polarities of the modernity/postmodernity debate necessitates a consideration of both the ‘continuities and discontinuities of power’ (McClintock cited in Hall 1995, p. 245). Perhaps there is no such thing as a clean break from the old, as Hardt and Negri (2000) seem to assume, but rather a polyphonous cross-fading between one configuration of power and the next. Brian Massumi (2002, p. 51) is helpful here, with his characterisation of change being ‘that which includes rupture, but is nevertheless continuous (but only with itself)’.

In a situation of overlapping regimes of power, arguing over which regime should constitute the principal object of critique becomes somewhat extraneous. The point, in my estimation, is to resist both modern and postmodern forms of oppression. Given that postcolonial theory attends to the former and critical globalisation theory to the latter, both are equally crucial to this effort. It is on this basis that I have seen fit to conjoin them in a common framework. Globalisation theorists need postcolonial theory so as not to unwittingly reproduce modernist oppressions; conversely, postcolonial theorists need globalisation theory so as not to unwittingly reinforce
newer postmodern forms of oppression. The relationship between the two camps hence need not be as combative as it has sometimes been.

The complementarity between postcolonialism and globalisation studies becomes especially evident when one looks beyond their critiques of the existing state-of-affairs to also consider the kind of world they envisage in its place – a world for which the concept of ‘cosmopolitanism’ is frequently invoked on both sides. How I have come to understand cosmopolitanism will be discussed at length in the following chapter.
Emergent cosmopolitanisms

Given, firstly, the fact that cosmopolitanism has taken on a plethora of divergent meanings, and secondly, that there are so few alternative concepts adequate to a discussion of the anational or postnational sensibilities emerging in the present, I have resolved that my only recourse is to join the swollen ranks of its proponents, albeit not without specifying exactly what I mean by it. This is my task for this chapter.

I wish to clarify from the outset that I align myself not with the Enlightenment cosmopolitanism of Kant (1794) and his contemporary devotees (e.g. Nussbaum 1996), but with the refigured cosmopolitanisms found in globalisation and postcolonial studies. Included here are the seminal writings of Edward Said, associated by many with cosmopolitanism even if he himself only occasionally used the term (Parry 1992). In *Culture and imperialism* (1994), Said locates in the work of Frantz Fanon a crucial pivot point between nationalist and cosmopolitan modes of transformative politics. Clearly pertinent to the issues at hand, a brief discussion of Said’s reading of Fanon will help to aptly preface this chapter.

Fanon was a writer and political activist from Martinique, trained initially as a psychiatrist in France. In 1953, he took up work in a psychiatric hospital in Algeria,
which at that point was still under French colonial rule. A year later, the Algerian war of national liberation was launched, eventually leading to the country’s independence in 1962. Amidst the upheavals, Fanon resigned from his post to dedicate himself to the revolutionary movement. Putting his writing at the service of revolution, he published in 1961 his final and most incendiary work, *The wretched of the earth* (Fanon 1961). This book was to cement Fanon’s place as one of the Third World’s leading anticolonial thinkers, and greatly influenced the many national liberation struggles spawned in Algeria’s wake.

Looking back on Fanon’s work, Said’s (1994) contribution was to detect, in addition to its obvious anticolonialism, an incipient and long-overlooked postcolonialism. The Fanon known to most had been the anticolonial Fanon (1961, pp. 27-84), unambiguous in his support for revolutionary nationalism and reciprocal counter-violence to the colonial order. Crucially, however, he argued that nationalist strategies only had value in the period prior to liberation:

[N]ationalism, that magnificent song that made the people rise against their oppressors, stops short, falters and dies away on the day that independence is proclaimed... If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness (Fanon 1961, p. 163).

Although he recognised that revolutionary nationalism was an indispensable weapon against colonial rule, Fanon’s contention was that it must, from the moment of independence, give way to something else, something more inclusive and horizontal; indeed, cosmopolitan. He cautioned that if this were to fail to take place, ethnocratic
and bourgeois dictatorships would usurp the ground newly vacated by the colonisers, leading to the perpetuation of their methods and logics (Fanon 1961, p. 147). It was this aspect of Fanon’s thought, neglected by Third World nationalists at their peril, that Said wanted to draw renewed attention to.

‘Fanon turned out to be right about the rapacity and divisiveness of national bourgeoisies’, wrote Said (1994, p. 334), ‘but he did not and could not furnish an institutional, or even theoretical, antidote for its ravages’. The work of formulating such an antidote is being done today by postcolonial and critical globalisation theorists who, like Fanon, feel that ‘national consciousness ought to pave the way for the emergence of an ethically and politically enlightened global community’ (Gandhi 1998, p. 123), but who, unlike Fanon, are focussed most especially on the postnational stage of the decolonising project. Practical alternatives are also being forged in diverse countercultural milieux and social movements. Picking up where Fanon left off, the hope of much of today’s political generation is for a more pluralistic future than that offered by the homophilic collectivities of earlier generations (Said 1994, p. 277). For many, this is the hope that the notion of cosmopolitanism embodies.

**Defining cosmopolitanism**

To define cosmopolitanism as I understand it, it will be necessary to differentiate it from a number of contrasting definitions. There is something in this of the art of sculpture; ‘of cutting away, of finding David in a block of marble, or one of all possible Davids’ (Turchi 2004, p. 69). Faced with the amorphous hunk of rock that is
cosmopolitanism tout court, I will apply a series of precise chisel blows in an attempt to reveal a cosmopolitan form that is specifically my own.

My first act as sculptor will be to chip away at the kind of cosmopolitanism that critics attack as a ‘luxuriously free-floating view from above’ (Robbins 1998, p. 1). The cosmopolitans I speak of in this thesis are not the jet-setting, globe-trotting elite, but grassroots activists engaged in alternative projects of nonsovereign globalisation. In its Kantian register, cosmopolitanism has historically functioned as ‘a key concept of modernity to hide coloniality’; one currently being updated to serve ‘the imperial needs of the West in the twenty-first century’ (Mignolo 2011, pp. 257, 287). However, an identification with the world beyond the nation-state does not necessarily mean complicity in Western hegemony or global capitalism in all cases. Argentinian scholar Walter Mignolo (2011, p. 255) thus holds out the possibility of a radical cosmopolitanism that works towards a ‘planetary conviviality’ freed from the dictates of sovereignty.

Radical cosmopolitanism requires not only a dissociation from sovereign globalisation, but also from Enlightenment pretences to universalism. Gilroy (2004, p. 4), for one, takes Kantian cosmopolitanism as a form of European provincialism ‘dressed up in seductive universal garb’. Kant (1794) spoke engagingly of a worldwide community of human beings, but his vision had what many postcolonialists consider a racist underpinning: one in which the supposedly inferior non-West was impelled, as a prerequisite for the realisation of the cosmopolitan ideal, to assimilate into Western civilisation (Gandhi 2006). Against the one-world cosmopolitanism of Kant, Mignolo
(2011, pp. 258, 274) affirms a ‘pluriversal’ cosmopolitanism open to shared globalities beyond exclusively European designs. This is echoed in the Zapatistas’ formulation of ‘a world in which many worlds fit’ (Marcos 1996, p. 80).

I will now chisel away another of Kant’s vestiges; namely, the idea of cosmopolitanism as the telos toward which humanity, somehow by ‘natural inclination’ (Kant cited in Mignolo 2011, p. 266), is tending. At issue here is the ideology of Progress by which history is presumed to move along a single linear timescale; a movement varyingly cast as one from darkness to light, from savagery to civilisation, or, in its more recent guise, from ‘developing’ to ‘developed’ (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 282).

Kant’s (1784) own metaphor of choice was the passage from childhood to adulthood. He characterised the Enlightenment as a process by which humanity, via the accession of reason, was being released from immaturity and entering into its adult phase. Full adulthood would be realised in a global cosmopolitan society. With the West posited as the standard of maturity to which the non-West must aspire, imperialists were thence able to cast colonised peoples as children in need of maturation and ‘adult’ guidance (Gandhi 1998, p. 34; Ignacio et al. 2004, pp. 64, 70; Mignolo 2011, p. 277).

It is the hierarchisation of humanity, informed by such notions of time, to which I take exception. I will hence endeavour to uncouple cosmopolitanism from the Kantian conception of adulthood and link it instead with the figure of the child – a trope by which a number of philosophers have sought to undermine Kant’s developmental schema.
For Jean-François Lyotard (cited in Gandhi 1998, pp. 33-34), the child ‘heralds and promises things possible’, standing in for an enriched sense of possibility beyond adult prescriptions. Elsewhere, Lyotard (1995, p. xx) writes: ‘If adults are often tough and sad, it is because they are disappointed. They do not listen well enough to the invitation to grace which is in them. They let the spaceship rust’. Although some might dismiss such remarks as frivolous and romantic, Gandhi (1998, p. 34) stresses it is crucial to recognise them as ‘a rhetorical response to the Kantian policing of human nature’; a means by which ‘to undo the logic of the colonial civilising mission’.

In a similar vein, philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987, pp. 300-316) render the child as a figure of potentiality; of that moment before human energy is channelled into rigid social roles that reproduce the status quo. The child belongs to the order of ‘becoming’ rather than of ‘Being’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), or, in poetic terms, is a wild river not yet tamed by dams or canals. Through their concept of ‘becoming-child’20, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, pp. 305-306) do not mean to call for a regression to one’s youth, but rather, for an unfolding onto the ontological flux from which all reality springs. The unimaginative world of adults, of rational subjects bound by habit and convention, hence becomes charged with new impetus for ‘creative evolution’ (Bergson 1911). This is not a forwards or backwards movement along a linear timeline, but an overflowing, as with the waters of a canal that have breached its banks. Indeed, becoming-child ‘can occur at any time, not necessarily at a fixed age’ (Guattari 2009, p. 131).

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I would like to propose, then, that cosmopolitanism, once ascribed to the Deleuzian child rather than the Kantian adult, is an ever-present possibility, not one that follows the nation-state in rational progression. Just such an argument becomes evident in the work of Gerard Delanty (2006, pp. 43-44) who writes: ‘Cosmopolitanism does not refer simply to... post-national phenomena that have come into existence today as a result of globalization... It resides in social mechanisms that can exist in any society at any time in history’.

Taken as an attitude of openness towards alterity, as the space of ‘translation between things that are different’ (Delanty 2006, p. 43), cosmopolitanism could therefore be said to have actually preceded nationalism, not vice versa. One example of this is the pre-colonial South Pacific, described by Epeli Hau‘ofa (2008, p. 33) as a world ‘in which people and cultures moved and mingled, unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers’. Hau‘ofa is speaking here of national boundaries in particular. The parallel I wish to draw is this: before the enclosures of adult rationality comes the openness and imagination of the child; and before the enclosures of nationalist rationality comes this often-overlooked form of pre-national cosmopolitanism. This is cosmopolitanism not as apogee, but as substrate; a constitutive cosmopolitanism equivalent to the flux from which all actuality emerges. If such flux is ever forgotten to us, it is perhaps because rigid identity-constructs must obscure it to ensure their own survival.

Keeping in mind the realignment of cosmopolitanism from the Kantian adult to the figure of the child, and following Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) theory of becoming-
child, I would like, at this point, to proffer the novel concept of becoming-cosmopolitan. Whenever there is a ‘deterritorialization’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) from homeostatic cultural formations, a becoming-cosmopolitan could be said to have taken place. This is a concept I will employ in this thesis as a means of understanding the manifold refusals of nation-state logics that I encountered in my fieldwork. It will be seen that the nation-state, an exclusionary form of community predicated on the idea of a single ethnos presiding over a discrete patch of earth, is today yielding to an ethos of more than an ethnos.

Becomings-cosmopolitan are deterritorialisations onto an open field, not mere fulfilments of a telos. There is the risk that one may escape the nation only to reterritorialise upon global capitalism, but this is mitigated by the kind of radical cosmopolitanism attributed earlier to Mignolo (2011). The contemporary regime of supranational sovereignty, like its national counterpart, is just one more ‘adult’ against which the youth must rebel.

So far, I have described a cosmopolitanism that is radical rather than bourgeois, pluriversal rather than universal, and constitutive rather than teleological. With these outlines in place, I will now seek to theorise two patterns that I picked up on in my fieldwork. The first pertains to a reconfiguration of values; the second to a reconfiguration of social space. In the case of the former, the nationalist value of homophily is being supplanted today by a novel embrace of difference, an ethos for which I reserve the term xenophilia: a love for the Other. In the case of the latter, it can be discerned that the territorial insularity of the nation-state is yielding to a new
kind of spatial sensibility; one that I refer to as translocalism. Translocal space could be seen as a manifestation of xenophilic values, just as the insular space of the nation evidently correlates with homophily. These two interrelated modes of becoming-cosmopolitan, xenophilia and translocalism, will be attended to in respective order below.

**Xenophilia**

Love has long been confined to the personal sphere – traditionally the province of poets, but rarely of social or political theorists concerned with supposedly less frivolous matters than matters of the heart. It is surprising, therefore, to find in the work of Hardt and Negri (2000; 2006) a provisional attempt to bring love and politics into renewed contact. They call for a new form of militancy that ‘makes rebellion into a project of love’ (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 413); and conversely, for a love that ‘serves as the basis for our political projects in common and the construction of a new society’ (Hardt & Negri 2006, p. 352). Their thinking in this area is suggestive, but only tentatively articulated. It therefore remains for others, myself included, to further explore what ‘love as a political concept’ (Hardt cited in Schwartz 2009) might mean.

Reading Vicente Rafael’s *White love* (2000), I found I was not the only scholar of Philippine descent to be thinking through the love-politics relationship. An historical survey of American imperialism in the Philippines, the title refers to the dubious ‘love’ that US occupiers professed for their ‘little brown brothers’ (Taft cited in Rafael 2000, p. 32). Rafael (2000, p. xi-xii) ponders the ambiguity of this supposed love, and also of
love itself. In Tagalog, he notes, there are two words signifying love: *pag-ibig* and *pagmamahal*. The root of the former, *ibig*, means to want or to desire, while the root of the latter, *mahal*, means that which is valuable or costly. The differing connotations ‘underline the ambiguities of love both as a promise of fulfilment... as well as a feeling of nearness that also... exacts a cost’ (Rafael 2000, p. xi).

Intrigued, I deferred to my partner Anamaine, a native Tagalog speaker, for further clarification: ‘Mahal [darling], how would you define the difference between *pag-ibig* and *pagmamahal*? Can they be used interchangeably, or do they mean different things?’

‘Um, I think *pag-ibig* is deeper. Like, you can have *pagmamahal* for things, *para sa bayan* [for the homeland], but *pag-ibig* is really only for people’.

‘Oh really? Is *pag-ibig* for both romantic and familial love?’

‘Yep’.

‘But what about when *pagmamahal* is used for people?’

‘It’s the same, I think; just not as deep or heartfelt’.

‘Can you have *pagmamahal* for an iPhone?’
'Haha, yes you can!'

One could suppose, in light of the above, that when the English novelist Edward Morgan Forster (cited in Gandhi 2006, p. 30) wrote ‘...if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country’, he was valorising pag-ibig for one’s friend over pagmamahal for one’s nation. In contrast, Benedict Anderson (1991, pp. 141-142), seemingly eager to defend Third World nationalism against its would-be detractors21, offers an equivocal affirmation of nationalist love:

In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals... to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism... show this love very clearly...

For me, the argument is not whether nationalism is more about hate or love, since both could be viewed as two sides of the same coin. Its hateful side, so familiar to me in Australia, also reared its head in the Philippines when my blog attracted the following comment from someone calling him or herself ‘Centre-Right Ethnonationalist’: ‘My country does not need bleeding heart half-breeds like you

21 Accounting for Anderson’s commitment to Third World nationalism deserves at least a footnote. In the early Cold War period when he came of age politically, the betrayals of Stalinism meant that the Eastern Bloc was replaced by the Third World as ‘the central pillar of hope and faith of those who still put their faith in social revolution’ (Hobsbawm 1999, p. 436). Anderson was ‘in awe of Southeast Asian leaders Sukarno and Ho Chi Minh in asserting their countries’ independence’ (Abinales 2003, p. xix), likely influencing his decision to conduct fieldwork in Indonesia in the 1960s – a time of significant revolutionary upheaval. There, he would encounter ‘nationalism in its most democratic and popular form, the nationalism that Ben Anderson would commit himself to, despite detractors and friendly critics pointing out the brutal dark side of the imagined community’ (Abinales 2003, pp. xvii-xviii).
supporting outlawed commies. Go back to Oz, stay there. Keep your nose out of my country’s business. We have enough foreign intrusions here’. Had the commenter read my blog more closely, s/he would have realised I was no friend of the communists.

What startled me most, though, was how similar the comments were to the racism levelled at me back home. It stirred memories of growing up in 1990s Australia, when ‘half-caste’ and ‘Go back to where you came from!’ were common insults.

As for the other side of the nationalist coin, I do not deny the claim that nationalism entails love – in some cases, a love of such potency that it spurs people to willingly sacrifice their lives. However, the same love that drives one to die for one’s country can also transmute into a hate that drives one to kill for it. Love and hate are not always contradictory opposites, then, but frequently function together in tandem (Hardt cited in Schwartz 2009, p. 814). In Imagined communities, Anderson (1991) does ponder the question of why people would kill and die for what he himself argues is an ultimately imaginary construct, but does not stop to ask himself if other, more expansive forms of love and community are possible.

Rather than assign virtue to love tout court, as Anderson (1991) appears to do, I maintain that it is imperative to be mindful of the varied forms that love can take – some expansive and others restrictive; some benign and others malign. What, then, does love in a specifically nationalist vein entail? Already, I have associated nationalism with homophily as opposed to xenophilia. I will now further elaborate on the former, if only to provide a basis from which to contrast xenophilia at a later stage.
Love of the same

The nation is manifestly held together by a ‘love of the same’ (Hardt cited in Schwartz 2009, p. 813) – in a word, homophily. We are often drawn to people in whom we find something of ourselves, but I propose that this may be an enculturated habit; one perhaps owing, in part, to the two hundred-odd year experiment with manufacturing ideal national subjects. The homophilic template of the national community has additionally impacted on communities in general in recent centuries – from the ‘community of two’ (Blanchot 1988) that is the romantic couple or pair of friends to self-similar collectivities of a much larger scale. With love reduced to the love of sameness, communities of all kinds have become veritable extensions of the self.

Homophily would seem to demand reconsideration in light of our twenty-first century global context. The question of ‘How are we to live together?’ takes on new importance as becomings-cosmopolitan proliferate and alterity becomes ever more present in our daily lives. In the face of such developments, insisting on homogenous, self-same communities would seem anachronistic. Once habituated assumptions around community are broken and scrutinised anew, a string of pressing ethical questions ensue: Might we be able, as Julia Kristeva (1991, pp. 1-2) asks, to live with the others in our midst as others, ‘without ostracism but also without levelling?’ Would it be possible, as Giorgio Agamben (1993) contends, to build novel collectivities on the very basis of diversity, rather than on its negation? Could we break love’s deeply-ingrained association with sameness and couple it instead with difference? What would love for, or friendship with, the Other even look like?
To begin to address these questions, it will firstly be necessary to undo an idea at the root of modern homophilic practices; that being, Gottfried Hegel’s (1817) identity-difference dialectic – shorthand for the antagonistic dualism he posed between Self and Other. Like Kant, Hegel was a seminal Enlightenment thinker, albeit one of more importance to the Left, owing to his transplantation into radical politics by Marx (e.g. Marx & Engels 1848). In my observations, Hegelian dialectics has even become a kind of taken-for-granted folk theory in activist milieux

Hegel (1817; 1807) took ideas already emerging out of the Enlightenment – including binary opposition and essentialism – and formalised them into a grand ideological framework, effectively elevating historically-specific sensibilities to the status of transhistorical laws. Confusing the map for the territory in this way led to a prolonging of what many theorists (e.g. Deleuze 1962) now critique as ideas in the service of repression.

One such idea is the identity-difference dialectic. For Hegel (1817), one achieves identity or selfhood through the negation of what one is not. In this schema, differences between Self and Other are conceived of in absolute terms: a distinct set of people on one side of a dividing line, another set of people on the other. As Deleuze (1962, p. 158) argues: ‘The whole dialectic operates and moves in the element of fiction... because it is content to work with permutations of abstract and unreal terms’. Seeing only pairs of absolute opposites, the identity-difference dialectic arguably falls short of being able to grasp real-world complexity. It could even be said to erase complexity: firstly, by positing each of the terms at play as undifferentiated wholes;
secondly, by eliminating the shades of grey in between; and thirdly, by eliding everything outside the two terms in opposition. In short, ‘the process of creating a self through opposition to an other always entails the violence of repressing or ignoring other forms of difference’ (Abu-Lughod 1991, p. 140).

The way that identity-difference logics translate into radical politics can be detected in many commonly-held assumptions on the part of activists: for instance, the assumption that only a unified and monolithic resistance is capable of effectively combating an enemy regarded in equally monolithic terms. Homophilic demands for unity have certainly proved crucial in many an effort to galvanise the oppressed against their oppressors. At the crux of the matter, however, is a question posed by Gandhi (2006, p. 25) in Affective communities: ‘Does loyalty to “my own” liberate me of ethical obligations to all those who are not of my own nation, family, republic, revolution?’ If there is one lesson that can be drawn from the history of twentieth-century nationalism, it is that homophily has a tyrannical flipside. Inwardly, it glosses over internal differences; outwardly, it regards the stranger, if not as an enemy, then at least as inimical. For the homophile, the friend-enemy distinction maps isomorphically with the dialectic between Self and Other, identity and difference. Homophily and xenophobia therefore go hand-in-hand.

Loving the Other

The concept of xenophilia is one way of denoting the alternative possibility of friendship between mutual strangers; of love for, and ‘cross-identification’ (Gandhi
2006, p. 138) with, the Other. Cross-cultural and other modes of transversal collaboration have been evident throughout history, but in recent centuries have tended to remain subordinate to the prevailing political value of homophily. Even Kantian cosmopolitanism, which many persist in treating as a force for liberation from the homophilic bonds of the nation, appears in one respect as an expanded homophily; one that substitutes the national for the human community, the latter bound by Eurocentric definitions of what it means to be fully human.

Smuggling the notion of xenophilia into discussions around cosmopolitanism is thus pivotal. Zambian sociologist Owen Sichone (2008) is one of few to have done so to date, specifically in an essay examining contrasting attitudes towards African immigrants in Cape Town, South Africa. The most intriguing aspect of his work, for me, was his finding that South African men, regardless of race, tend more towards xenophobia, while South African women tend more towards xenophilia. Taking exception to the ‘uncosmopolitan’ cosmopolitanism of Western elites, Sichone (2008, pp. 320-321) argued that we would do better to ‘look to remote African villages and congested urban slums to find the woman who greets the stranger with a tray of food… South African women oppose the dehumanisation of the migrant, as well as their own, in such gestures’. Sichone variously refers to such practices as instances of xenophilia and hospitality – terms he tends to use synonymously, but which I will seek to distinguish shortly.

Also spurring my interest in the potential of xenophilia as a concept was an essay by the Raqs Media Collective (2003, p. 365), but they dedicated only a few brief lines to
the idea (or rather to the orthographic variant of ‘xenophilly’)... The apparent trend is that where the term xenophilia crops up in the literature, it is most often used as the simple opposite of xenophobia, while being left largely under-developed in conceptual terms.

Elsewhere, a number of scholars have identified an emerging sensibility approximate to xenophilia, but stop short of giving it a name of its own, or otherwise list it as an attribute of other concepts. Hardt (cited in Schwartz 2009, p. 813), for instance, touches briefly on what he simply calls the ‘love of the different’. Ulf Hannerz (1996, p. 103), meanwhile, writes of a certain ‘willingness to engage with the Other... an intellectual and esthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity’. In a similar but more political vein, Gilroy (2004, pp. xi, 76) advocates a ‘radical openness’; ‘a new way of being at home in the world through an active hostility toward national solidarity, national culture, and their privileging over other, more open affiliations’. It is this kind of open stance towards otherness that I wish to encapsulate and foreground through my use of the term xenophilia, contrasting it not solely from xenophobia and homophily, but also from hospitality, as will now be elucidated.

Having already settled on xenophilia as one of my key concepts, I was amused to encounter the ancient Greek notion of ‘philoxenia’ (cited in Gandhi 2006), which, like xenophilia, denotes a love for the Other, albeit with its component parts – **philos** (love) and **xenos** (stranger) – switched around. I learnt that philoxenia is closely allied with the notion of hospitality, but realised that therein lies its limitation. Hospitality is
certainly suited to those from outside one’s community, but what about ‘internal outsiders’ from within a given ethnos?

The best example I can think to give is from my own experience: I have never been anything other than an Australian citizen, and yet, on account of my brown skin, I remain an outsider to the dominant national imaginary. Outright racism is one thing, but what to make of a well-meaning old lady assuming I was a tourist and wishing me a pleasant stay in Australia? I was even once welcomed to my own country by a drunken white New Zealander at a reggae concert. Both of these individuals displayed no trace of malice, yet their self-designation as the hosts and myself as the guest – when in fact Australia is as much my home as theirs – reinforced established cultural and racial hierarchies, even though they may have felt they were being hospitable and egalitarian. As Jacques Derrida (2000) notes, the idea of hospitality involves an inherent power imbalance between the often self-appointed ‘master of the house’ and the actual or ostensible guest upon whom conditions are placed.

Unlike hospitality or philoxenia, xenophilia must be commodious enough a concept to allow an embrace of both external and internal difference. In loving the otherness inherent amongst those within a given set of literal or figurative borders – allowing, for example, diverse expressions of what it means to be Australian or Filipino without demanding conformity to an overarching ideal – one subverts the ‘identity’ side of the inherited identity-difference dialectic. And in loving the otherness of those from beyond one’s immediate purview, one subverts the identity-difference dialectic altogether. A distinction will hence be made in this thesis between intra- and inter-
xenophilia; the former representing a departure from the idea that community should equate with sameness, the latter from the idea that it requires segregation from others.

**Translocalism**

Aside from the value of homophily, called into question in the preceding section, the national liberation project embodies a spatial logic that confers a similar geometry of inside and outside upon thought. The activists I worked with are themselves subverting nationalist ideas of space through their practice, engendering instead what I have come to understand, and will hereby attempt to theorise, as translocalism. If the concept of xenophilia holds out the possibility that two people can become friends without conforming to an encompassing homophilic unity, then the concept of translocalism holds out the like possibility that people from different localities, both within and between nation-states, can enter into productive, horizontal partnerships without submitting to national or global unity.

Translocalism entails a network, as opposed to patchwork, ontology of space; a geometry of points and connecting lines, rather than the discrete partitions comprising standard world maps. I deem that the particular spatial imaginary associated with the nation-state system is not natural, but rather, a contingent ‘habit of thought’ (Bateson 1972) unravelling in the face of globalisation and postcoloniality. Translocalism is one amongst a range of alternative spatial imaginaries emerging in the present era, but
before examining it in detail, I will argue as to the significance of space in the first place, and sketch a provisional framework by which to understand it.

Space matters because despite the ‘apparent innocent spatiality of social life... human geographies are filled with politics and ideology’ (Soja cited in Jarvis 1998, p. 44). We cannot stand outside geography, nor are we ever completely free from struggles over geography. Said (1994, p. 6) emphasises that such struggles are not solely about ‘soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings’. It is precisely the dimension of the imagination that concerns me here. Above, I made use of the notion of the imaginary. According to Dilip Gaonkar (2002, pp. 1,7), imaginaries are the ‘constitutive magma of meaning’; symbolic matrices ‘within which a people imagine and act as world-making collective agents’. They are selective interpretations of reality that, although generated from the wider social contexts of which they are a part, also become ‘social entities themselves, mediating collective life’ (Gaonkar 2002, p. 4). Imaginaries are therefore both ‘context-driven’ and ‘context-generative’ (Appadurai 1996, pp. 182-188), produced and productive at one and the same time.

When it comes to spatial imaginaries, a particularly apt analogy might be that of the map. Each map conveys a story about a specific territory, but is not, however, equivalent to the territory itself (Bateson 1972, p. 455). If this were the case, we would end up with the redundancy of a map with a 1:1 ratio the size of its very object of representation (Borges 1946). Central to the art of cartography, then, are choices of
scale and theme; of what gets put in and what gets left out. How closely a map conforms to the territory it describes is less important than what it allows us to see, what it thereby makes possible, and how it is put to use. ‘How it works is the sole question’ in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1972, p. 180) estimation.

As with maps, imaginaries can work in any number of ways, with possible effects being inclusive of those both benign and malignant, enabling and prohibitive, revealing and concealing. Acts of mapping and imagining also play a part in producing their objects, and thus are not straightforwardly representational. This was a point made by Jean Baudrillard (cited in Harmon 2009, p. 15) when asserting ‘it is the map that precedes the territory’.

*Patchworks and networks*

With all this in mind, I will now take up Ernest Gellner’s (cited in Malkki 1992, p. 26) invitation to consider two hypothetical maps, or spatial imaginaries, of the world’s cultural make-up, one drawn up before, and the other after, the dissemination of the ‘national principle’ through European imperialism: ‘The first map resembles a painting by Kokoschka. The riot of diverse points of colour is such that no clear pattern can be discerned in any detail’. The second, meanwhile, is said to resemble a Modigliani: ‘There is very little shading; neat flat surfaces are clearly separated from each other, it is generally plain where one begins and the other ends’ (Gellner cited in Malkki 1992, p. 26).
The second map described above is equivalent to what Nancy Fraser (2009) designates as the ‘Westphalian imaginary’. Referenced here is the Peace of Westphalia, a set of treaties signed in 1648 that put an end to the Thirty Years’ War and laid the basis to the international nation-state system. Presently, even when postcolonial and globalising processes seem to be undermining the very basis of the Westphalian imaginary, it nonetheless continues to thrive in the minds of many, assisted in part by the United Nations (UN) as one of its foremost guardians. This demonstrates that although imaginaries are immanent to their contexts at the moments of their production, disconnects can arise over time should a given imaginary fail to be sufficiently responsive to new input from its environment (Gell-Mann 1994, p. 71).

Returning to the first of Gellner’s (cited in Malkki 1992) hypothetical maps, it is curious that the spatial schema he ascribed to the precolonial world would also seem readily ascribable to our postcolonial present. If, however, one recalls my earlier description of cosmopolitanism as a constitutive force that both precedes and succeeds the formation of nation-states, this ceases to appear contradictory and begins to make sense. I contend that the nation-state system is a temporary reterritorialisation of the forces of ontological flux. Its undoing on account of both sovereign and nonsovereign globalisation means that spatial imaginaries premised upon flows and connections are once again coming to the fore. Hence, while some continue to abide by Westphalian world maps even in spite of intensifying global integration, others are charting new cartographies more in consonance with the times. Included here is the translocalist imaginary.
Although the idea of the ‘translocal’ is peppered throughout the work of scholars Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Paul Gilroy (2004), through whom I was first exposed to the term, they fall short of defining it in any explicit way. Rather, its meaning is left implicit, allied to and accompanying ideas of ‘networks of interconnectedness and solidarity’ (Gilroy 2004, p. 5) that cross national boundaries. The term ‘transnationalism’ (Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994) is a much more popular way of denoting such phenomena, but for me is an idea that needs to be disaggregated into diverse modalities too often conflated with one another. Translocalism is one distinct modality of transnationalism, but there are others – pan-nationalism and bi-nationalism included. The latter two will be explored in Chapter 5, suffice it to say for now that they remain rooted in a patchwork ontology of space, in contrast to those, like translocalism, that are premised instead on network space.

Though focussed on migration rather than social movements, the edited volume *Translocal geographies* (Brickell & Datta 2011a) fills a significant gap in the hitherto undertheorised literature on translocalism. For the collection’s editors, Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta (2011b, pp. 3, 19), the concept of translocalism foregrounds ‘the importance of local-local connections’ – that is, the ‘literal as well as imaginative links between “heres” and “theres”’ that take the form of localities and not just nations. We live our lives and relate to one another translocally, and these connections must be seen to take place by way of actual places, not apart from them.

In the translocal schema, then, the world ceases to resemble a Westphalian quilt and becomes instead a planetary network of localities, all caught up in one another’s
destinies by virtue of ‘a globalization that reaches ever outward from within particular places’; in other words, the ‘hyper-extension’ of the ‘emplaced social relations’ of everyday life (Flusty 2004, pp. 3-4). It should be added, though, that translocalism is not limited to global or transnational phenomena, but applies equally to local-local connections within nation-states as well (Brickell & Datta 2011b).

*Rigidity and flexibility*

To date, I have counterposed ‘a world of nation-states’ with ‘an interconnected, intermingled world... where various economies, cultures, and peoples intersect and interact’ (Ang 2001, p. 5). This will not be enough, since the complexity of the latter, consisting of processes of both sovereign and nonsovereign globalisation, needs to be accounted for too. Thus, in addition to the distinction between patchwork and network space, one would also do well to distinguish between different kinds of networks – some rigid and static, others flexible and dynamic (Cleaver 2008).

It is common for critical globalisation scholars to attribute qualities of flexibility to the new regime of global capitalism, as, for instance, in David Harvey’s (1990) concept of ‘flexible accumulation’. I contend, though, that such notions often serve as euphemisms for the imposition of new kinds of rigidities. In this section, I will seek to uncouple flexibility from sovereign globalisation and associate it instead with its nonsovereign counterpart. Translocalism, in my formulation, corresponds only to the latter.
Capitalism has liberated itself from the nation-state, but in doing so has retrerritorialised at the supranational level. The question is not just one of scale, but also of the modes by which sovereignty operates. Here, I will revisit and further build upon the discussion in the preceding chapter of power in its modern and postmodern permutations. Where modern, nation-state-based sovereignty is largely reliant on *enclosures*, sovereignty in its postmodern, globalised incarnation could be seen to rely instead on *networks* which are scarcely any less rigid (Deleuze 1992a). The poet Annie Le Brun (2008) builds on Foucault’s (1977) theorisations of the former, for which he took the institution of the prison to be emblematic, to eventually arrive at the latter through her concept of the ‘network prison’. ‘The labyrinth of circuits’, she writes, ‘is far stronger than the walls against which some of us bang our heads’ (Le Brun 2008, p. 3).

Not merely poetic reverie, Le Brun’s (2008) musings find resonance in the ‘network society’ thesis of Manuel Castells (2000), as well as in the theory of Empire examined earlier. To some, borders might still resemble prison walls, yet to others, the walls perpendicular to their path may have been replaced by those on either side of them, containing them within channels that simultaneously allow for, and strictly regulate, mobility.²² Consider the Filipin@ workers around the world, who, while permitted to move across national jurisdictions as never before, are only able to do so under the uncompromising conditionalities associated with contracts and visas. The form of control then becomes canalisation, not simple enclosure, with the figurative prison

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²² Anna Tsing (2005, p. 6) makes a similar case to Le Brun, but relies instead on the image of the road system: ‘Roads create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go. The ease of travel they facilitate is also a structure of confinement.’
guard in Foucault (1977) effectively morphing into the figure of the *engineer* who must ‘subordinate hydraulic force to conduits, pipes, embankments...’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 400). This, for me, is not flexibility, but a different kind of rigidity. The visa schemes for overseas workers offered by wealthy countries clearly operate as restrictive pipelines, allowing labour shortages to be filled by bringing in people from countries like the Philippines on temporary contracts, which are designed in large part to facilitate labour discipline (Pinches 2001, pp. 198-200), before piping them back home when their contracts expire or when they fail to remain compliant.

Granted, greater and greater flexibility is being enjoyed by transnational corporations and the political-economic elite more generally in the current era. My view, though, is that this should not be mistaken for an across-the-board flexibility, since its effect on those subject to it is ultimately rigidifying in many cases. As Zygmunt Bauman (1998, p. 69) highlights,

all dominance consists in the pursuit of an essentially similar strategy – to leave as much leeway and freedom of manoeuvre to the dominant, while imposing the strictest possible constraints on the decisional freedom of the dominated side.

Flexibility does come into play in the context of supranational sovereignty, albeit in scenarios quite different to those usually theorised. I am referring here to the restoration of flexibility through resistance and subversion on the part of global capitalism’s subjects, including the Filipina contract workers mentioned earlier. Take, for example, Nicole Constable’s (1999, p. 214) chronicling of the autonomy that one Filipina domestic worker in Hong Kong managed to win for herself:
Although part-time work – or “aerobics” as it is euphemistically called – is illegal for foreign workers, it is not uncommon, and Acosta’s employer knew she worked for several employers. Acosta skilfully negotiated her numerous part-time jobs, earning substantially more money than she would have with a single employer. She arranged her own hours and refused to work for employers she did not like. Although vulnerable because of the illegality of her work, she seemed both confident and proud of her ability to work the system.

Filipina domestic workers have frequently been known to escape abusive employers as well. Strategies of ‘exodus’ (Virno 1996), as opposed to head-on confrontation, are ubiquitous, just as they were in the colonial era. Consider the thousands of Filipino seamen aboard Spanish galleons who, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, jumped ship in present-day California and Mexico to flee into the hinterlands, integrating into indigenous populations or founding communities well-removed from colonial authorities (Mercene 2007, p. 106).

The case can be made that the assertion of autonomous mobility does not simply arise in response to power, but also precedes it, just as the wild river predates its canalisation (Hardt & Negri 2000; Negri 1999; Papadopoulos, Stephenson & Tsianos 2008). Wherever people rebel, an overflowing of officially-designated channels could be said to take place, amounting to a restoration, however impermanent, of ontological flux. These are the flows and becomings constitutive of nonsovereign globalisation – and of the translocalist imaginary in turn.

The local and the global
Castells’ (2000) oversight was to attribute the network form to sovereign globalisation alone. I propose that the networks comprising global capitalism might be better described as *transnodal*, rather than translocal. The idea of the node, unlike that of the local, seems to connote something impersonal, such as when it is used to refer to relay-points for the movement of commodities, money, or data. As James Ferguson (2005) demonstrates with respect to transnational corporations in Africa, the agents of global capitalism display little commitment to the communities and places where they do business.

In addition to questions of rigidity and flexibility, then, what is also at stake is the question of the local. In contrast to other modes of transnationalism, that which I have designated as translocalism is an imaginary in which a commitment to locality is retained, even as solidarity is forged with others elsewhere. The accommodation of the local within the translocal will be substantiated ethnographically in due course, but it will be necessary for the time being to lay some theoretical foundations upon which to do so.

One criticism often levelled at cosmopolitanism is that it allows people to shirk responsibility to the communities in which they live in favour of an abstract commitment towards humanity as a whole (Bhabha 2001, p. 42). Although mine is a cosmopolitanism that eschews the local-global opposition, there are cosmopolitanisms that in fact embody it, in which case the aforementioned criticism becomes justifiable. Consider, for instance, Hannerz’s (1996, p. 102) formulation that ‘there are cosmopolitans, and there are locals’, each assumed to be mutually-exclusive groups.
further case in point is the Kantian cosmopolitanism of Martha Nussbaum (1996). Informing her work is a spatial imaginary of concentric circles, moving outwards from the individual to the family to the local community and so on, until eventually reaching the largest circle: humanity as a whole. From this perspective, one must transcend locality in order to arrive at the global, cosmopolitan ideal.

The concept of translocalism makes conceivable a very different cosmopolitanism. Local communities cease being antonyms of the global and instead become the constituent elements of what Flusty (2004) calls ‘everyday globalities’. It therefore becomes possible to be local and cosmopolitan at the very same time. One example to be discussed at length in this thesis is the relationship between activist groups in Manila and San Francisco waging a common struggle against Chevron. For these groups, local action and translocal solidarity are not contradictory but demonstrably compatible, challenging assumptions that the local and the global are necessarily opposed.

For me, then, the antonym of cosmopolitanism is not the local but the national. When cosmopolitanism resurfaced as a buzzword in the 1990s, it was precisely nationalism that theorists were trying to overcome (Mignolo 2011, p. 260). I touched on this earlier with reference to Said’s reading of Fanon. Although conflated in some accounts, nation and locality remain largely distinct in this thesis, since the former, in my view, is a sovereign apparatus from which the latter must be freed. Detachment from the nation does not have to mean detachment from locality. In turn, staying connected to one’s local community in no way precludes the possibility of maintaining relations with
communities elsewhere. The reality of cosmopolitanism today is one of ‘multiple attachment’ (Robbins 1998, p. 3); ‘a rooted cosmopolitanism that accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches’ (Cohen cited in Schiller, Darieva & Gruner-Domic 2011, p. 401).

Becoming-cosmopolitan, xenophilia, and translocalism form part of a bevy of concepts, introduced throughout Part I. I have been intentional in this endeavour, since each will be indispensable to the remaining chapters. Granted, reality always exceeds the concepts we use to make sense of it, and so it must be acknowledged that my chosen terms are never infallible and always provisional.

With the bulk of the theoretical and historical groundwork having been covered, I am now able to proceed to the ethnographic heart of this thesis; namely, to an examination of the becomings-cosmopolitan that presented themselves to me in San Francisco and Manila respectively.
Part II

The eastern Pacific
Chapter 4

The San Francisco Bay Area

If my intention was to add a diasporic component to my work on the Philippine Left and its repercussions, then it made perfect sense for me to head to San Francisco. For all the historical reasons sketched in the Introduction, the city and its surrounding areas have become home to one of the largest concentrations of Filipinos (and their descendents) outside of the Philippines (Vergara 2009, p. 24). This, combined with the fact that the Bay Area has long been an epicentre of radical politics within the US, has meant that it has also become a key centre of diasporic Filipino activism globally.

Cesar, whom I introduced at the opening of this thesis, spent a decade in exile there during the Marcos years, where he continued to organise in support of the revolution. Furthermore, amidst the crisis of Philippine Left in the early Nineties, exiled revolutionaries chose San Francisco as the site of the Forum for Philippine Alternatives – a seminal international gathering that brought together a range of actors who would later fall on the RJ side of the 1993 splits (FOPA 1992, p. 30). Far from being restricted to Philippines-centred issues, Filipino and Fil-Am activists in the Bay Area have an equally long history of engagement with social justice causes endemic to the US.

In this, the first of my ethnographic chapters, I will describe Filipino American activism in the Bay Area as I encountered it in 2007. I will firstly sketch the general features,
before then zooming in on the persistent debate over whether Filipin@ American activists should primarily mobilise around US- or Philippines-centred issues. I will lastly direct my attention to FAEJI, a group which displaces the largely Westphalian terms of the aforementioned debate by combining both US- and Philippines-oriented activism into a novel translocal framework.

The lay of the land

I had been to San Francisco once before, en route with my family to visit our Fil-Am relatives in Florida. I was just eleven at the time, and so was excited to return to San Francisco as an adult. The plane touched down mid-morning on a cold but sunny day in January 2007. As for the political climate, President George Bush was still in power and the War on Terror still in full-swing. Meanwhile, Bush’s ally from across the Pacific, President Gloria Arroyo of the Philippines, was gearing up for mid-term elections, as reports filtered through of over one hundred dead in election-related violence (Zarate 2007). Macropolitics aside, I firstly had to pass through immigration.

‘What’s the purpose of your visit?’ asked the immigration officer as she leafed through my papers.

‘Academic research’, I replied. ‘I’ll be hosted over at UC Berkeley\(^{23}\).’

\(^{23}\) University of California – Berkeley campus.
She had my Australian passport in her hands, but given my name and phenotype suspected other origins. ‘Are you Filipino or Latino?’ she enquired.

‘Half-Filipino. On my mother’s side’.


‘Wow, how long have you been in the US?’

‘About ten years now’.

Our banter continued as she stamped my documents, before finally asking whether or not I was married. Laughing, I answered in the negative, at which point she smiled and said: ‘Well, maybe you might find a nice Filipina wife here’.

I had not anticipated such a warm welcome into the US, particularly not in the post-September 11 climate. I was fearful when applying for my visa that I might not even be allowed into the country, given my arrest in 2003 (arbitrary though it was) at an anti-war demonstration outside the US Consulate in Perth. Ironically, I found myself inside the exact same consulate years later, face-to-face with the man who would decide my fate. Midway through trying to explain my arrest, the consular official interjected and said ‘No, no, that’s okay. Plenty of Americans disagree with US foreign policy too. I think you’re gonna go there, do some study, and come back – no problems’.

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24 Slang for Filipina. ‘Pinoy’ is the masculine equivalent.
I later learnt that the Filipina immigration officer who stamped me in at San Francisco airport had been fortunate in her own way as well. In the wake of September 11, a congressional hearing found that 80 percent of airport employees in the United States did not hold US passports (Rodriguez & Balce 2004, p. 131). With rising fears about national security, the preference switched to US citizens. The passing of a new security act resulted in the firing of some 28,000 people country-wide, a thousand of whom were Filipin@ immigrants working in Bay Area airports (Rodriguez & Balce 2004, p. 133). The response from Filipin@ and Fil-Am activists was swift and a campaign against unjust lay-offs and deportations was mounted in the ensuing months (Balce et al. 2004, pp. 19-27). I heard much of this campaign during my time in San Francisco – the very kind of diasporic activism I was there to learn about.

Unlike in the Bay Area, there is little diasporic Filipin@ activism to speak of in Australia. A personal motivation for me, then, was to explore, by proxy, what a prospective Filipin@ Australian politics might look like. In these efforts, I seemed to cut quite a perplexing figure amongst my Fil-Am interlocutors. ‘I was intrigued when I heard you were Filipino Australian’, remarked Elroy, a veteran revolutionary of the Seventies generation, during our first meeting over coffee. ‘I’d never heard those two words – “Filipino” and “Australian” – put together like that before’. Another interlocutor, Emma, a FAEJI member and epidemiologist, expressed something similar: ‘I’ve never thought about there being Filipinos in Australia before. It’s so interesting. You’re the first Filipino Australian I’ve met’.
What we encountered in each other was both a familiarity and a strangeness. Fil-Am experiences of racism, marginalisation, and the ‘perpetual foreigner syndrome’ (Wu 2002, pp. 79-129) were familiar to me. One notable difference, though, was that, unlike most of the Fil-Am activists I met, my own politicisation had occurred independently of my Filipin@ background. The Philippines was not a place I thought much about as a student activist, given I never really grew up as part of a Filipin@ community in Australia, except for the occasional extended family get-togethers. For many Fil-Ams, though, the process of radicalisation and that of obtaining an affirmative sense of Filipin@ identity seem to conjoin into one and the same trajectory. Much of this has to do with their unique positionality as a formerly-colonised people within the ex-imperial metropole – a location they often call the ‘belly of the beast’. Research participants revealed to me on numerous occasions that learning about the history of the US-Philippines relationship was the first step in their formation as political activists.

With Philippine and Filipin@ American history seldom taught in schools25, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) like the Philippine Community Alliance* (PCA) have taken it upon themselves to bring this history to public awareness. One way that the PCA does this is by running regular walking tours around San Francisco, visiting sites of historical significance to the Filipin@ American community. Included on the itinerary is a towering monument in Union Square erected in 1903 to commemorate

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25 Although true at the time of my fieldwork, this is now changing. In 2015, a law was passed by the California State Legislature to observe an annual ‘Larry Itliong Day’ in honour of the influential Filipin@ American labour organiser, additionally encouraging schools to teach about his life and contributions (Oriel 2015). Itliong is most remembered for his leadership of the joint Filipin@-Mexican farmworkers’ strike in Delano, California in 1965.
the American takeover of the Philippines (see Image 10). There, as myself and a group of Fil-Am students from Stanford University huddled beneath our umbrellas one drizzly morning, our tour guide recounted in brief the imperial history that it symbolised. I also learnt at UC Berkeley that several buildings on campus are named after former colonial administrators in the Philippines.²⁶

The cultural geography of the Bay Area is marked, not only by reminders of US imperialism, but also by inscriptions of the colonised and formerly-colonised. I refer not solely to the presence of Filipin@ restaurants, grocers, and newspapers like *Philippine News* and *Pinoy Today*, but also to markers of anticolonial resistance. Tucked

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²⁶ These include Barrows Hall and Moses Hall. David Barrows served in the occupying government between 1901 and 1909, Bernard Moses between 1900 and 1902 (Dyson 2009; University of California 2010). Both also held professorships at UC Berkeley.
away in a quiet corner of San Francisco’s SoMa (or ‘South of Market’) neighbourhood, for instance, are some peculiarly-named streets: Lapu-Lapu, Rizal, Bonifacio and Mabini streets, among others (see Image 11). Lapu-Lapu was an indigenous chieftain from Mactan Island in the Philippines, whom many regard as a hero for his slaying of the conquistador, Ferdinand Magellan, in 1521. The others, meanwhile, were prominent figures in the anti-Spanish rebellions of the 1890s, with José Rizal even martyred for his anticolonial novels.27

This cluster of streets was on the itinerary of the aforementioned PCA walking tour. According to our guide, the street names emerged out of an anti-gentrification campaign that took place in the area some decades ago. Community-members mobilised to save the neighbourhood’s low-income housing, much of it occupied by

Image 11: San Francisco streets named after Filipino revolutionaries

27 The works referred to here are Noli me tangere (1887) and El filibusterismo (1891). It should also be noted that Rizal, en route to Europe in 1888, stopped over briefly in San Francisco. There, he was shocked by the racism against Asians and African Americans, and troubled by forebodings of US expansionism in the Pacific (Anderson 2007, p. 68).
Filipin@ immigrants. Although the developers and municipality prevailed, one
concession that the tenants and their allies were able to negotiate was for a handful of
streets to be renamed after Filipino historical figures.

Having presented an impressionistic overview of the context of my Bay Area research, I
will now zoom in on the activist milieux that I worked in, particularly the debates and
conflicts by which they are punctuated.

**Political fault-lines**

One afternoon while writing up some fieldnotes in my fourth-floor Berkeley
apartment, the whole building began to sway like a ship on waves. A few breaths later,
it was over. Notoriously earthquake-prone, the San Francisco Bay Area is also riven
with fault-lines of a political nature. On one side of the San Andreas Fault cutting
through Filipin@ American radical politics is the tectonic plate of Philippines-centred
activism; on the other, that of US-centred activism. A pair of vignettes will help to put
this dynamic into context.

The first begins about a month into my fieldwork in the Bay Area, when I received an e-
mail advertising the launch of a photography exhibition on the Filipin@ diaspora. It
was slated to take place in a community space run by the Manilatown Heritage
Foundation (MHF) in downtown San Francisco, which I was curious to visit. I also made
a special point of attending that night for the panel of speakers, which included a
number of veteran organisers whom I was keen to connect with. Amongst them was
Simon (first introduced in Chapter 2), who is well-remembered for his leadership role in the struggle to defend the International Hotel in the 1970s.

The low-income housing provided by the I-Hotel (as it is commonly known) was mostly occupied by Filipin@ immigrants, located as it was in the then-Filipin@ enclave of Manilatown. The neighbourhood’s immigrant and working-class population had, however, been steadily displaced by the expansion of San Francisco’s financial district. As Larry Salomon (1998, p. 95) put it, ‘urban renewal’ unfortunately meant ‘Filipino removal’. By the late 1970s, the I-Hotel was all that was left of old Manilatown, but it too had to go for reasons made clear by municipal official, Justin Herman (cited in Salomon 1998, p. 93): ‘This land is too valuable to permit poor people to park on it’. The I-Hotel was slated for demolition and its residents given a notice of eviction, which all unanimously refused to comply with. Together with community activists, they launched a spirited campaign to save the I-Hotel which was crushed one night in 1977 when ‘400 police in full riot gear rushed the 3,000-person-strong barricade to evict the 50 or so tenants barricaded inside’ (Salomon 1998, p. 101).

A quarter-of-a-century later, sustained community organising resulted in the construction of a brand new I-Hotel very near to its original site. Completed in 2005, its original function as a low-income housing block was restored and its ground floor given over to the MHF who would use it for its offices and archives, as well as for a community events space. It was here that the aforementioned exhibition launch was held.
What stood out to me from Simon’s talk was his lament about how so few activists in the Philippines have heard of the I-Hotel struggle, despite it being considered seminal by Filipin@ Americans. He remarked that Fil-Ams are more than just exiles from the homeland; that their activism should not be limited to issues in the Philippines (as important as they are), but should also be concerned with issues in their own communities. ‘What we need to build’, concluded Simon, ‘is not just a Filipino movement, but a Filipino diaspora movement’.

His quarrel, I came to realise, was with the Philippine nationalist perspective on the place of diasporic Filipin@s – the subject of considerable debate since the 1970s. The nationalists maintain that Fil-Ams are but overseas constituents of the Philippines, and therefore that they should focus their activism on issues in the homeland. The other side, which includes Simon, maintains that Fil-Ams are primarily constituents of the communities in which they live, and therefore that their energies should be directed towards local issues. This debate will be examined in depth in Chapter 5; for now, it will be necessary to continue mapping the general features.

Another story that illustrates the discord between US-centred and Philippines-centred activism stems from my involvement in the Fil-Am Popular Education Network* (FPEN) – home to several dozen activist educators, interfacing with hundreds of students each year. In the early days of my fieldwork, I chanced upon a flyer at a Filipin@ community centre advertising a semester-long course that FPEN would be running at the City College of San Francisco. Half of the curriculum would be dedicated to Tagalog language instruction, the other half to Philippine and Filipin@ American social history.
Topics included the Philippine-American War, the Philippines under US rule, resistance to the Marcos dictatorship, and Filipin@ migration to the US. I felt it was too good an opportunity to pass up, and enrolled soon thereafter.

My classmates were mostly locally-born Fil-Ams, keen to explore their identities in relation to both the US and the Philippines. The text *America is in the heart* was central—a semi-autobiographical novel by Carlos Bulosan (1946), a Filipino immigrant to the US and labour militant in the inter-war period, now held up as the archetypal Filipin@ American activist. I was taken by the enthusiasm of the volunteers who ran the programme, and impressed to experience the ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ in practice, adapted by FPEN from Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970).

FPEN had been up-and-running for six years by that point, with courses spread across a number of schools. Balboa High School was where it first began, its *raison d’être* explained by FPEN’s charismatic founder, Elena, as follows: ‘Students wanted more Filipino teachers; they wanted more curriculum that was Filipino American. Balboa had 27 percent Filipinos, so it was this huge population that wasn’t really being served’. A small programme was implemented thenceforth, later proliferating to other institutions.

FPEN is given to an understanding of Filipin@ Americans, not as constituents of the Philippine homeland, but of the communities in which they reside. This corresponds with how Elena identifies culturally: ‘I’m definitely a Pinay rooted in the United States—in terms of my identity, who I grew up with, what I know’. Although respecting and
embracing her heritage, it became apparent to me that Elena locates home, not in the homeland, but in the diaspora. Her parents are immigrants, but she herself was born in the US and maintains few ongoing links with the Philippines, having only been there twice. As she articulated in an interview:

Politically, I have some links, but they’re not as strong as they could be. I’ve been very Fil-Am in terms of my politics... We have so many local issues that sometimes tackling the larger, global ones – I can teach about it, I can teach about global issues, but going to the Philippines and organizing? I don’t know if that’s gonna be my role.

FPEN’s local orientation means that it tends to attract criticism from nationalist organisations like the Filipin@ Student Alliance* (FSA), based in the US but aligned with the RA faction of the Philippine Left. Although Philippine and Fil-Am matters are given more or less equal weight in FPEN’s social history curriculum, it is geared more towards the empowerment of US-based, and not Philippines-based, constituents. From the perspective of the FSA’s homeland-centred nationalism, such an approach is anathema.

Towards the end of semester, we were joined in the FPEN classroom by guest speakers from a range of Filipin@ American activist groups. Our teachers were of the hope that our guests might bring to life the many issues we had been exploring, as well as inspire students to become politically-active themselves. As Elena herself articulated as the class got underway: ‘I feel this is the direction I want to move my students in – into

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* FSA’s presence is strongest at San Francisco State University, with an active membership of 20-30 at the time I was doing fieldwork.

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community work. [FPEN] isn’t a program or an organization – it’s a pipeline, so that one day, it’ll be my students up there speaking as organizers, like these people today’.

The speakers included representatives from the South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), United Playaz, Alay\textsuperscript{29}, and the aforementioned FSA. The latter stood out from the other organisations present, owing to its Maoism and Philippines-centred practice. SOMCAN, in contrast, operates much more locally, advocating for social and economic justice for Filipin@ American and other working-class residents of the SoMa district. Meanwhile, United Playaz seeks to mitigate gang violence by promoting cross-cultural understanding between different racial and ethnic groups in San Francisco high schools. Its mission, in the words of one of the members present, is to ‘unite the different races and learn from each other’s cultures’ – a first example of the kind of xenophilic politics I have so far only discussed in the abstract. Similarly, the speaker from Alay affirmed the vital importance of alliance-building with other ‘communities-of-color’. This was something I witnessed first-hand at a joint Filipin@-Latin@ immigrant rights rally that Alay helped organise a few weeks prior.

As for the FSA, its priority is to support the work that the NDM is doing in the Philippines. Said Renée, one of several FSA representatives present: ‘The kind of activism we do is really different to the others. We don’t separate Filipino and Fil-Am issues. Our issues here stem from issues in the Philippines. We always need to connect the two’. Where the RAs do act on local issues, their habit is to find a conceptual link to the homeland, thus allowing them to keep their nationalist framework intact. Their

\textsuperscript{29} ‘Alay’ in Tagalog means ‘offering’.

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approach might hence be understood as what Ania Loomba (1998, pp. 211-215) has christened ‘pan-nationalism’\(^{30}\).

Renée gave the example of the FSA’s campaign for a certain Fil-Am lecturer at San Francisco State University to be awarded full tenure. His precarious employment situation was connected to the fact that the US is taking money out of education while at the same time increasing aid to the Philippine military, suspected by many, the UN included, to be behind a covert campaign of extrajudicial killings against leftists (Ubac, Papa & Dizon 2007). The point Renée was getting at was that one cannot address Fil-Am issues in isolation, but must also work towards the overthrow of US imperialism in the Philippines. Once conditions in the homeland improve, she argued, conditions for diasporans around the world would improve as well.

While part of me was in agreement with the idea that everything is interconnected, another part of me recognised that Fil-Am issues do have their own distinctiveness. At home later that evening, I pondered the possibility that what was at work in FSA’s practice was an odd kind of imperialism in reverse: If American imperialism extends its ‘apparatus of capture’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 468-522) westwards to engulf the Philippines, does Philippine pan-nationalism effect an eastbound universalising drive in an attempt to reinscribe diasporic Filipin@s in the US back into the national fold?

One of Renée’s comrades had even gone so far as to say: ‘Our struggle as Fil-Ams is not our own’. Objecting to FSA’s disavowal of locality, the United Playaz speaker made the

\(^{30}\) This has been theorised elsewhere as ‘long-distance nationalism’ (Anderson 1998, pp. 58-74) or ‘transnational nationalism’ (Kastoryano cited in Dufoix 2008, p. 94).
case that ‘We have to clean our own house first’. It had been an illuminating exchange, but there was one group that was notably absent that day. I am referring here to FAEJI, unique in Filipin@ American activism not only for its ecological outlook but also for the fact it has found a way to overcome the divide between US- and Philippines-centred politics. This is the topic to which I now turn.

The translocalists

Headquartered in Berkeley, FAEJI’s influence is larger than what their modest active membership might suggest. The novelty of FAEJI’s practice, as I came to grasp it through my fieldwork, is that it is neither an FPEN-style localism nor an FSA-style pan-nationalism, but rather, one in which issues concerning communities in both the US and the Philippines are brought together into a novel translocal framework. This is illustrated by its campaign against Chevron – a multinational oil company headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area (more specifically, in San Ramon) while also being responsible for social and environmental abuses in the Manila suburb of Pandacan (see Maps 2 and 3). There, it operates a hazardous oil depot with adverse health impacts on the surrounding residents. As such, FAEJI, together with its Philippine partner, the Pandacan Environmental Justice Alliance* (PEJA), is advocating for the immediate closure and clean-up of the depot site. While PEJA targets Chevron’s operations in Pandacan, FAEJI does likewise in San Ramon, as well as in Richmond, just
north of Berkeley, where a Chevron oil refinery is similarly impacting on nearby residents.\textsuperscript{31}

The struggle at each end is local, but FAEJI and PEJA have also seen fit to collaborate in a way that is just as transnational as their corporate adversary. The difference is that theirs is a \textit{translocal}, as opposed to transnodal, form of transnationalism. It is, however, the distinction between the translocalism of FAEJI and the pan-nationalism of the RAs that I will focus on in this section.

On a visit to the MHF early on in my fieldwork, a staffer named Nita took the time to sit down with me and map out the range of Filipin@ American activist groups in the Bay Area. Getting a handle on who was who would allow me to then decide which groups I would most like to work with. I was intrigued by FAEJI, since they were the only environmental organisation to figure in Nita’s diagram. I e-mailed them that evening, and they responded with an invitation to their upcoming national conference. I was glad for my timing, given that it only takes place biennially.

The conference was held at the Center for Third World Organizing in Oakland, not far from that city’s Chinatown. Fireworks explosions heralding the Chinese New Year punctuated the proceedings, which included workshops on alliance-building, crafting a collective vision, artistic activism, and transnationalism. During the latter session, a veteran organiser named Miguel, resident in the US since the Seventies, reflected on the profound shifts he has seen over his lifetime:

\textsuperscript{31} Everything in this paragraph was current at the time of my fieldwork. Subsequent developments are discussed in the Postscript.
I've been engaged in Philippine support and solidarity work for about twenty-four years... So part of it is trying to reflect on where I've been in this work and what's different now from twenty-four years ago... The income gap between countries has accelerated dramatically... Migration has exploded... Globalization has allowed companies and governments to rule over the world... Advances in technology really strengthen communications between communities and allow for more meaningful exchanges... The ability to have a phone thing and a video thing was unheard of twenty years ago. We were still waiting for the fax to spit out paper... This technology makes, truthfully, the distance come closer... And for an organization like [FAEJI], we should really embrace that and try to maximize the impact of that in our work, much more than we've currently done.

As with Miguel individually, FAEJI as a whole has grappled with the changing global context and its implications for activist practice. Where the FSA and other RA groups have stayed loyal to the traditions of the national liberation era, FAEJI has been seeking ways to update its ideas and practices to better suit contemporary realities. Its response to the crisis of the Left could be characterised, therefore, as one of reinvention rather than reaffirmation. I decided for this reason that FAEJI was just the group I should focus on in my research.

Over the next four months or so, I involved myself in as many of FAEJI’s activities as possible. I attended regular meetings, participated in demonstrations outside Chevron’s San Ramon headquarters, and volunteered in a number of capacities; for instance, by helping out in the office, staffing an information booth at a conference on Asian American activism, and maintaining a newsfeed on Big Oil and the environment. I spent a good deal of time with FAEJI members on an informal basis as well. Through these experiences, I gained valuable insights into the becomings-cosmopolitan embodied in their work.
At the centre of FAEJI’s practice is the notion of ‘Transnational Environmental Justice’. While the first part of the conjunction draws a connection between the US and the Philippines, the latter draws a connection between environmental and social justice values. The term ‘Environmental Justice’ (EJ) has a specific meaning in US activist circles, denoting, in contrast to traditional environmentalism, an approach that refuses the segregation of nature and culture. Attesting to its subversion of both the US-Philippines and nature-culture binaries, Paloma professed in an interview: ‘[FAEJI] takes these traditionally-segmented things and says, “No, they’re really related, and this is how they’re related”’. Before further elaborating on FAEJI’s particular modality of transnationalism, more needs to be said about the Environmental Justice framework, with which it has become intertwined.

The EJ perspective was first formalised in Washington (District of Columbia) at the 1991 National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The charter of principles that emerged from this seminal gathering is ‘something we firmly believe in’, averred Emma, a long-time FAEJI member. One of its themes is that cultural diversity is just as important as biodiversity, with the preamble urging a respect for ‘each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world’ (First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit 1991, p. 371).

The EJ perspective also entails a particular analysis of power, highlighting the tendency for both poorer communities and communities-of-colour to be disproportionately-affected by environmental abuses. EJ activists hence speak of what they call ‘environmental classism’ and ‘environmental racism’. ‘Chevron would never locate
their stuff in a white community here; a white, wealthy community in the US’, Miguel argued. From his perspective, it is no coincidence that Chevron chose to build a highly polluting refinery in Richmond, home to a large number of African American and working-class residents. Likewise in Pandacan, it is the poor who bear the brunt of Chevron’s toxic emissions, at a remove from Manila’s wealthier neighbourhoods. In Emma’s words, then, the main aim of the Environmental Justice Movement is to ensure ‘that communities aren’t disproportionately impacted because of their race, color, class, and that there is a process for engagement on decisions that are impacting these communities’.

Before joining FAEJI, Lupe had been active with a mainstream conservation NGO. When asked what it was like to transition into Environmental Justice work, she replied:

It’s really different, because... [FAEJI] is very much about how the environment and people are extremely connected every day, in their everyday lives, in their wellbeing, and in their capacity to survive... Before [FAEJI], I had always been about conservation... I always knew people were connected to the environment, but I just never got a chance to totally explore that. And then separately, I had this other journey of my Filipino American-ness, and it really married the two things I was going through, and I think that’s why [FAEJI] is really cool... it provides people this space to do both, to explore both.

Another young FAEJI activist, Ligaya, likewise affirmed her passion for ‘environmental work that has a cultural mindset to it’: ‘Beyond lumpia [spring rolls] and beyond, you know, dancing, how can, say, lobbying against oil companies – how can that be part of your cultural identity?’
FAEJI has not been content to adopt the EJ framework as is, but rather, has creatively adapted it for its own purposes. It is here that the organisation’s transnational approach becomes apposite. According to Miguel, the original EJ framework was ‘very place-based’, its scope historically limited to disadvantaged communities within the US. As such, it tended to overlook transnational processes associated with globalisation and postcoloniality – a shortcoming that FAEJI is now seeking to rectify. Although remaining committed to the local, FAEJI sees a need to extend solidarity to communities elsewhere; particularly to those with whom, by virtue of intensifying global integration, they have come to share a common fate. Testifying to FAEJI’s uniquely translocal sensibility, Ligaya stated: ‘If people nourish a sense of local community, that’s the first way they can make an impact in transnational work’.

While FAEJI’s transnationalism marks it out from most other EJ groups in the US, its specific mode of transnationalism also distinguishes it from other Filipin@ American activist groups with trans-Pacific ties. As Miguel explained:

Folks who are doing work on the Philippines, I mean outside of [FAEJI] stuff, are still in the old framework... It's been the same framework for thirty-somewhat years... You recruit people here to support the revolution that's going on in the Philippines... In a transnational and globalizing environment, I think that's insufficient.

The pan-nationalist framework, borne of the era of national liberation, is principally upheld by the US wing of the Coalition for National Democracy in the Philippines* (CNDP-US), an umbrella body of which the FSA and numerous other RA groups are part. For the CNDP-US, community is equivalent to the Philippine nation. Although
operating transnationally, it could not exactly be said to operate cross-categorically, since, in effect, it expands the category of the Philippine nation so as to engulf the diaspora. This, I contend, is an attempt to reconcile its nationalist ideology with processes of globalisation and postcoloniality that would otherwise threaten its foundations.

It is no coincidence that FAEJI practices a very different style of transnational activism to the RAs, given that several senior members are NDM veterans who later fell on the RJ side of the Philippine Left. Where the RAs remain wedded to revolutionary nationalism and its pan-nationalist offshoot, FAEJI has been at pains over many years to craft an anational *modus operandi* sensitive to what Miguel describes as an ‘interplay of experiences that aren’t just nation-bound’.

FAEJI does not officially declare itself as a Rejectionist organisation, but its allies in the Philippines are practically all affiliated with the RJ Left. ‘It just seems a lot of the work we do aligns well with their approach in organizing’, explained Emma. Unsurprisingly, FAEJI’s unofficial political affinities have been the subject of scorn and suspicion in Reaffirmist circles. I witnessed this first-hand on a number of occasions, especially at the beginning of my fieldwork when I was participating as much in FSA as in FAEJI. Initially, it seemed like a good idea to have a foot in both the RA and RJ camps, but it soon became much too difficult to negotiate the divide.

I began to realise this as early as my very first FSA meeting, when I was given a five-minute slot on the agenda to introduce my research. Following my brief presentation, I
was asked the question of which groups, besides the FSA, I would be working with. Upon learning of my involvement in FAEJI, Teresa, the FSA’s chairperson at the time, remarked: ‘Well, just be careful. They’re not National Democratic. You have to be aware of some of the things they might say to you. If you have any questions, we should talk’.

From what I gathered, Teresa’s concern was that I might be exposed to alternative perspectives on Philippine history and politics beyond the officially-sanctioned narrative of the FSA. Most FSA members whom I met had never heard of the RA-RJ split, nor were they aware that the organisation they had joined was Maoist in orientation. FSA instead labels itself as nationalist or National Democratic, with newcomers not introduced to Maoism until a much later stage of their involvement. As Fil-Am journalist Benjamin Pimentel (2010, p. 2) wrote, the leadership strata of the CNDP-US and its affiliate organisations are ‘not typically transparent about their agenda even as they try to impose it on others’.

I grew increasingly uncomfortable with the RAs’ attempts to stage-manage what I would and would not be exposed to in my fieldwork, just as they do their recruits. I also realised how naïve I had been in thinking it would be possible to operate unencumbered across the RA-RJ divide. One evening, at a public talk in Oakland by Angela Davis, a renowned scholar-activist and former member of the Black Panther Party, I was forced into the position of having to choose who to sit with – FSA or FAEJI. In choosing the latter, it was made clear where my affinities lay. This marked the end
of my involvement with FSA, allowing me thenceforth to concentrate most of my efforts on FAEJI.

In my later fieldwork in Manila, I focussed likewise on activist groups outside the NDM. Although my own anarchistic politics put me at odds with Maoism, it was nevertheless my initial intention to seek, in good faith, a relativist understanding of where the FSA and CNDP-US were coming from. Circumstances dictated, though, that my research would have to take an alternative tack.

I have sought in this chapter to sketch some of the key features of Filipin@ American activism in the Bay Area. The friction between the pan-nationalists and the translocalists will be greatly expanded upon in the chapter that follows. I will put their respective modes of transnationalism into historical context, while also reading them as expressions of different understandings of community.
Chapter 5

A tale of three transnationalisms

The diasporic transnationalisms to be examined in this chapter each bear the mark of the specific historical contexts that gave rise to them. While pan-nationalism was a product of the national liberation era, translocalism is largely a product of the contemporary era of globalisation and postcoloniality. In the intervening period between the two, there emerged what I have chosen to call the bi-nationalist imaginary. Unlike the pan-nationalists, whose conception of community maps with the Philippine nation-state, the bi-nationalists saw themselves as belonging to the US and Philippine national communities in equal measure. This was in the late 1970s, a time when nationalism was falling out of favour but when alternatives to the Westphalian imaginary were as yet inconceivable for many. Not until the 1990s did a cosmopolitan radical politics come into its own, accompanied by translocalist re-imaginings of space and community.

Before narrating the successive emergence of pan-nationalism, bi-nationalism, and translocalism, I should clarify that I do not conceive of these shifts as progressions along a linear timeline. Rather, in keeping with my theory of becoming-cosmopolitan, I see them as contingent ‘reconfiguration[s] of a field’ (Hall 1995, p. 254), brought about
by the collective creativity of activists who, whenever faced with an impasse, forge an array of alternative routes.

**Pan-nationalism**

A side-effect of the mass emigration of Filipin@s, particularly from the 1960s onwards, has been the diffusion of Philippine revolutionary nationalism. This has transmuted, in diasporic contexts, into what I have been calling pan-nationalism. As Lorna, a Filipina migrant long resident in the US, remarked to me over lunch in Oakland’s Chinatown one afternoon: ‘They think the extent of our contribution to this country is our labor and things like *pansit* [noodles] and *lumpia*, but we also bring our politics!’ In this section, I will trace the rise and fall of the pan-nationalist imaginary in Filipin@ American social movements, drawing on oral histories narrated by my research participants.

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, which rescinded the bans on Asian immigration implemented during the Great Depression, was pivotal. Prior to this time, the Filipin@ American community had been isolated not just from mainstream US society but also from the Philippines. The possibility of transnational community was not really imaginable at that time, since the technological means to achieve ‘simultaneity’ (Estévez 2009) across disparate geographic locales did not yet exist. Given the enclaved environments in which Filipin@ Americans lived, a localist form of radical politics developed – one grounded in a conception of Filipin@ Americans as a
marginalised people within the US, not as peninsular extensions of the greater Philippine nation.

The lifting of immigration restrictions in 1965 spelt the end of this period of isolation, with Filipin@s once again arriving in large numbers. Amongst them were political exiles escaping persecution under Marcos, both in the lead-up to, and following, his declaration of Martial Law in 1972. As Miguel explained in an interview:

> You had people coming here because folks were being sought after by the military in the Philippines. So there were a lot of cadres, some of them were from the CPP, who came here because they were too “hot” in the Philippines... They came here ‘cause they had family.

Over the fifteen-year period of the dictatorship, Filipin@ exiles in the US are reported to have totalled around 15,000 (Gaerlan 1999, p. 95). Benito Vergara (1999, p. 136) has pointed out the contradictory nature of this state-of-affairs: Although rallying against US complicity with Marcos on the one hand, exiled activists simultaneously sought the protection of the US on the other. Miguel suggested, however, that perhaps it was not so much the US government that activists turned to for safety, but rather, their pre-existing family networks that extended into US territory.

One of those to flee the repression in the early stages was Cynthia Maglaya – an energetic young organiser from the KM, a Maoist student group that later merged into the CPP, as mentioned in Chapter 1. In the US, Maglaya subsequently went on to become one of the founders of what Helen Toribio (2000, p. 31) called ‘the most organized leftist institution in the history of the Filipino American community’; namely,
the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP), or, ‘Union of Democratic Filipinos’. According to one of Maglaya’s former comrades: ‘[Her] greatest influence and contribution within the KDP was her ability to bridge the political and cultural differences between recent immigrants and Filipino Americans. She laid the cornerstone that allowed us to build a truly integrated organization...’ (Habal 2000, pp. 201-202). The KDP, founded in 1973 and headquartered in San Francisco, was thus formed out of the merging of two currents from either side of the Pacific (Gaerlan 1999; Toribio 2000; Choy 2005). Its focus, however, was set firmly on the Philippines, with its priority, at least in the beginning, being to support the CPP-NPA in its struggle to overthrow Marcos and take power.

Lorna was one of several former KDP members whom I spent time with and interviewed in the Bay Area. I first met her through a Filipin@ studies group at UC Berkeley, where she was enrolled as a mature-age doctoral student, and was awed by the stories she shared of her past. While still a teenager in the Philippines, she got swept up in the politically-charged atmosphere of UP Diliman – then, as now, a hotbed of radicalism. She joined the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK), but with political repression on the increase, became increasingly fearful of the prospect of arrest, torture, and even death. Lorna and her parents decided it would be best for her to flee, as Maglaya had done, to the relative safety of San Francisco. There, she was

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32 While the KDP represented the left-wing of the anti-dictatorship movement in the US, the Movement for a Free Philippines represented its right-wing. There was also a third national organisation, the Friends of the Filipino People, made up of non-Filipin@ solidarity activists. All three emerged from a series of splits in the National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines, not long after its founding in 1972 (Gaerlan 1999). In keeping with the scope of this inquiry, only the KDP will be focussed on here.

33 Tagalog for ‘Democratic Association of Youth’. For a recent collection of memoirs on the SDK, see Santos & Santos (2008).
happy to find in the KDP a group through which to maintain her involvement in the
Philippine revolution, even at a distance.

Elroy, another of my research participants once active in the KDP, explained how the
organisation was able to garner a lot of quiet support in the Filipin@ American
community:

You can’t understand our work in getting support to oppose the dictatorship if
you don’t understand... who these people were... On the surface, it looked like
they were just here to work, send money back, mind their own business, you
know, get a nice car. But in the same families... you had people whose nephew
was imprisoned, whose schoolmate’s sister went off to the New People’s Army.
Those were the kind of things that, right from the beginning, sustained us.

With the arrival of ever-greater numbers of exiled revolutionaries, many Fil-Am
activists began to develop a newfound awareness of, and affinity for, the homeland,
thereby being drawn away from localist commitments and toward Philippine ‘support
work’. Concomitantly, many came to imagine themselves, not just as marginalised
Americans, but also as overseas subjects of the Philippines.

According to Elroy, the pan-nationalist imaginary appealed to Fil-Ams in part because it
provided them with an enlarged sense of belonging beyond their minority subject
positions within the US. ‘These were people who were American but never made to
*feel* American, so there was a comfort in identifying as Filipino’, he said. It also
appealed, said Miguel, because ‘what was going on in the Philippines was exciting –
revolution was happening – and so, during that period of time, who [Fil-Ams] of course
related to was the Communist Party’. In this way, the localist politics that had
developed amongst Fil-Ams independently of the Philippines before 1965 came to be overshadowed by Philippine Maoism.

The KDP initially shared a very close relationship with the CPP-NPA, even being mandated by the Party to be its *de facto* representative in the United States (Gaerlan 1999, p. 83). ‘We continued to be the main ones to explain why the NPA does its work’, recounted Lorna in an interview carried out at UC Berkeley. ‘We would even have NPA anniversary-of-its-founding celebrations – that’s how radical we were!’ Elroy gave a sense of the historical atmosphere within which this radicalism emerged:

> We were very much representing the New People’s Army *explicitly* [laughs], which today seems kind of funny but you have to remember that that was a period when... large sections of American young people were supporting the enemy literally and would fly Vietcong flags. So supporting the New People’s Army was kind of the Philippine version of the Vietcong, and there was a Left movement that was very explicitly not just opposed to the war, but rooting for the enemy’s victory. It’s a whole other moment in history... That’s the only way you can understand the KDP’s formation.

Following the lead of the CPP-NPA’s ideological framework, the canonical works of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism were studied in KDP reading groups throughout the US, as were the writings of Jose Maria Sison.

From the pan-nationalist perspective that developed as Philippine Maoism took root in the diaspora, Fil-Ams did not have an independent identity of their own, but were rather deemed overseas Filipin@s in exile from their homeland. A poet whom I saw perform at a CNDP-US fundraiser expressed as much when she characterised Fil-Ams as ‘an uprooted diasporic people’. This notion allowed the CPP to recapture diasporans...
within the category of the Philippine nation and thereby demand their allegiance to the nationalist revolution. As far as the Party was concerned, the KDP’s sole function was to provide support for its own endeavours. The locally-grounded politics that had developed amongst the pre-1965 generation was hence cast as irrelevant.

Postcolonial scholar Ien Ang (2001, p. 13) objects to the concept of diaspora on the basis that it disengages people from where they actually live. While not true of all diasporic imaginaries, this is evidently the case with pan-nationalism. Discontent stirred within the KDP the more its members realised the discrepancy between pan-nationalism and their own lived experiences. Typifying the dilemma that many faced at the time, one activist was forced to reflect: ‘Am I a Filipino first or a Filipino American? Where do my loyalties reside – in my country of birth or in the country of my residence?’ (Ojeda-Kimbrough cited in Choy 2005, p. 295). Although ‘the Philippine work did dominate KDP’s organizing’ (Toribio 2000, p. 38) in the early years, many came to insist that US issues, particularly those concerning Filipin@ Americans, should be afforded equal weight in the organisation. Such were the rudimentary stirrings of the bi-nationalist imaginary.

**Bi-nationalism**

Through the course of the 1970s, KDP activists grew increasingly uneasy with the pan-nationalism demanded of them by the CPP. As a result, the KDP leadership eventually decided that, in addition to Philippine support work, it would also try to accommodate its members’ own concerns within the US with an ‘agenda of anti-racist and eventually
pro-socialist domestic organizing’ (Gaerlan 1999, p. 80). The KDP’s newspaper, *Ang Katipunan*, continued to report on the progress of the revolutionary movement in the homeland, but now was additionally filled with stories about issues that KDP activists became involved in locally. These included immigration, education, workers’ rights, and the I-Hotel campaign discussed in Chapter 4.

The new approach advocated by the KDP became known as the ‘Dual Line’ (Habal 2000; Toribio 2000; Choy 2005), explained by Miguel as follows: ‘There is space to accommodate folks who are calling for the revolution in the Philippines and who are organizing for revolution here in the United States, and it’s not a contradiction’. Implicit in this programme, then, was a novel bi-nationalist imaginary.

A commitment to local issues was never really absent from the KDP; it was just that it had been subsumed in the early years by the imperative of marshalling support against Marcos. Gradually, however, KDP activists became more and more active on the US front, plugging back into local movements that had been operating in parallel the whole time. In this, they took inspiration from the insurgent cultural nationalism around them, including those of the Chican@ (Mexican American) and Black Power movements. As Estella Habal (2000, p. 199) wrote,

> the ideas of Black Power had influenced many of us who were willing to listen. We owe a debt to black people in this country who opened the doors for us. Minority peoples became empowered... We began to understand the role of racism and the inferiorization of Third World peoples.
The question of race featured at the core of the KDP’s Dual Line programme (Choy 2005): it held that Filipin@ Americans were not just overseas constituents of the Philippines, but also racialised minority subjects within the US.

The KDP leadership’s insistence on the Dual Line perturbed not only the CPP, but also many of the KDP’s own members who remained committed to the pan-nationalist imaginary. Debates raged within the organisation around whether or not Philippine work should continue to have primacy. Helen Toribio (2000, p. 38), herself a participant in these debates, recalled some of the points of contention raised:

Having a dual program meant objectively participating in two separate revolutions, the Philippines and the US. Could a “revolutionary mass organization” like the KDP realistically consider itself as a part of two revolutions? Shouldn’t one revolution take precedence over the other? And since the Philippine revolution was more advanced (i.e. having a vanguard party in the Communist Party of the Philippines and a strategy), compared to the US (having no singular vanguard and no unified strategy), then shouldn’t Philippine work have primacy within the KDP?... If the Philippine work had priority, then how should the KDP view the fast-growing Filipino community in the US? Given the increasing influx of immigrants from the Philippines, should the KDP view the community as an “overseas” constituent of the Philippines? Or, did an immigrant population settling into American communities and integrating into the workforce mean it was principally a US constituency?

Federico, who also took part in the Dual Line debates before going on to co-found FAEJI, summarised the key divide as follows:

It was a struggle between one perspective which said “Even though we’re in the US, we are still Filipinos, we consider ourselves Filipinos, and we’re part of this struggle in the Philippines as Filipinos”. And then there was another group, within KDP also, which eventually became dominant, and this group said: “We have a Dual Line. We’re Filipinos in the US, therefore we need to also work for social change in the US, but we also need to support the Philippines”.

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It was, in short, a quarrel between two contending imaginaries: pan-nationalism and bi-nationalism.

In 1975, as these debates were peaking, the Chicago chapter of the KDP chose to part ways with the rest of the organisation over its disagreement that US issues should be afforded any equivalence to those in the Philippines. ‘They objected to being asked to do organizing around domestic labor or other social issues in the United States’, wrote Barbara Gaerlan (1999, p. 85), when what they were most concerned with was overthrowing Marcos. Lorna, who had, up until that point, been working with the San Francisco chapter of the KDP, was re-assigned to Chicago to help heal the rift there. In her first few days, she stayed at the house of the only chapter member to have remained loyal to the KDP, and yet her husband had gone the other way. ‘It was very weird!’ exclaimed Lorna, chuckling. Lorna’s work in Chicago bore fruit and ‘the chapter was reintegrated – with the Dual Line in tact’ (Toribio 2000, p. 38).

Although able to reconcile internal differences, the KDP found it was increasingly unable to reconcile itself with the CPP. KDP leaders knew that the Dual Line ran counter to Party dictates, but took steps to respectfully argue their case. Following her success in winning back the Chicago chapter in 1975, Lorna joined a clandestine delegation to the Philippines in 1979 to see if similar progress could be made with the CPP. Recounted Lorna:

We made presentations to the underground leadership about why we felt very strongly about our position and that we felt they were wrong, because the Philippine movement took the position that the overseas Filipino community has to be viewed as part of the Philippine nation. They are the dispersed part of
the Philippine nation and, as such, the Philippine revolutionary movement must have jurisdiction over them. Okay, well, first of all, “there aren’t a lot of people who want to join your revolution!” [laughs]

Clarifying what she meant, Lorna explained to me, as she did to the CPP, that when KDP organisers interfaced with the wider Filipin@ American community, the issues people felt strongest about tended to be those affecting their own lives in the US, untied to what was happening in the Philippines. Lorna made the case for the validity of the Dual Line, but the CPP was unreceptive. Even the fact that people emigrate from the Philippines in the first place was, and sometimes still is, considered traitorous. Those who leave to seek a better life elsewhere, so the argument goes, betray those who stay and fight – hence the dichotomy posed by Caroline Hau (2004) between migration and revolution. Contra the CPP, Lorna maintained that emigrants choose to leave for complex and varied reasons, and it does not necessarily follow that they are deserters to the cause.

Lorna also realised, looking back, that she lacked the language that today is commonplace: ‘This was already the era of globalization, but those terms were not yet the terms to use. We just knew that the internationalization of capital was luring labor where it needs it’. Unlike the KDP, the CPP was not as responsive to the momentous changes taking place. Lorna recalled:

At some point, because we were so arrogant, we characterized their position as “narrow nationalism”. Oh, they got pissed! [laughs]... [The Dual Line] was but one of the myriad of questions that were facing the Philippine Left... There wasn’t yet that tradition of theoretical debate and study within the movement to be able to handle all these questions when Martial Law was declared... It’s very difficult to function logistically under repression, so we were always very
concerned about that. That’s why we felt they should have given us more credit for doing a lot of the theoretical and investigation work that we tried to do, you know, to answer those questions.

Rather than grapple with the implications of the changing global environment, the Party remained wedded to nationalist orthodoxy. ‘It’s an idealist error’, said Elroy in a distinctly Marxist register, ‘because they don’t take into account the material dialectic of acculturation’.

Aside from the Dual Line, debates over international developments also deepened the rift between the KDP and CPP. One flashpoint was the national liberation struggle in Angola. In what became a proxy war between Cold War rivals, pro-independence forces won the backing of the USSR and Cuba, while Portuguese colonialists and anti-independence militias were propped up by the US and South Africa. Meanwhile, China’s animosity toward the Soviet Union after the Sino-Soviet meant it became a strange bedfellow of the US, at least on the Angola question. For the KDP, what was most important was to oppose US imperialism, but the CPP chose to follow the lead of its Maoist exemplars.

The KDP was further alienated from the CPP over China’s support for the genocidal Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (Toribio 2000, pp. 42-43). Owing to these and other events, the KDP gradually came to a complete rejection of its Maoist origins. The rift that first appeared between the KDP and CPP in the mid-1970s became unbridgeable by the early Eighties, and the two organisations severed ties completely.
Following the split from the KDP, the CPP was left without a viable support organisation in the United States. As such, representatives were sent to San Francisco in 1983 to help re-establish a Maoist presence in the diaspora, loyal to the Party’s pan-nationalist line. Their efforts resulted in the formation of the Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC) in 1986 (APC 1986).

When the CPP delegates first arrived in San Francisco, it was unclear to the KDP what their intentions were. ‘We welcomed them’, said Lorna, because we thought there would be a theoretical debate or study, a joint study, which was our proposal... and it didn’t work out because we were informed that they felt we were beyond repair – you know, the political line differences – and that they had decided they would want the KDP to be destroyed.

It turned out that the CPP was only there to ‘re-establish the franchise’, as Miguel put it. He himself joined the APC at the time, as did Federico, but both went the way of the RJs in the splits of 1993. At that point, they suddenly found themselves on the same side as Lorna and others with whom they had previously clashed. Federico, who was born in the Philippines but who has since spent most of his life stateside, narrated his shifting position as follows:

We started up... believing that the Philippines was our main concentration, and by the time we got to ’88 or so we started shifting and realizing... it’s not an issue of whether it’s right or wrong to work on the Philippines or the US. It’s a personal choice. If a Filipino is in the US and wants to work on social change in the US, that’s great. If they want to work on the Philippines, that’s great too... By about ’91 or so, the Left also split in the Philippines completely, and it caused a split here as well, and so many of these organizations died. APC simply died.
One of the ironies of the short-lived APC was that it was founded in the very same year that the CPP was sidelined, and subsequently discredited, in the People Power Revolution that toppled Marcos. The KDP felt vindicated by this turn of events, viewing the Party’s absence in the midst of the revolution ‘as the consummate error of [its] adherence to Maoism’ (Toribio 2000, p. 43).

Although KDP members had the satisfaction of feeling vindicated after 1986, they fared no better in the rapidly-changing environment than did the APC. In fact, the KDP suffered an even earlier demise, resolving to disband itself in 1987. A contributing factor was that many KDP organisers returned to the Philippines to take part in the new ‘democratic space’ that opened up after Marcos. Another reason, according to Lorna, was that

a lot of our activists were also battle-weary, and thought it was time to go back and take care of their children who had grown up without their guidance... And others decided it was time to get married and have kids, and, you know, just a lot of delayed decisions in life which were put on hold in favour of the movement... We were smaller and smaller in number...

The remaining members held several weeks of meetings to collectively decide on the future of the organisation. One possibility that was considered was to maintain the KDP’s newspaper as a progressive broadsheet for the Filipin@ American community, but discontinue the group’s other functions. The eventual consensus, said Lorna, was that ‘we should bury it consciously, just close shop... and one day, when the conditions...
change, maybe some younger folks when we’re already dead or whatever will resurrect it, or maybe one day people will write about it’.

Lorna herself has been writing her memoirs. Looking back on her lifetime of activism, she feels she has made just as many enemies as friends, even joking that whenever she travels back to the Philippines and encounters Maoists, she takes out her mobile phone and shows them a picture of her kids, saying: ‘This is who you’ll be accountable to if ever anything happens to me!’

The history of the CPP-KDP relationship proves revealing. It was, to reiterate, a dispute between two diasporic imaginaries: a pan-nationalism that sought to defend notions of national unity against the challenges posed to it by migration and diaspora, and a bi-nationalism constitutive of an early attempt by Filipin@ American activists to respond to the new challenges of an increasingly globalised world. KDP activists critically reflected on their subject positions as transnational and cross-cultural actors, and revised their cultural-political frameworks accordingly.

Although trailblazing at the time, the bi-nationalist imaginary did have its limitations. The KDP ‘rejected the “overseas” characterization of the Filipino American community as an indication of [the CPP’s] narrow nationalism’ (Toribio 2000, p. 38), but simultaneously left the broader Westphalian imaginary intact. It wanted to commit to two national revolutions, rather than just one, but could not yet imagine what a politics beyond or without nation-states might look like. This was back when processes of global integration were still incipient. The proliferation of transnational ties since
the Seventies, however, has further exacerbated the disconnects between material realities and inherited Westphalian imaginaries. Pan-nationalist and bi-nationalist politics do retain currency for many in the Philippine diaspora, but there are also new imaginaries emerging today that go beyond national commitments, irrespective of whether to one, two, or many nations.

**Translocalism**

Processes of globalisation and postcoloniality, while not guaranteeing the emergence of cosmopolitan imaginaries, do constitute much of their raw material (Schiller, Darieva & Gruner-Domic 2011, p. 404). Hence, while some activist groups have responded to the changing global context by reasserting old certainties, others have attempted to craft new imaginaries more in consonance with the times. The Dual Line was one such attempt, with new organisations having picked up where the KDP left off in 1987.

Here, I will focus on FAEJI, continuing my discussion from the previous chapter about their novel approach to trans-Pacific organising. The term ‘transnationalism’ is central for FAEJI, but signifies, not so much a relationship between national communities, as between local communities – hence the translocalist imaginary that I have attributed to their work. Translocalism parts ways, not just with nationalism, but also with Westphalianism: the idea of the world as a patchwork of discrete national units. As will be seen, it took the experience of the KDP for FAEJI to realise how necessary this twin defection was.
When FAEJI was founded in the year 2000, its original mission was to support the struggles of toxic waste victims around former US bases in the Philippines. By way of context, Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base (see Map 4) were established in the early years of US colonial rule, but stayed put even after 1946 – this being one of the United States’ conditions before granting independence. The bases played important roles during the Cold War, helping the US jockey for influence in the Asia-Pacific region, including in the key battleground of Indochina.

After Marcos’ downfall, a spirit of reform pervaded the air. Many Filipin@s resented the United States’ backing of the dictatorship, along with the continuing presence of their former colonisers at Clark and Subic. As such, the lawmakers that took office after the nominal restoration of democracy were charged with a new mandate. In 1991, they voted to annul the long-standing bases agreement between the Philippines and the US, obliging US forces to withdraw the following year.

The other major event of 1991, just a few months prior, was the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. Surrounding communities were devastated. By an accident of history, so too were Clark and Subic, which contributed to the United States’ eventual willingness to leave. US forces in fact left in haste, neglecting to clean up and properly dispose of their hazardous chemical waste.

‘Most people associate toxic waste solely with industry’, writes Jorge Emmanuel (1997, p. 3), but
military facilities and operations also generate large quantities of hazardous waste from production, testing, cleaning, maintenance, and use of weapons, explosives, aircraft, naval vessels, [and] land transport... Toxic solvents, oils, greases, corrosives, fuels, heavy metals, PCBs [polychlorinated biphenyls], dioxins, unexploded ordnance, and radioactive material are some of the hazardous wastes emitted or discharged directly into soil, air, or water by the military.

Not long after US personnel withdrew from the base sites, nearby residents – as well as Pinatubo refugees who had been given temporary accommodation inside Clark Air Base – began to complain of a myriad of health problems. These included gastrointestinal disorders and skin rashes, later followed by cancers and birth defects (Emmanuel 1997). Each was found to be connected to toxic military waste that had contaminated the local water supply (Soriano 2002, p. 39; Tritten 2010).

In 1993, the People’s Task Force for Bases Clean-Up (PTF) (see Image 12) was formed in the Philippines, along with the United States Working Group for Philippine Bases

Image 12: People’s Task Force for Bases Clean-Up
Clean-Up (USWG) on the other side of the Pacific (Magno 1999, p. 167). Many activists in the clean-up campaign had come directly out of the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Old trans-Pacific networks were mobilised, albeit this time with the environment topping the agenda.

The USWG was one of several streams that merged to form FAEJI. One of its key players was Federico, formerly with the APC, who had become increasingly interested in the overlaps between environmental and social justice issues, particularly as regards human health. Owing to his background in chemical engineering, he participated in several scientific investigations into the levels of environmental contamination in and around the Clark and Subic base sites. Carried out in conjunction with San Francisco-based NGO, Arc Ecology, the studies confirmed the gravity of the situation. It was then that the USWG was formed, its main aims being identical with those of the PTF: to hold the US military accountable, have it pay for the clean-up, and award compensation to the victims and their families.

The USWG would soon join forces with Tagalog On-Site (TOS), and it was out of that relationship that FAEJI was born. TOS was a unique cultural and linguistic immersion programme that brought Filipin@ Americans to the Philippines every summer to study Tagalog while also participating in grassroots community work. Its founder, Susan Quimpo, was once part of the underground resistance against Marcos, along with a number of her siblings.\textsuperscript{34} In founding TOS, Quimpo wanted to allow a space for young

\textsuperscript{34} For their recently published family memoirs, see Quimpo & Quimpo (2012).
Fil-Ams to explore their identities in relation to US-Philippines history and politics (Louie & Villanueva 2007). She found the bases clean-up campaign an ideal fit – a trans-Pacific issue in line with her students’ trans-Pacific identities – and it was hence that TOS entered into partnerships with both the PTF and USWG. Not only would Quimpo’s students learn Tagalog in the classroom, but also out in the communities affected by toxic waste, assisting the People’s Task Force in its amelioration and organising efforts.

One TOS alumna, Kristal, was so moved by her experience in the programme that she decided to return to the Philippines to work with the PTF full-time. In a 2007 interview, she conveyed a sense of the buzz during that period:

I was in the Philippines for two and a half years, which was an amazing time... I love movement work... It was just when the campaign was at its peak. We were getting national as well as international recognition on the issue, the bases campaign. It was becoming, you know, like a hot issue and one of the top issues between the United States and the Philippines.

Kristal was later joined by Annika, another TOS alumna who returned to the Philippines to dedicate herself to the campaign. To garner further support for the cause, the PTF felt it would be a good idea to send Kristal and Annika on a speaking tour around the US in 1997. To help organise it, PTF members called on Federico of the USWG and other US-based activists whom they knew from the anti-dictatorship movement. They also enlisted the readymade network of TOS alumnae and alumni dotted throughout the United States.
Said Kristal of her experience:

It was a crazy tour. We went to, like, thirteen cities... all across the country over a period of a month... The response we got was pretty incredible... We talked at a lot of colleges and just got a huge response from Philippine Americans who were just so hungry for information about the Philippines and even more hungry for a way to get involved to make an impact about the situation... After the speaking tour, we realized we needed somebody in the United States to kind of continue that education and organizing... I e-mailed all these people in Tagalog On-Site, all these people in the US Working Group – you know, people who had worked with us in the speaking tour who had been involved in the campaign through the People’s Task Force before I came on board – and just said “Hey, let’s start an organization”... It really was just like a natural outflow of the speaking tour.

From the USWG side of things, Federico narrated these same events as follows:

After the speaking tour, we thought maybe it’s time to build something new, because the US Working Group, although it had a political arm... it mainly became a technical support group. It was mainly engineers and scientists doing much of the work, and nothing much else happening. The TOS people said “We need more advocacy too”, so we got together and that’s how [FAEJI] basically was founded. It was, in a way, a merging of the two groups. What’s also interesting is that the US Working Group were older people... whereas TOS were mainly people in their twenties. So it was an intergenerational thing and I thought it was quite exciting. We had a founding congress here, and that’s how [FAEJI] evolved.

FAEJI grew rapidly from the moment of its founding, with chapters springing up in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Minneapolis, among other places. A few years later, however, the PTF collapsed, with the entire bases clean-up campaign soon following suit. Bereft of a partner organisation in the Philippines with whom to work, FAEJI was forced to fundamentally reassess its purpose.
The reasons for the PTF’s demise were several, but the main cause, according to my interlocutors, was internal division. Dissenters within the organisation pointed to the top-down relationship that had developed between the PTF and the afflicted communities it claimed to represent. Toxic waste victims were spoken on behalf of, but given comparatively little say of their own. Many PTF members were RJs who split from the Maoist Left, but hierarchical habits continued.

In Emma’s words:

There seems to have been a real division in the board of the People’s Task Force. It was made up of very high-profile people – like, there was a professor, a lawyer, a journalist – and a lot of people considered that they were the “Manila elite”... Some of the people who were more in touch with what was happening in the communities felt like there was a disconnect, so it was literally this board of higher profile people who split from another faction who felt they were more sort of in touch with the communities. They had strategic differences, but it was completely devastating... From our perspective, from [FAEJI], we tried to remain neutral for quite a while; we tried not to get involved in their politics necessarily, and it ended up not working.

With the implosion of the PTF, none of the campaign’s goals were able to be won. The US military never accepted responsibility; victims remain uncompensated; and, despite some clean-up efforts by the Philippine government, the environment remains contaminated. In 2002, although grassroots organising had ceased, activists tried their hands in the courts. A class action lawsuit was filed against the US military (for environmental negligence resulting in over 170 deaths), but was ultimately unsuccessful (Arc Ecology 2008).
One success that the bases clean-up campaign could take credit for, though, is that it put Environmental Justice firmly on the agenda. Another is that it set in motion hundreds, if not thousands, of new activists on both sides of the Pacific, many of whom remain politically-active today. Lastly, it also gave rise to FAEJI, whose impacts continue to be felt in other areas.

FAEJI’s *raison d’être* upon founding was to act as the PTF’s US partner on the bases clean-up campaign. Hence, when the PTF collapsed, FAEJI was uncertain it would continue to exist. Its members were thrust into a period of deep reflection, eventually resolving to continue their work, albeit in reconfigured form.

FAEJI launched its comprehensive reassessment process in 2004, with many hoping it would reinvigorate the organisation and give it new direction. ‘What is the relevance of our work?’ and ‘Are we really needed?’ were two of the main questions posed, according to Kristal. FAEJI members wanted to be clear about the specific role they could play as diasporic Filipin@s – if not in the bases clean-up campaign, then in another cause consistent with their Environmental Justice values. Aware of the shortcomings of past attempts at trans-Pacific organising, they were wary not to uncritically adopt inherited imaginaries, but rather set out to collectively forge their own way forward.

In practical terms, the reassessment process involved focus group discussions in each of the cities where FAEJI had branches. The final part of the process, according to Emma, ‘involved going to the Philippines to do a similar-type exploration with our
partners’, particularly to brainstorm ‘other issues that would be relevant for us... That’s when we learnt about the issue in Pandacan’. Emma and her associates learnt that 84,000 people, most of them poor, live in the vicinity of the Pandacan oil depot, jointly operated by Chevron, Shell, and Petron (Edep 2010). With little buffer, local residents suffer chronic exposure to toxic emissions, including known carcinogens. In addition to that is the threat of spills, fires, and explosions.

FAEJI considered a number of campaigns, but eventually settled on Pandacan. A core rationale was that it saw a strategic role for itself, being based, like Chevron, in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its search for a new campaign, then, was accompanied by questions around Filipin@ American positionality. FAEJI wanted to consider afresh the diaspora-homeland relationship, as the KDP had done in earlier times. In Kristal’s words, ‘We wanted to develop criteria for understanding our placement within Philippine-American transnational issues, as well as within the Philippine American community’.

Among the questions probed were: What is an ethical way for Filipin@ Americans to act on Philippine issues? What does it mean to be an ally? How can Fil-Ams become constituents in their own liberation and not just advocates for the liberation of others? The reflections of movement veterans like Miguel and Federico came into play during FAEJI’s reassessment, and the Dual Line debates became a reference point for younger activists to learn from. Both generations agreed that a new way of doing things was needed, beyond the pan- and bi-nationalist templates of the past.
Complicating matters was the political climate in the US following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Campaigners on issues relating to the US military found themselves increasingly constrained, with less tolerance for their anti-militarist critiques and less funds made available for their work. A number of what FAEJI called its ‘congressional champions’ – that is, members of Congress who were supportive of the bases clean-up campaign – also lost their seats after 2001. Furthermore, the US significantly increased military aid to the Philippines after September 11, helping to combat the long-running Islamic insurgency in the country’s south (Bello 2002). Even if FAEJI wanted to continue the work that the PTF was doing prior to its collapse, it would have been ‘impossible to politically advance the campaign’, according to Miguel.

FAEJI recognised in time that it needed to consider, not just the United States’ military impact in the Philippines, but also its corporate impact. ‘That’s where the whole Chevron thing came up’, said Miguel. Taking stock of the supranational character of contemporary capitalism, Miguel continued: ‘Things have changed, so what does nation now mean, right?... We’re at the stage where there is, in a sense, a recolonization of nations, but super-sized. It’s not just related to individual nations anymore’. In this new dispensation, to cite another research participant, corporations have become ‘the biggest monster of our times’.

When FAEJI pondered global capitalism on the one hand, and Filipin@ American positionality on the other, it came to realise the extent to which each dovetailed with the other. One of the key insights to emerge from the reassessment, then, was that the transnationalism of diasporic affinities can serve as the very means with which to
challenge the transnationalism of capital. One FAEJI member, Claire, put it as follows: ‘Our families live here and there. Chevron is a US-based company and we, as US citizens, have the opportunity and obligation to hold them accountable to their actions. The health problems and issues affect all of our families and communities’.

Mobilising the everyday globalities inherent in the diasporic experience toward the ends of subverting sovereign globalisation is a practice I would like to call *strategic positionality*. Such a practice, as it has developed within FAEJI, starts with the specific sites occupied by Filipin@ Americans and from there poses the question of what precise roles they might then play in effecting social change. ‘The basis of organizing is where people are at, and your organizing is only as good as how it relates to people’s experiences’, asserted Miguel. ‘That’s where I’m getting this transnational frame stuff. It has to emerge out of people’s everyday experiences’. It is precisely the lived transnationalism of Filipin@ Americans – rooted in the US, but with emotional ties to the Philippines – that FAEJI takes as its starting point. As Paloma stated in an interview:

What I think [FAEJI] is good at is that there’s always that idea in organizing to do what’s appropriate for you... As a Filipino American, I’m not trying to say that this is “my issue” *per se*, but I can play a unique role because I have a connection to this community [the Philippines], but I also live in the US, so I also have a connection to this corporation [Chevron].

At the FAEJI national conference in 2007, another member, Pilar, similarly articulated:

Being a hybrid identity – being Filipino and also being American, because I grew up here – I can use those identities as strategic, to build alliances... That’s what’s so amazing; that diaspora is a strategic framework... As us who are very hybridized and multiculturalized, we have that leverage.
In contrast to the pan-nationalist fixation on origins, FAEJI evidently affirms cultural hybridity, mobilising it through the practice of strategic positionality.

The value that FAEJI places on hybridity and multiple attachments could be considered inseparable from its translocalist imaginary. Although not using the term ‘translocalism’ as such, Ligaya spoke equivalently of ‘a localized but global consciousness around issues’. Kristal, too, described the balance that FAEJI tries to strike between ‘connecting with communities locally’ and ‘looking at things more transnationally’.

As touched on in the previous chapter, FAEJI’s translocalism is no better exemplified than in its partnership with PEJA. FAEJI pressures Chevron in the Bay Area and PEJA does likewise in Manila. Each acts locally, while at the same time cooperating with one another at the global level. The local and the global are not in opposition here, provided one dissociates the latter from the universal and treats it instead as a dynamic network of localities. The local thereby becomes a constituent element of the global, not its antonym.

When localised actions are articulated together into translocal networks, nationalist frames of reference appear to become superfluous. To cite Miguel:

We’ve moved from advancing a national liberation struggle, and this was kind of how I got into this, was I joined the anti-dictatorship movement to have national liberation for the Philippines... National liberation started its focus on seizing state power. That was kind of the thing in the Seventies and Eighties... but I feel now that you don’t necessarily have to have that as a central part of
your activity, of your strategy. It could be kind of what we’re doing, which is working with communities, issues that those communities confront... The national is still important, I don’t want to minimize this, but I don’t think it’s the central organizing principle in making this kind of transnational link.

Miguel went on to confirm that the new framework that FAEJI developed was ‘a response to the old debate, the Dual Line stuff’, distinct from both the pan-nationalism of the CPP and the bi-nationalism of the KDP. ‘It’s no longer bi-national’, he attested. Lorna, too, distancing herself from her earlier position on Filipin@ American identity, remarked: ‘It’s hard to say it can be captured just by saying it’s a sort of duality... I think it’s more complicated’.

The pan-nationalists prioritised one national community, and the bi-nationalists two. Either way, collective identity remained confined to the Westphalian schematic. Translocalism, in contrast, frees the imagination from Westphalianism and reorients it instead towards local communities and translocal networks. In this way, the translocalist imaginary has arguably been able to accomplish what bi-nationalism tried to but could not; that is, to adequately accommodate the complexities of globalisation and postcoloniality, and provide activists with the conceptual tools to more effectively operate under the new conditions.

In saying all of this, I certainly do not wish to imply that FAEJI has everything figured out. Although its new framework was formally programmatised at its 2005 national conference, ambiguities persist on the ground. Ligaya revealed, for instance, that while FAEJI is relatively clear about its work in the Philippines, it remains unsure of its place in the Bay Area:
In terms of local community issues, I think that’s an area that’s kind of blurry... I think it’s always figuring out “Okay, how are we also our own constituents, and what’s our role?” – because many of us, you know, it’s not to say we’re immune from environmental injustice, but most of us don’t live on the fenceline or we don’t live in the affected communities... We’re in solidarity but most of us don’t live in Richmond... Where do we put ourselves? Do we need to erase ourselves from the issues? And what really is our role? It’s something I’m still trying to figure out... Am I just an ally because it’s not my experience?

Ligaya’s distinction is between constituents and allies: between people directly affected by a given issue and people removed from the situation who act in solidarity with those affected. FAEJI continues to grasp towards an ethical form of solidarity work that avoids the pitfalls of the past, which include the pan-nationalist model of one-way support for the homeland, as well as the kind of hierarchical relationship that developed between the PTF and the toxic waste victims it claimed to serve.

Additionally, FAEJI members seek, beyond their role as allies, to become constituents in their own liberation. It is apparent, then, that the translocalist imaginary has not hardened into dogma, but continues to evolve through an ongoing cycle of action and reflection.

Significantly, as I was to discover when coming home from the field and delving into the literature, the type of translocal sensibility that I first picked up on in the Bay Area has also been detected by other social movement researchers in their respective fieldsites. Appadurai (2002, p. 23), for example, foregrounds the way in which grassroots activists in Mumbai, India, ‘are finding new ways to combine local activism with horizontal, global networking’. Meanwhile, Arturo Escobar (2008) describes the practice of the Afro-Colombian activists with whom he worked as entailing both place-
based resistance and transnational outreach. Lastly, Jeffrey Juris (2008, p. 14), drawing from his research with anti-capitalists in Barcelona, Catalunya, highlights ‘the expansion of globally-connected yet locally-rooted social movements, which are increasingly organized around flexible, all-channel patterns, rather than traditional top-down political formations’.

Although geographically dispersed, the abovementioned Mumbaiker, Afro-Colombian, and Catalan activists are presumably responding to, and themselves precipitating, the very same postcolonial, globalising trends as the Fil-Am and Filipin@ activists I worked with. Nationalist and Westphalian imaginaries are everywhere springing leaks, yielding instead to a profusion of ‘translocal interpenetrations’ (Gonzaga 2009, p. 31).

Of the three modes of transnational activism examined in this chapter, I maintain that only the translocalist imaginary could be seen as immanent within, rather than abstracted from, contemporary realities. It is not that it is more ‘correct’ than the others; only that it has responded in greater degree to new input from the rapidly changing global context, likely making it more efficacious.

Translocalism in Filipin@ American activist practice did not spring from a master theoretician, but is rather the result of a collective, intergenerational learning process involving countless exchanges between countless numbers of people. The same is true of xenophilia, the focus of the following chapter.
Chapter 6

Selves and others

If translocalism represents a departure from nation-state space, then xenophilia departs likewise from the corresponding insularity of nationalist identity-constructs. Ang (2001, p. 11) writes that although nationalism ‘generally emphasizes the liberating force of embracing a collective identity, especially if that identity was previously repressed or oppressed’, it also names ‘a potential prison-house’ (Ang 2001, p. 11). The prison segregates those on the inside from those on the outside, while also enforcing conformity to inflexible internal standards. I have referred to the latter, in the context of nationalism, as the tyranny of homophily. The renascent political value of xenophilia, in contrast, takes issue with the notion that community or collective identity should hinge on a ghettoised sameness, instead embracing diversity.

A curious observation will help to illustrate the issues at hand; one prompted by Filipina postcolonialist, Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (2004, p. 11), who critiques nationalism on account of its ‘sila-kami’ or ‘them-us’ logic. Kami is the Tagalog for ‘we’ or ‘us’, but there is also another term: tayo. The difference between the two proves telling. Kami denotes an exclusive belonging and is closely-allied to the notion of sarili, the self. It is a ‘we’ that is an extension of the self; a collectivity comprised of people with whom one shares a homophilic bond. Tayo, in contrast, signifies a more open and
inclusive form of belonging; one that accommodates the different and the non-self-similar. It would seem, then, that the potential for xenophilic community is already acknowledged within the Tagalog language.

The way that kami- and tayo-based notions of collective identity play out on the ground will become clear as this chapter unfolds. I will firstly elucidate the place of homophily in Filipin@ American activism, before then examining, in respective order, the intra- and inter-xenophilic trends emerging in opposition to it. As outlined in Chapter 3, intra-xenophilia is the name I have given to the valorisation of difference within a given community, inter-xenophilia to the valorisation of difference across communities. In this chapter, the former will pertain, for the most part, to relations internal to the Filipin@ diaspora, the latter to those between diasporas.

**Homophily**

Before discontinuing my involvement with the RAs, there was one episode that stood out to me as a clear indication of their homophilic values. I will begin the story at a CNDP-US meeting at San Francisco State University, where the agenda that evening revolved around preparations for an upcoming anti-war march, timed to commiserate the fourth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. The CNDP-US was one of dozens of participating groups from around the Bay Area.

Clear hierarchies quickly became apparent to me at the meeting. ‘The [CNDP-US] speaker will probably be me or [Teresa],’ stated one senior organiser. It was as if the
overall plan had already been decided on by the leadership and simply needed to be communicated to the rank-and-file. The latter seemed not to be required in the decision-making process; only to fulfil specific roles on the day of the event.

One such role was that of security marshal, whose task it would be to police the borders of the contingent and keep non-Filipino Americans out. ‘We don’t want people mixing in’, came the explanation; ‘it wouldn’t be a good look ‘cause what we’re trying to do is represent Filipinos’. I learnt in the ensuing discussion that CNDP-US marshals the previous year had employed a rope to clearly delineate them from the other groups in the march. They received a lot of criticism for this, with one woman denouncing what she called their ‘fascist rope’. In light of such reactions, it was agreed that the rope would not be used this time around but that marshals would still be required to help maintain the integrity of the contingent.

On the day of the march, the convergence of tens of thousands of people of diverse political stripes made for a moving atmosphere. Amongst the throng were groups dedicated not just to stopping the war in Iraq but also to Palestinian liberation, immigrant rights, the environment, labour, and so on.

For the CNDP-US’s part, its contingent was headed by a red pick-up truck adorned with a large Philippine flag and a banner that read: ‘Oppose US-Israeli Imperialist Aggression’. The leadership hierarchy assumed its place on board the truck, directing call-and-response chants to the sixty or so rank-and-file members below, all of them
dressed in red. The marshals were meanwhile kept busy at the perimeters, herding people along and safeguarding the internal homogeneity of the group.

In hindsight, it occurred to me that the way that CNDP-US members arranged themselves in space that day was perhaps a fitting reflection of their nationalist ideology and attendant homophilic values. To my mind, their formation was akin to a mini-nation-state, complete with a national flag, hierarchical command structure, and border guards determining who does and does not belong. Their serious and uniformly red visage furthermore presented a striking contrast to the more colourful feel in other parts of the march.

After having snaked its way through the city for well over an hour, the procession fanned out into the vast plaza fronting San Francisco City Hall, where the day’s events would culminate in a series of speakers and bands. The CNDP-US, however, chose not to join the main rally, instead breaking away to hold its own mini-rally off to the side. The leaders atop the red truck claimed one corner of the plaza, proceeding to chant and sloganise through their megaphones with only their own footsoldiers as company. It felt uncomfortably clannish for me and so I opted not to join them, feeling much more at home in carnivalesque diversity. I followed my ears to a samba ensemble nearby, and joined the spontaneous dancing in the streets.

What, though, of the fact that the CNDP-US was there demonstrating against the US occupation of Iraq? How did its tacit solidarity with the Iraqi people square with its
otherwise insular, homophilic politics? What too of the fact that the CNDP-US contingent that day formed part of a larger Asian American Maoist bloc called Strength in Unity? As far as I could gather, Maoist internationalism is something quite apart from xenophilia. Although recognising the affinities between different national liberation movements, Maoists deem nonetheless that each movement must wage its own battle within the confines of its own national sphere. Solidarity is expressed across borders, but not in a way that would subvert them.

From my observations, the overriding priority of the CNDP-US and its member organisations is to relate to fellow Filipin@s and Filipin@ Americans. A second priority is to relate to other Asian Americans, especially those of a Maoist persuasion; hence the involvement of the CNDP-US in the Strength in Unity bloc.

Relating to anyone else seems to be a distant third priority, as became apparent at an FSA meeting I attended. Joining us was Júlio, a Mexican American organiser who, at his request, was given the floor for a few minutes to inform us of his group’s current campaigns against Coke and Nestlé in Mexico. ‘The same things are happening in the Philippines, so there’s potential for us to work together’, he said. ‘And on the immigrant rights front, what’s happening to Mexican immigrants is also happening to Filipinos, so it’d be good to brainstorm what we could do together’. I, for one, was enthused by Júlio’s proposal, but the response of the others present seemed lukewarm. As far as I know, the possibility of an alliance was never seriously pursued.
While limited capacity may have been one reason, another is likely that it did not compute within the FSA’s homophilic framework.\textsuperscript{35}

The disavowal of the Other is only one half of the tyranny of homophily; the other half being the disavowal of differences within the category of Self. It is owing to the latter that one FSA member, Jerome, conveyed to me his impatience with the identity issues that young Fil-Ams so often face growing up: ‘I feel like if we could get the identity stuff settled in high school, then by the time they get to college, they’ll be ready to organize’. Not fully understanding, I asked ‘But what do you mean by “settled”?’ Jerome explained:

Okay, so in the Philippines, you’re not going to have Filipinos there going “Who am I? Am I American? Am I Filipino?” They know who they are already. That’s something they don’t even think about. It’s automatically known “We’re all Filipinos”, so they skip that process. I feel like if we’re all levelled off in who we are, that takes a lot off, you know, the process in college where we’re learning about our histories’.

The phrasal verb ‘to level off’ felt, to me, like a euphemism for enforcing homophilic conformity. Apparently, identity for Jerome is not something to be explored, much less agonised over, but an \textit{a priori} mold – that of ‘authentic’ Filipin@ness – that must be filled before effective political organising can take place.

\textsuperscript{35} Incidentally, I presented a conference paper the following year on the interconnected histories of Filipin@ and Mexican resistance to Spain’s Pacific empire. My talk focussed on trans-Pacific ties, but as touched on in chapter 4 with reference to Larry Itliong, there is also a strong history of Filipin@-Mexican solidarity within California. Consider the United Farm Workers, which formed in the Sixties out of a merger between two workers’ rights organisations in that state – one predominantly Filipin@ and the other predominantly Mexican (Guevarra, p. 186). The subsequent decline of interethnic organising might be seen as resulting, at least partly, from the rise of revolutionary nationalism in both the Mexican American and Filipin@ American communities. These effected enclosures that today’s re-imaginings are seeking to open back up.
Furthermore, Jerome seemed to be of the understanding that identity-related angst is unique to diasporans and non-existent in the Philippines. Just as Fil-Ams are rendered marginal in the US by exclusionary constructs of who qualifies as a ‘true’ American, are not all manner of subjects in the Philippines – Moros and indigenous peoples amongst them – marginalised by similarly exclusionary constructs of who qualifies as a ‘true’ Filipin@?

At the crux of the matter is the fact that Filipin@ American Maoists habitually repudiate their diasporic location and concurrent cultural hybridity in favour of an essentialist identity rooted in the homeland. ‘There is a permanent in things’, writes Hegel (1817, pp. 208-210), one of the godfathers of essentialist thought, ‘and that permanent is in the first instance their Essence’. Jose, also an FSA member, clearly posited an unchanging Filipin@ essence when he expressed to me in conversation:

As a Filipino American... even though you’re not born in the Philippines; even though, like, everything you live on is American-this, American-that, it shouldn’t matter, you know. Deep down inside, my heart is from the Philippines and my blood is from the Philippines. I may be born here, I may have grown up here, but I’m Filipino at heart.

Measured against the national essence, hybridity becomes tantamount to ‘pollution and impurity’, according to Gilroy (1993, p. 2) – a sullying, that is, of one’s ‘true’ self. It is for this reason that the FSA impels young Fil-Ams to abandon their multiple attachments and assume their preordained identities as Filipin@s. Such exhortations carry with them a number of contradictions. One is that, although providing Filipin@ Americans with a positive sense of belonging, Philippines-centred identity-constructs
simultaneously render them foreigners to the society in which they live. Trading their stake in the US for an exclusive identification with the homeland means, in effect, that they become paradoxical accomplices in their own marginalisation.

Further contradictions surface when Filipin@ Americans return to their professed homeland in search of an ‘authentic’ self, only to have a mirror held up to their inescapable hybridity. It was thus that Gisela, another RA activist whom I met in the Bay Area, conceded to me that despite her profound sense of connection to the homeland, despite the ‘genuine happiness’ that she feels in the Philippines being surrounded by her ‘own kind’, ‘people there don’t consider me Filipino, they consider me Fil-Am, not only ‘cause of my accent, but also my way of thinking, my behaviour; you know, even they say my smell’.

Denied a sense of wholeness in the US, Fil-Ams like Gisela find that they are unable to find wholeness in the Philippines either. Authenticity becomes an unattainable ideal, meaning those who strive for it effectively find themselves ‘in perpetual lack, guilty a priori’ (Guattari 1995, p. 103). One antidote would be to cease measuring oneself against transcendental abstractions in the first place. Doing so, the hybrid subject finds she lacks nothing and is already abundant. A growing section of Fil-Am activists are coming to this realisation, therefore embracing rather than denying their cultural hybridity. Underpinning this shift are emergent intra-xenophilic values, as will be examined in the following section.
Intra-xenophilia

Having given a sense of how homophily functions in the Maoist milieu, my task now will be to shed light on the growing significance of xenophilia to newer social movements. I will focus, in particular, on the challenges being posed to the homophilic notion that, in order to belong to a community, one must necessarily submit to a certain homogeneity. FAEJI is one example of an organisation that demonstrates the possibility of new, non-essentialist forms of collective identity.

Where the RAs flatten differences within the category of ‘Filipin@’, deeming that only a monolithic resistance can effectively combat the monolith of US imperialism, FAEJI affirms the necessity of working through, rather than at the expense of, difference. As with postcolonial theorists of cosmopolitanism, FAEJI ‘rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure’ (Rushdie cited in Tomlinson 1999, p. 142). It operates, not by aspiring to a pure Filipin@ essence, but by accepting the fact of cultural hybridity and subsequently mobilising it through what I termed earlier as strategic positionality.

To reiterate, strategic positionality is a practice by which activists seek to determine the roles most befitting their specific subject locations. In the case of diasporans, this means reflecting on how best to effect change from the very cosmopolitan crossroads at which they are located. It is thus that FAEJI members eschew the search for a lost purity, and strive instead to give political expression to their lived hybridity – or, as Lupe put it, to draw on their experiences as Filipin@ Americans and ‘utilize that in a
positive way’. This, according to Kristal, is one of FAEJI’s unique strengths: ‘I feel like we’re doing something that’s really different from what a lot of other groups are doing... looking at inner stuff, what people are going through as Philippine Americans and how it connects to social justice work’.

Emma revealed, too, that FAEJI consciously endeavours to provide ‘a unique space for Filipino American youth to explore their cultural identity’, allowing them to do so in an open-ended way without having to conform to a preordained mold. Unmoored from essentialism, identity becomes a contingent entity to be continually reinvented. Where Jerome was dismissive toward young diasporans’ struggles around identity, FAEJI regards them, not as barriers to political organising, but as springboards.

The anti-essentialist turn in Filipin@ American cultural politics finds expression in the work of Stephanie Syjuco – a San Francisco-based artist whom I saw speak at a roundtable in Manila. Although my Manila fieldwork only comes fully into play in Part III, it is the nature of my subject matter, of a Pacific Rim criss-crossed by innumerable flows, that it frequently evades easy compartmentalisation. The roundtable itself was part of the Galleon Trade Arts Exchange, named after the historic trade route between Mexico and the Philippines plied over the course of Spain’s centuries-long dominion over the Pacific. The exhibitions comprising the project, variously staged on the Pacific Ocean’s eastern and western shores, had the aim of creating ‘new routes of cultural exchange along old routes of commerce and trade’ (Galleon Trade Arts Exchange 2007, p. 1).
Being Fil-Am from California – once part of Mexico prior to the US-Mexican War of 1846-1848 – Syjuco’s own identity accorded well with the concerns of the Galleon Trade Arts Exchange. Satirising nationalist preoccupations with authenticity, she playfully described herself at the roundtable as a ‘counterfeit’ or ‘fake’ Filipina. Much of her artistic production in fact takes the form of counterfeiting and bootlegging – these being means by which to investigate issues of authenticity in terms of both cultural identity and brand-name consumerism.

In The counterfeit crochet project, Syjuco (2008) produced crocheted versions of Chanel, Gucci, and Prada handbags, inviting people from around the world to join her in what she dubbed a ‘global counterfeiting ring’. In so doing, her stated intention was to procure an ‘authenticity in being fake’ – an ‘authentic inauthenticity’ (Denzin 1996, p. 143) to counter the inauthentic authenticity of the commodity form. Although Chanel might market one of its handbags as unique, even in spite of the fact of its mass production, it is the crocheted knock-off, bearing the mark of its maker’s individual human touch, that is the truly unique creation.

Similarly, ‘fake’ Filipin@s are not deficient or derivative copies of their ‘authentic’ counterparts in the Philippines, but are legitimate subjects in their own right. Here, Syjuco draws an intriguing parallel between capitalist commodity-production and nationalist identity-production, both processes characterised by a standardising impulse. She highlights that when standards are displaced, differences and singularities flourish.
Staying in the Philippines for now, the logic of authenticity was also lampooned by fellow participants in the FAEJI solidarity tour. To give one example, the group clown, Anton, coined the term ‘Ness’ as a tongue-in-cheek abbreviation for ‘Filipin@ness’. This caught on with the rest of the group and provided many a laugh. Travelling around in our mini-bus, interfacing with communities, sharing meals, and so on, people would quip: ‘Are you feeling the Ness right now?’; ‘That’s hella Ness!’; ‘You gotta get in touch with your inner Ness’; or, ‘Keeping the Ness alive’.

As an extension of the joke, we began to keep tabs on each other as to who amongst us was the most ‘authentically’ Filipin@. People would notch up ‘Ness points’ whenever performing anything stereotypically-Filipin@, conversely having them deducted whenever acting in a decidedly ‘un-Filipin@’ manner. We became satirical arbiters of each other’s authenticity in a long-running jest that I took as symptomatic of a growing distaste for homophily.

Any intra-xenophilic alternative – that is, a collective identity inclusive of diverse expressions of Filipin@ness – would have to involve a disaggregation or ‘de-massification’ (Grosz 1994, p. 172) of the national subject and a reconstitution of the elements into new forms of ‘togetherness-in-difference’ (Ang 2001). It was another of my experiences during the FAEJI solidarity tour that afforded me with a trope – the figure of the ‘Fil-Whatever’ – by which to envision such an alternative.
Fil-Whatevers

To tell this story, it will be necessary to return to the opening scene of this thesis: the office of an environmental organisation in Quezon City in which myself and a number of Fil-Am comrades were being addressed by Cesar, a veteran of the NDM who later surfaced on the RJ side of the Philippine Left. Although somewhat lacking in hope, he did offer some valuable reflections on the changes he has lived through and how activists might rethink their work accordingly. Amongst his concerns was the need to redefine Filipin@ identity in a more accommodating and multivalent way:

In a situation of a sort of barrierless world... in a situation where I can talk to my friend in California for an hour without having to pay for it because we use Skype... it’s like it’s possible to create culture across national boundaries. And so, effectively, it becomes: What sorts of identity do we work out of... and we don’t ask, you know, whether you’re more Filipino than I am or I’m more Filipino than you are?

This resonated with a similar statement made by Miguel in the Bay Area:

The nature of the experience of a world that’s shrinking... of people being able to go somewhere else and live and be exposed to a different environment... changes the calculation of what is then possible, right? It breaks down, it necessarily breaks down, the Third World nationalism stuff, wherein what’s most important is the nation and its cultural dimensions... because the experiences of people that belong to that nation are different.

The common thread is a renunciation of the homophilic values of the past and a new acceptance of otherness within the category of ‘Filipin@’. ‘This animal called the “Global Filipino” actually really exists’, continued Cesar, explaining that globalisation
has engendered multiple ways of being Filipin@, with homeland inhabitants joined by Fil-Ams, Fil-Canadians, Fil-Italians, ‘Fil-Whatevers’.

Although used by Cesar as no more than a throwaway turn-of-phrase, I realised in hindsight that the idea of the ‘Fil-Whatever’ could potentially serve as a useful means for imagining what an intra-xenophilic Filipin@ identity might look like – especially when coupled with Agamben’s (1993) formulation of ‘Whatever’ as a philosophical concept. It will be necessary, as such, to briefly survey the philosophy of difference that Agamben promulgates in *The coming community* (1993), before then re-staging the trope of the Fil-Whatever in a more considered light.

For Agamben (1993, pp. 19-20), the concept of Whatever signifies an ‘inessential commonality’; that is, a ‘solidarity that in no way concerns an essence’. Parting ways with Hegel’s (1817) identity-difference dialectic, from which arises the notion that sameness is necessary for community, Agamben (1993) asserts the possibility of co-belonging across difference, independent of any overarching whole.

In place of an ontology of discrete wholes bound by essential attributes, Agamben (1993) imagines a kind of ontological network, each element of which, although part of a common web, remains irreducibly-singular. It is the ‘line of sparkling alternation’ (Agamben 1993, p. 20) between the common and the singular for which the concept of Whatever is reserved.
Consider the deceptively simple example of the human face: Each has its own *sui generis* morphology, and yet each remains appreciably human (Agamben 1993, p. 19). To the question of whether humans are one or multiple, universal or particular, Agamben answers that we are both and neither. We reside in between, along the watershed of Whatever, comprising a quantity that is ‘more than one, but less than many’ (Law 1999, p. 3).

Consider, as a second example, Agamben’s (1993, p. 20) assertion that ‘it is from the hundred idiosyncrasies that characterize my way of writing the letter “p” or of pronouncing its phoneme that its common form is engendered’. The form becomes definable, not by essences, but by a syncretism of idiosyncrasies; an *idiosyncretism*, perhaps.

Anticipating Agamben by decades, the Surrealist poet André Breton (1924, p. 9) wrote: ‘If in a cluster of grapes there are no two alike, why do you want me to describe this grape by the other, by all the others, why do you want me to make a palatable grape?’ There are no essences to which grapes can be reduced; no essential ‘grapeness’ underlying grapes as they actually are. Just as the many ways of rendering the letter ‘p’ together compose an inessential commonality, so too do grapes in all their singular forms.

Unlike the antagonistic binary between identity and difference (in which the non-self-similar is either assimilated or expelled), or between the particular and the universal (in which the former is often negated for the latter’s sake), the new couplet of
singularity-commonality, inherent in the concept of Whatever, makes possible a liberating affirmation of alterity.

Conjoining Cesar’s spontaneous neologism with the theory of difference outlined above, the figure of the Fil-Whatever becomes emblematic of a non- or anti-essentialist Filipin@ness. Home for the Fil-Whatever is not equivalent to the homeland, but to the archipelago-writ-large of Filipin@ communities worldwide, including those both inside and outside the Philippines.

‘What is “homeland” in the context of Filipinos in the 21st Century? It’s a nation-in-movement’, mused Miguel, ‘and the economic, political, cultural dimensions of that have to be placed in diaspora’, not solely confined to the Philippine nation-state. Implicit here, as in Cesar’s earlier comments, is a suggestion that homophilic notions of Filipin@ness should ideally give way to an intra-xenophilic collective identity able to accommodate Filipin@s and Filipin@ diasporans in all their diversity. The new identity would include the ‘Ilocano[36] worker in Kuwait, whose sister has migrated to Canada but both of whom still share a primary affinity with their village kin’ (Pertierra 1995, p. 7). So too the domestic worker in Singapore, the Muslim Filipin@ in Malaysian Borneo, the Fil-Am in San Diego, the Fil-Australian in Sydney, the highland indigene in Manila or Cagayan de Oro. The trope of the Fil-Whatever brings such subjects to assembly, allowing them to commingle in a ‘community of singularities’ (Nancy 1991, p. 28) without having to submit to an overarching unity.

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36 Ilocan@s are people hailing from the Ilocos region of northern Philippines.
The Fil-Whatever co-constructs affinities with others like her, but remains singular in so doing. Common projects are forged, albeit not in a way that would compromise diversity. Take, for example, my participation in the FAEJI solidarity tour, which I would like to suggest as a microcosmic manifestation of broader intra-xenophilic trends. I was a Fil-Australian amongst Fil-Ams interfacing with Filipin@s – not Filipin@s in any simple sense, but Aetas, Amerasians, Visayans, Tagalogs, Ilocan@s, and so forth. All of us were simultaneously similar and different – singular albeit not at the expense of our commonality, and common albeit not at the expense of our singularity. There was no question of having to conform to a transcendental ideal of Filipin@ness as a prerequisite for common action. Rather, we were able to work together as Fil-Whatevers through, and not in spite of, our heterogeneity. This was not a solidarity as traditionally conceived, but ‘a pragmatic solidarity without solidity; what one might call... fluidarity’ (Pindar & Sutton 1989, p. 10).

The turn from homophily to xenophilia – or, from solidarity to fluidarity – in Filipin@ and Fil-Am radical politics is mirrored by the transformations taking place in other postcolonial social movements. Especially exemplary are the struggles for black emancipation in Africa and the African diaspora, which, since the national liberation era, have also become increasingly cosmopolitan. I will consider, in particular, the Négritude movement that took root in the Francophone regions of West Africa and the Caribbean in the mid-twentieth century, before examining the reappraisals being made of it in the current era.

37 The Aeta are an indigenous ethnic group from the Luzon highlands, and Amerasians the miscegenated offspring of US servicemen. Visayans, meanwhile, are those from the Visayas region of the central Philippines.
As a form of Pan-Africanism, Négritude aspired to the unification of Africa and her diasporas, with a view to liberating black people everywhere from the indignities of European imperialism. Among its progenitors were the poets Leopold Senghor (from the then-French colony of Senegal) and Aimé Césaire (from the still-French colony of Martinique). According to Hardt and Negri (2000, p. 130), theirs was a ‘quest to discover the black essence or unveil the black soul’, not unlike the yearnings of Philippine Maoists for an untainted Filipin@ essence.

For Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka (cited in Stratton 1994, p. 41), Négritude’s principal shortcoming lay in the fact that it ‘not only accepted the dialectical structure of European ideological confrontations but borrowed from the very components of its racist syllogism’. In other words, Négritude paradoxically sought liberation from within ‘a pre-set system of Eurocentric analysis’ (Soyinka cited in Said 1994, pp. 276-277); for instance, by affirming the abstract category of blackness, despite it being ‘a mystification constructed in the colonial imaginary’ (Hardt & Negri 2000, p. 130). One might say that Négritude intellectuals acquiesced to a chess game between black and white, while neglecting to question the chessboard itself.38

From the Sixties to the present, Négritude has faced numerous cosmopolitan contenders, including a cultural-political movement that a group of Martinican writers

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38 I am indebted here to the philosophical fiction of Italo Calvino (1974, pp. 64-65) who writes that the city of Eutropia (a portmanteau of ‘Europe’ and ‘utopia’?) ‘repeats its life, identical, shifting up and down on an empty chessboard. The inhabitants repeat the same scenes with the actors changed. Eutropia remains always the same’. This will be theorised in the Conclusion as the politics of inversion.
have christened ‘Créolité’ (Bernabé, Confiant & Chamoiseau 1996). In place of the past fixation on purity, Créolité advocates a ‘conscious harmonization of preserved diversities’ (Bernabé et al. cited in Crowley 2008, p. 114) – what the Creolists call, in a word, ‘diversality’ (Bernabé, Confiant & Chamoiseau 1996), a portmanteau of diversity and universality. Like Agamben’s (1993) concept of Whatever, diversality heralds a collective identity that is neither particular nor universal, but somewhere in between.

As Shireen Lewis (2006, p. 90) explains,

Creolists disrupt Enlightenment binarisms... by radically reworking difference... For Creolists, it is no longer a question of conceptualizing race, culture, and identity as derived from Africa but of a new paradigm based on the diasporic experience... [T]hey do not base their identity on being black but on being Creole... [T]his is premised on a move away from Négritude’s modernist concerns with homogeneity... toward postmodern notions of heterogeneity, plurality, and open-endedness.

Here, the parallels with recent cultural-political trends in the Philippine diaspora become clear. Like the Creolists, FAEJI activists ground their politics, not in the homeland, but in ‘diaspora space’ (Brah 1996). And where the Creolists substitute monolithic blackness for a multivalent Creole identity, FAEJI activists substitute monolithic Filipin@ness for a multivalent Fil-Whatever identity. In each case, homophily is displaced by an intra-xenophilic predilection for the ‘illicit blendings’ (Bernabé et al. cited in Crowley 2008, p. 114) of postcoloniality.

39 Roughly, ‘Creoleness’ in French-to-English translation.
Equally important to today’s postcolonial social movements is the cultivation of togetherness-in-difference *between* – and not just *within* – racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. I will hence turn now from intra- to inter-xenophilia.

**Inter-xenophilia**

Intra-xenophilic practices depart from the Third World nationalist demand for a unified Self, instead seeking to accommodate *internal* difference. Inter-xenophilic practices depart from the related demand that Self remain separate from Other, thereby embracing *external* difference. For many of today’s activists, the assumption that an oppressed people ‘can attain full selfhood and be made “whole” again only by disconnecting itself from the world’ (Gaonkar 2002, p. 14) no longer resonates. I will demonstrate that just as affinities can be forged between diverse Fil-Whatevers without the need for an overarching Filipin@ness, so too can affinities be forged between Filipin@ and non-Filipin@ actors without recourse to any similar such overarching unities – for instance, the Eurocentric conception of human-ness around which Kantian cosmopolitanism is centred.

It was during an FPEN fieldtrip to the MHF that the penny first dropped with regards to the inter-xenophilic sensibilities in contemporary Filipin@ American activism. FPEN students were engaged in an intergenerational dialogue with veterans of the I-Hotel struggle, discussing, among other things, the topic of community-building. Elena interpolated at this point with a key contribution: ‘Community-building shouldn’t just
mean building a strong Filipino community; it should also mean building solidarity with other communities-of-color. We know we can’t do anything without each other’.

From then on, I began to pick up on emergent inter-xenophilic values everywhere, even prior to having a term by which to describe them. Such values are not without history. I learnt, in conversation with Federico, that part of their genealogy in fact stems from the Dual Line debates of the Seventies and Eighties. Following on from the previous chapter, a further point of contention between the pan-nationalists and bi-nationalists concerned the meaning of solidarity. For the pan-nationalists, solidarity was one-way: the homeland was the locus of struggle, and the role of diasporans was solely to provide support. Taking exception to the CPP’s concomitant demand that diasporans suspend their own concerns in the US to focus exclusively on the Philippines, many in the KDP began to argue for a new kind of solidarity.

Federico, having been a member of the CPP-aligned APC, initially adhered to the pan-nationalist line, but by the late Eighties had developed an expanded conception of solidarity work. One part of this was the notion that there should ideally be a two-way, and not just unidirectional, flow, with homeland and diaspora constituents having much to learn from each other. This represented, in effect, an intra-xenophilic affirmation of difference within the category of Filipin@ness.

Crucially, however, there also emerged in tandem an inter-xenophilic solidarity, or fluidarity, towards non-Filipin@s. For Federico, there was one experience in particular
that exposed the limits of homophily and made transparent the need for an inter-xenophilic alternative:

During the anti-Martial Law movement in the Seventies and Eighties... we had this concept of viewing ourselves as activists who were part of the struggle in the Philippines – to the point that we even said that we shouldn’t really be too involved in issues here in the US... Our view at the time was “Our roots are in the Philippines, our struggle is in the Philippines”... So our role here in the US was to get Americans to support the social justice struggle in the Philippines, and that was how we viewed solidarity... I remember one thing that showed me how flawed it was, and this was still back in the Eighties: One of the things we used to do is we would organise trips to the Philippines for non-Filipino Americans... We would do the briefing here in the Bay Area, and then they’d go to the Philippines and they’d stay for, you know, maybe a month or something like that. We used to call them “exposure trips”; it was to expose them to the situation. But the idea when they come back was to be activists to support us in the struggle there. And I remember when this person, he was an African American, came back from this trip, an exposure in the Philippines, and I asked him “Do you have any comments?” – you know, feedback – and his one comment was: “I went to the Philippines. I brought with me slides and materials about the struggles of African Americans – my community, the struggle in my community – and nobody ever asked me, and I never got a chance to tell anybody, about our struggles”. And that's when I realised this was a flaw; that what we've been doing has been quite flawed. Even back then in the Eighties, we started to shift a little bit, but conceptually, it was still very difficult for us... By the Nineties I think it became much clearer.

The inter-xenophilic exchange of experiences and perspectives, as this thesis attempts to show, is much more highly-valued today than in the past. Correspondingly, there is increasingly little patience for any one group declaring itself the centre around which others must revolve. According to Federico, solidarity must be mutual, or else does not merit the name.

The African American man to whom Federico referred would be impressed to learn of the ‘Black-Filipino community collaboration’ (Washington 2008, p. 1) that I
encountered in San Francisco in 2008 – if, that is, he was not already involved. The initiative’s name, Soul Adobo, is a composite of Soul Food, an African American cuisine, and adobo, a signature Filipin@ dish of Spanish and Chinese origins (Vergara 2009, p. 24). Incidentally, I was pleased to find adobo on the menu at San Francisco City College where I attended weekly FPEN classes.

At the one Soul Adobo event I was able to catch, what took place was a sharing of food, music, art, stories, and conversations – all with the aim of overcoming past tendencies toward insularity and celebrating what were described on the group’s Facebook page as ‘our commonalities’ and ‘shared histories’ (Washington 2008, p. 1).

The mention of shared histories between Black and Filipin@ peoples was no mere fancy. There have been countless instances of cross-cultural collaboration throughout history, but their worth has often been disregarded on account of homophilic preconceptions. These experiences are now being valorised in hindsight, as exemplified, for instance, by a raft of recent publications: The many-headed hydra (Linebaugh & Rediker 2000), Affective communities (Gandhi 2006), and, most fittingly for the discussion at hand, Afro Asia (Ho & Mullen 2008). The latter collection chronicles the varied and long-overlooked connections between African American and Asian American activists over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1960s,

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40 The many-headed hydra unearths the history of the ‘revolutionary Atlantic’ during the period of European imperial expansion in the Americas – a time when runaway African slaves, dispossessed English commoners, and a host of other motley defectors engaged in unprecedented forms of cross-cultural resistance. Affective communities meanwhile surveys the alliances in past centuries between colonised peoples and anticolonial sympathisers within imperialist countries (noticeably absent, however, is Mark Twain, who, apart from his writing, also campaigned against the US annexation of the Philippines). Lastly, Under three flags (to be discussed in Chapter 10) examines the relationships in late-nineteenth century Spain between European anarchists and revolutionary nationalists from Cuba and the Philippines.
their mutual solidarity was spurred-on by the historic Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 – an unprecedented gathering of national liberation leaders from the two continents then engaged in anticolonial revolt.

Consider, too, the cross-cultural affinities that developed during the Philippine-American War. Filipin@ soldiers were aware of the plight of Black people in the US, where segregation laws had been in effect in the South since 1896, also noting their subjugation within the occupying army. They decided, as such, to distribute leaflets to the so-called ‘Buffalo Soldiers’, directly appealing to them to switch sides. At least a dozen African Americans are reported to have defected and fought on the side of the Philippine Army, including David Fagen, who rose to the rank of Captain (Ignacio et al. 2004). After the war ended, many more opted to stay on and settle in the Philippines, rather than resume their place as second-class citizens in the US.

I was reminded of the little-known history of Buffalo Soldiers in the Philippines when, in downtown San Francisco one morning, a friend and I were approached by a homeless African American man with a limp. He politely requested a dollar or two, soliciting our sympathies by informing us that he was ex-Navy. It came out in the ensuing discussion that he had been stationed at Subic Naval Base in the Philippines for much of the 1970s. I do not know if his experiences there had anything to do with his homelessness, but I remember pondering how a military occupation can adversely affect occupiers and occupied alike.
An encounter with another panhandler, this time in Berkeley, yielded similar surprises.

I was making my way home from a long day of fieldwork when I dropped by the grocery store to pick up some supplies. As I was entering, an African American man, probably in his early forties, rattled his can and asked ‘Can you spare a little change so I can get something to eat today?’

‘No worries’, I replied. ‘On my way back out, okay?’

‘Thank you very much, sir. Hey, I really like your tattoo’.

‘Oh, thanks!’

‘What is it?’

‘It’s an ancient Filipino script, Alibata. It says “kalayaan” which means “freedom” in Filipino’.

‘Oh, you’re Filipino? I know a few Filipino words – and I love adobo!’

‘Wow, how’d you learn all that?’

‘I worked with a ton of Filipinos in Vallejo, and my cousin’s wife is Filipino too’.
Later when leaving, I gave the man some change as promised, along with a small bag of groceries. He sprung me with a hug, further surprising me with the words ‘Mahal kita’ – Tagalog for ‘I love you’. I was touched by our exchange, which spoke to me of the everyday cosmopolitanisms proliferating in the present era, but was under no illusions as to the class disparity between us that remained.

*Inter-diasporic solidarity*

It is apposite at this point to turn once more to FAEJI, which exhibits as much inter-xenophilic as intra-xenophilic values. Attending FAEJI’s 2007 National Conference was a West African woman whom I will call Hawa. Being from a like-minded Environmental Justice organisation, she was there to learn more about FAEJI’s work and explore possible avenues for collaboration. ‘The various diasporas need to start talking to each other’, she stressed. ‘Yes, we are the Filipino, African, and whatever else diaspora, but we are also one bloc and one strong force’. Although unintentional, Hawa’s use of the term ‘whatever’, like Cesar’s, seemed appropriate to her Agamben-like point that singularity and commonality can co-exist.

The way that Hawa was received by FAEJI stood in contrast to the nonchalant silence with which, as recounted earlier, the FSA greeted Júlio’s proposal for greater Philippine-Mexican solidarity. Many of the conference participants nodded in agreement with Hawa, and an intriguing discussion about the need for cross-cultural alliance-building ensued. Claire, for one, cited the Environmental Justice Movement as offering ‘a very rough draft of how we work together: essentially, we’re in one boat;
some people are in shittier parts of the boat, some people are in better parts of the boat, but the whole boat is sinking and the same people are making it sink’.

Staying at the FAEJI conference for now, Annika pointed during discussion time to the similarities between the Philippine and Puerto Rican experiences, both territories having passed from Spanish to US control after the war of 1898 and both still affected by the legacies of US militarism. This, she insisted, warrants a much greater degree of cooperation between the Puerto Rican and Filipin@ American communities than has so far been built:

I’ve always been trying to say, you know, “C’mon, here’s this Puerto Rican Vieques thing; we should be doing events together!” and it’s always hard because they have to devote themselves to their events and we have to devote ourselves to our events... It’s not like I want to take away the time, but it’s just so resonant.

Vieques, an island-municipality of Puerto Rico, was used for decades as a bomb-testing range by the US Navy. Locals had long-resented the US naval presence for depriving them of land and degrading the ecology, but only when a stray bomb killed Vieques native, David Sanes, was a mass movement to oust US forces was mounted (Zinn & Arnowe 2004, pp. 521-522). This, coupled with increasing international pressure, led the US Navy to pull out in 2003.

Annika had been recalling her exchanges in the early 2000s, prior to the Vieques victory. At this time, FAEJI was focussed on the bases clean-up campaign in the Philippines. The habit of each movement had been to entertain only metropole and
periphery, coloniser and colonised. What Annika felt was needed was a new way of conceptualising the anti- or postcolonial imperative; a schema that would allow the peripheries – in this case, the Philippines and Puerto Rico – to imagine themselves, not just in relation to the United States, but also in relation to each other.41

I detected similar ideas in a chat with Fil-Am scholar-activist Jorge Emmanuel, who, amongst other works, co-wrote The forbidden book (Ignacio et al. 2004) – a survey of anti-Filipin@ racism in the US media at the time of the Philippine-American War. While on a visit to Cuba, Emmanuel made a point of donating a copy to the University of Havana. He felt there was a lot that could be learnt from one another’s histories, given that Cuba suffered a comparable fate to Puerto Rico and the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.

Pertinent here is the work of Allan Isaac (2006), who extracts the Philippines from the Southeast Asian spatial imaginary and re-examines it as part of the ‘American tropics’ – a latitudinal string of former and extant US possessions from the Philippine Islands to Hawai‘i to Panama and the Hispano-Caribbean.

It should be added here that the rationale for inter-xenophilic solidarity is not purely historical, but also springs from the present configuration of things. Miguel argued as much when pronouncing:

41 Such a politics was already beginning to be realised in the International Women’s Network Against Militarism (IWNAM), to be examined in Chapter 8.
Just look down the street, look at the kind of communities we live in... It’s hard to know what is what in that setting, right? So we have to begin defining what that setting is beyond kind of, in a sense, individual ethnicities... Each ethnicity is important as a grounding point, but we’re building something new together, right? And that something has to be defined as a common project.

For reasons both historical and contemporary, inter-xenophobia has become central to FAEJI’s practice. As far as FAEJI’s alliance-building efforts in the Bay Area are concerned, a conscious decision has been made to prioritise outreach, not to other Filipin@ American outfits, but rather to other groups working on Environmental Justice issues. ‘If we really wanna kick Chevron and all the oil depots out from the Philippines, then it’s just as relevant for us to be involved with partners who are trying to do that in Nigeria, and seeing the interrelationship of that’, reasoned Kristal. ‘I don’t know exactly how one strikes the balance... but just to have that broad understanding they’re all kind of connected’.

At the time of my visit, FAEJI was involved in several local-level coalitions – environmentalist in orientation and cross-ethnic in composition – contesting Chevron’s operations in Richmond and San Ramon.

San Ramon

The inter-xenophilic values embodied in FAEJI’s alliance work became tangible to me at a protest outside Chevron’s San Ramon headquarters on March 19, 2007 (see Image 13). This event, like the anti-war march discussed in the early parts of this chapter, was
held to commiserate the fourth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. Joining FAEJI was a local San Ramon community group. An immigrant from Iraqi Kurdistan spoke on its behalf, making clear the links between Chevron’s actions in the Bay Area and what was happening in her native land. Another speaker, an African American woman representing one of California’s oldest Environmental Justice groups, lamented that it is the poor and people of colour who are disproportionately affected by the oil industry’s malpractices. This was true, she said, of the Chevron facility in Richmond, her city of residence for over sixty years, as well as elsewhere around the world. We also heard from an organisation partnering with the indigenous peoples of the Ecuadorian Amazon to oppose Chevron’s ecological abuses in the region. Student, labour, and anarchist groups were also present, as was a radical theatre collective that surprised the assembly with a sombre funeral procession for the last ice on earth.

Five weeks later, I joined FAEJI and its allies for another rally at the Chevron complex, this time on the occasion of the company’s annual shareholder meeting. The gathering
this time was bigger, more colourful, and more diverse. As shareholders made their way through the gates, we handed them information leaflets outlining our grievances and inviting reflection on what they were supporting. FAEJI highlighted the company’s adverse impacts on the Philippines, as did other groups with respect to Ecuador and Burma, not to mention underprivileged communities within the US itself.

The Burmese group, whose gripe was with Chevron’s complicity in the military regime in their homeland, was probably the loudest and most animated, thanks to their chants, drums, and cymbals. Being a percussionist myself, I asked one of the Burmese activists – a young man from the Chin minority, who initially assumed I was Ecuadorian – if I could borrow a drum and play along. We alternated between drumming and chatting for much of the morning. One of the Fil-Ams from FAEJI also brought with him some percussion that day – a musical instrument from the southern Philippines known as the kulintang, consisting of a row of tuned gongs laid horizontally on a supporting frame.

Jamming together, what had been separate musical traditions converged in ‘counterpoint’ (Said 1994, pp. 59-60; Said 2008) – a term referring to when two or more musical lines interweave into a concordant pattern, while at the same time retaining their distinctiveness. Our respective activist traditions combined in a like manner, leading me to ponder the affinities between the creation of song and the creation of new social relations through our activisms.
Later at the same rally, two FAEJI spokeswomen, Lupe and Emma, read out a statement prepared for the occasion by PEJA, their partners on the far shore of the Pacific. We were also addressed by two indigenous leaders from Ecuador, who had been given the opportunity to air their grievances at the shareholders’ meeting inside, but only for a few minutes. As translators rendered their words into English, it struck me that this was one of many instances of translation that day – across issues, across locales, and across the various subject positions of culture, class, gender, and so on.

Extrapolating still further, one might take our demonstration against Chevron as a microcosmic expression of nonsovereign globalisation; of a counterpower that seeks to subvert supranational sovereignty, not by arraying one unity against another, but rather by means of multiplicity itself (Solnit 2004). Social movements predicated upon unity and homophily are, as Harry Cleaver (2008, p. 127) observes, ‘being steadily displaced by a proliferation of distinct projects and a common understanding that there is no need for universal rules’. This could still be regarded as inter-xenophilia, albeit of a more political, and not just cross-cultural, form.

As a final point, xenophilic values can certainly have different implications for different people. For Ligaya, recognising one’s interconnectedness with others is not incompatible with a commitment to the Filipin@ American community:

I can’t read the newspaper without seeing something in, say, Somalia as being intimately connected with myself – not to say that you can’t prioritize because otherwise you’re going to be running around like a chicken without its head... There’s always going to be a hundred things, so for me, it’s meant choosing – building solidarity with other groups, but still focusing on this specific community.
Aurora of the PCA, however, has chosen a different route: ‘I really need to grow, I think, as a person – and so it means stepping out of your comfort zone and going somewhere else’. She explained that after years of working within the Filipin@ American community, she felt it was time to branch out and instead try her hand at working in groups that were not exclusively Fil-Am. While proud of her ethnic heritage, she did not want it to determine the totality of her horizons.

This chapter began by examining the pitfalls of homophily, before then exploring the intra- and inter-xenophilic trends displacing it. Xenophilia, in each of its manifestations, functions to uncouple the notion of community from the demands and expectations of similitude, allowing activists to work through, and not against, difference. To return to the Tagalog terms introduced at the beginning of this chapter, community is increasingly coming to be associated with a tayo- rather than kami-based notion of collective identity; with a ‘we’ that is not equivalent to the Self, but also accommodates the Other. I maintain that this has resulted, in part, from an intergenerational process of collective learning that has been taking place in postcolonial social movements since the national liberation era.

Having reached the end, not just of this chapter, but also of Part II, it is time now to shift from the eastern to the western Pacific; that is, from the becomings-cosmopolitan in the Filipin@ diaspora to those within the Philippines itself.
Part III

The western Pacific
Chapter 7

Metropolitan Manila

Intellectually grasping the need for multi-sited ethnography is one thing, but implementing it in practice is quite another. Apart from the bureaucratic hurdles of applying for two separate research visas, I found that I had underestimated the difficulty of starting all over again in a new fieldsite. I also found that I was much less adept at operating in my supposed ‘homeland’ than in the diasporic context of San Francisco.

I offer, as a segue between my sojourns on either side of the Pacific, an account of a magical-realist play entitled *Pagbabalik*, which in Tagalog means ‘The Return’. Staged just prior to my departure from San Francisco, *Pagbabalik* was written and directed by FAEJI’s own Annika, first introduced in Chapter 5. In one of the early scenes, the protagonist, a twenty-something Fil-Am named Diwata, scribbled anxiously in her journal on board a flight bound for Manila. ‘I know I’m acting calm’, she wrote, ‘but truth is I’m scared out of my wits. I’m going back to the homeland for the first time. No idea what awaits me on the other side’. The oxymoron of ‘going back’ for the ‘first time’ seemed to be what the play set out to explore.
Upon arriving in the Philippines, Diwata went to stay at her grandmother’s house and was visited that night by a *mutlo* or ancestral spirit. ‘Better you stay where you came from!’ wailed the presence, agitated by the foreign interloper.

‘But this *is* where I came from!’ Diwata cried. ‘These are my origins. If not here, then where else? Listen, in the States, I’m like a second-class citizen. I could never truly belong there...’

Diwata was done away with by the *mutlo*, later reawakening in purgatory. In life she had been caught between two worlds and such was also her fate in death.

My initial response was one of uneasiness at what the play seemed to be saying about cultural hybridity. Was there not also a certain joy in being hybrid? I came to realise, though, that other readings were possible; that perhaps *Pagbabalik* was allegorical of the dangers of overly-romanticising the homeland. If what diasporans seek there is an untainted Filipin@ self, I mused, they set themselves up for despondence from the outset. In the case of my own trip to the Philippines, ‘finding myself’ was never my aspiration. Rather, I wanted only to learn and explore in as open-ended a way as possible.

**The lay of the land**

I was amused to catch myself in Diwata’s shoes, sitting in a plane *en route* to Manila. My journal was likewise filled with nervous anticipation, as we touched down in drizzly
darkness. Jetlagged, I joined the lane for foreign passport holders. Other lanes were reserved for returning ‘OFWs’ or overseas Filipin@ workers – one small expression of the Philippines’ labour-export machinery.

Outside, I found a taxi to take me to the townhouse in Cubao, Quezon City where I would be staying for the duration of my fieldwork (see Map 3). It had been in the family for twenty-odd years, serving as accommodation for whatever relatives happened to be visiting from overseas or elsewhere in the country.

‘Where are you from?’ inquired the taxi-driver, Mang Pepe.

‘Taga-Australia ako’, I replied in my still-skechty Tagalog, keen to start practicing.

‘Ah, but your face is like a Pilipino!’

Most locals assumed I was Filipin@ American, though I was mistaken for Mexican or even Indian on occasion as well. Mang Pepe went on to mention that a friend of his was currently working in Australia on a three-year contract.

‘Oh really? Are a lot of people you know working overseas?’

‘Oo [yes], a lot! Especially sa Middle East’.
Such stories were incredibly common. I would also learn that my neighbour, a taxi-driver himself, received regular remittances from his two sisters in Spain. It made sense, then, that the Philippines featured prominently in that seminal study of transnationalism, *Nations unbound* (Basch, Schiller & Blanc 1994).

In the days after my arrival, I set about tidying up the apartment. Sorting through cupboards and drawers, I unearthed some old photographs of my youngish-looking grandparents sporting Sixties fashions. In other images, I discerned my mother as a little girl, before having migrated to Australia at the age of nineteen to study nursing. I even found photos of a younger version of myself staring back at me, some snapped on our intermittent family visits to the Philippines, others sent from Australia.

Upstairs, my bedroom window afforded a modest view over Cubao. Painted in a palette of grime and sparkle, the picture was one of smog-stained buildings, neon, and billboards selling everything from religious salvation to skin-whitening lotions to work placements in Bahrain to mobile phones bundled into ‘OFW family packs’. In no city but Metro Manila have I seen such a concentration of outdoor advertising. The only time Manileñ@s get respite is when typhoon warnings are issued, in which case the giant ads are furled to prevent their frames toppling onto surrounding homes and motorways, as has happened in previous years (Kabiling 2006).

Another aspect of what I took as the Philippines’ runaway commercialism is that teams in the national basketball league are named, not after cities or provinces, but after

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42 Residents of Manila.
their corporate sponsors. Hence such names as the ‘Cobra Energy Drink Iron Men’ and the ‘Ascof Lagundi Natural Cough Busters’. More serious is the issue of conflict-of-interest in the political arena. Take Bayani Fernando, for instance: a construction magnate whose companies are suspected to have greatly profited from his long chairmanship of the Metro Manila Development Authority (Jimenez 2008). Even the government’s banking watchdog is frequently peopled by appointees who themselves have private interests in the financial sector (Riedinger 1995, p. 208).

While public schools and hospitals face chronic underfunding and transport infrastructure bursts at the seams, glitzy remittance-fuelled shopping malls have mushroomed in recent years. Three malls in Manila are now on the list of the world’s top ten largest (Van Riper 2008) – a sign of the affluence that exists in the city, side-by-side with extreme poverty. The elites reside in what Hau (2004, p. 5) calls the ‘heavily guarded ghettos of the rich’, while the underclasses are consigned to ever-swelling informal settlements, resulting in a kind of de facto apartheid between rich and poor (International Institute for Asian Studies 2007, p. 1).

While on the topic of class, the fact of my own privilege vis-à-vis the majority of my Manilan interlocutors was inescapable, even as I tried to mitigate against it. The usual asymmetry between researcher and researched perhaps becomes all the more acute in the case of fieldworkers from the Global North, well-meaning though we may be, venturing into the societies of the South. I readily identified with Fil-Am researcher Laurel Fantauzzo (2013, p. 29) when, reflecting on a visit to a local dive, she wrote: ‘My presence amuses and annoys the guards and drivers who were never granted
scholarships to study me in my birth country... On some days I don’t know what to do with all this’.

Fantauzzo’s (2013, p. 28) experiences were further coloured by her hailing from a ‘country that once controlled the Philippines’. Indeed, what separates the Philippines from most other postcolonies is the fact that US influences commenced, not with the advent of global capitalism, but with direct colonial occupation. The legacy of American colonialism is evident, for example, in the nomenclature of such Manila thoroughfares as New York Street, Rockefeller Street, and Taft Avenue – the latter named for William Howard Taft, Governor-General of the Philippines from 1901-1903 who later served as President of the United States (Cordero-Fernando & Chaves 2008).

Furthermore, English remains the medium of instruction in schools and universities. US administrators have impacted on the Philippine education system in other ways too: To this day, it is the mythology of the independence movement against Spain that is celebrated in history classrooms, while the no less ardent resistance against the United States is given comparatively little attention.

The colonial legacy is now compounded by US-led global capitalism. In Manila’s ubiquitous call centres, for instance, the workday conforms to the waking hours of their stateside clientele, meaning the middle of the night locally. Each historical epoch – precolonial, Spanish, American, and postcolonial – forms part of the palimpsest within which today’s Filipin@ activists operate.
Political fault-lines

In Quezon City, I encountered some graffiti that read ‘Sagot sa kahirapan: Digmaang Bayan’ (‘The answer to poverty: People’s War’), signed off by the NPA. Not far from there was an altogether different message: ‘CPP-NPA nagpahirap sa taongbayan’ (‘CPP-NPA brought hardship to the people’). Metro Manila’s activist milieu is notoriously quarrelsome, and it will be my task in this section to map some of the major fault-lines. I will begin by elaborating on the division between the Reaffirmist and Rejectionist factions of the Philippine Left, before then examining some of the tensions within the RJ Left.

Further tensions separate the Reds (inclusive of the RAs and RJs) from the colours Purple (the feminists), Green (the environmentalists), and Black (the anarchists). An exploration of these other hues of the political rainbow, however, will have to wait until Chapters 8, 9, and 10, respectively. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, feminism, environmentalism, and anarchism – sites of considerable fecundity and innovation as compared to other radical milieux, at least from what I could discern – really only flourished in the period after the RA-RJ splits of 1993.

Not only did scores of leftists defect from the National Democratic Movement at this time, but so too did many activists renounce the very idea of the Left, which, it must be noted, is synonymous in the Philippines with socialism and communism. Another subset of activists – cutting across Red, Purple, Green, and Black – came to question the nation-state form, the dialectical ‘Ground’ (Hegel 1817, p. 224) occupied by Left
and Right alike. For now, a focus on the Red will help form the undercoat over which the other pigments can later be applied.

The RAs and RJs

Uneasy tensions, and sometimes outright hostilities, have characterised relations between the RAs and RJs since their initial breach in the 1990s. Although often protesting the same institutions, each side chooses to stage its rallies well-removed from the other. This was what occurred in July 2007 on the day of President Arroyo’s annual State of the Nation Address (SONA) – a traditional day of protest for Filipin@ activists each year (see Image 14). I made a point of attending both the RA and RJ rallies, each held near the Batasang Pambansa (National Legislature), albeit at a distance of around a kilometre apart.

Image 14: RA protest march on the occasion of President Arroyo’s 2007 State of the Nation Address
The RA event was organised by the Quezon City-based Coalition for National Democracy in the Philippines* (CNDP) – the umbrella under which various above-ground Maoist groups organise (including the CNDP-US introduced in Part II), with a collective membership in the thousands. A number of protestors were wearing t-shirts bearing the Maoist slogan of ‘Serve the People’, but ‘the people’ on this occasion were also serving them, with street vendors providing water and hand-fans on what was a stiflingly hot day. Chants included ‘Makibaka! Huwag matakot!’ (‘Dare to struggle! Fear not!’), ‘Si Gloria ay terorista!’ (‘Gloria is a terrorist!’), and ‘Gloria! Puta!’ (‘Gloria! Whore!’). The sexism of the latter came as a shock.

I wore red to blend in, but my brown complexion unexpectedly helped camouflage me too. Other foreigners were not so lucky, with a delegation of white-skinned Belgians attracting the attention of authorities and threatened with deportation (Punay 2007). Also present were solidarity contingents from South Korea and the United States – the latter comprised of around twenty Fil-Ams, including several FSA members whom I knew from the Bay Area. It was awkward running into them in this way, given I had abruptly terminated my involvement with them some months prior, but we were cordial nonetheless.

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43 This group marched under the banner of the ‘Philippine Support Group – Belgium’, an approximation of its Flemish name, Filippijnengroep België. During the heyday of the NDM, it was part of a network of Philippine solidarity groups operating all across Europe, but after the splits of 1993, it became the sole group to remain loyal to the CPP. The European connections to the Philippine revolutionary movement have been skirted in favour of those with the US, but readers interested in the former are advised to consult: Concerned Development Workers in the Philippines (1993); European Solidarity Conference on the Philippines (1991); and Filippijnengroep België (1993).
I later broke away and strode off to the RJ rally up the street. This edition was organised by Laban ng Masa\textsuperscript{44} (LNM), a bloc formed in 2005 out of a common desire amongst its RJ constituents to consolidate a new centre-of-gravity in Philippine politics – a self-designated ‘Democratic Left’ (Bolton 2007), as distinct from the Maoists and the Right alike. Made up of over 100 organisations from around the Philippines (Bolton 2007), Laban ng Masa, unlike the CNDP, is not bound by a single ideology but is rather composed of a range of tendencies – Social Democracy, Trotskyism, Ho Chi Minhism, and humanist Marxism amongst them – making it an important experiment in political pluralism.

Despite my mediocre Tagalog, I was able to make sense of the speeches from the English loanwords peppered throughout: ‘privatization’, ‘contractualization’, and so forth. A common grievance at both the RA and RJ rallies was the threat posed by the newly-instituted Human Security Act (Republic of the Philippines 2007) – a set of counter-terrorism measures furnishing the state with powers not seen since the Marcos dictatorship. Critics feared that the act would be used, not just to crack down on terror, but also to suppress legitimate political dissent (Human Rights Watch 2007). At the time of my fieldwork, activists, dissident journalists, and radical clergy were already being targeted in a covert assassination campaign dating back to 2001 (Amnesty International 2006; Avendaño et al. 2011).

Months after the SONA rallies, the reality of the strife-ridden environment I was in – so different to the comparative placidity of San Francisco – struck very close to home. I

\textsuperscript{44} ‘Struggle of the Masses’ in English.
had weathered during my time in Manila a fatal bomb attack on a Muslim congresswoman (Stewart 2007) and even an attempted military coup (Contreras et al. 2007), but I was none the more affected than when Dong, a friend from the RJ Left, confided in me of a threat to his life.

Dong was involved in a range of grassroots organising efforts, one being the anti-Chevron campaign in Pandacan, which was how I first met him. His primary work, however, was the defence of a squatter settlement, where, just weeks prior, his co-organiser had been gunned down by a masked assailant on a motorcycle. Still grieving the loss of his comrade, a woman in her sixties, Dong was terrified he might be next.

If not a military operation, he explained, it could well have been a private hitman contracted out by one vested interest or another, perhaps a developer or landlord. I learnt too that Dong had just been accepted for migration to the US, his family in Houston having lodged a petition on his behalf several years ago. While eager to flee to safety, he felt awful for abandoning the communities he had long been fighting for.

Dong’s revelation served as a shocking wake-up call; a cue to tread cautiously and rein in my impetuousness. Not only was it the violence of the state, directed at RAs and RJs alike, that had me fearful, but also the history of ‘fratricidal warfare’ (Pamintuan 2007, p. 14) within the Left itself.

During my time in Manila, news emerged of Jose Maria Sison’s arrest in the Netherlands, his seat of exile since 1982, for his alleged involvement in the
assassinations of prominent RJ rivals Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara (Gloria 2007). Since the CPP had already ‘claimed responsibility for both killings, saying they were engaged in “criminal and counterrevolutionary activities’’ (Zamora 2007, p. 6), it had only to be proved that it was Sison who sent the orders, which plaintiff lawyers were ultimately unable to do.

Then still subscribed to the FSA mailing list, I received in my inbox an indignant press release protesting Sison’s arrest. The case was denounced as a conspiracy to demoralise the National Democratic Movement, but the question of what Sison was actually accused of was side-stepped. For Belinda Olivares-Cunan (2007, p. 11), the irony of the situation was that RA groups ‘have gone to town accusing the military of engaging in extrajudicial killings’, while downplaying the killings carried out by the CPP-NPA.

The fact of the matter was that neither the Philippine nor Dutch authorities had any part in a plot. Rather, it was the widows of the slain RJ leaders who initiated the lawsuit, both of whom were wary to not let the Philippine state exploit the case for its own purposes (Zamora 2007).

Several weeks prior to Sison’s arrest, I had the occasion to meet Joy Kintanar, one of the widows who filed the case against him. The venue was the Bantayog ng mga Bayani (Shrine of the Martyrs) in Quezon City – a memorial to the hundreds of pro-democracy activists who lost their lives to the Marcos dictatorship. A small museum
occupies one corner, with the rest of the site given over to a manicured garden centred around the Wall of Remembrance.

I was there that day with Simon, on vacation from San Francisco and lobbying to have the names of two of his fallen comrades added to the wall: Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes, whose assassinations a US court pinned squarely on the Marcos regime (Gaerlan 1999, p. 89). It was their anti-Marcos organising with the Seattle chapter of the KDP that cost them their lives, but Domingo and Viernes are also remembered as influential labour leaders in Alaska (Chew 2012). ‘Fil-Ams were martyred too’, rued Simon. ‘It’s sad, but people in the Philippines don’t know anything about our struggle’.

Joy, a Bantayog board member, seemed open to Simon’s proposal. Together they scanned the names engraved into marble, reminiscing over the friends and companions they had known and lost. Amongst them was Edgar Jopson, Joy’s first husband.45 What she has had to endure is unfathomable: widowed once by Marcos, and a second time by the Maoists.

To my mind, Joy Kintanar’s story reveals something of how the CPP became, in certain respects, a ‘copy of that by which it felt itself to be oppressed’ (Deane cited in Gandhi 2006, p. 23). Such was one of the points raised at the 1992 Forum for Philippine Alternatives: ‘[T]hough the Marcos regime and the CPP were driven by very different motives, interests, and goals, they shared certain critical organizational features: both were highly centralized, hierarchical, totalizing, and heavily militarized’ (Crisis of

45 See Pimentel (2006) for a biography of Jopson’s life.
Socialism Cluster Group 1993, pp. 13-14). The Party’s militaristic bent, although initially directed at the state, was later rehashed in its relations with other Left groups.

_Tensions in the RJ Left_

The RA-RJ fault-line aside, I also picked up on underlying tensions within the RJ Left. These were of a different nature though, being more philosophical than belligerent. One point of difference amongst Rejectionists concerned the legacy of revolutionary nationalism: while some retained the Maoist commitment to the nation-state, others gave indications of inchoate cosmopolitanisms.

A first example is the debate that arose during a seminar on China at UP Diliman. Two panellists, whom I will call Alicia and Jeremiah, were in disagreement over the relevance of the Chinese experience to the contemporary Philippine Left. Alicia, a forty-something former CPP member now working with an RJ-aligned rural development NGO, still held sympathies for Mao, feeling the issue with the Party to have been Sison’s leadership, not Maoism _per se_. Jeremiah, a younger scholar-activist affiliated with a different RJ faction, responded to Alicia with a list of grievances against Maoist China: its normal relations with far-right regimes in Greece, Spain and Chile, its siding with the US and apartheid South Africa in Angola, its repression of dissent on the domestic front, and so forth. His implication was that Maoism never lived up in practice to what it professed in theory. Contextualising his critiques, he pointed out that, unlike Alicia, ‘I didn’t get my political education from the Little Red Book, for good or bad, or from the other texts attacking the Little Red Book’.
Being in his twenties, Jeremiah came of age politically in the postcolonial, rather than anticolonial, era. This meant he had much less of an attachment to revolutionary nationalism and attendant Westphalian notions of space, so central to the older generation. We need, he went on to argue, to ‘overcome the divisions imposed on us by this nation-state system’. Abandoning the Westphalian spatial imaginary opens the possibility for borders to be subverted, not simply straddled as in the case of Maoist internationalism.

I observed during my fieldwork that proto-cosmopolitans within the RJ camp critique nationalist politics, not only for its incongruence with transnational realities, but also for its relegation of local struggles to secondary status, beneath those deemed to be of ‘national’ significance.

Whether to give primacy to diverse local struggles or focus instead on ‘national issues’ was the topic of a debate at another RJ meeting I attended. The purpose of the gathering was to commence work on the Philippine Social Forum (PSF), proposed to take place in January 2008 as a response to the World Social Forum’s (WSF) call for a global week of action. The WSF, held annually since 2001, is an ‘open space for debate and discussion’ amongst the many forces comprising the Alternative Globalisation Movement (Santiago 2004, p. xiv).

\[46\] For the first time, the WSF would not be restricted

46 I myself was one of an estimated 100,000 people (Choonara 2004) to attend the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India in 2004. Some 400 Filipin@ activists were present (Hau 2004, p. 4), most of them from the RJ Left. The RAs meanwhile took part in a smaller rival event on the opposite side of the highway, organised by the Maoist-oriented International League of People’s Struggles. In my discussions with Miguel in the Bay Area, I discovered that he too was present in Mumbai. ‘That was a great visual indicator of where things are at’, said Miguel of the two forums, ‘where you have, on one side of the...’
to a single locale, but would take place through scores of local, though globally-coordinated, events over the course of a week.

Jeremiah was present, again taking issue with older activists for their nationalist habits-of-thought. One veteran argued that the Philippine version of the global event ‘should have a national face’, and that ‘We should stress burning national issues like JPEPA\(^{[47]}\). Another agreed, insisting ‘We need to be unified’. Jeremiah instead made appeals to a ‘politics of multiplicity’ (Lazzarato 2010), expressing the view that the social forum should ideally function as ‘open space, inclusive sa lahat [for everyone]’. He wanted a diversity of local struggles to be accommodated without being eclipsed by monolithic, and supposedly more important, national concerns.

Jeremiah’s emphasis on openness and inclusivity was in keeping with how the WSF was originally conceived. Indicative of this was his use of the term ‘open space’, theorised by WSF co-founder, Chico Whitaker (2004, pp. 113, 115), through the metaphor of the town square:

> If the square has an owner other than the collectivity, it fails to be a square, and becomes private territory. Squares generally open spaces that can be visited by all those who find any kind of interest in using it... The longer they last as squares the better it is for those who use them for what they offer for the realisation of their respective objectives. Even when a square contains trees and small hills, it is always a socially horizontal space. Those who climb the trees or the hills cannot control from above the actions of those inside the square.

\(^{[47]}\) Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement.
The open space, in short, is a multiplicity that resists becoming a unity. The crucial point is that a subset of Rejectionists, composed mostly of younger activists like Jeremiah, is divesting itself of nationalist inheritances and affirming a new, anational sensibility: one predicated on the singular and the common, the local and the translocal.

This tension between the local and the national also surfaced in conversations with PEJA organisers Ricardo and Diego, both of modest financial means, but rich in heart and integrity. In an interview one afternoon in Diego’s rickety family home, constructed on squatted land a short distance from the Pandacan oil depot, I was intrigued to learn of their experiences in the Quezon City-based Philippine Socialist Organization, a Social Democratic party of the RJ Left with a national membership in the tens of thousands. Both had been members when the PSO was active in the anti-oil depot campaign, but eventually came to question the group’s motives in Pandacan. As Ricardo saw it, winning social and environmental justice for local residents was less important for the PSO than winning national elections. ‘Sometimes they’re acting on local issues, but they’re more concentrated on national issues’, seconded Diego. ‘I think grassroots organizing is what is really needed – here, we’re not talking about the Party anymore’.

Alienated by the PSO bureaucracy and its methods, the pair chose to submit their resignations and continue on in Pandacan as independent community organisers. In so
doing, they affirmed the capacity of local-level actors to bring about change from the bottom up, sans the intervention of representatives.

Representational logics are intrinsic to Social Democracy; indeed to any political framework premised on the nation-state. Cesar, himself a senior figure within the PSO, earlier said of his party’s approach in a seminar: ‘Many of our programs have to do with improving people’s lives, empowering people... but hopefully developing the kind of empowerment method that you can scale up, so that at some point, you become relevant at a national level’.

What I read from this was that local issues matter insofar as they can serve national agendas, which was precisely Ricardo and Diego’s gripe with the PSO. They were the kind of local actors that the PSO wanted to empower; at the same time, however, it deemed their actions insufficient without the mediation of PSO cadres ostensibly representing them at the national level. In light of such phenomena, one anarcha-feminist in Manila argued that ‘[r]epresentation will only breed apathy and disempowerment’ (Ingrata cited in Dapithapon 2013, p. 71).

I have touched on a range of critiques that today's Filipin@ activists are making of nationalist and statist inheritances, but the list is far from complete. So far, I have only looked at the proto-cosmopolitanisms emerging amongst the Rejectionists, but these were not as pronounced as those I encountered in the feminist, environmentalist, and anarchist movements. Each extends the critiques of nationalism presented thus far in its own way. Just as nationalist political groups in the Philippines have had a history of
subsuming local issues to those deemed to be of national importance, so too have issues concerning women and the environment been subsumed in a like manner. In the NDM, feminist and environmentalist concerns were accommodated, but relegated to secondary status beneath the overarching imperative of national liberation. In response, the Autonomous Women’s Movement and the Autonomous Environmental Movement were born, as will be examined in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively. The contemporary anarchist movement, too, largely emerged in rebellion to what it perceived were the shortcomings of the national liberation model, as will be chronicled in Chapter 10.

For now, however, it will be necessary to spend the final part of this chapter considering the consequences of nationalism for the Philippines’ plethora of ethnic minority subjects. The fact that revolutionary nationalists in the past have been complicit in their repression is yet another reason why contemporary activists – whether Red, Purple, Green, or Black – are increasingly re-imaging community along cosmopolitan lines.

**Ethnic repression**

To repeat an earlier point, the advent of postmodernity does not mean that modernist oppressions have been dispensed with. New oppressions have arisen (for instance, those associated with transnational corporations and so-called ‘free trade’), but old oppressions arising from nationalism and statism remain. The Philippines’ ethnic minorities know this well, whether ethno-linguistic, ethno-religious, indigenous, or
otherwise. Note that ‘minority’ is understood here, not in terms of mere numerical makeup, but as the outcome of uneven power dynamics.

As asked for his views on Philippine nationalism, Leon, an anarchist of Waraynon descent whom I interviewed in Manila, responded:

I was born in a coastal town in Leyte [see Map 4]. We have our own language [Waray-Waray], we have our own culture. Historically-speaking, if you talk about Filipino nationalism, you actually just talk about the Tagalog, which originated from Cavite, Batangas, in Luzon, central Luzon... So it's a kind of "internal imperialism" [laughs] in some way or another, right?

Even as nationalists resist imperial homogenisation across transnational space, they paradoxically effect an equivalent homogenising drive at home. Corroborating Leon’s insight, postcolonial scholar Daniel Goh (2008, pp. 268-273) maintained that early Philippine nationalists did not erase American imperialist ideology so much as ‘Filipinize’ it, incorporating it into its own workings.

In practical terms, the Tagalog bourgeoisie came at independence ‘to inhabit the bureaucratic machinery created for the implementation of colonial rule’ (Gandhi 1998, p. 119). One ramification is that Tagalog today is the only Philippine language to enjoy the privilege of actually being called a language. The rest are usually cast as dialects of the national standard, despite many of them being mutually-unintelligible, fully-fledged languages in their own right. The problem, writes Carl Rubino (2005, p. 7), is that in the Philippine context, the terms ‘language’ and ‘dialect’ tend to be used ‘politically rather than linguistically’.
The Tagalog-centrism of bourgeois nationalism was not disputed by the NDM, but on the contrary reproduced. The ‘use of the national language’, declared Sison (writing as Guerrero 1970, p. 164), ‘must be promoted to accelerate the propagation of a revolutionary national culture’. The CPP hence made efforts to spread Tagalog in regions where it was not the native tongue, particularly by way of its rural literacy campaigns (Montañez 1988, pp. 11-12).

Amidst the upheavals of the early Nineties, RJ scholar Rizal Buendia (1993, pp. 82, 84) took the Party to task for its view that ‘the formula for nation-building is the homogenization of the entire society’. Reflecting on her own experiences in the NDM, Lorna, then on a visit from the Bay Area, commented in a seminar at UP Diliman:

‘Communist parties are universalist formations and there was no room for people who don’t fit. Our emphasis on the nation made us overlook, for example, the struggle in Mindanao, and the struggle of Igorot groups in northern Luzon’. Like Leon, Lorna too is ethnically Waraynon, her minority status perhaps affording her greater perspicacity on the matter.

One way of phrasing the issue would be to say that nationalism produces not just external but also internal outsiders. Consider Twinkle Bautista, a young woman from the Kalinga tribe of the Luzon highlands. Asked about her experiences as an indigenous woman by a pair of activist researchers looking to foster a more inclusive feminism, she told them: ‘I remember being confused in school; the teacher said to me that I was
Filipino because my parents were Filipinos, that Filipinos wear *baro’t saya*[^48] and the national language is Filipino, but back home we didn’t wear that and we spoke another language’ (Bautista cited in Reyes & Asinas 2011, p. 433).

In addition to indigenous peoples, the Amerasian community presents another case in point. As the descendants of US servicemen and their Filipina partners, Amerasians occupy, from the perspective of some Philippine nationalists, an unsettling and potentially traitorous subjective location. Indicative of this was a sign at a bases clean-up rally in the early 2000s reading: ‘*Kano magdadagdag ng toxic at Amerasian*’ (‘The Yanks are spawning toxics and Amerasians’) (see Image 15). Coming across it in an archival photograph, I instinctively bristled at the parallel it seemed to suggest: that the Philippine environment is being contaminated by toxic waste, and the Philippine national community by the human flotsam of empire.

[^48]: A Spanish-influenced blouse-and-skirt costume worn by women.
I learnt from Angela – a feminist and anti-racist activist in Olongapo City, adjacent to the former Subic Naval Base – that black Amerasians like herself are particularly discriminated against.

‘How do you identify culturally?’ I asked her.

‘I don’t feel I’m a Filipino. I don’t belong here because I don’t look Filipino. I look American’.

She described school as a desolate experience. Constantly ostracised, Angela succumbed to depression, but not drug abuse like a number of her Amerasian peers. Outside of school, with few employers willing to hire her, she spent an agonising stint in the sex industry, before eventually finding her place as a community organiser.

Angela’s story reminded me that identity is far from being a petty, self-indulgent concern unique to diasporans, which was the view expressed by Jerome in the Bay Area. I encountered similar views in Manila, where one acquaintance, recently returned from two years of graduate studies in the US, opined: ‘We’ve got so much problems here in the Philippines – poverty, corruption, extrajudicial killings – and all Fil-Ams worry about is their identity?’ He had forgotten, it seemed, about the Moros, the indigenes, and the Amerasians, amongst other internal outsiders, whose struggles in large part are also struggles over identity.
As a final illustration of the impact of nationalist majoritarianism on ethnically variant Filipin@s, I will relate the story of Nikita, a member of the Indian Filipin@ minority. Firstly, by way of context, Indian Filipin@s, like Chinese Filipin@s, are frequently subjected to a racism that, given their often financially well-placed status, comes bundled with a resentment against the rich (Pangalangan 2007).

Nikita, though, was of modest means. Although I met her only once through a mutual friend, our conversation left an imprint. She had recently graduated from a creative writing degree at UP Diliman, well-known for its nationalist intellectual culture, but was left feeling alienated by the experience. Attempting to write from her own unique subject location, Nikita found that her efforts went unappreciated, and were sometimes even thwarted, by her nationalist professors. ‘I couldn’t really identify with what they’re promoting because I’m not fully Filipino’, she repined.

In what is testament to Nikita’s experience, literature scholar Elmo Gonzaga (2009, p. 23) faults the Philippine literary establishment for its policing of young writers to ensure they stay within the nationalist ambit. Poet and postcolonialist Neil Garcia (2004, p. x) has likewise criticised it for its ‘insular’ tendencies. The Créolité movement discussed in Chapter 6 has helped generate a new Caribbean literature – one inclusive of difference and critical of ‘false universality, monolingualism and purity’ (Bernabé cited in Pennycook 2007, p. 130) – but no similar such movement has yet taken hold on Philippine shores. There, the literati continue elevating the liberatory virtues of national consciousness, while overlooking the way it silences those beyond its purview.
Moreover, for nationalists to espouse purity could be regarded as somewhat disingenuous given that cultural hybridity is a fact-of-life for most Filipin@s. Denying their own hybridity, they enter the realm of abstractions. Consider, for instance, the disdain that nationalist linguists tend to hold for Taglish – a playful mishmash of Tagalog and English – even as they use it for everyday communication (Rafael 2000, pp. 170-171). In light of the Creolists, I offer a more generous take: Rather than view Taglish as a polluted Tagalog, and its speakers as victims of outside influences, one could regard it instead as the collective product of countless creative actors who perpetually negotiate and re-negotiate cultural flows, intercepting some elements while indigenising others (Garcia 2007, p. xiv).

Increasingly, Filipin@ activists are proceeding likewise, basing their politics on the rich, postcolonial tapestry of present-day Philippines, rather than on a supposedly-recoverable, but arguably never-existent, lost purity.

Thus concludes my introductory survey of the Philippines’ cultural-political landscape, as I encountered it during my time as a researcher in Manila. To summarise some of the key points of this chapter, contemporary radicals are rebelling against the once-hegemonic national liberation framework for its disavowal of difference, ethnic and otherwise, as well as for its deprivatisation of the local in favour of select national priorities. It will also be seen that issues concerning women and the environment have been rendered subordinate in much the same manner. Once restricted to varying
shades of red, the Philippine political imagination today draws from a vibrant palette of purples, greens, and blacks. There are other colours, other movements, but feminism, environmentalism, and anarchism were what made the biggest impressions on me during my fieldwork. The cosmopolitan sensibilities therein will be brought to light in the remaining chapters.
Chapter 8

The feminists

The feminist movement, wrote Quesada-Tiongson (2006, p. 320), has ‘been one of the most vibrant forces in... the [Philippines’] socio-political landscape’. The vibrancy of Philippine feminism was such that, over the course of my two research stints in Manila, I was jolted out of my complacency and forced to take notice. Realising how remiss I had been in not including gender concerns in my initial research design, I began to tune in, listen to women’s stories, and critically reflect on my male privilege. I came to appreciate that gender injustice is not just a women’s issue, but a community issue in which all are implicated (Tintiangco-Cubales cited in Dapithapon 2013, pp. 23-24). As a male-bodied person socialised into patriarchal norms, I myself participate, wittingly or unwittingly, in the perpetuation of unjust social relations in my daily interactions with women and girls. This realisation, coupled with the feminist emphasis on ‘the deeply intimate as an area for political action’ (Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 10), was what put me on the path of a feminist ally.

I hence proceed in good faith, speaking not from a position of authority, but as someone relating my encounters with Filipina feminists, and the lessons learnt therefrom. Since it would be impossible to do justice to the complexity of Philippine feminisms, past and present, in just one chapter, I offer only a snapshot: one centring
in particular on the ecotone between Red and Purple. It will be seen that efforts to
undo the subsumption of women’s liberation to national liberation are inseparable
from the emergent cosmopolitanisms permeating the feminist movement. Entailed in
each is a defection from the NDM’s legacy.

**Red to Purple**

My grouping of Filipin@ activists into the camps of Red, Purple, Green, and Black is
more a heuristic device than anything else. On the ground, the Philippine social
movement landscape presents a more complicated picture, with one veteran activist
(cited in Weekley 2001, p. 265) likening it to ‘an animated Picasso painting – a
constantly moving picture of angles and clashing colours, creating myriad shapes and
spaces’.

In the space between Green and Red are the eco-nationalists; between Green and
Black, the eco-anarchists. Meanwhile, in the spaces where Purple crosses over into
Red, Black and Green are the nationalist feminists, anarcha-feminists and eco-feminists
respectively. Only well after my fieldwork did I learn of the existence of anarcha-
feminist groups like LiCK!49 (Dapithapon 2013, pp. 67-68) and eco-feminist groups like
SARILAYA50 (Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 6). Each converge in what is referred to
as the Autonomous Women’s Movement, with ‘autonomous’ in this context signifying
a ‘break from the national liberation movement’ (Quesada-Tiongson 2006, p. 332), as
well as from leftist party bureaucracies more generally.

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49 Liberate the Clit Kolektiv.
50 A portmanteau of two Tagalog words, ‘kasarian’ (‘gender’) and ‘kalayaan’ (‘freedom’).
The organisations I was able to make contact with in Manila, though, were not autonomous, but affiliated with parties of the RJ Left. Most carry Maoist vestiges, even if unconsciously, but these are beginning to be challenged from within so as to distinguish their perspectives from the nationalist feminism of RA groups like GABRIELA.\footnote{General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action.}

One RJ feminist outfit to shed its old feathers is the \textit{Nagkakaisang Kababaihan para sa Inang Bayan}\footnote{Despite the use of pseudonyms, ‘\textit{inang bayan}’ (‘motherland’) has been retained from the organisation’s old name, as has ‘\textit{kalayaan}’ (‘freedom’) from its new name.} (‘United Women for the Motherland’), which, at minimum, is several hundred members strong. In April 2008, a friend from the organisation e-mailed me with some momentous news:

\begin{quote}
Our name is too limiting, as if the org is simply focused on motherland, the Philippines; or just working and fighting for national democracy or national justice. Realizing the “mistake” and recognizing the importance of international solidarity... and believing that true justice is global justice, we RESOLVED TO DELETE the word INANG BAYAN (‘motherland’) from our name... On the second week of March, we changed the name to \textit{Nagkakaisang Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan}\footnote{‘Party for the Liberation of the Philippines’ in English.} (NKK), or, ‘United Women for Freedom’\footnote{General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action.}.
\end{quote}

The NKK is an affiliate of the \textit{Partido para sa Liberasyon ng Pilipinas} (PLP), widely considered the most Maoist of all the RJ parties. This made its cosmopolitan turn all the more surprising for me. In changing its name, not only did the NKK displace homophilic logics in favour of a new xenophilic openness, but so too did it signal a refusal to subsume women’s struggles to overarching nationalist imperatives.
The decades-old argument over whether women’s liberation should hinge on national liberation or whether it should be a struggle of its own is referred to in Philippine activist circles as the ‘Women Question’. To put this question into historical context, I will parachute in to the year 1969 when the *Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan*[^54] (MAKIBAKA) was founded.

**Nationalist feminism**

Filipinas had long clamoured for greater freedoms, but not until the arrival of MAKIBAKA did the women’s movement take on a militantly nationalist character. Although instrumental in putting women’s issues on the agenda, it shied away from identifying as ‘feminist’ – a term dismissed by many in the male-dominated NDM as ‘Western’ and ‘petit bourgeois’ (Dapithapon 2013, p. 16; Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, pp. 2-3).

When Martial Law was declared in 1972, MAKIBAKA was forced to go underground. The new repressiveness then allowed the CPP to argue that women’s concerns must take a backseat to the overriding imperative of overthrowing the dictatorship. A cell of CPP cadres within MAKIBAKA ensured that this became the orthodoxy, albeit not without resistance (Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 3). When MAKIBAKA did eventually become a National Democratic subsidiary, the ‘malayang’ part of its name was changed to ‘makabayang’, making it not the *Free* but the *Patriotic* Movement of New Women (Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 3).

[^54]: Tagalog for ‘Free Movement of New Women’.
MAKIBAKA then went from an organisation fighting for women’s liberation to one tasked with maximising female involvement in the national liberationist cause (Hilsdon 1995, p. 156). Sison (cited in Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 4) commanded as much when writing: ‘To build the strength of the women’s movement, you must work for the fullest participation of women... in the National Democratic struggle against US imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism’.

Here, a parallel can be drawn with the way that the KDP was instructed to relinquish its diaspora-specific concerns and instead throw its weight behind the revolutionary movement in the homeland. The CPP deemed that the role of women’s groups, like that of the KDP, was to act as special-interest adjuncts to the NDM, the justification being that only through national liberation could their own liberation be won. In Sison’s (cited in Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 4) words, it is ‘through the National Democratic struggle that the women can best assert and exercise their rights’.

Even as the political category of ‘women’ was recognised, it was ranked as subservient to those of class and nation. This ‘hierarchical ordering of issues’ (Hilsdon 1995, p. 12) – nowadays critiqued as ‘Oppression Olympics’ – could be seen as at least partly derived from Mao’s theory of contradiction, discussed in Chapter 1. Although Mao (1937) took into account a range of contradictions, he argued that in Third World contexts, all but the contradiction between colonised and colonising nations remained secondary. It is in this light that one can make sense of such oft-made claims as ‘women cannot be free until the nation is free’, their motive being to re-direct feminist energies into the CPP-NPA’s efforts to seize state power.
Coopted thus, women’s liberation was deferred until after the revolution. Sison (cited in Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 4) conceded, however, that ‘even in the socialist society of the future, you [women] will still have a lot of work to do in order to expand your freedom and achieve full equality with men’. His apparent humility notwithstanding, this statement seems to carry the assumption that achieving gender equality is the sole responsibility of women. That the onus might fall on men to work against the grain of their male privilege and construct alternative, ‘non-oppressive masculinities’ (Cox et al. 1997, p. 198) accordant with feminist aspirations was something as yet unimaginable for Sison. Such was the consequence of treating women’s grievances as particularistic, rather than all-pervading, concerns.

Faced with radical desires that threatened to evade its grasp, the CPP was forced to accommodate feminist concerns, albeit only by slotting them into its already-existent framework. Not all women in the NDM were able to be placated in this manner. Dissatisfaction began to mount in the 1980s and became especially pointed in the early Nineties when the Women Question issued into the swirl of debates that precipitated the RA-RJ splits.

The proto-Rejectionist, Sunny Lansang (1991, p. 41), wrote at this time that she had ‘not yet met another feminist comrade who is satisfied with the way the Party is confronting the practical and theoretical challenges posed by the local and international women’s movement’. She decried the extent to which the sexism of wider society was perpetuated within the Party, arguing that to allow this to happen was ‘to oppose imperialism and feudalism with our right hand only to caress it with our
left’ (Lansang 1991, p. 46). Aida Santos and Sylvia Estrada-Claudio (2005, p. 4) furthermore attested to women being treated ‘as secondary comrades in the movement’, at times even as ‘mere appendages of their husbands, particularly those in positions of power’.

While men predominated in leadership roles, women were assigned to secretarial positions, also forming the majority of the movement’s health care workers (Hilsdon 1995, p. 168). Another manifestation of the gendered division of labour in the NDM was the common tendency for men to devolve family responsibilities to their wives, thereby freeing themselves up for activism (Lansang 1991, pp. 48-49). Burdened with child care and housework and sometimes even told that to perform their wifely duties was the best contribution they could make to the revolution, female comrades began to speak out against their subordination, only to then be ‘castigated for their lack of commitment’ (Lansang 1991, pp. 48-50).

On top of this was the range of norms and expectations in the NDM pertaining to sexuality and relationships, which were more heavily policed amongst women than men (Hilsdon 1995, p. 167). The CPP leadership favoured marriage, banned extramarital sex, and frowned upon homosexual relations as ‘ideological failings’ (Lansang 1991, p. 48).

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55 One source, a woman who had spent many years in the mountains as an NPA guerrilla, confirmed the prevalence of homophobic attitudes within the movement. This is now changing, though, with same-sex unions permitted within the CPP-NPA since the mid-2000s (Dowell 2005). Although absent from this work, the theme of queer liberation is one I intend to investigate in future research.
All this meant that the movement, at least for women, was scarcely more liberating than the society it sought to replace. Many women opted out and went on to found a throng of feminist groups independent of National Democratic structures. It was in this manner that the Autonomous Women’s Movement was born.

**Autonomous feminism**

The NKK’s aforementioned shift from Red to Purple was the latest in a long line of purplings stretching back to the early Eighties. PILIPINA and KALAYAAN, founded in 1981 and 1983 respectively, are today recognised as early progenitors of the Autonomous Women’s Movement in the Philippines.

KALAYAAN co-founder, Aida Santos, who also happens to be an acclaimed poet, wrote in the foreword to one of her collections: ‘I wanted to bring my sisters’ stories into focus, stories which were left out in the writing of revolutions and rebellions’ (Santos 2000, p. iii). Autonomous feminists consider it imperative that women be able to tell their own stories, formulate their own analyses, set their own agendas, and manage their own resources (Quesada-Tiongson 2006, p. 330). In asserting their independence in this way, many have been attacked over the years for being ‘splitist’ and ‘divisive’ (Nemenzo cited in Quesada-Tiongson 2006, p. 328) by male activists not always cognisant of their roles in driving women away in the first place.

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56 Shorthand for the **Kilusan ng Kababaihang Pilipina** (Movement of Philippine Women).
57 Shorthand for the **Katipunan ng Kalayaan para sa Kababaihan** (Society for the Freedom of Women).
Santos and Estrada-Claudio (2005, p. 5) recall that ‘the most hurtful accusation that trivialized KALAYAAN’s effort was that we were merely unhappy wives’. KALAYAAN sought to strike a balance between autonomy and co-existence with the Maoists nonetheless, seeing feminism as ‘integral to but distinct from’ (Santos cited in Quesada-Tiongson 2006, p. 327) other social movements, the NDM included.

PILIPINA, on the other hand, believed it necessary to forge its own way forward. Contrary to the National Democratic maxim that women’s liberation is dependent on that of the nation, PILIPINA argued the exact inverse; namely, that ‘one cannot have national liberation without women’s liberation’ (Quesada-Tiongson 2006, p. 326). Only after the discrediting of the NDM in 1986 and its disintegration in 1993 did autonomous feminism come into its own, like a sapling outgrowing the shadow of an older tree.

For all its successes, there is some concern today about what has been termed the ‘NGO-ization of the women’s liberation movement’ (Santos & Estrada-Claudio 2005, p. 6) – that is to say, its de-radicalisation and containment within the sober world of board meetings, grant applications, project reports, and UN-style developmentalist rhetoric.

The NGO sector in the Philippines, however, is extremely diverse, ranging from international aid organisations to grassroots community action groups, each working in their own ways to keep women’s issues on the agenda. These include issues around reproductive health, sexism in the media, violence against women, prostitution and
sex trafficking, the relative poverty of women as compared to men, workplace
discrimination, and the abuse and exploitation of female labour migrants in the
globalised economy (Hilsdon 1995; Quesada-Tiongson 2006; Reyes & Asinas 2011).

This work continues to be vital, particularly considering that the notion that women’s
concerns are secondary is not limited to the Maoists, but is also prevalent in wider
society. This was revealed by anarcha-feminist writer, Be Dapithapon (2013), in a series
of interviews with working-class Manileñ@s. Asked for his thoughts on feminism, one
tricycle⁵⁸ driver (cited in Dapithapon 2013, p. 26) responded:

I think our government has to deal first with poverty, unemployment and
corruption before we can talk about feminism and equal rights for all. How can
we talk about equality when we are hungry, when we have no homes, and we
have no means to provide the basic needs of our family?

Poverty is indeed a pressing issue, although not one necessarily at odds with gender
equality. Insisting on the primacy of gender above class would invert the customary
hierarchy of oppressions, while leaving the logic of Oppression Olympics intact. Most
contemporary feminists effect no such manoeuvre, but rather argue as to the
‘intersectionality’ (Crenshaw 1991; Crenshaw 1989) between multiple systems of
oppression.

In intersectional analysis, the various isms (including sexism, racism, and classism) and
phobias (including homophobia and transphobia) are held to mesh in such a way that
each makes little sense in isolation. The experience of a working-class woman, for

⁵⁸ A common form of public transport in the Philippines.
instance, is not reduced to either her class or gender, as ‘single-axis’ (Crenshaw 1989) frameworks would presume, but is rather understood in terms of the specificity of her intersectional subject location. So too with indigenous women, Amerasian women, diasporic women, and so forth. This could be seen as one of the most important contributions of recent feminist theory to anti-oppression theory in general.

Not purely theoretical, intersectional analysis also has substantial practical implications. One is the reorientation towards situational, rather than universal, resistance strategies. Related to this is the emergence of rainbow alliances that allow activists to work through, and not against, diversity. A standout example from my fieldwork is that of the Metro Subic Network (MSN) in Olongapo, met through the FAEJI solidarity tour.

The MSN is comprised of an assortment of groups varyingly focussed on local indigenes (specifically, the Aeta), Amerasians, women, asbestos survivors, and the environment. What they share in common, even while remaining singular, is that their grievances all stem from the former Subic Naval Base. The facility’s adverse impacts on surrounding communities have included ‘violence against women and girls, violation of local people’s self-determination, and abuse and contamination of the environment’ (Cachola et al. 2008, p. 1). The MSN’s member organisations recognise that if the ‘imbroglio’ (Latour 1993, pp. 1-3) within which their respective constituencies are

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59 An ‘imbroglio’, for Latour (1993), is a complex entanglement of concerns for which traditionally compartmentalised knowledges and practices are no longer adequate. Cites Latour (1993, p. 2) as an example: ‘The smallest AIDS [Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome] virus takes you from sex to the unconscious, then to Africa, tissue cultures, DNA [Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid] and San Francisco, but the analysts, thinkers, journalists and decision-makers will slice the intricate network traced by the virus for
enmeshed is to be ameliorated, single-axis frameworks cannot, in themselves, suffice. What has therefore been enacted is a rainbow-hued politics sensitive to the intersections between each of their concerns, without any competition over whose struggle should be afforded greater priority.

Such competition would make little sense given that a number of feminist organisers in the MSN themselves have Amerasian children; that Amerasian women are amongst the survivors of sexual abuse; that Aetas, too, have been affected by environmental contamination – these being but a few instances of the transversal linkages cutting across the traditionally-segmented domains of women, ethnic minorities, the environment, and so on.

If as supple a politics as the MSN’s is applicable to the localised imbroglio of Subic and its surrounds, then it is certainly applicable to the broader imbroglio engendered by the web of US military bases worldwide. This is where global rainbow alliances like the International Women’s Network Against Militarism (IWNAM) come in.

**Pacific pacifism**

IWNAM is a transnational – and very much cosmopolitan – coalition of feminists, environmentalists, and pacifists committed to reversing the detrimental impacts of US militarism around the Pacific Rim and Caribbean. It involves women’s groups from South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Guam, Hawai’i and Puerto Rico – all places where you into tidy compartments where you will find only science, only economy, only social phenomena, only local news, only sentiment, only sex’.
the United States maintains, or has maintained, military bases. It also includes the US-based Women for Genuine Security (WGS), which, according to its website, began life in 1996 ‘when women from Okinawa (Japan) appealed to us as women living in the United States to take responsibility and speak up about the impacts of our military in other countries’ (WGS 2008b, p. 1).

IWNAM is sustained through biennial conferences, each time held in a different country. In 2007, it was Women for Genuine Security’s turn to play host in San Francisco, the theme of the gathering being: ‘The opposite of war is creativity: Women resisting militarism and creating a culture of life’ (WGS 2007). Several MSN members, at the time I met them, were preparing to head to San Francisco, the very city I had just left behind. My timing was unfortunate, but I made sure to keep abreast of the proceedings online, as well as to follow up with the MSN delegates upon their return so I could hear about their experiences in person.

Two Amerasian activists were slated for the Philippine delegation, but had been denied visas by the US government. Angela, whom I introduced in the preceding chapter, was one of the unlucky ones. Although not given any reasons for their rejection, Angela felt it was a case of wrongful discrimination. She surmised that the US government probably suspected they would attempt to stay in the country, using their American fathers as justification, but also that it was taking measures to conceal the existence of Amerasian communities in the Philippines, as well as in other parts of Asia affected by US military occupation.
With Angela and her comrade kept at home – their predicament a demonstration of the ‘hierarchies of mobility’ (Bauman 1998, pp. 68-76) accompanying globalisation – I was left with report-backs from Samiya, chair of an MSN-affiliated women’s group working on prostitution issues, and Georgina, an organiser with an Environmental Justice NGO, likewise part of the MSN. Both were in their forties and from working-class backgrounds. Said Samiya of her time in San Francisco:

It’s good to hear the problem of the women from other countries. For us, it’s empower with us, and we have, you know, we have a dream to fight again... It’s a very good sharing: the sharing of the problems and then also the action, what we’re gonna do after this... It’s different ways for fighting, but it’s a common problem.

For Georgina, too, ‘it was a really amazing experience... the people were so passionate’. One of the conference participants whose passion and resilience moved her most was a woman from Vieques, Puerto Rico. Several years prior, her only son passed away from toxic contamination believed to have been of US military origin, propelling her into a life of activism. ‘I also met an Okinawan’, continued Georgina; ‘she was raped by a military officer and that pushed her to be an activist there in Okinawa. She has been fighting for Okinawan land for more than twenty years now and still wants to continue’.

The Filipina delegates moved others with their stories too – not just at the conference, but also at a Philippines solidarity evening that FAEJI helped organise. There, they spoke of their work in the Task Force for Subic Rape, an ad-hoc coalition seeking justice for the Filipina survivor of a rape attack by visiting US servicemen in 2005 (Nicole
Information Bureau 2009). They also shared some of the history of the anti-bases movement and subsequent bases clean-up campaign in the Philippines – experiences from which other women in IWNAM have long drawn inspiration, as well as cautionary guidance.

The hosts from WGS participated in the sharing of ‘experiences, information, and effective organizing strategies’ (WGS 2008b, p. 1) as well. As part of this effort, they took their guests on a tour of the Bay Area, visiting sites of significance to their work around social and environmental justice. One such site was the Emeryville Shellmound, a tract of land held sacred by Native Americans that campaigners in the late 1990s had tried to prevent from being developed into shopping centre, albeit unsuccessfully. Richmond, where Chevron is facing considerable community resistance, was another of the sites visited.

In addition to the tour, even the delegates’ accommodation was selected by organisers for its significance to the cause in hand: a backpackers’ hostel located on the grounds of the old Fort Mason. Readers will recall from the Introduction that this was the nerve centre of the United States’ Pacific empire for much of the twentieth century, prompting delegates to reflect on the historical web of connections within which they were entangled. As Georgina recounted:

At first, we were so surprised, like “Why are we here?”... But after that night we arrived in San Francisco, they explained to us why we’re on that ground. And part of the program is for us to understand the places we’re going to visit; how they’re connected to each other. So they explained to us that Fort Mason was used as the port... in their invasions of the Asia-Pacific, particularly in the Philippines and the bombing in Nagasaki... Could you imagine how these
invasions had cost these people? We realized it when we got there, and when they explained to us how these things are interrelated... The people of Hawai‘i and the people of Guam and Okinawa and Korea were so shocked because they didn’t realize.

Xenophilia

Through the kinds of exchanges presented thus far, the assembled women were able to cross-fertilise and forge xenophilic affinities across difference. The network’s apparent xenophilic predilections are evident, too, in the primacy it accords to multilingualism. Unlike a lot of other transnational coalitions, IWNAM avoids operating in English by default. Instead, it puts ‘translation and interpretation at the center of everything we do’, one manifestation of which is a dictionary that interprets peace activist terminology across five languages – Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, Spanish, and English (WGS 2008a, p. 1). The network goes further than the translation of words, additionally seeking to interpret ‘women’s lives and activism in their specific political and cultural contexts’ (WGS 2008a, p. 1).

In what I also took as indicative of xenophilic values, Georgina expressed to me that ‘even if the US government will not recognize up to the end of their life the toxic contamination in Subic and Clark, at the very least we contributed to the success stories of other countries with existing bases’. Evidently, her sphere of concern is not limited to the Philippines alone, but extends globally. Here, the NKK’s disavowal of nationalist feminism in favour of a cosmopolitan solidarity with women everywhere once again becomes apposite. The connection is that Georgina, aside from her NGO work, also happens to be an NKK member. Given that the NKK resolved to change its
name just several months after the IWNAM gathering in San Francisco, I could not help but think that perhaps the lessons that Georgina and her comrades learnt through the experience might have somehow factored into it.

Santos and Estrada-Claudio (2005, p. 7) point out that well before the Alternative Globalisation Movement, famous for introducing the politics of multiplicity to the world, such a politics was already being prefigured in global feminist coalitions that Filipinas have long played an active role in. IWNAM is a contemporary exemplar of coalitions of this kind, offered here as a case study into the xenophilic values therein.

There is the inter-xenophilia between women of diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the intra-xenophilia internal to such categories as ‘Filipin@’. At this point, however, I would like to propose a more expansive understanding of xenophilia, since love for the Other need not be restricted to one’s cultural, ethnic, or racial others, but can additionally extend to others of all kinds, including to people of other genders, sexualities, classes, and so forth. Rainbow alliances like the MSN could hence be seen to entail an inter-xenophilia between diverse subjectivities and social movements.

An intra-xenophilia internal to individual movements is discernible too. For example: where twentieth century feminists tended to mobilise on the basis of a monolithic conception of ‘woman’, revealed as having similarly marginalising effects to monolithic notions of nation and class, today’s feminists are increasingly embracing a multivalent politics inclusive of diverse expressions of womanhood (Baumgardner & Richards 2010; Butler 1990; Walker 1995).
Amplified in these ways, xenophilia ceases being a mere attribute of cosmopolitanism and becomes a value in its own right – a point to be revisited in later chapters. For now, I will turn to the matter of translocalism in IWNAM’s work.

Translocalism

To reiterate an earlier point, translocalism could be considered the spatial corollary of xenophilic values. IWNAM’s xenophilia is hence accompanied by an apparent translocalist imaginary. Suggestive of the latter is a passage on the WGS website describing IWNAM as a ‘collaboration among women active in our own communities who share a common mission’ (WGS 2008a, p. 1). This reveals both local commitment and translocal solidarity. Sidelined as a consequence is the insularity of nation-state space. The women of IWNAM, however, do not do away with the national only to reterritorialise upon the plane of supranational sovereignty. Rather, they enact a nonsovereign globalisation, at odds with the rigidifying edicts advanced through the likes of APEC, the Forum for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation – my chosen focus for the minute, for reasons that will soon become clear.

APEC presents itself as ‘the premier forum for facilitating economic growth, cooperation, trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region’ (APEC 2013, p. 1). It could alternatively be described as a key instrument for the advancement of global capitalism. If ‘capital needs a sovereign authority standing behind it’ (Hardt & Negri 2006, p. 177), this need is fulfilled, at the supranational level, by bodies like APEC, alongside kindred institutions like the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and WTO.
Comprising the bloc are 21 member states from around the Pacific Rim – or ‘member
economies’, as tellingly preferred by APEC (2011) – that between them represent ‘40
percent of the world’s population, 56 percent of global GDP [Gross Domestic Product]
and 48 percent of world trade’ (Probyn 2007a, p. 6).  

Remarkably, at the same time that the IWNAM gathering was taking place in San
Francisco, APEC was meeting for its annual conference on the other side of the Pacific
in Sydney, Australia. There, presidents and prime ministers – together with trade
officials, big business representatives, and even the director-general of the WTO –
gathered to strategise the further integration of Asia-Pacific economies. The leaders
committed themselves to a possible Pacific Rim trading bloc, with President Bush of
the United States setting forth that though he believed the WTO ‘was the best way to
boost trade across the world, a free trade area of the Asia-Pacific would at least
produce results for the nations bounded by the Pacific’ (Wright 2007, p. 6).  

If APEC has become an alternative front for advancing global capitalism, it is because
the WTO’s dream of a single, globally-integrated marketplace has stalled, particularly
since the stand that an alliance of poor countries took against the unfair terms being
imposed on them in the Cancún negotiations of 2003 (Denny, Elliott & Vidal 2003). This
was preceded in 1999 by the now-fabled ‘Battle of Seattle’ (Yuen, Katsiaficas & Burton-

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60 APEC’s members, in alphabetical order, are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong,
Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia,
Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam (APEC 2011).
61 Sharing Bush’s enthusiasm for Pacific Rim integration, the successor administration of President
Barack Obama announced, in 2011, an expansion of the United States’ engagement with Asia – a topic
to be saved for the Postscript.
Rose 2001) – mass demonstrations that shut down WTO proceedings, thereafter hailed as the ‘coming out party’ (Klein 2002, p. 6) of the Alternative Globalisation Movement.

The face-off in Seattle was not between pro- and anti-globalists, as the corporate media framed it, but rather ‘between two radically different visions of globalization’ (Klein 2002, p. 6) – one sovereign and plutocratic, the other non-sovereign and democratic. The same could be said of my juxtaposition of APEC and IWNAM: two gatherings on opposite sides of the Pacific enacting divergent globalities, as well as contrasting visions of what the Asia-Pacific community should look like. On one side, the Pacific is dreamt of as a unified market allowing maximal freedom for transnational capital (usually inversely proportional to the freedom of those it presides over). On the other, it becomes a translocal archipelago of self-determining communities premised on ideals of social and environmental justice.

The women of IWNAM would have considered as allies the thousands of protestors who descended on the APEC summit in Sydney, since, although IWNAM principally targets US militarism, it is not without a critique of global capitalism. Conversely, not only have anti-APEC campaigners long called for fairer trans-Pacific trade, but also, like IWNAM, for ‘peace and disarmament in the region’ (Bello & Chavez-Malaluan 1996, p. 50).

The overlapping anti-militarist and anti-capitalist agendas make sense given that APEC, although ostensibly focussed on economic matters, is also a forum in which military matters are canvassed (Kabiling 2007; Probyn 2007a; Probyn 2007b). Commercial and
military imperatives jointly inhere in what Hardt and Negri (2006, pp. 176, 231) call ‘armed globalization’, with security efforts often oriented ‘toward stabilizing and guaranteeing the global economic order’. As a group of IWNAM-affiliated co-authors themselves articulated in an article, ‘military expansion is a partner in corporate capitalist expansion’ (Cachola et al. 2008, p. 4).

For WGS (2008c, p. 1) and their allies in IWNAM, ‘security’ in the conventional sense undermines the ‘genuine security’ of everyday people: a peace-of-mind that ensues from socially-just and ecologically-sound relationships, allowing for equitable access to ‘food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education’ and the freedom ‘to live in life-affirming ways’.

As I hope this chapter has demonstrated, feminism restores a vitality somewhat forgotten to the traditional Left. In the first part, I traced the ecotone between Red and Purple, showing that the Autonomous Women’s Movement in the Philippines arose in rebellion to the NDM’s ‘tendency to subsume the women’s struggle under that of national liberation’ (Hilsdon 1995, p. 162). Not happy with having to deprivitize their concerns for the supposed greater good of the nation, autonomous feminists worked to keep women’s issues at the top of the agenda, simultaneously ushering into being a new, intersectional style – one described by Santos and Estrada-Claudio (2005, p. 10) as a ‘politics of diversity that does not require strict faithfulness to ideological lines and a central command structure’. IWNAM – insofar as it operates
horizontally and regards women’s liberation as intimately connected to pacifism, anti-capitalism, and Environmental Justice – offers an exemplary case study into precisely such a politics. Purple, therefore, does not supplant Red as a tendency seeking hegemony over others, but rather assumes its place in the rainbow-coloured ecology of contemporary activism.

In addition to their embrace of political diversity, Filipina feminists are increasingly valorising cultural diversity as well, thereby parting ways with nation-state logics. As a final illustration of this, one Manilan anarcha-feminist (cited in Dapithapon 2013, p. 77) even went so far as to say: ‘I am not a Filipino, I don’t believe in nationality’. A defiant cosmopolitanism can be found to pervade environmentalist circles as well, as will be seen in the following chapter.
Chapter 9

The environmentalists

The Pasig River was a daily feature of my trips around Metropolitan Manila, whether travelling on it by ferry, crossing it by bus or rail, or pacing its banks on foot. From its source in the Laguna de Bay, the Philippines’ largest lake, it cuts a path through the dense cityscape of Manila, passing at its mid-point beneath Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) near the site of the eponymous EDSA Revolution of 1986, as well as the so-called ‘EDSA II’ uprising that ousted president Joseph Estrada in 2001. From there, the river winds its way past the Pandacan oil depots (see Image 16) where a disastrous oil spill took place at the time of writing (Carvajal 2013), before then continuing on to

Image 16: Pandacan oil depot on the banks of the Pasig River
Malacañang Palace (the seat of the Philippine presidency), the old Spanish enclave of Intramuros, the Chinese Filipin@ enclave of Binondo, and the Bureau of Immigration where I fought quite the battle for official permission to conduct research in the country. Near to where the Pasig finally empties into Manila Bay is a dilapidated monument erected in 1964 to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the commencement of the Galleon Trade between Manila, Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico.

Not only does the Pasig River string together key sites in which Philippine history has been and continues to be made, but it also became for me an emblem of ecological ruin. From the sparkling waterway eulogised in the poetry of nineteenth century bard Francisco Balagtas (Ocampo 2007), it went on to be proclaimed biologically-dead in the 1990s (Murphy & Anana 2004, p. 1). Taking it as an indictment on the state of the wider Philippine environment, one Manileña blogger (Tiongson 2013, p. 1) mourned, ‘As the Pasig River goes, so goes the nation’. Putting a lighter spin on the situation, a friend turned up to the PLP Christmas party, which that year was an eco-themed costume affair, dressed as the Pasig River – rubbish, slime, and all – outdoing even my own kalaw⁶² outfit.

Just as compromised are Manila’s skies, with air pollution at levels five times greater than acceptable World Health Organization standards (Magno 1999, p. 148), resulting in 12 percent of all premature deaths in Metro Manila (Adraneda 2007). The issue

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⁶² Local name for the Rufous Hornbill, endemic to the Philippine rainforest.
became real for me when, not long into my stay, my childhood asthma reappeared with a vengeance.

Environmental degradation had become personal for many others I met too, which goes part of the way to explaining how environmentalism has irrupted into Philippine consciousness. Unlike in the West, however, environmentalism in the Philippines is not a predominantly middle-class concern, but just as often one of the poor, particularly the rural and indigenous poor for whom intact ecologies are more immediately a matter of survival (Ehrenreich 1993, p. x).

James Putzel (1992, p. 9) claims that many of Manila’s squatters are in fact ‘ecological refugees’ from the provinces, their lands and waters – and therefore their livelihoods – adversely impacted by state and corporate profiteering. Deforestation by logging companies, for example, leads to diminished biodiversity, watershed and cropland degradation through increased soil erosion, and a greater risk of landslides in severe weather (Magno 1999, pp. 146-147). The same is true of mining activities, with the added impact of toxic tailings discharged into lakes and rivers. Corporate agriculture meanwhile contaminates the environment with chemical fertilisers and pesticides, increasingly stripping peasants’ control over seed resources as well (Magno 1999, p. 147; Verzola 2004, pp. 95-110). The effects of US militarism cannot be forgotten either, not to mention the threats associated with climate change.

With rural Philippines beyond the scope of my fieldwork, I will mostly be limited in this chapter to my interactions with environmental activists in urban Manila. My
immediate task will be to traverse the ecotone between Red and Green, as I did between Red and Purple in the previous chapter, before then drawing out some of the becomings-cosmopolitan discernible in the environmentalist milieu. These include xenophilic valorisations of diversity (culturally- as well as biologically-speaking) and translocal re-imaginings of community, each of which cohere in bioregionalism – a philosophy to which more and more Filipin@s are presently being won.

Red to Green

An evening I spent at the Quezon City office of the Samahang Rebolusyonaryong Pilipino*63 (SRP), a Marxist-Leninist grouping of the RJ Left, afforded valuable insights into the tensions in Philippine radical politics between Red and Green. What started there as a one-on-one interview with Dalisay, a full-time organiser whose congeniality belied her political militancy, ended up becoming a wide-ranging group discussion involving several of her officemates.

Things became especially interesting when I began to probe their stance on environmental matters. ‘It seems to me’, I said, ‘that most environmental activism here isn’t initiated by the Left – by that I mean both the Rejectionists and Reaffirmists. I s’pose I’m really curious as to why that is. I mean, why leave it up to the NGOs?... Have there been many discussions in your org about how to incorporate the environment as part of the revolutionary struggle?’

63 Tagalog for ‘Philippine Revolutionary Association’.
‘Actually, not yet’, replied Dalisay. ‘There’s still no *parang* [kinda] formal, cohesive discussion within the Left – not just us, but also the other Left groupings – on the environment. I think that should be the next level. Environmental struggles are essential, but so far there’s…’

‘Ah, but it’s integrated in the anti-capitalist struggle’, interjected Dalisay’s comrade, Harold. ‘It’s built in, because we believe that capitalism is responsible for the destruction of the environment’.

‘That’s a given point’, came Dalisay’s reply, ‘but I think it’s necessary for the Left to…’

‘It’s basically a question of power’, maintained Harold. ‘If you don’t have the power, you don’t have the capacity to change…’

‘We shouldn’t wait for us to be in power!’ exclaimed Dalisay. ‘It’s our environment; let’s do something about it now. It’s like the old Women Question, no?’

Inquiring into the challenge of ecology to traditional leftist sensibilities, I was unexpectedly granted this illuminating parallel between environmentalism and feminism. While women’s liberation has historically been subordinated to national liberation or worker’s liberation, Dalisay suggested that ecological questions are today being rendered secondary in much the same manner. It is not surprising, then, that the autonomous environmentalists whom I met, like their feminist counterparts, overwhelmingly reject the hierarchy of oppressions by which the Maoists and some
Rejectionists continue to operate, insisting instead on ‘the equality of all struggles for equality’ (Crisis of Socialism Cluster Group 1993, p. 18).

The vignette just relayed bridges the preceding and present chapters (Purple and Green alike sharing a common impetus towards an anational politics), while also offering a first glimpse into the fraught dynamics between Red and Green. My principal concern henceforth, however, will be less with the greening of the Red, which is the battle that Dalisay has before her, and more with the emergence of what I would like to call the Autonomous Environmental Movement, composed of former Reds turned Green as well as greenies with no background in RA or RJ groups in the first place. This is a moniker modelled on that of the Autonomous Women’s Movement (the focus of Chapter 8), albeit not without basis. The environmentalists I worked with in Manila themselves used the word ‘autonomous’ on occasion, but more often self-identified as ‘independent’, meaning independent from the institutional Left. During my fieldwork, I even learnt from Ermin, an organiser with the Zero Waste Alliance* (ZWA) and Green Futures Movement* (GFM)64, that a range of social movement organisations, his own GFM included, had commenced discussions about forming an ‘independent, non-socialist bloc’ outside of both the RA and RJ factions of the Philippine Left.

Commencing now with the history of the Autonomous Environmental Movement, it was in the 1970s that environmental activism first burgeoned in the Philippines, despite the repressive conditions under Marcos. Two forms of environmentalism

64 The ZWA is a coalition of environmental groups working on waste issues, while the GFM is a social movement organisation focussed more broadly on social and environmental justice. Both are headquartered near UP Diliman in Quezon City and have only modest active memberships, but upwards of 5000 followers each on Facebook.
prevailed in these early years, one camp comprised of apolitical conservation groups like the Haribon Foundation, the other of ad hoc community coalitions for whom defence of their local patch of earth was simultaneously a rebellion against the Marcos dictatorship (Magno 1999, pp. 148-151). While the former fenced off their nature-based concerns from the social conflicts of the time, the latter exhibited a joint social and ecological consciousness, analogous to the Environmental Justice perspective that would later develop in the US.

The Cordillera experience

Of the myriad struggles waged in a socio-ecological vein in the 1970s, one of the most prominent was the campaign against the World Bank-funded Chico River Dam Project in the Cordillera highlands of northern Luzon – one of a number of large-scale development works initiated under the banner of Marcos’ so-called ‘New Society’ (Finin 2008, p. 96). Locals of the Kalinga and Bontoc tribes refused to accept that their villages, rice terraces, and forestlands should be flooded for the sake of hydroelectric power for the cities (Magno 1999, p. 150). A group of women, seeing a military camp being erected at one of the four prospective dam sites, descended on the outpost and ripped down the tents (Finin 2008, p. 98). From this spontaneous act of revolt in 1974, the movement to halt the dams spread rapidly; an intersectional movement that became a cause célèbre to indigenous rights advocates and environmentalists alike.
Prior to the outbreak of the anti-dam struggle, the NPA had been having a difficult time winning over indigenous Cordillerans – also collectively known as the ‘Igorot’\textsuperscript{65} – since first entering the region in 1971. Highland elders, in particular, tended to take exception to what they saw as young upstarts from the lowlands lecturing to them about Maoism and proposing revolutionary changes to their way of life that, quite to the contrary, they wanted to preserve and reclaim (Finin 2008, p. 96).

Once Igorot peoples began to mobilise \textit{en masse} against the Chico River Dam, the NPA saw an opportunity. They offered considerable support for the campaign, and also helped local villagers with tasks like planting, harvesting, and pounding rice (Kwiatkowski 2008, p. 248). Additionally, the more that radicalised highlanders faced the backlash and repression of the state, the more their sympathy for the communist guerrillas grew. By 1977, the CPP-NPA’s underground bulletin \textit{Ang Bayan} (cited in Finin 2008, p. 100) was reporting: ‘Red Fighters of the New People’s Army have joined forces with the people of Kalinga-Apayao\textsuperscript{66} in carrying out armed resistance against the Marcos fascist regime which is driving the masses out of their homes and farms to make way for the Chico River dams’.

By the mid-1980s, the government and World Bank abandoned the Chico River Dam Project ‘in the face of massive resistance’ (Finin 2008, p. 102). Although the NPA’s backing was a decisive factor in the movement’s success, the pragmatic alliance that

\textsuperscript{65} Although ‘Igorot’ was originally a pejorative term used by inhabitants of the low-lying areas of Luzon to denigrate mountain-dwellers, it was reclaimed by highland indigenes in the mid-twentieth century and transformed into a positive, pan-Cordilleran identity-construct (Finin 2008, pp. 79-82).

\textsuperscript{66} Once a single province, Kalinga-Apayao has since been partitioned into the separate provinces of Kalinga and Apayao. The other administrative units into which the Cordillera highlands are partitioned are Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, and Mountain Province.
the Igorots entered into with the Reds proved not to be lasting. For starters, many villagers felt burdened by the guerrillas’ constant demands for food, made worse by the tacit threat of their weaponry (Kwiatkowski 2008, pp. 251, 259). NPA sojourners had made sure, in the early years, to reciprocate their hosts’ hospitality by helping out with village and farming chores, but reportedly became less and less conscientious over time (Kwiatkowski 2008, pp. 256-257).

Ideological discrepancies also played a part, with Igorot peoples growing increasingly critical of the CPP-NPA’s nationalism. They eventually went on to articulate that their prime concern, in contradistinction to that of the Reds, was not with liberating the Philippine nation from US imperialism, but with liberating the Cordillera from the Philippine nation (Weekley 2001, pp. 154-155). Their stated enemy was the ‘colonialism represented by the government of the Philippines’ (Aydinan cited in Weekley 2001, p. 155), bringing to mind the ‘internal imperialism’ thesis raised earlier.

A sub-section of NPA cadres in the highlands came to empathise with the Igorots’ desire for self-determination. Their experiences living and working alongside them ‘profoundly reshaped their thinking about the revolution’ (Finin 2008, p. 116), leading them to question the appropriateness of Maoism for Cordillera society. Pointing out that Igorot peoples ‘did not even see themselves as part of the larger Filipino nation’, cadres in Ifugao proposed to the CPP leadership in Manila that a separate Igorot Liberation Army be established (Weekley 2001, p. 90). Predictably, their appeals were dismissed on the grounds that national unity must always override ethno-regional identifications. For the Party hierarchy, the struggles of the so-called ‘national
minorities’ (Guerrero 1970, pp. 152-153) were regarded in much the same manner that diasporic and feminist struggles were; namely, as subordinate elements of the all-subsuming National Democratic Movement.

The dissenting NPA cadres acquiesced to the Party line – until, that is, the EDSA Revolution of 1986, which transpired independently of the Maoists and therefore irreparably damaged their reputation. A month after this turn of events, a group of allies to the Igorot cause defected from the NPA and went on to form the Cordillera People’s Liberation Army (CPLA), presaging the array of splits that would follow in the years to come (Finin 2008, p. 109). Dispensing with the ‘myth of “the Filipino people”’ (Weekley 2001, p. 154), this new outfit asserted the cultural distinctiveness of the Cordilleran highlands and set itself the goal of winning regional political autonomy.

Although the CPLA disarmed in 2011 (Sinapit 2011), many Igorots continue to hold out hopes for greater autonomy, albeit not necessarily along ethno-nationalist lines as is commonly presumed. Igorot identity evades such characterisations by virtue of the fact that it accommodates within it a plethora of ethnicities, the largest of which are the Bontoc, Iboloy, Ifugao, Isneg, Kalinga, Kankanay, Tinguian, and Yapayao. ‘In the Philippines as in the rest of the world’, writes Weekley (2001, p. 156), ‘trends in liberation discourses point to a growing recognition of difference and diversity, and the trend is especially strong in the struggles for indigenous peoples’ rights’. Here, the resonances with my theorisations around xenophilia become clear.
The rise of environmentalism

Although not exclusively environmentalist, the Cordillera struggle is remembered as part of the history of Philippine environmentalism for setting in train a trend that has persisted ever since; namely, an approach to activism that emphasises the inseparability of the social and ecological spheres. As Francisco Magno (1999, p. 171) has written, ‘[e]nvironmental issues in the Philippines tend to be framed within the context of livelihood and equity concerns’. Calls for community control over natural resources often follow, not forgetting the ‘ecological abuses that arose from the exclusion of public participation’ (Magno 1999, p. 150) under Martial Law, and that continue to arise under speciously democratic administrations.

The communities in resistance along the Chico River and elsewhere set such an example that even the formerly human-averse Haribon Foundation began, in 1989, to undertake grassroots organising in local communities (Magno 1999, p. 153). That same year, the Green Forum was founded – a coalition of over 200 organisations across the archipelago espousing both environmental and human rights values (Magno 1999, p. 156). The following year saw the formation of the Philippine Environmental Action Network, which similarly articulated a ‘people-based environmental agenda’ (Broad & Cavanagh 1993, p. 136).

This was a period of rapid growth for the Philippine environmental movement. I refer to it in the singular, however, only for convenience’s sake, since it was and remains a medley of movements. In the early to mid-Nineties, these included campaigns against
a coal-fired power plant in Masinloc and a cement factory in Bolinao, anti-logging campaigns in the country’s north, and the struggle to save Lake Lanao in the country’s south (Magno 1999, pp. 161, 168; Putzel 1992, p. 13).

Environmentalism further proliferated in the wake of the RA-RJ splits of 1993, with the end of the Maoists’ hegemony over Philippine radical politics leaving the field wide open for hitherto submerged perspectives to come to the fore. Ermin explained the shift to me as follows:

Before, the only framework existing during those times was the Marx-Lenin-Mao framework... After the split, that’s also the beginning of the bloom of different social movements in the Philippines. So you have the ‘Pop Dems’ [Popular Democrats], ‘Soc Dems’ [Social Democrats], ‘Dem Socs’ [Democratic Socialists] – maybe you’ve heard those kind of terms – and also the Greens. Social movements became more diverse in terms of the philosophy that they’re pushing.

As the fortunes of the NDM spiralled, those of the Greens – that is to say, the Autonomous Environmental Movement – ascended.

Being of the post-Cold War generation, Ermin, like me, was too young to have grown attached to twentieth century notions of what it means to be radical. Our first encounter was through the FAEJI solidarity tour, he and his colleague from ZWA having addressed our group about the impending Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) – a free trade deal with a number of clauses on investment, intellectual property, and labour migration tacked on. Of particular concern to ZWA was a provision allowing Japan to export and dispose of hazardous e-waste on
Philippine shores (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism 2006; Magkaisa Junk JPEPA Coalition 2007). The campaign to defeat the deal was itself defeated when, in October 2008, the Philippine Senate voted JPEPA into law (Agence France-Presse 2008).

We also learnt of Ermin’s work in the GFM, formed in 1996 in the political clearing opened up by the twin downfalls of Marcos and the CPP. Pedro, another GFM member who likewise presented to our FAEJI cohort, specified that the organisation consists of two main types of people: environmentalists increasingly concerned with social justice, and social justice activists increasingly concerned with the environment. The result is a framework in which ‘society and environment are taken as one’, no longer cordoned off into separate domains. Of the two species of activist in the GFM, Pedro conforms to the latter, having deserted the Reds and turned Green. As narrated in his own words,

I’ve been an activist since college; and then of course I was in college when Martial Law was declared, so we all went underground. I got involved in the Left... I started in the struggle against the dictatorship, and then I was arrested and imprisoned for three years, on and off... And then I went back to school, finished my engineering course and gradually became an environmentalist – well, more than an environmentalist. “Green” is critical: You start from an environmental perspective, but you develop a perspective that you also apply on social issues.

The campaign against the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in the 1980s, which later extended its opposition to the US military’s nuclear arsenals at Clark and Subic (Yeo 2011, p. 42), was a key influence on Pedro. By that stage, too, he had acquired a distaste for the hierarchical mores of the traditional Left – another factor to have steered him on the course from Red to Green. ‘We’re basically a loose organization’,
said Pedro, referring to the GFM; ‘not like the Communist Party which is very tight and top-down’. Even today, two decades after the RA-RJ splits, the CPP’s so-called ‘democratic centralism’ (Sison & Rosca 2004, pp. 128, 137) continues to serve as a reference point of how not to conduct a politics of liberation.

Pedro proved hard to catch, but fortunately, I was able to meet with the gregarious Ermin quite regularly over my time in Manila. I rallied with him outside the Senate and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, helped him to facilitate an environmental education workshop at a local kindergarten, and also got the chance to engage him in a wide-ranging research interview.

Curious as to Ermin’s thoughts and feelings on the Left, particularly the legacy of the NDM, I presented him with the following question: ‘I think it was a few months ago, I read in the newspaper that the NPA are now talking about attacking mining companies; not just Philippine government installations, but mining companies – and in the name of the environment! I thought: “How strange; the Reds are becoming Green!” One of their spokespeople was actually saying, you know, “we’re opposing environmental degradation”, and that kind of thing. What’s your take on that?’

Ermin’s first response was to laugh heartily and shake his head, as if to suggest that the idea of the NPA as eco-warriors was preposterous. Composing himself, he answered:

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67 For the article referred to, see Agence France-Presse (2007).
‘Actually, I haven’t read that particular article, but most of the installations that the NPAs are attacking are because they haven’t paid revolutionary taxes, not really because they oppose a particular project. And anyway, most environmental groups condemn the armed struggle. All the groups that I’ve been involved with, we promote nonviolent culture, so we don’t agree on armed struggle.[68] I think that separates most of the environmental groups from the very, very left socialist groups... I’m not sure if that really is an anti-mining campaign, but based on the track record of the rebels here, it’s all about money’.

Ermin’s supposition about the motive for the attacks was no jest. According to Putzel (1992, p. 13), revolutionary taxes have been a major source of revenue for the NPA, with companies allowed to operate in peace so long as they remain compliant. It is not just transnational corporations that are extorted either, but also local businesses. My own grandparents, for instance, ran a small fishing fleet in Mindoro, later opening a convenience store when the catch began to dwindle. Every so often, letters from the NPA would arrive, politely requesting a ‘donation’ to the cause. Lolo and Lola always made sure to contribute some minimal amount, just to stay on the safe side. As for the case in the aforementioned article, Ermin’s cynicism spoke volumes, regardless of the sincerity or otherwise of the NPA.

[68] ‘Non-violence’, argues Roberto Verzola (2004, p. 240), a prominent eco-philosopher in the Philippines, ‘should be elevated to a principle of behaviour that is reflected in our relationship with fellow human beings, in our interaction with nature, and our program for social change’.
Nature and culture

From the discussion to date, four broad areas of tension between Red and Green can be discerned. The primary tension, of which the others could be seen as subsidiaries, is that between human-centred and ecological concerns. The second is the fault-line between national and anational notions of community, as became apparent in the Cordillera struggle. Related to this is the third fault-line between centralised and decentralised modes of organisation, as touched on by Pedro. Last of all is the disagreement, identified above by Ermin, over the use of violence and coercion.

In what follows, I would like to zoom in on the first and most fundamental of the tensions outlined above: the friction zone between humanistic and ecological worldviews, with a focus on the differing ways that the nature-culture relationship is understood within each. This will set the context for an exploration, in the last part of this chapter, into the socio-ecological notion of community inherent in the philosophy of bioregionalism.

Industrialisation

In the Enlightenment humanist tradition, within which leftists of diverse stripes have long been steeped, nature is considered as passive raw material, while culture is ‘the active force molding and reworking nature to make it amenable to individual, social, and collective use’ (Grosz 2005, p. 45). Such a perspective inheres in the value that many Filipin@ leftists continue to place on industrialisation: the marshalling of nature
In the service of the nation. ‘In the old socialist framework’, explained Ermin, ‘they always view the environment as an infinite resource... The human aspect is the priority, and the environment is there to serve their interests’. Edgar, a socialist in the PLP and economics student at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, confirmed as much when stating in an interview:

[T]he environment is the one providing you your needs and your resources for your economy to grow. As long as you do not destroy your environment for your economic development, and as long as you still leave something for the future, for the future generations, for them to also use for their development, then that should be the relation between the economy and the environment.

Edgar, as with the PLP as a whole, has incorporated a modicum of environmentalism into his Marxist-Leninist outlook, although his instrumental and economistic view of nature arguably presents limitations. In a later interview with Jorge, a senior leadership figure in LNM (which, as noted earlier, is an alliance of exclusively RJ groups – the PLP, PSO, and SRP amongst them), I was given further insight into the Marxists’ apparent faith in the industrial paradigm:

Sometimes, environmentalists go overboard... What worries me is a tendency to take a Luddite position, opposing this and opposing that, opposing all sources of energy. Where the hell are we going to procure the energy to keep the industries going?... We are against the use of nuclear power and now we are against the use of coal, then biofuel is an alternative, and now we are campaigning against biofuel because it shrinks the land area for food production, and we have not really come up with a formula of how to reconcile all this. You do not want the destruction of the environment, but at the same time, how do you provide the requirements for industrialization, since we also recognize that industrialization is important?[^69]

[^69]: RAs are of a similar mindset, with Sison (writing as Liwanag 1992a, p. 67) even warning against the use of the ‘ecology issue’ as ‘an imperialist weapon to discourage the industrial development of economically backward countries’.
Renewable options like solar, tidal, and wind aside, I was interested not so much in the question of how the Philippines will power its industrialisation, but in why Jorge felt that industrial progress was so important in the first place. Is it incumbent on the countries of the Global South to follow the same path travelled by Europe, or would it be best, as Fanon (1961, pp. 251-255) advocated, to desist playing catch-up with the North and instead forge their own paths?

The words to coherently frame this question evaded me at the time, but had I found them, I suspect that Jorge’s reply would have drawn much of its flavour from a particular strand of Marxist historiography that I found prevalent in the RJ Left. Only when the Philippines sufficiently modernises and industrialises (so the argument goes) will a working class develop that is capable of seizing power, thus propelling society into the next phase of its historical destiny; that being, socialism. RJ and RA Marxists alike tend to presume that all the world’s societies are distributed along a single linear timescale, each progressing from one historical stage to the next toward the ultimate telos of a classless utopia. Such a schema ironically deems capitalism inevitable; a stage humanity must pass through, the ruin it inflicts a lamentable by-product of the inexorable march of history.

*Ontology re-imagined*

Several environmentalists whom I met in Manila assailed the Marxists’ notion of linear, teleological time – that ‘black hole into which possible futures implode and disappear’ (Braidotti 2006, p. 167). For Ermin, the antidote is to shift the focus of activist practice
from the future to the present: ‘We are not here in this world fighting for a paradise; we just want a better place to live in. I think, in that context, there’s really hope’. Freed from the false hope of a tomorrow which never comes, the thrust then becomes the cultivation of a more just and habitable present.

This new temporality is bound up with a re-envisioning of the natural order. Consider the position articulated by Pedro:

> All life, including us, is part of a process of creation that is still ongoing. Given this perspective, and given this process, what then is our role, knowing that this is where we came from? What will we commit the rest of our lives to?... Our environmental work must ensure that this process of creation is not stunted or destroyed.

This transcript encapsulates four key breaks from humanist habits of thought, all of them interrelated. The first is that time is seen to move, not in a straight line towards an inevitable telos, but more along the lines of what Jorge Luis Borges (1964) typified as a ‘garden of forking paths’.

The second is that nature is newly admitted into time itself, no longer presumed as the timeless, passive backdrop ‘against which the cultural elaborates itself’ (Grosz 2005, p. 45). There is, as philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1938, p. 152) maintained, ‘no nature apart from transition’. And since nature is forever generating newness of its own accord, human beings can be considered as but co-participants in the perpetual flux of creation.
This leads to the third break; namely, that creativity, a quality attributed by humanists to culture alone, is recast by contemporary environmental thinkers as an ontological property of the natural world. David Abram (2010, p. 71), for one, asserts that ‘the creativity we find in ourselves has its correlation in the surrounding cosmos’. Elizabeth Grosz (2005, pp. 44-52) furthermore argues that it is nature that sets culture in motion and not vice versa. Nature, in other words, is the generative wellspring to which cultural inventiveness is indebted.

The fourth and final break from humanism concerns the question of ethics. As Pedro indicated, the ethical impetus behind much of today’s ecological activism is not the channelling of history in a particular direction (as tends to be the case with most Philippine Marxisms), but the freeing up of ontological creativity wherever it happens to be dammed or canalised. When life diversifies freely, the resultant mélange ensures flexibility for continuing evolution. The loss of flexibility through diminished diversity – whether of species, genomes, cultures, or ideas – is otherwise the recipe for an ‘evolutionary cul-de-sac’ (Bateson 1972, p. 509). Anticipating an argument towards this chapter’s end, xenophilic values are therefore applicable to life itself.

Not only do the above-mentioned shifts of perspective mark out contemporary environmentalism from humanist modes of activism, but also from environmentalism in its earlier incarnations. The approach of the early Haribon Foundation, for example, was to champion nature in isolation from social justice concerns. The inverse was true of the Maoists, whom Ermin caricatured as follows: ‘Hey! Hey man, there’s a lot of
stuff happening in our society, a lot of injustices, so stop lecturing us on the importance of birds and wildlife and cute, furry animals! [laughs].

Although the biocentrism of traditional greenies and the anthropocentrism of the Reds are antithetical at one level, they also share a deeper unity: an adherence, that is, to the customary nature-culture binary. Against this backdrop, there is emerging today a new understanding that the cultural is nested within the natural, and that there is no necessary antagonism between the two. To rephrase an earlier point, the goal of the new environmentalism then becomes, not to fence off a nature without human beings, but to produce new ‘nature-cultures’ (Latour 2004) conducive to the flourishing of the human and ‘more-than-human’ (Abram 1996) alike.

What, however, of the traditionally-anthropocentric notion community? If activism, as cited in the Introduction, ‘exists only in relation to established and emerging communities’ (Day 2005, p. 11), what then are the novel forms of community being imagined or conjured into actuality by contemporary environmentalists? What would a new conception of community – one that refuses the separation of nature and culture – look like? Answers to these questions are beginning to be ascertained, both in theory and practice, by way of the emerging discourse of bioregionalism.

**Bioregionalism**

Said Ermin of the GFM: ‘We promote what we call “bioregionalism”. It’s a thing, like, in every island, you have a different ecosystem – especially here in the Philippines – and
in every ecosystem, there’s a different culture, a different group of people, a different language. Language is one of the indicators that every island is unique’. Ermin believes, for these reasons, that ‘the ideal society for the Philippines is to decentralize everything; the power and the use of resources; give the governing power to every region and every island’.

‘It does seem to make a lot of sense in the Philippine context’, I replied, ‘given it’s made up of so many different communities, cultures, bioregions. Very different to a lot of the leftists who want greater centralism and national integration!’

‘Actually, that’s one of the contradictions between a green philosophy and a socialist or nationalist framework’, concurred Ermin, ‘because, actually, we believe that everything, every island, once you centralize everything, it breeds more corruption. That’s always our argument with my friends from the Left. I say: “Okay, so you have a good leader, but what happens if he turns out to be a bad leader and controls everything? What will you do? Will you again hold a revolution to depose him?” So it’s really funny because, well, absolute power corrupts absolutely... Many provinces here in the Philippines say they are being left out by the government, because most of the policies being implemented here are really Manila-based... Especially in far-flung provinces in Mindanao, they’re not being consulted, and it’s very hard to implement a national program that will be good for everyone, so the thing is that every group should really develop their own program’.
I was intrigued, but unclear about one aspect: ‘In your vision of bioregionalism and decentralisation’, I asked, ‘would there still be room for trade and communication and solidarity, you know, exchanges of culture between each of the different self-managed bioregional communities?’

‘Of course, of course’, Ermin answered. ‘Bioregionalism is just about governing yourself, instilling the responsibility within yourself. If you decentralize the responsibility, you’re also instilling the responsibility to every citizen... But we’re social animals, so you cannot really stop people from developing trade or sharing their experiences... Me, for example, I’m really interested to go to different parts of the country to know more about being Filipino. The keyword, I think, is diversity. Every Filipino is unique. Everywhere you go, it’s a different thing and you can learn from that... It’s really crap that we always say that the Filipinos are “one”, in a way, because we’re all different – and we should be proud of it, instead of treating diversity as counter-productive... If you can harness that, that diversity, it’s something we should be proud of’.

‘Good point’, I said, ‘because, I mean, a lot of the old politics was about “Oh, we’re not nationalist enough, people are too regional, they’ve got these different languages, we should strengthen our national culture”...’

‘You cannot have that! If you’re calling for one national culture, you’re just imposing your own agenda on other people’.
One manifestation of Ermin’s anti-nationalist politics is the fact that, at the time of my fieldwork, he was studying the Cebuan@ language of the central Philippines. Although a member of the dominant Tagalog ethnic group, he recognises the inequity of expecting non-Tagalogs to assimilate into his own medium of expression, instead putting the onus on himself to learn the language of the Other.

It was in conversation with Ermin that my interest in bioregionalism was piqued. I saw in it a rich expansion of the Environmental Justice framework, and in time as a kind of green cosmopolitanism too, inclusive of both xenophilic and translocalist sensibilities.

In theory

Having introduced bioregionalism by way of an ethnographic vignette, it will now be necessary to consult the bioregionalist literature directly. Contra the notion of nature as the backdrop to which the human drama plays itself out, bioregionalists aspire ‘to rebuild a community with nature’ (McGinnis 1999, p. 7). They envision ‘ecological communities’ (McGinnis 1999, p. 7) of human and non-human denizens able to relate to each other and their physical habitats, their bioregions, in a manner conducive to the continued flourishing, not solely of human beings, but of life itself.

Bioregionalism bridges the rift between nature and culture, but it also – and herein lies a crucial part of its appeal amongst Filipin@ environmentalists – redresses many of the pitfalls of nationalism that past political generations have had to labour through.

Where nationalists uphold homogeneity as a value, bioregionalists celebrate both
cultural and biological diversity. Where nationalists enforce the uniformity of national space, bioregionalists work to preserve and restore the multiformity of distinct places. Where nationalists practice a top-down, centralised politics, bioregionalists advocate decentralised decision-making and democratic community control over natural resources. Corroborating this last point, Michael McGinnis (1999, p. 4) describes bioregionalism as ‘a grass-roots doctrine of social and community-based activism’ calling for the ‘devolution of power to ecologically- and culturally-defined bioregions’.

Doug Aberley (1999, p. 13) further explains bioregionalism as

a body of thought and related practice that has evolved in response to the challenge of reconnecting socially-just human cultures in a sustainable manner to the region-scale ecosystems in which they are irrevocably embedded. Over nearly twenty-five years this ambitious project of “reinhabitation” has carefully evolved far outside of the usual political or intellectual epicentres of our so-called civilization.

Indeed, although catching on in activist circles, bioregionalist writings remain relatively unnoticed in academia – a phenomenon that David Graeber and Stephen Shukaitis (2007) note is frequently the case with theories that hold that theory itself is not enough.

Bioregionalism differs from conventional theory in another important way as well: namely, by renouncing decontextualised forms of knowledge that present themselves as universal, and affirming instead the need to ground knowledge in precise times and places (McGinnis 1999, p. 7). Unlike Maoism, then, bioregionalism is not a ready-made model to be applied irrespective of local specificities, but on the contrary – owing to its
attunement to the ‘local earth’ (Abram 2010, pp. 69, 71), and not the Earth as an abstract totality – is a philosophical umbrella harbouring diverse, locally-adapted bioregionalisms.

In many parts of the world, a style of politics akin to bioregionalism pre-existed the coining of that term in 1970s North America. Filipin@ environmentalists did not read the early bioregionalist tracts and then decide to put them into practice; rather, the bioregionalist literature lent a new vocabulary to place-centred movements already underway. The Igorot regionalism discussed earlier is a case in point.

As Robin Broad and John Cavanagh (1993, pp. 147-149) observed,

movements in the Philippines have a long and illustrious history of campaigns and projects that advance the sustainable-development agenda at a local level... Aware that dynamic local projects do not necessarily scale up to a comprehensive [national] alternative, some creative citizens’ groups have begun experimenting with regional development... [in which] the unit of analysis and action is not the traditional political boundaries... but ecological zones... that share certain environmental, social, economic, and political characteristics. “Nature”, explains economist Sixto Roxas to us, “gives you a lead on how to define community”... [T]he centrepiece of this alternative is a shift in control of local resources [from state and corporate hands] to community-based ventures that will manage resource use more sustainably’.

What are being referred to here are movements that are bioregionalist in flavour, if not in name. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine three salient facets of this style of activism: its localism and translocalism (keeping in mind that these are complementary, rather than opposed), and finally, its xenophilia. In this endeavour, I will be drawing, as per my futurological method, on social movement history and
ethnography as the source material for philosophical reflection. Theoretical detours will be necessary, but a single theme runs throughout: that being, Filipin@ activists’ efforts to re-invent community along non-nationalist or cosmopolitan lines.

Localism

Given the tradition of local, community-oriented environmentalism in the Philippines, it seemed clear to me why bioregionalism was readily adopted by many of the eco-activists I met. Bioregionalist perspectives complement already well-established practices, since, as Roberto Verzola (2004, p. 240) has written, the majority of green groups in the Philippines ‘give the highest priority to grassroots organizing’. For these groups, the ‘[local] community is the most important locus of human activity. It provides both the basic need for social interaction and allows structures that are small enough to make genuine democratic processes practicable and participatory’ (Verzola 2004, p. 239).

Instantiating this point, Ermin revealed in our interview: ‘The reason why I decided to work with the [Zero Waste Alliance] is because most of our member organizations are community groups. Actually, I studied here in Manila, and after I graduated, I decided to work in the provinces because I wanted to really work with the communities... I stayed there for three years in Batangas, working as an organizer in Taal Lake, for the protection of Taal Lake, because I just really love the community work’.
'That’s very cool’, I said, ‘although I’ve been hearing about the experiences of some communities with NGOs that thought they knew everything and just wanted to come in and implement a programme and then leave again\textsuperscript{70}, so how is the project you did in Taal – how did you approach that differently?’

‘Well right now, many community development organizations in the Philippines are introducing some new approaches in implementing programs... Essentially, the theme is community participation. So you derive the programs within the communities; you really consult them, even from the very start of the project proposal down to how you spend... You really work with them so you develop accountability and the community really feels that they’re a part of the implementation... because every step of the way they’re involved. What happened with the practices of other NGOs in the past – or actually, there are still NGOs who practice this stuff – is sometimes you’ll encounter communities who say: “Oh, you are just using us for your project proposal to get funding for yourselves” and things like that. You will encounter those kinds of communities, because maybe they had a bad experience with other NGOs... so it’s really hard to win the trust of many local communities right now... It’s really a challenge for the groups like us who are trying to improve how we involve them...

‘How about with your current work in the [ZWA]? How have things played out there?’ I asked.

\textsuperscript{70} Consider Tilo Kuizon’s (2011b, p. 6) claim about the way that professional organisers have historically interacted with local communities: ‘It has been the same traditional pattern: NGOs enter a community, bring in new ideas, give support... The dilemma, however, is people are left with little or no decision-making power as these groups are most likely to mediate and on many occasions dictate what direction they should go’. One issue is that NGOs are often more accountable to their donors than to the communities they purport to serve (Godrej 2014). For an in-depth analysis of the politics of NGOs in the Philippine context, see: Clarke (1998).
‘Well, for the [ZWA], for example, one of our member organizations was going to a barangay[71] to do an ecological survey of waste management, and they firstly, of course, consulted the barangay... Once the people supported it, they had a training and developed some kind of mechanism to ensure that the program will succeed, even with a little monitoring... I think it’s good because you’re not really forcing a program in the community, saying “this is good, you should just follow this”.

Whilst it is indeed positive that the kinds of initiatives discussed by Ermin are becoming more participatory and democratic, there remains the uncomfortable fact that they are instigated from the outside in. Far from having to rely on outside saviours, local peoples in the Philippines frequently demonstrate that they are also perfectly capable of organising themselves. When activist formations arise from within a community, they are referred to in the Philippine context, not as non-governmental organisations, but as people’s organisations (POs) – a crucial distinction.

An example of local self-organisation already given is the indigenous resistance against the Chico River Dam Project, which outside activists attempted to appropriate in vain. Another is the anti-logging movement that took hold in Bukidnon province – more specifically, in the remote community of San Fernando – in the late 1980s. Documented at length by Broad and Cavanagh (1993), I will provide here a summary of the movement’s trajectory, and of the lessons that can be drawn from the experience.

[71] In the modern context, barangays are the smallest units of government in the Philippines, equivalent to ‘municipalities’ or ‘wards’ in English-speaking polities. Before the formation of the Philippine state, ‘barangay’ simply meant ‘village’. 
It was in the late 1970s when Marcos first made inroads into the still-verdant mountains of Bukidnon, his intention being to ‘develop’ what he regarded as a backward province. Fearing the threat to their forests, watersheds, and livelihoods, the people of San Fernando began to self-organise. They were greatly encouraged by Marcos’s downfall in 1986, if only for a brief moment, since the new Aquino administration proved similarly unresponsive and no less beholden to the logging industry than its predecessor. Thus commenced a militant campaign of road blockades, with villagers halting a score of log-laden trucks on their way down from the uplands, as well as preventing empty trucks from making their way back up. The military was called in to break up the camps, but locals were not deterred, vowing continued civil disobedience until the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) cancelled all timber licenses in the province. One company complained that it was losing US$15,000 a day to the stoppages, to which one San Fernando resident (cited in Broad & Cavanagh 1993, p. 65) responded: ‘Aha, now we know what you’re making from our mountains!’

There were widespread suspicions that the movement was incited and inspired by the communists, but in truth it was entirely autonomous and self-directed (Broad & Cavanagh 1993, p. 66). The people of San Fernando won some partial victories – for instance, a government ban on logging in critical watershed areas – but the chainsaws continued. DENR checkpoints, meant to enforce the bans, became ‘cash points’ for the routine issuing of bribes from loggers to petty officials (Broad & Cavanagh 1993, p. 68). In a letter to the DENR secretary, San Fernando petitioners (cited in Broad & Cavanagh
1993, p. 68) were subsequently moved to ask: ‘Who is governing our country, is it the government or the loggers?’ According to Broad and Cavanagh (1993, p. 69), they possessed a clear understanding ‘that some of the reasons for Bukidnon’s deforestation lay outside the Philippines’ national borders’.

In San Fernando, as with elsewhere in the Global South, the defence by local peoples of their immediate environment – of the bioregion on which they depend – is at once ‘a struggle for equity in the control and management of resources’ (Broad & Cavanagh 1993, pp. 137-138). The goal becomes one of wresting the commons away from the corporations (as well as from the state, insofar as it functions to safeguard corporate activity), and shifting them into democratic community control. In the absence of the latter, ‘the formal democracy that exists in the Philippines and much of the rest of the world means very little to the poor people who are in the majority in these countries’ (Broad & Cavanagh 1993, pp. 140).

A final example, drawn this time from Malaysian Borneo, will help to further illustrate what is at issue in socio-ecological, place-based struggles. Peter Brosius (2003, p. 86), an anthropologist who worked with the indigenous Penan people in their fight against deforestation, remarked that his interlocutors have asked him ‘on more than one occasion to explain the meaning of the word Malaysia’ [italics in original]. Their allegiance, it seems, is not to the abstract, imagined community of the nation, but to the forested bioregions that they depend on for survival. ‘Just as Penan are often unsure of what the government is’, continues Brosius (2003, p. 87),
so too are they unsure of the distinction between the government and logging companies. They believe these to be part of a single entity... As several individuals noted, when they have blockaded logging roads in the past, it was the police who came to take down the blockades. The result is that Penan assume many, if not all, government officials are acting in some way as agents of the logging companies, and that they are doing this in order to become wealthy.

The Penan’s seeming misapprehension about the indistinguishability of government and private enterprise is perhaps no misapprehension at all, but rather, an insight into the actual state of affairs that goggles of habit have prevented us from seeing. Since the Cold War, it has been widely presumed that the primary political antagonism is between the market and the state, private versus public, but the cases presented here suggest that this no longer really holds true (Mendoza 1994, p. 29). Rather, the key political divide today would seem to be that between the ‘commons’ (De Marcellus 2003; Esteva & Prakash 1998; Klein 2001; McGinnis 1999, p. 2) and what might be called the public-private compact – that ‘single entity’ supposed by the Penan; a chimera of which both capitalists and state actors are constituent elements, giving lie to neoliberal claims about the capacity of markets to run themselves.

The activist co-authors Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998, p. 153), from Mexico and India respectively, observe that grassroots movements across the Global South are increasingly seeking, not to capture the state, but to win autonomy from it ‘so that local spaces may exert and govern themselves in their own cultural terms’. This emerging style of politics is one that is decentralised, place-based, and – if not self-consciously bioregionalist – at least bioregionalesque.
In a bioregionalist world, the land and waters would be held communally, constituting a commons free from both state and private hands, with local peoples co-managing their common resource base in democratic local assemblies (Thayer 2003). In contrast to older, misanthropic environmentalisms, bioregionalists argue that the restoration of a given landscape must go hand-in-hand with the reanimation of the human community (or communities) to which it plays host. ‘If communities are left out of the process’, says McGinnis (1999, p. 7), that process ‘is not bioregional’. Valorised in this vision are local knowledges and solutions, grounded in a deep sense of place.

On the topic of place, Kirkpatrick Sale (1991, pp. ix-x), one of the more influential proponents of bioregionalism, described his buzz upon learning of the Spanish word *querencia*, denotative of ‘a deep, quiet sense of inner well-being that comes from knowing a particular place of the earth, its diurnal and seasonal patterns, its fruits and scents, its history and its part in your history’. This feeling, though increasingly rare in an urbanising world, would still be familiar to many English- and Tagalog-speakers, even if we may lack so concise a term to encapsulate it – at least in the vernacular. In Anglophone philosophy, however, one finds a viable equivalent: ‘Topophilia’ (Gibson 2009), the love of place. Such a love is what animates bioregional politics. One begins by forging an emotional bond to ‘the local neighbourhood of the infinite’ (Abram 2010, p. 23), and from there, working to re-create one’s life and community accordingly.

This vision reconciles the customary rift between ecological and social conceptions of place, as discussed by Arif Dirlik (2001). Where the former usually emphasises ostensibly-fixed physical determinants like rainfall patterns, soil characteristics,
watershed boundaries, and so forth, the latter tends to focus on the indeterminate ways that place is socially- and culturally-constructed. Not only does bioregionalism agree that place is never purely given, defining bioregions in accordance with both human and extra-human considerations, but it actually calls for the conscious redesigning of place, albeit with one crucial caveat: that it not outstrip a given bioregion’s ability to sustain itself. The ideal is a ‘cultivated ecosystem’ (Mollison 1988) that can perpetually regenerate, as opposed to degenerate, its enveloping support systems.

As previously stressed, the valorisation of place on the part of bioregionalism functions in resistance to the spatially homogenising thrust of nationalism. For anarcho-bioregionalist Max Cafard (1990, p. 4), the nation-state ‘is a parasitical growth on the Region, something exterior, hostile, threatening. It has no life of its own, but drains vitality from the living community’. To put it differently, the bioregion precedes and persists independently of the nation-state apparatus – that ‘artificial grid’ (Kemmis 1999, p. xii) to which diverse peoples and landscapes are expected to conform.

Importantly, bioregionalism also works to subvert supranational, and not just national, sovereignty, restoring place amidst the global capitalist production of ‘non-places’ (Augé 1992). That is, it seeks to revivify ‘the unruly otherness of the living locale’ (Abram 2010, p. 139) in a world in which every airport, shopping centre, chain hotel, or fast food outlet – whether in Manila or San Francisco, Perth or Dubai – seems almost indistinguishable from any other.
In summary, the bioregionalist revalorisation of place involves a downscaling of the imagined locus of political action from ‘society as a whole’ (whether national or global) to one’s immediate, human-scale community (Esteva & Prakash 1998, p. 40). The starting point for bioregionalists is always the ground beneath their feet, but as shall be seen in the following section, they can and do operate without contradiction across regional and national boundaries too.

Translocalism

Bioregionalism’s predilection for place is by now clear enough; less clear is the extent to which it values the connections between places. As such, I will seek to develop in this section a point made earlier by Ermin: that maintaining an affinity for one’s bioregional community does not preclude the development of translocal affinities for communities elsewhere.

My starting point is an unlikely one. Most of what we think of as uniquely human has precedents and parallels in the more-than-human world: art by human hands is matched by the artworks of numerous species of bowerbird (Deleuze & Guattari 1987); humansong by birdsong; the globalisation of humankind – our cultures and economies – by an older avian globalisation. I will linger with the latter for a moment, my aim being to demonstrate that the impetus for a translocalist bioregionalism stems, not solely from the restlessness of twenty-first century humanity, but also from ecological relationships that are already translocal.
I will present an example from my bioregion of residence, at least at the time of writing: the Swan Coastal Plain of the Australian Southwest, where the Darling Scarp eases into the Indian Ocean. The plain’s drainage system coalesces in the Swan-Canning Estuary, around which the cities of Perth and Fremantle are built. Unbeknownst to many of their cosmopolitan residents, they share their environment with cosmopolitans of a feathery kind. Each year, from late winter through to the summer months, the Swan-Canning Estuary plays host to some 10,000 migratory birds from Asia, comprised of over thirty different species. Among the more remarkable is the tiny Red-Necked Stint, which flies all the way from its breeding grounds in the Siberian Arctic to feed in the warm and food-rich mudflats of southern Australia (Department of Environment and Conservation 2009).

Evidently, no bioregion is ever closed off from the extra-local. The practice of drawing lines in the sand and definitively setting one zone apart from another belongs not to bioregionalism, but rather, to the very nationalism with which bioregionalists take exception. Mitchell Thomashow (1999, p. 129), for one, laments that the ‘delineation of hard and fast boundaries is the cause of much human suffering, as… nation-states argue about who belongs where’ – a spatiality he contrasts to the ‘permeable boundaries’ between bioregions. There is a lesson in the story of the humble Red-Necked Stint of ‘the political barriers that man [sic] erects but which birds ignore’ (Elphick 2007, p. 4), as well as of the possibility of a mobile, as opposed to sedentary, belonging.
I myself was a winged sojourner of sorts in Manila. I learnt there of a variety of bioregionalesque translocalisms – some internal to the Philippine archipelago, others linking localities within and without the Philippine nation-state. Exemplifying the former are the radical environmentalists behind the journal *Eco-Defence*, based out of the southern Philippine metropolis of Davao. Reporting on the efforts of fisherfolk, farmers, and indigenous peoples to defend their lands and waters against state and corporate encroachment, the journal aims to ‘bridge the gap of isolated community struggles’ and assist in building ‘a strong network of communities’ (Kuizon 2011a, p. 2). Community-level resistance and ‘inter-community cooperation’ (Eco-Defense Editorial Collective 2011, p. 14) are treated as complementary rather than opposed – an approach that jibes squarely with translocalism.

As for bioregionalesque translocalisms that traverse national borders, consider the ‘cosmopolitan bioregionalism’ theorised by Thomashow (1999). Having grappled with how the bioregional project might be made agreeable with global and postcolonial realities, Thomashow (1999, pp. 125-126) contends that

> [p]lace-based knowledge is meaningful not only as a commitment to understand local ecology and human relationships but as a foundation from which to explore the relationships between and among places... The local landscape can no longer be understood without reference to the larger patterns of ecosystems, economies and bureaucracies.

Recognising ‘the connections between places as intrinsic to the well-being of any one place’, he furthermore suggests that the ecological interdependencies entwining

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72 See also James (2012) for alternative treatment of this same problematic.
diverse bioregions should translate into ‘transregional’ political solidarities (Thomashow 1999, p. 129). This is indeed already happening, with Aberley (1999, p. 13) emphasising that locally-rooted movements have developed ‘intersecting webs of bioregional connection that now stretch across the planet’.

One strand of this web links the Philippines with Brazil, as revealed one evening at the Philippine Democratization Institute* (PDI) in Quezon City, where a public talk was being given by Brazilian scholar-activist Marcos Arruda73. Although in town for an academic conference, he made time to connect with a myriad of local activist groups, feeling that his experiences in the Brazilian Left would be instructive for the Philippine Left and vice versa.

Arruda is one amongst a legion of defectors from Brazil’s pre-eminent left-wing party, the Partido dos Trabalhadores74 (PT), which, since coming to power for the first time in 2002, has grown increasingly distant from its progressive roots. Some defectors went on to found the Partido do Socialismo e Liberdade (Socialism and Liberty Party) in 2004, while others decided to break with electoralism and state-centric politics altogether. Arruda found himself in the latter camp, narrating his trajectory as follows:

We who did not get into the new party, we needed a new way of doing politics in Brazil and Latin America. We can no longer build people’s power on the basis of a vertical, patriarchal political party, so many of us are convinced that we are right to be working at the grassroots... We would develop a new form of organization called the “popular assembly”...

73 Arruda’s published works include Cartas a Lula (2006), a reflection on the recent history of the Brazilian Left, and Humanizar o infra-humano (2004), an interrogation of the myths about human nature that undergird the capitalist order.

74 ‘Workers’ Party’ in Portuguese-to-English translation.
Arruda went on to describe his excitement as hundreds of popular assemblies began springing up across Brazil in 2005. Many were formed on a *sectoral* basis (that is to say, around distinct issues pertaining to women, housing, health, education, and so forth), and others on a specifically *bioregional* basis:

> We had Amazon people meeting together and preparing their proposals; the forest people of the Atlantic meeting together; the semi-arid region of the north meeting together; the pampa people of the south of Brazil meeting and preparing their particular proposals, which were economic, social, cultural, and ecological at the same time.

Participants in these grassroots democratic structures set about collectively grappling with the social and ecological problems affecting their daily lives, forging local-level solutions while coordinating translocally with others doing likewise elsewhere.\(^{75}\)

I was impressed by Arruda’s presentation, but my sentiments were not shared by everyone. Some in the audience appeared perturbed by Arruda’s barbed critiques of the PT, his former party, with one senior member of the Philippine Socialist Organization even getting up and leaving the room. Putting two and two together, I realised what was happening: the PDI where we were gathered that evening is essentially a PSO think-tank, and the PSO looks to the PT as one of its main inspirations.

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\(^{75}\) The *localist/translocalist* character of the popular assembly movement was somewhat negated when proposals from across Brazil were assimilated into a single national document presented for consideration to the federal government in Brasilia. The movement remains, nonetheless, an important experiment from which instructive lessons can be drawn.
The reasons for this lie in the surprising parallels between Brazilian and Philippine history: The PT was formed in the redemocratisation period following the deposition of Brazil’s military dictatorship in 1985; the PSO during the Philippines’ own redemocratisation period following the fall of Marcos in 1986. Both parties pioneered a distinct brand of Social Democracy, more radical than that of the social-democratic parties of the Global North. Unlike, say, the Labour Party in the United Kingdom or the Socialist Party in Spain, the PT and PSO are rooted, not solely in bureaucratic trade unions, but also in grassroots social movements more broadly (or at least claim to be). One major difference between the PT and PSO, however, is their contrasting electoral fortunes. While the former (at the time of writing) has been in power in Brazil for over a decade, the latter remains a minor player in Philippine political life – this being the reason that the PT is held in such high esteem by the PSO.

In an apparent rebuke of PT- and PSO-style politics, Arruda affirmed:

We can’t wait to take power of the state in order to begin building a workers’ economy. We have to do it now, with our own means... Are we still talking about socialism? I say yes, but another type of socialism. Not the state socialism we’re used to... We’re building a workers’ economy that is decentralised; that relies on the unique capacities of each person, each family, each community.

Arruda retains vestiges of his formative years in the traditional Left, but these are now being tempered by his new embrace of bioregionalism, as well as of the concept of the ‘solidarity economy’ (Allard, Davidson & Matthaei 2008). Hybridisations of ideas and

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76 Hobsbawm (1999, p. 370) refers to formations of this kind as ‘labour-cum-people’s parties’, which he maintains are peculiar to newly industrialising countries.
imaginaries are likewise being concocted in the Philippines, also in response to the lessons being learnt from past political experiences. The common thread, though, is decentralisation – and by extension, translocalism.

Arruda and I were not the only foreigners in the room that night. Also present was a Pinay American and a Sri Lankan Australian, all of us translocal migrants on temporary sojourn in Manila. Bringing the discussion back to the bioregionalist movement, it has, since its inception, tended in an increasingly translocalist direction, rendering accusations of hermetic provincialism ever more misplaced. In a surprising reversal of common preconceptions, Esteva and Prakash (1998, p. 27) argue that provincialist attitudes are to be found, not in local or bioregional projects, but in global ones: ‘Global proposals are necessarily parochial: they inevitably express the specific vision and interests of a small group of people, even when they are supposedly formulated in the interest of humanity’. In contrast, by re-imagining the world as an irreducible mosaic of localities and bioregions, one avoids ‘the arrogance of pretending to know what is good for everyone’ and engenders instead a ‘radical pluralism’ (Esteva & Prakash 1998, pp. 27, 193).

To extend bioregionalism from the local to the translocal also raises the question of boundaries. Dirlik (2001, p. 22) reminds us that the boundaries that exist in nature – the coastline, the mountain ridge, the forest edge, and so on – are ‘flexible and porous’ (Dirlik 2001, p. 22). Stark insides and outsides do not exist in nature, except as a product of human reason. It follows that all bioregions bleed into and interpenetrate one another (Gordon 2008, p. 159), aided by vectors both human and non-human.
I hope to have shown in this section that there is no necessary contradiction between bioregionalism and mobility, so long as one connects respectfully with the places one is in, instead of remaining neither here nor there in the generic non-places of national and supranational space. Questions of place and space aside, the turn to bioregionalism also involves a reorientation toward xenophilic values.

**Xenophilia**

Bioregionalism is xenophilic in the sense that it puts the highest premium on both cultural and biological diversity. Commencing with the former, consider again the point made earlier by Ermin: ‘The keyword, I think, is diversity... It’s really crap that we always say that the Filipinos are “one”, in a way, because we’re all different – and we should be proud of it, instead of treating diversity as counter-productive’.

Here, Ermin echoes Buendia’s (1993, p. 82) critique of the ‘negativization’ of difference by Philippine nationalists. NDM partisan Kris Montañez (1988, p. 9), for instance, spoke querulously of what he supposed was the ‘divisiveness along regional, linguistic and religious lines’ in the Philippines, refusing the notion that the country’s rich cultural diversity might be a positive worth upholding. Unlike the Reds, bioregionalists tend to judge that it is the hierarchisation of difference, not difference itself, that is the problem.

Another point of contrast between nationalism and bioregionalism is that, whereas the former often posits an inseverable bond between ‘blood and soil’ (Kiernan 2007) – that
is to say, between a discrete ethnos and a delimited parcel of land – the latter allows a given territory to be identified with by anyone, so long they maintain a symbiotic rather than exploitative relationship to it. As anarcho-bioregionalist Uri Gordon (2008, p. 158) explains, a bioregional identity

based on connection to a local area does not contain any essentialist factors – it does not stipulate anything about the content of the personal and collective identities that can flourish within and alongside it. The only requirement is that such identities... cohere with sustainable relationships between people and the land. As a result, individuals and groups can experience bioregional belonging while still holding multiple personal and collective identities in terms of occupation, language, ethnicity, lifestyle, spirituality, cultural taste, gender, sexual preference and so on. Bioregionalism is thus in line with anarchist demands for self-realisation and for the celebration of multiple and shifting identities.

I have retained this last sentence as a foreshadowing of the following chapter on anarchism. As for the discussion at hand, one small instance that illustrates Gordon’s claim that bioregionalism has little to do with essences is a community group in my area (at the time of writing) dedicated to the protection of our local wetlands. Although sharing a topophilic connection to place, the group’s participants are far from culturally-uniform, composed as they are of Aboriginal Australians, Anglo-Australians, migrants, and the locally-born children of migrants, among others. The phrase ‘locally-adapted cultural multiplicity’ (Barnhill 2012, p. 220) usefully encapsulates such phenomena.

Where nationalist essentialism reduces multiplicities to either homophilic sameness or xenophobic otherness, bioregionalism thrives on the xenophilic play of differences – and this in the sense of cultural as well as biological diversity. Turning now to the
latter, I will begin with a sketch of the 2003 campaign against genetically-modified (GM) crops, frequently recalled in conversation by my interlocutors.

The campaign was launched when the Philippine Department of Agriculture announced that it would give Bt corn (a GM maize variety developed by US biotechnology firm Monsanto) the green light to enter the country. Protestors set up camp outside the Quezon City office of the Department of Agriculture, also erecting a giant wooden corncob etched with the words ‘Crime against all generations’. Calling for a moratorium on the introduction of GM strains and a defence of native corn varieties from contamination by Bt pollen, some opted to go on a month-long hunger strike, dubbed the ‘Indignation fast against the Arroyo government and Monsanto’ (Lacuarta 2003; SEARICE 2003).

Amongst the campers were members of the GFM, Artists for the Environment, the *Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka* (National Movement of Farmers’ Associations), as well as an eco-anarchist outfit named Earth First Manila (SEARICE 2003). The coalition’s political diversity was matched by its commitment to biodiversity – and by this I do not solely mean species diversity, but also genetic diversity within particular species.

Foremost amongst the protestors’ concerns was the threat to genetic diversity posed by GM crops. Modern agribusinesses are increasingly relying on GM seeds, from which are produced only a handful of standardised varieties. This comes at the expense of the once-vast range of heirloom strains developed in specific bioregions over
generations, many of which are going extinct. Environmental champion Vandana Shiva (cited in Winarto 2011, p. 276) worries that, just as industrial farming practices are instituting ‘monocultures of introduced plant varieties leading to the displacement and destruction of local diversity’, so too are they breeding ‘a monoculture of the mind by making the space for local alternatives disappear’. The so-called ‘Green Revolution’ is diminishing both the genetic and cultural resource base, while putting ever-greater power into the hands of big agribusiness and biotechnology corporations.

A central consideration is that biodiversity is indispensable to continued evolution. A wide range of preadaptations ensure that, in times of unpredictable environmental change, a ‘natural selection’ (Darwin 1859) of the traits best suited to the new conditions will occur, thereby safeguarding survival into the future. The present era, however, is one of diminishing biodiversity – owing, not just to industrial agriculture, but also to over-fishing and logging, to name two of the other biggest threats in the Philippines – and therefore of evolutionary flexibility.

Following Grosz (2005, p. 48), I contend that in agriculture, as in human cultures more generally, ‘culture is not the magnification of nature and its animation through human effort’, as biotech scientists and humanists alike would have us believe, ‘but the selection of only some elements or facets of the natural, and the casting of the rest into shadow, a kind of diminution of the complexity and openness of the natural order’. Certainly, other cultures and agricultures are possible: practices that involve ‘working with nature rather than against nature... allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions’ (Mollison 1988, p. ix-x).
Cue xenophilia: Expanded from the human to the more-than-human realm, xenophilia becomes a cultural value in service of the anarchic multiplicity of life itself and its impetus towards ‘self-variation and becoming’ (Grosz 2005, p. 48). What matters, from this standpoint, is that life remains free to flourish in all its variability and generativity, rather than be reduced down to the standardised forms favoured by sovereignty.

I began this chapter by tracking the history of the Autonomous Environmental Movement in the Philippines, before examining some of the key tensions separating Red and Green in the present day. I then zoomed in on an alternative vision of community that increasing numbers of Filipin@ environmentalists are proposing in place of the nation-state; namely, that laid out by the bioregionalist movement.

If concrete examples of self-conscious bioregional communities have been lacking, it is because bioregionalism remains, in the Philippines to date, more an attitudinal tendency than anything else, having yet to blossom into a full-blown political project. This did not pose a problem, though, since my stated intention from square one has been to explore, not simply what is, but more importantly what is becoming. I took what in the field only presented themselves as intimations, and, in keeping with my futurological method, further explored and expanded on them through philosophy.

Returning to the protest camp against GM corn one last time, I met an anarchist and former participant in that campaign who identified it as one of the earliest instances of
Green-Black solidarity in Manila that he could remember. Working together on the campaign, environmentalists and anarchists found that not only did they share a common antipathy towards the corporate takeover of food production, but also considerable overlaps in terms of their political, ethical, and organisational sensibilities. In the chapter to follow, it will be seen that the decentralist and anti-nationalist agenda of bioregionalism is matched in Philippine anarchism by the notion of the ‘archipelagic confederation’ (Umali 2006).
Chapter 10

The anarchists

Anarchism’s history ‘has been that of a suppressed alternative... forced to subsist in
the shadows of Marxism’ (May 1994, p. 44). This was true up until the Crisis of the Left;
that point at which communist movements found the tide turning against them. This
then opened a space for a revivification of anarchist projects worldwide. As anarchist
anthropologist David Graeber (2004b, p. 330) observed,

[a]narchist or anarchist-inspired movements are growing everywhere; anarchist
principles – autonomy, voluntary association, self-organisation, mutual aid,
direct democracy – have become the basis for organising within the
[Alternative] Globalisation Movement and beyond, taking the place that
Marxism had in the social movements of the Sixties.

Although writing from North America, Graeber’s assertions are not inapplicable to the
Philippines, where, in the Eighties and Nineties, many defectors from the Maoist
insurgency found that their critiques of the CPP-NPA strongly resonated with
anarchism. Since that time, a succession of young Filipin@ activists, wishing to keep
their distance from Maoism’s legacy, have likewise gravitated in an anarchist direction.
Replied one Filipina anarcha-feminist under the sobriquet of ‘Ingrata’ (cited in Dapithapon 2013, p. 72), when asked in an interview about what anarchism meant to her personally:

There is no other socio-political theory that I know of that has given equal weight to the problems of class inequalities, racism, sexism, homophobia and every form of domination which enslaves humanity than anarchism. It is so vibrant that the cycle of practice, criticism, validation and innovation does not cease... Being an anarchist is an ongoing struggle for a society where all deterrents to genuine human freedom and aspirations like hierarchies, authority, discrimination are eliminated. But the bonus is you get to live it now!

Referred to herein are four of contemporary anarchism’s core features: its intersectionality; its opposition to all hierarchies; its commitment to open-ended process; and its alignment of means and ends, encapsulated in the notion of ‘living it now’. As a way of acquainting the uninitiated with anarchism, beyond caricatures of bomb-throwing nihilists77, I will expand on each of these features in respective order.

Firstly, with respect to intersectionality, contemporary anarchism has mostly dispensed with the kind of Oppression Olympics practiced by the Maoists (whereby national and class-based oppressions are ranked as more pressing than sexism, homophobia, environmental destruction, and so on), as well as by the so-called ‘class war’ anarchists of old. From its roots in working-class struggles, anarchism has since expanded into ‘a vast umbrella movement, importantly radicalized by feminists,

77 It should be acknowledged that such caricatures are not without basis, since some anarchists did partake in bombings and assassinations (then known as ‘propaganda of the deed’) for a brief period in the 1890s and early 1900s. Graeber (2013, p. 191) claims, however, that anarchism was also ‘the first modern political movement to (gradually) realize that, as a political strategy, terrorism, even when it is not directed at innocents, doesn’t work’. As such, anarchists have overwhelming eschewed violent methods for the better part of a century now.
ecologists, gays and lesbians’ (Kinna 2005, p. 4). As a feminist, Ingrata would have
found that the anarchist movement was generally more receptive to gender issues
than the traditional Left, which may have been what first drew her in.

Second is anarchism’s opposition to all forms of hierarchy. In fact, the very word
‘anarchism’ derives from the Greek for ‘without rulers’ (Graeber 2004a, p. 3). From its
beginnings as a movement opposed to the twin hierarchies of government over the
governed, and capitalists over workers, it has since gone on to counter the hierarchies
of humankind over nature, man over woman, straight over gay, and cis-gendered over
transgendered, among others. While relevant to the previous point about
intersectionality, what I wish to highlight here is the key cleavage between Marxists
and anarchists over the question of power. The former, in their efforts to seize state
power, have usually only sought to substitute ‘new and better hierarchies for old ones’
(May 1994, p. 51). Hence Marx’s (1875) now-infamous proposal for a ‘dictatorship of
the proletariat’, in which the desire to overthrow a tyrant equates with the desire to
occupy the tyrant’s place. Anarchists, in contrast – in their opposition to state
sovereignty, as well as to forms of authority that, like patriarchy, are diffused
throughout society – aim at ‘getting rid of hierarchic thinking and action altogether’
(May 1994, p. 51).

The third feature to consider is the anarchist commitment to an ongoing process of
experimentation and innovation, the counterpart to which is an opposition to linear,
teleological time. Clearly parting ways with Marxist teleology, the seminal anarchist
agitator, Emma Goldman (1969, p. 63), emphasised as much when writing:
Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of anarchism therefore do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances. Methods must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime, and of the intellectual and temperamental requirements of the individual... Anarchism does not stand for military drill and uniformity; it does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form, against everything that hinders human growth.

This leads on to the final feature of contemporary anarchism to be discussed for now: the emphasis it places on aligning means with ends. This can be understood against the Marxist habit of putting hierarchical means at the service of anti-hierarchical ends. The building of a new society, so the argument goes, must wait until after the revolution; what is important for now is to resist the present order. To the idea of negating in order to create, anarchists pose the inverse alternative of creating in order to negate. Traditionally, this was termed ‘building the new within the shell of the old’ (Barclay 1982, p. 143), but is known today by the succincter phrase of ‘prefigurative politics’ (Gordon 2008, pp. 34-38). ‘[O]ne cannot create freedom through authoritarian means’, explains Graeber (2004a, p. 7); ‘as much as possible, one must oneself, in one’s relations with one’s friends and allies, embody the society one wishes to create’. By ‘living it now’, as Ingrata put it – or, by ‘acting as if one is already free’ (Graeber 2009, p. 203) – one subverts the old while simultaneously prefiguring the new. In practice, this translates into radically-democratic organising practices and a profusion of counter-institutions.
In contrast to the traditional Left, in which the institution of the political party predominates, I encountered in Manila’s anarchist milieu an array of countercultural forms: anarcho-punk collectives, eco-anarchist collectives, a local chapter of ‘Food Not Bombs’ (see McHenry et al. 2014), alternative media collectives, self-publishing initiatives, diverse artistic projects, a grassroots think-tank, a cooperative bookstore, and a community library (or ‘infoshop’ in anarchist parlance). All aspire to ‘cementing people’s self reliance and developing grassroots networks... based on horizontal, non-hierarchical co-operation with no need for any government, political parties, NGOs, [or] businesses (Anonymous 2013, pp. 3-4).

With the stage now set, I will, in the next part of this chapter, trace the ecotone between Red and Black; the transition in Philippine radical politics, that is, from revolutionary nationalism to anarchism. In so doing, I will rely more on oral history interviews than on written texts, since much of what follows is hitherto unwritten history. I then turn, in the second part, to the notion of the ‘archipelagic confederation’ (Umali 2006) – a community-of-communities that a section of Filipin@ anarchists is proposing in place of the Philippine nation-state. While contemporary feminists and environmentalists meld their critiques of nationalism with their critiques of androcentrism and anthropocentrism respectively, the contribution that anarchists make to the new cosmopolitan zeitgeist is to throw into the mix their uncompromising anti-statism. This is crucial for the very reason that, if one is to re-imagine community beyond the nation-state, one must take issue with both the nationalism and the statism inherent in that conjunction.
Red to Black

Making contact with the anarchists in Manila was not as straightforward for me as it was with the environmentalists. Meeting the latter had been made a breeze by the FAEJ solidarty tour, but getting in with the anarchists took some groundwork. My first port of call was the now-defunct Manila Indymedia website – part of a global network of ‘independent media centres’ first sparked out of the Battle of Seattle in 1999, each functioning as an open publishing platform for the sharing of news, views, events, photos, and so on. While in the first seven years of its life, the Indymedia network served as a crucial tool for activists worldwide, it has since been eclipsed by the rise of social networking platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

At the time of my fieldwork in Manila, however, Indymedia was still very much in use by local activists. I regularly trawled the newswire for local happenings, taking particular interest in the stories and reports posted by anarchist groups. I posted comments in response, introducing myself and my research and inquiring whether or not it would be possible to meet. I was ignored for several months, but did not take it personally. Security was (and remains) a real concern for Filipin@ activists, given the prevalence of political violence in the country. Eventually convinced of the sincerity of my intentions, Leon – the young Waraynon anarchist introduced in Chapter 7 – got in touch with me out of the blue to suggest a meeting at UP Diliman.

When the day arrived, Leon showed up over an hour late, bespectacled and short of breath after having ridden to campus on his bicycle. My impression was of a perceptive
and good-humoured character, and what I imagined would be a short chat over lunch morphed into a lively, drawn-out drinking session that lasted until well past nightfall. Our setting was a grungy student bar named Sarah’s, located in Krus na Ligas – a well-established squatter community across the road from the university. Against the din of the rain and traffic, our meandering conversation covered ample ground: the state of the Philippine Left, recent intellectual movements in the Philippines, anarchistic cultures in the archipelago prior to the Spanish invasion, anarchist theory, French poststructuralism, the Alternative Globalisation Movement, Leon’s time as a migrant worker in Japan, my time as a migrant rights organiser in Australia, and so forth.

I also learnt of Leon’s diverse involvements in alternative media, including in zine78 and documentary film-making collectives, pirate radio, and the aforementioned Manila Indymedia. To my surprise, I found out that Perth Indymedia activists back home had played a pivotal role in helping their Manila counterparts get their own site off the ground in the early 2000s, providing them with technical support, server space, and the like, until they had sufficient resources and know-how to run it themselves. Not only was it a happy coincidence for me, given my Perth-Manila connections, but also a salient example of the kind of translocal collaboration I have been discussing in this thesis. International networking aside, Manila Indymedia also made sure to network locally, becoming, upon its formation, one of a couple of dozen member collectives of the Metro Manila Anarchist Confederation* (MMAC).

78 Zines (their name abbreviated from ‘magazine’) are self-published booklets reproduced via photocopier in a do-it-yourself (DIY), and often anti-capitalist, spirit. Their place in alternative culture was set in train by the anarcho-punk scene of the 1970s (Duncombe 1997).
Leon’s political activism was not always as colourful. In a past life, he was a militant with the Young Socialist League* (YSL), which he was recruited to in the late Nineties during a campaign against fee hikes at his alma mater. Now inexistent, the YSL was the youth and students wing of the Alliance for Workers’ Solidarity* (AWS) – an RJ, and more specifically, Trotskyist, organisation formed out of the great schism of the early Nineties. Even though the RA-RJ split had taken place before his time, the antagonisms of the older political generation still defined the environment in which he operated. He was taught to scorn the RAs for their authoritarianism, but grew tired of the authoritarianism within his own organisation as well. For this reason, he began gravitating in an anarchist direction, gradually dropping his YSL commitments in the early 2000s before making a decisive switch to the MMAC. As Leon recounted:

If we wanted to organize our own local struggles at that time, they would always say, “Oh, coordinate it with the national committee of the student sector”. We always had to ask permission; that’s how it works. So yeah, eventually I got pissed off with this kind of authoritarian tradition, and I saw a different mode of expressing politics in the [Metro Manila Anarchist Confederation]... They’re very dynamic; they don’t need to have a party.

Leon’s turn from Marxism to anarchism also involved an embrace of the anational attitudes to which contemporary anarchism is predisposed. He even declared in one of our interviews that ‘there is no such thing as “The Philippines”’, or at least no primordial national community that pre-existed its forcible creation under the Spanish.

This is only the fast-forwarded version of the Red-Black transition in Philippine radical politics. To give a fuller account, I will rewind to the political tensions of the Eighties and early Nineties, and play it through again at regular speed.
The older generation

As already recounted, the dissolution of the CPP in 1993 precipitated a flowering of feminism, environmentalism, and anarchism in the Philippines, all of which had been held in check by the Maoists’ hegemony over the Left. Every innovation at this time was informed, in part, by diagnoses of what went wrong with the Party. The RJs who found solace in non-Maoist forms of Marxism pinned the blame on Mao’s and Sison’s distortions of the supposed essence of the Marxist project (MRRC 1993; Nemenzo 1994). Meanwhile, born-again Social Democrats affirmed the ‘parliamentary road’ (Ciria-Cruz 1992) against what they saw as the excesses of revolutionary violence. Both tendencies, however, remained invested in the nation-state paradigm. My contention is that those who effected a more fundamental break were not those who quarrelled over the correctness of one Marxist theorist or another, or who argued for a reformist rather than revolutionary approach, but those who called into question the very logic of sovereignty within which all were complicit.

The journal Kasarinlan was the forum for many of these debates, both in the lead-up to and in the wake of the CPP’s collapse. It was within its pages that an article entitled ‘Re-imagining Philippine revolution’ (Serrano 1994) appeared, perturbing many at the time. Its author, Isagani Serrano, was very much in the minority amongst his fellow CPP defectors for his divergent, anti-statist perspective. He critiqued his former party for being ‘statist through and through’, challenging, in particular, its tendency ‘to reduce revolution to the capture of state power’ (Serrano 1994, pp. 80-81). When an RJ acquaintance commented to me quite seriously one evening, ‘I just hope I’ll still be
alive on the day of the victory’, he was referring to revolution in this same sense – a cataclysmic seizure of power so as to bring about an ideal society from the top down. In contrast, Serrano (1994, p. 81) stressed the need for a social, rather than merely political, revolution. Where the ‘political revolution’ effects a simple change of management within the state apparatus, the ‘social revolution’ erodes the state by ‘dispersing power across the social spectrum’ (Serrano 1994, p. 81). Elsewhere, he explained that a ‘community can come to power without actually taking power. Slowly you pulverize centralized power by breaking it up and taking control’ (Serrano cited in Broad & Cavanagh 1993, p. 149).

Serrano re-imagined revolution as a process rather than an event; more an undercutting than an overthrowing. This is the precise approach taken by present-day anarchists in their building of counter-institutions and their efforts to cooperativise all that capitalists would wish privatised and that statists would wish nationalised. Said Leon, for one, ‘I consider revolution as an everyday struggle – the revolution of everyday life’. Although Serrano never professed an affinity for anarchism, his anarchistic intuitions were palpable.

Serrano was in fact advocating for Popular Democracy, as distinct from the National Democracy of the Maoists. From this perspective, the true locus of democracy lies, not in the state, but in civil society (Serrano 1994, p. 75). The ‘Pop Dems’ (as adherents of this approach were known) began coalescing in the wake of the People Power Revolution of 1986, when widespread disillusionment with the CPP-NPA first set in. A tension soon emerged, however, between those Pop Dems who still saw a role for the
state, even if a very minimal one, and those who wanted to do away with it altogether. While the former current has since been absorbed into electoral formations, the latter persists in community empowerment initiatives, whether driven by NGOs, POs, or explicitly anarchist outfits (Törnquist 2002, pp. 48-55).

One NGO inspired by the anti-statist strain of Popular Democracy is the Philippine Institute for Popular Education* (PIPE), active throughout the country but based in Manila. Through the FAEJI solidarity tour, I was able to meet one PIPE educator, formerly an NPA guerrilla, whom I shall call Edwin. In a fascinating talk, Edwin reflected on how he and his NPA comrades did little to empower the people in whose interests they were supposedly operating. On the contrary, they actively contributed to their disempowerment by positioning themselves as leaders and the masses as mere followers. On this topic, it would be worth citing Edwin at considerable length:

When I was with the Maoist movement... I realized most people would come to me as the fountainhead of knowledge in the barangay, because I represent the revolution. So if a couple has a domestic spat, they come to me to settle this problem – and I was twenty-three years old and single! Given that particular context I was in, I would say... “All these problems between husbands and wives are the problems of colonialism and imperialism”, because I had nothing else to say... [Another] part of our work at the time was going to the small landlord in each town... and asking them to lower the interest rate of the loans that the farmers made, or increasing the farmers’ share of the harvest... Because we were armed, because we were guerrillas, the landlords would be shaking in fear, because in the rural areas, they wouldn’t have any recourse to military intervention. We were in power in the area... “Can you increase the peasants’ share of the crop?” and he would say, “sure, sure”. He’d be really shaking with fear. And then one of the guys who was in a key position in the movement at the time wondered about something very crucial. He said “We are not doing revolutionary work with the peasants... We are doing something for them, but they are not doing it for themselves... Do we call this revolutionary work? Why don’t we try asking them to do it?... to talk to the landlord about changing the sharing patterns?” If only the guerrillas do it, things can change, but if the people do it, you get different results... Left groups
would talk about empowering people. I keep wondering how that empowerment happens, or if it’s really happening... Sometime in the late Eighties, I became an NGO worker. That whole thing I experienced in the NPA was foremost in my mind whenever I’d do NGO work... I was always asking myself... “Is it perpetuating dependence?” It’s entirely possible that some sort of dependency has shifted from one entity to you, as an NGO worker.

At this point, Edwin offered a word of caution for us, as young diasporans getting involved in Philippine affairs:

I noticed many Fil-Americans who come over... would naturally say, “in the States, things don’t happen that way. Why don’t you do it this way?” And that usually produces two kinds of reactions: One is resentment, right? But the majority reaction is “Oh yeah, he’s right. Why don’t we do it his way?... Things are better there. They do things better in the States. Ah, I wish we could do that here”. So what I’m saying is when people have recommendations for how things should get done – and I’m sure a lot of goodwill is inherent in the recommendations – one has to be conscious of how it impacts on people’s consciousness, given the context of dependence... What does [FAEJI] bring into the community?... Projects and programs and material things? That’s all good, but try to do something else too – a notion of dialogue, so that you don’t tell people what to do, but actually try to listen.

Edwin then related this to his own work as a popular educator with PIPE:

It’s a good thing to present an alternative to the current state of affairs, but it’s also a good thing to help people articulate their discourse on a particular issue. And then we might help people re-tell the story... Discourses are not static... People would say: “Ah, mayor so-and-so is a good person... He may be stealing from the coffers, but he sends my kids to college”. But if there’s less corruption, it might be possible they could send more kids to college. If we could help people find such fissures and cracks in their discourses, then I think that’s a good thing we can do for people... Our community programs in [PIPE] are basically of an education type, but aside from the usual notion of education, what we do is try to help people articulate such discourses so that they themselves could re-tell their discourses in a new way – hopefully. And this is basically cultural work... cultural-political work. Identifying strong points in their culture and helping them to find the cracks, so that when they
try to fill them in, the whole discourse changes towards something more progressive.

Intrigued, I asked Edwin during question time about how he arrived at his ideas. Were they solely a product of his experiences, or were there certain theorists that influenced him as well?

In 1986, we were still good Maoists, loyal Maoists at that time... but we were already reading [Paulo] Freire. And the senior cadres were discrediting us for reading Freire... I think after three years, they got tired of us... They simply severed us and that was the end. After that, some of us started discovering [György] Lukács and [Antonio] Gramsci... [and the] postmodernist writers. And then the senior cadres were branding us as anarchist, but we didn’t even know what anarchism was... So we started reading up on anarchy and anarchism and realised: “Yeah, we’re anarchists! They’re right!”

Anarchism was fitting, given Edwin’s already-cogent critiques of hierarchical power relations. His intuitions were echoed by Roberto Garcia (2001, p. 94), another former NPA soldier who developed anarchistic leanings:

The [National Democratic] revolution thrives in its critique of iniquity and the hierarchical distribution of wealth, power, and decision-making in society. But the movement itself is patently hierarchical. The whole party structure is vertically organized and all major decisions are done at the top.

From the de facto or accidental anarchism of former Maoists, I will turn next to the adoption of anarchism proper amongst the younger generation.
The younger generation

Owing to the enmities of the older generation, and the fluctuating realignments resulting therefrom, the Nineties were a bewildering time to be young and radical in the Philippines. ‘The political Left at that time had these factions’, recalled Leon. ‘Every year, there’s like splits going on... Because of this, we got frustrated with how the authoritarian leftist tradition was affecting us’. No sooner did Leon find his place in the YSL, a group formed out of the RA-RJ splits, than it was torn apart by a split of its own, with a quarter of its members bolting en masse. The dissidents’ point of contention was that the YSL’s parent organisation, the AWS, should transform itself into a fully-fledged, Bolshevik-style party; one that would aim at the kind of hegemony over the Left that the CPP enjoyed in the Seventies and early Eighties. The loyalists, meanwhile, felt that the group should remain a ‘pre-party formation’, and that, as Leon narrated it, a new party ‘should not be formed until we reconsolidate our forces’. Those who defected did eventually establish a new revolutionary party, the Partido para sa Rebolusyong Sosyalista* (PRS), only to see it disappear just a few years later. While some in this milieu let their disillusionment get the better of them, others grew eager for an alternative outside the political culture in which they had been raised. A handful of them found just such an alternative in anarchism, becoming key players in the formation of the MMAC at the turn of the millennium.

According to Leon, the rationale behind the MMAC’s founding was as follows: ‘Why not just build a network of individuals and collectives who will work together through

*This translates as: ‘Party for Socialist Revolution’.
action, rather than thinking of building a party? This was in the wake of the Battle of Seattle, which demonstrated to the world the power of anarchistic, network-based forms of organisation. A co-founder of the MMAC whom I corresponded with by e-mail cited Seattle as a ‘major inspiration’. He was inspired, too, by the anarchist federations already in existence in the Philippines: the Davao Anarchist Resistance Movement in Mindanao and the Far South Resistance Movement in southern Luzon.

The achievement of the MMAC was to bring together diverse, anarchist-inspired collectives from across Metro Manila – students, punks, adventurers, zinesters, anarcho-vegans, alternative globalisation activists, and so on – into a common arena for collaboration.

Leon was still with the YSL when the MMAC came into being, but the more estranged he grew from his own organisation, the more he contemplated as a viable option for himself the trail from Red to Black blazed by his former comrades (notwithstanding their detour through the failed PRS). In time, as touched on earlier, Leon came to reject the RJs’ self-designation as the ‘Democratic Left’ and their description of their RA rivals as the ‘Authoritarian Left’, concluding that both were just authoritarian as each other. The MMAC appealed for the reason that it took traditional leftists to task for reproducing the hierarchies of wider society within their own organisations. Leon was surprised to find informal hierarchies at work within the MMAC as well, but figured that at least there was a general commitment to mitigate them.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, anarchism is not opposed to organisation and order in general, only to forms of organisation premised on coercive, centralised authority (Heckert 2013, p. 513). Anarchists stand instead for voluntary, decentralised, and self-regulating relationships between equals, which they believe constitute a much more ordered way of life – hence the slogan ‘Anarchy is order; government is civil war’, attributed to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (cited in Kinna 2005, p. 5).
What also drew Leon into the anarchist fold was its culture of conviviality and creativity, so different to the humourless militancy he was used to:

I was inspired by [the MMAC’s] work, you know? Way back in 1999, before the Battle of Seattle broke out, they already had their own community space where different youth, people from different communities, used to converge... They had these once-a-week skill-shareings – from Food Not Bombs to making zines, anything DIY. So I was observing their activities and I was kind of “Wow”. That was it; I decided to join them.

For Leon, the anarchist ethos of ‘living it now’ was an antidote to the life-denying values demanded by the traditional Left – discipline, sacrifice, and the idea that ‘one has to be sad in order to be militant’ (Foucault 1972, p. xiii). Leon had sacrificed a lot for the YSL, dropping out of university in order to become a full-time organiser. Upon joining the MMAC, however, he decided to resume his studies, this time in art rather than advertising. Once there was no longer any leftist bureaucracy in the equation, Leon felt free to pursue more life-affirming endeavours in his activism and studies alike.

*Organising without leaders*

One major reason for Leon’s turn to anarchism has yet to be discussed; namely, the dashed hopes following the 2001 uprising that swept then-president Joseph Estrada from office. Commonly known as ‘EDSA II’, the follow-up to the first EDSA revolution of 1986, this episode was a turning point in Philippine radical politics – not for its apparent success, but for its failures. The events of 2001 revealed to Leon, and many others like him, the ideological bankruptcy of the traditional Left, making anarchism a
compelling alternative. To tell this story, I will begin in the most unlikely of places:

Leon’s surprising connection to renowned historian Benedict Anderson, who, although most well-known for his writings on Indonesia, has also developed a significant body of work on the Philippines. Odd though it may seem at present, all will make sense in good time.

It was over beers at Sarah’s that Benedict Anderson first came up as a topic of conversation. Leon had yet to get his hands on a copy of Anderson’s latest book, *Under three flags* (2007), but I had just finished reading it myself and imagined it would be of great interest to him. I summarised it for Leon as a study of the rich exchange that took place in 1890s Spain between three sets of people: European anarchists, Cuban émigrés fighting for Cuban independence, and Filipin@ émigrés fighting for Philippine independence (or at least for greater autonomy). The treatise concludes with a curious postscript hinting at parallels between the ‘early globalization’ of the 1890s and the ‘late globalization’ of the current era (Anderson 2007, pp. 3, 234). In it, Anderson (2007, p. 234) writes:

> In January 2004, I was invited to give a preliminary lecture on some of the themes of this book by the famously radical-nationalist University of the Philippines, where the influence of (Ilocano) José Maria Sison’s Maoist “new” Communist Party, founded at the end of 1968, remains quite strong. Arriving much too early, I filled in time at an open-air campus coffee-stall. A youngster

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81 Anderson turned to the Philippines after being banned from Indonesia by the Suharto dictatorship. Part of the appeal was the impending dissolution of the Philippines’ own dictatorship in the mid-Eighties. He recalled that at this time ‘many of my best students at Cornell University were deciding to work on the Philippines, for political as well as scholarly reasons. I more or less tagged along behind them’ (Anderson 2003, p. viii). In an e-mail to one of his former students, Patricio Abinales, now a noted scholar in his own right, Anderson gave a further reason for his interest in the Philippines: ‘I think that living in America, and having long experienced... the *katarantaduhan* [‘nonsense’ in Tagalog slang] of Washington in other places, made me think I should really study the American colony’ (Anderson cited in Abinales 2003, p. xxvi).
came by to hand out leaflets to the customers, all of whom casually scrunched them up and threw them away once he had left. I was about to do the same when my eye caught the title of the one-page text. “Organize Without Leaders!” The content proved to be an attack on the hierarchies of the country – boss-ridden party-political, corporate capitalist, and also Maoist Communist – in the name of “horizontal” organized solidarity. The leaflet was unsigned, but a website was appended for further enquiries. This was a serendipity too good to keep to myself. I read it out loud to my audience, and was surprised that almost everyone seemed taken aback. But when I had finished speaking, many hurried up to ask for copies... I feel certain that Isabelo\textsuperscript{82} would have been enchanted by the leaflet and rushed to his laptop to explore the website manila.indymedia.org. He would have found that this website is linked to dozens of others of similar stripe around the world. Late Globalization?

Leon could hardly believe it when I relayed this story to him, since the ‘youngster’ with the leaflets was none other than Leon himself. I was surprised by the coincidence of it all, and Leon by the fact that Anderson had seen fit to refer to their mundane (though at once momentous) encounter in his work. Manila Indymedia was only six months old at that point, so Leon and his comrades were still working hard to inspire popular participation in the newswire. What better occasion to spread the word, they figured, than a Benedict Anderson lecture on anarchism and anticolonialism? Funnily enough, Leon had no idea who the foreigner at the coffee shop actually was – ‘I saw an old, fat, white guy sitting there’, he recalled; ‘I didn’t think he would be care, but I gave him a flyer anyway, just to piss him off’ – until

\textsuperscript{82} Anderson is referring here to Isabelo de los Reyes – the Philippines’ first self-declared anarchist. Arrested by Spanish authorities in 1896 for his involvement in the Philippine Revolution, he was sent to prison in faraway Barcelona, largely in order to isolate him from fellow Filipin@s over whom he held considerable sway. Not to be isolated from radicals of other nationalities, his Catalan anarchist inmates so impressed him that, before long, he himself took on an anarchist identity. For de los Reyes (cited in Anderson 2007, p. 201), anarchism was about ‘the abolition of boundaries; that is, love without any boundaries, whether geographic or of class distinction... with all of us associating together without any need of fraudulent taxes or ordinances which trap the unfortunate but leave the real criminals untouched’ [italics mine]. Returning to Manila, de los Reyes brought with him the first anarchist texts to reach the Philippines and quickly resumed his militant organising, albeit this time against the new American regime (Anderson 2007, p. 7).
around an hour later when he saw the same man appear at the front of the lecture hall to speak.

The relevance here is that the Indymedia flyer in question was adapted from a statement first distributed by anarchists during the 2001 uprising against Estrada. Likewise bearing the title of *Organize Without Leaders!*, it recommended that people ignore the various political parties that were attempting to capitalise on the movement, and self-organise instead. While the RAs and RJs dreamt about coming to power, President Estrada’s more conservative opponents simply wanted him replaced by another member of the political-economic elite. For the anarchists, in contrast, the issue was not who was in power, but power itself. They maintained that if the problems afflicting Philippine society stem from an anti-democratic, hierarchy-ridden political culture, then solutions must take radically-democratic, non-hierarchical forms – hence their proposal for an archipelagic confederation, which emerged directly out of the post-Estrada context. For this to make any sense, it will be necessary to examine EDSA II and its aftermath in greater detail.

As in the first EDSA revolution of 1986, millions of Filipin@s again took to Manila’s Epifanio de los Santos Avenue in 2001 to demand the resignation of a president whose rule they no longer found tolerable (see Image 17). Estrada was a charismatic former movie star who came to power in a landslide election victory just two and a half years prior. Before long, he revealed himself to be a walking contradiction: a populist plutocrat who, despite his pro-poor rhetoric, siphoned from the public purse somewhere in the range of 63-71 million US dollars (Burton 2001, p. 16; Larmer &
Meyer 2001, p. 10). On top of this, he was a chronic gambler and notorious womaniser who boasted of mistresses and illegitimate children (Spaeth 2001, p. 22). His dubious moral character made it easy for Manila’s business elites, who had long despised the president for his anti-elitist posturing and economic mismanagement, to enlist the Catholic Church in their calls for Estrada to step down. The Left joined in too, once the extent of Estrada’s graft and corruption came to light. The opposition was hence composed of seemingly incommensurable forces: ‘both management and organized labor; the Right and the Left’ (Bello 2001, p. 4).

The movement reached flashpoint in early 2001, such that it began to feel like the sequel to 1986. Estrada remained defiant, insisting he had the backing of the country’s poor, but when his cabinet defected and the military withdrew support for his regime, he had little choice but to resign. Estrada’s departure on January 20, 2001, provoked spontaneous dancing in the streets, but what came next inspired far less celebration. In line with constitutional writ, power was handed to the vice-president: US-educated
economist, Gloria Arroyo. The constitution turned out to be a convenient alibi for corporate elites, since, of all the options put forward by the broad-based opposition, it was Arroyo whom they felt would best serve their interests (Burton 2001).

Already in late 2000, leftists were fearing that ‘it is the faction of Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo that is pushing the situation in their favour... She can never be part of the solution as she is in fact equally a part of the problem... [given her record as] a staunch promoter of the neo-liberal agenda of global capital’ (PARE! Unity Assembly 2000, pp. 1-2). This prognosis proved correct, with Arroyo faithfully serving the capitalist establishment over her nine-year tenure as president. Her economic policies and repression of the Left even earnt her comparisons to Margaret Thatcher, with commentators dubbing her the ‘Iron Lady of Asia’ (Cabacungan, Andrade & Morelos 2011, p. 1). It later came to light that Arroyo was scarcely less corrupt than her predecessor, having been arrested twice since departing the presidency for electoral fraud and theft of public funds (Ranoco 2012).

Owing to the dashed hopes of one uprising after another, there is now widespread talk amongst progressives of a veritable ‘EDSA fatigue’: a disillusionment with the timeworn revolutionary exercises that merely result in a change of management within the same structure of power. One acquaintance at UP Diliman captured the mood when he sighed: ‘We made a revolution, and look what happened: all we got was Gloria!’ During my fieldwork, several leftist groups were pushing for a new EDSA-style revolution against Arroyo, but even their own members at times seemed cynical about the prospect. Dalisay, for instance, lamented to me one rainy afternoon over coffee
that rallies demanding Arroyo’s ouster were dwindling in numbers and lacked a certain fire. ‘The EDSA strategy isn't resonating anymore’, she said. ‘Our rallies feel too much like a routine’. I was later reminded of this when encountering Juris’s (2008) argument that the more that protest events become habituated, the less effective (and affective) they become.

Like EDSA I, EDSA II ‘resulted in the consolidation rather than the weakening of the elite’s hold on Philippine politics, governance, and society’ (Akbayan 2005, p. 1) (see Image 18). Some RJ groups did modify their strategies after the failings of EDSA II, although not in any fundamental way. Rather than reflect on the limitations of state-centric, sovereignty-bound politics, the one major lesson that RJs seemed to draw from the experience was that any future post-revolutionary government would have to annul the existing constitution and draft its own – this, in order to prevent a simple transfer of power to the vice president, as with what happened with Arroyo. It was
thus that LNM proposed that in the event of a future presidential ouster, a Transitional Revolutionary Government (TRG) be installed – in effect, a temporary dictatorship with the paradoxical aim of bringing about greater democracy. One LNM member group explained that the proposal for a TRG is meant to emphasize that the current crisis is a systemic crisis that cannot be resolved within the confines of the current political system... The biggest argument for extra-constitutional means is the set of radical reforms that we want. These reforms cannot be delivered under the constitutional order. The elite in political institutions cannot be expected to put a check on, much less lessen, their political power and prerogatives (Akbayan 2005, pp. 1, 4).

This scheme could be read, in part, as an effort to atone for the embarrassment of the RJ Left’s tactical alliance with the Right during EDSA II. There was also the embarrassment of the anti-Estrada movement’s well-to-do composition. As Walden Bello (2001, p. 1) observed, ‘the mass base of this transfer of political power was the middle class. The lower classes largely sat it out’.

This class fault-line was brought into stark relief by a dramatic backlash of the poor, triggered by Estrada’s arrest in April 2001 on charges of plunder. Although life had changed very little for the millions of impoverished Filipin@s who voted for Estrada, many remained loyal to him for the seeming reason that most other politicians failed to grant them even a modicum of dignity as he did. Land reform, squatters’ rights, redistribution of wealth, and other important issues for the poor were neglected during Estrada’s term, but he did present the illusion that they were being addressed (Severino 2001, p. 4).
With their champion behind bars, hundreds of thousands of rural and urban poor descended on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue to stage an uprising of their own: EDSA III (see Image 19). ‘It appeared to be a mirror image of the anti-Estrada protests, with the same location for the stage, political banners hanging from the overpass, and even the same songs’, wrote Howie Severino (2001, p. 2). The key difference was that there were ‘no college students or office workers in evidence. This was the so-called masa [masses]’ (Severino 2001, p. 3). Deeming EDSA II to have been a protest of the rich, those in attendance sought, not solely to defend Estrada, but also to decry their marginalisation in a devastatingly unequal society.

No leftist group participated in EDSA III in an official capacity, though many individual leftists, their curiosity whetted, did head down to watch the surprising turn of events unfold. There, they witnessed the poor self-organising without them, thereby coming to an awareness of the rift between the Left and the very people in whose interests it supposedly operated.
I cannot say what effect EDSA III had on the RAs, since I had very little to do with them in Manila, but as far as the RJs were concerned, many whom I spoke to felt greatly humbled by it. EDSA III was swiftly crushed by the new Arroyo regime, but it continues to serve as a reference point for leftists seeking to lessen the gulf between themselves and the poor. Edgar and Jorge, for example, now renounce their earlier complicity in EDSA II, claiming EDSA III to have been the only true uprising of the oppressed. Dalisay also shared with me that, in light of the events of April 2001, the so-called ‘spontaneity of the masses’ is now embraced within LNM. This is to say that, rather than the downtrodden always having to follow the Left’s lead, there is a novel recognition that it should sometimes happen the other way around.

Leon was still with the RJ Left in early 2001, but when its inadequacies were laid bare by the upheavals of January and April, he became convinced that the way forward was with the anarchists. ‘EDSA II’, remarked Leon,

was actually terrible, you know, because it was an uprising of the middle class and upper class opposition, so there was no significant change... What happened to the Left movement is they just followed the political elites... And then what happened was now; this is the future of those political dealings and all that. This is what they asked for. From then on, I got involved in the [MMAC].

The Organize Without Leaders! document that anarchists circulated during EDSA II was a breath of fresh air for Leon, which was why he thought to adapt it for Manila Indymedia’s purposes a few years later. As mentioned, many of the ideas it contained were inspired by the Battle of Seattle on the other side of the Pacific, but it also took on its own unique flavour in light of local political circumstances.
The anarchist critique of the Philippine revolutionary tradition, ‘highly influenced by red bureaucracy’ (Umali 2006, p. 2), gained significant traction after 2001, when even the Rejectionists, who had been considered the benign alternative to the Reaffirmists, were discredited in the eyes of many. Anarchist writer, Bas Umali (2006, p. 1) ventured that the RJs ‘offer no substantial difference [to the RAs], for they all adhere to the state and capturing political power’. It was on this basis that Umali (2006) formulated his vision of a stateless alternative: the archipelagic confederation.

Archipelagic confederationalism

Given that a majority of Filipin@ activists from across the political spectrum have long deemed the nation-state as incontrovertible, Umali’s re-imagining of the Philippine Archipelago along non-nationalist and non-statist lines could be seen as something of a game-changer. In his own words, the archipelagic confederation would be an ‘alternative anarchist political structure... that connects and interlinks politically and economically every community in the archipelago... not in a hierarchical or top-down orientation, but rather... [on the basis of] mutual cooperation, complementarity and solidarity’ (Umali 2006, pp. 1, 9). Here, a spatial imaginary born of the Philippines’ unique, island-studded geography becomes the locally-specific vehicle for an old anarchist idea: a ‘federation of free communities’ (Rocker cited in Davis 2014, p. 224) autonomous from sovereign authority.

My first exposure to archipelagic confederationalism was in conversation with Leon in 2008. Leon, in turn, first learnt of the concept at an anarchist festival two years prior,
where Umali and his fellow delegates from the Anarchist Initiative for Direct Democracy (AIDD) – a grassroots think-tank comprised of a small but energetic cadre of dissident intellectuals – delivered a landmark seminar on the political crisis in the Philippines following EDSA II. Their argument, recounted Leon,

was that *Laban ng Masa* adheres to the idea of top-down politics. Although they try to look like they want to make some kind of significant change in Philippine politics... it’s just about reform. They want to reform the electoral system through the TRG... They don’t actually believe in grassroots organizing. They don’t have such a thing, where you have organized political power from the communities... We believe that the communities, like the slum areas, like the urban poor communities, have their own way of fulfilling their needs, so we thought we could build our collective power without depending on a Transitional Revolutionary Government. So when AIDD brought this critique and suggested the archipelagic confederation, we thought that “Yeah, it could be possible”; that we start organizing from below, build up the power from below, and then eventually disregard the government and the state, you know? You have your own autonomous assemblies... popular assemblies, instead of a national government.

The RJs, in drafting the TRG programme, had tried to make amends for their missteps during EDSA II, but anarchists were unimpressed. While TRG exponents believed themselves to stand for ‘systemic change and not the mere changing of the government’ (Akbayan 2005, p. 5), Leon was one with the AIDD when countering that there can be no systemic change if politics continues to be restricted within the nation-state apparatus. ‘For me’, he said, ‘the root cause of the problem is authority itself – and hierarchy. Even though you have this revolutionary government run by whatever leftist factions, if hierarchy and authority is present, you don’t resolve anything’.

After several return visits to Manila’s anarchist community during the write-up of this thesis, I saw that support for the prospective archipelagic confederation continues
strong. Moral support has also come from afar, with Gabriel Kuhn (2010, p. 15), a writer-activist from Austria who visited Manila in 2006, positing that the Philippines could play a vital role in bringing much-needed Third World perspectives to the global anarchist movement: ‘Recent essays published by Bas Umali’, he said, ‘are just one proof of this’.

Of course, Umali has not escaped reproach. His critics have come from the Right and Left and even from within the anarchist milieu itself. As Danny, a scholar-activist with the AIDD and masters student in philosophy, explained to me in an interview:

I think Bas... he’s trying to stake a claim on how we can localize anarchism, and as such, I think it’s a good effort... It’s another flower – let it bloom. But a few anarchist groups took offense in the sense that... the paper was trying to say that “this is Filipino anarchism”, when I guess what Bas was really trying to say was “this is a form of anarchism we should think about”, and at that level, I share that with him... The response was “Why are you trying to organize us?”... Many of these anarchist groups fear large formations, and obviously, that paper was in favour of a network of free communities, which is a large formation. And, you know, I’ve never had a problem with that, but many of them do... They feel that it’s a small step towards the loss of their autonomy. The way I felt was “You know, if you don’t like it, it’s not something we’re forcing on you”. In fact, the only thing we’re forcing is “Let’s talk about this, and hopefully something comes out of it... something that’s both yours and ours”.

Such dissension could be taken as testament to the anarchist movement’s vibrancy. Unlike in the traditional Left, no anarchist would ever expect another to toe a particular line, since the idea of a formal leadership structure enforcing official tenets is anathema for anarchists in the first place. Instead, ideas are produced, circulated, and contested in a much more open and flexible way.
Gordon (2008, p. 6) asserts that the anarchist movement is ‘a setting in which high-quality political thinking – indeed political theorising – take place’ [italics in original]. At the same time, though, he emphasises that ‘anarchist literature is not supposed to look like academic political theory. Much of it appears in self-published, photocopied and pirated booklets and zines’ (Gordon 2008, p. 9). This was the case with Umali’s piece on archipelagic confederalism, which was self-published on an anarchist website.

Although much of anarchist theory bypasses academia, it should not be seen as any less important. In fact, it fills a conspicuous gap in the Philippine intellectual landscape, with ‘embedded intellectuals’ (Bratich 2007) in the academe still very much beholden to nation-state precepts. ‘Here at the university’, said Leon during one of our meetings at UP Diliman, ‘they always propagate the idea of nationalism, without even thinking that nationalism kills other people’. The work of critically re-examining the inheritances of the national liberation era is therefore being left to non-academic intellectuals like Umali – a de facto postcolonial scholar in a country that, as noted in Chapter 2, is curiously lacking in postcolonial studies.

Returning momentarily to Benedict Anderson’s Under three flags (2007), a line of affinity was drawn in that book between the contemporaneous anticolonial intellectuals José Rizal and José Martí, who agitated against Spain from the Philippines and Cuba respectively. Today, similar lines of affinity can be drawn between postcolonial intellectuals in the same two countries. I was surprised to discover, for instance, the resonances between Bas Umali’s archipelagic imaginary and that of
Cuban writer Antonio Benítez-Rojo (1996). For the latter, the Caribbean is a ‘meta-archipelago’: a space of immense ‘sociocultural fluidity’ with ‘neither a boundary nor a center’ (Benítez-Rojo 1996, pp. 3-4). Intriguingly, Benítez-Rojo (1996, p. 4) points to the archipelagic isomorphism between the Aegean Islands (the ancient Greek name for which was Archipelagos, this being the very origin of ‘archipelago’ in modern English), the Caribbean, and the ‘great Malay archipelago’ (inclusive of present-day Philippines, Indonesia, East Timor, Malaysia and Singapore).

As with ideas emanating from the West Indies, Umali (2006) re-imagines the Philippine Archipelago, if not the wider East Indies, as a centreless mesh of cultures and communities, held back by being held too tightly together by nationalist and statist impositions. Taking the trope of the archipelago as my starting point, I will, in the following sections on xenophilia and translocalism, build on Umali’s work by further relating it to a range of kindred thinkers, mostly anarchist, who are concerned likewise with re-inventing community beyond the nation-state.

_Xenophilia_

Xenophilia as a nascent or renascent political value can be understood against the homophilic impositions it seeks to undo. In the pre-colonial era, the diverse peoples inhabiting the islands of present-day Philippines submitted to no overarching state nor conformed to any monolithic, archipelago-wide identity. Only with colonialism were diverse communities forcibly integrated under a single apparatus of rule (Dagami 2010, pp. 20-21; Gasera Collective 2010, p. 1). The invention of a homophilic national identity
went hand-in-hand with this process. Although political power has shifted over the years from Spain to the United States to the Philippine elite, nationalist and statist logics have remained constant throughout – not only on the part of rulers, but also on the part of those, like the CPP-NPA, seeking to take their place.

Umali (2006) concedes the importance of nationalism in the Philippine Revolution of the 1890s, but maintains that to subscribe to nationalism today is to do violence to alterity and perpetuate the colonial mindset, even in spite of anticolonial intentions. A similar sentiment comes through in a poem entitled ‘Naming archipelagos’, in which Catherine Candano (2007, p. 9) laments the lingering impact of colonialism on the cultural diversity of the Philippines. With the Spanish invasion came the ‘erosion of the countless names for surface soils... each granule sinking into sea-bed, and then reborn, thrust forth – *eto* [this], an island itself...’ The archipelago, in effect, was reduced to a single island. What was and remains a multiplicity became discursively naturalised as a unitary community, with one people and one history. For RJ scholar, Marie Guillermo (2000), the search for a ‘national bond among diverse communities’ is still ongoing.

Recently, postcolonial theorist Antonis Balasopolous (2008, p. 9) coined the term ‘nesology’ to refer to the ‘discursive production of insularity’ – its prefix deriving from *nesos*, the Ancient Greek for ‘island’. The ‘bounded morphological schema of the island’ (Balasopoulos 2008, p. 13) becomes the analogue and archetype for the range of entities customarily seen as discrete and self-contained: the individual, the academic discipline, and the nation-state amongst them. Breaking from such
anachronisms, Umali’s (2006, p. 2) recasting of the Philippines along archipelagic
rather than nesological lines was a key manoeuvre:

Myriad historical accounts indicate that the bodies of water surrounding
different islands connected rather than separated them from each other, and
that economic, social and political activities of the inhabitants were developed
due to the interconnectedness of their immediate environment... [T]he rich
natural endowments of the archipelago allow diverse cultures to flourish and
develop in heterogeneous ways, yet [remain] connected by mutual cooperation.

Of note is that the sea is not seen as a barrier, but as a connective tissue crossed by
perpetual flows. Just as Hau’ofa (2008, p. 31) wrote with respect to the South Pacific,
Umali (2006) regards the Philippine Archipelago less as a collection of isolated patches
of land than an interconnected ‘sea of islands’, each inseparable from the fluid
relationships between them. For Benítez-Rojo (1996, p. 2) too, the Caribbean is
composed, not of stable islands, but of ‘unstable condensations, turbulences,
whirlpools, clumps of bubbles, frayed seaweed, sunken galleons, crashing breakers,
 flying fish, seagull squawks, downpours, nighttime phosphorescences, eddies and
 pools, uncertain voyages’(Benítez-Rojo 1996, pp. 2).

In each of these cases, attention shifts from hermetic island space towards the
relational space of the sea. This is apt considering that ethno-linguistic groups in the
Philippines do not map with particular islands, but with particular maritime regions.
For example, the Cebuan@ language is endemic, not just to the island of Cebu, but
also to the eastern portion of Negros and the western portion of Leyte, both of which
face Cebu. Likewise, Waray-Waray is spoken on the island of Samar as well as in eastern Leyte which faces Samar. Indeed, *no culture is an island.*

Crucially, the same sea by which languages and cultures disseminate also acts as a medium for cross-fertilisation across difference. The embrace of difference – in a word, xenophilia – figures at the heart of archipelagic confederalisation. In contrast to the nationalist imperative of subordinating diverse communities to a homophilic unity, the archipelagic confederation would ‘accommodate highly diverse interests, views, conceptions and identities in a horizontal manner’, both within and between localities (Gasera Collective 2010, p. 3). Given that, according to Umali (2006, pp. 7-8), revolutionary nationalist formations are incapable of attending to the diversity of peoples and places in the Philippine Archipelago, the solution is for each local community to govern itself, connected to others in horizontal fashion but free from an overarching sovereign.

Leon explained it as follows: ‘The progressive movement in the Philippines... is very much preoccupied with the idea of national liberation. And, for me, I think this is fascism in the making, because they’re building a nation and a state which is nothing but a replication, a mirroring of what the imperialists did to them. They’re actually proto-fascists because they want the idea of nationalism injected into the people, the archipelagic formation of the Philippines... They want to inject the idea of one whole something, which basically, for me is – well, it’s kind of irrelevant because, I mean, we have forty languages, we have different cultures, diverse from one another. And if you
impose nationalism in these very diverse communities, you would kill the diversity and, worse, you would create some kind of regional conflict or ethnic conflict...

‘If we consider the idea of power from below, organizing without leaders, this is very much practical in the Philippines because we’re very diverse. So the question of national identity is not that important anymore. What’s important is how you would enable solidarity with other cultural groups, with other ethnicities, with other people, which I think goes way beyond national identity. You become multiple in a sense, you know? You’re not just you – me as a Waraynon, for example – but you can also be something else, somebody else, when you have this interaction with other people, other cultures, and other backgrounds. And from here, evolution is very much present. You evolve, you learn. The intellectual capacity of these cultures... [becomes] healthier, because of this idea of diversity... The people are diverse, the cultures are diverse, and I guess if people from below would organize their own communities, from there, they could organize a kind of confederation’

‘So we can build solidarity without necessarily being “one” or homogenous?’ I asked.

‘Yes, exactly. It’s not necessary actually... If you talk with others who have a different background than yours, it doesn’t mean they should be the same as you’.

Having repeatedly heard such sentiments expressed to me in the field, I found I lacked a word that could adequately encapsulate them. That was before I hit upon ‘xenophilia’, which seemed an ideal fit. In the excerpt above, Leon was advocating for
intra-xenophilia in particular; that is, for an embrace of the Philippines’ cultural and ethnic diversity, which homophilic notions of Filipin@ness usually paper over.

What, though, of inter-xenophilia?; of forms of collectivity inclusive of Filipin@s and non-Filipin@s alike? Not until Leon spent four years in Japan as a migrant worker did he learn of this second sense of togetherness-in-difference. It should firstly be noted, though, that his departure from the Philippines was not an entirely voluntary one. Shaken by the assassination of one of his comrades just a hundred metres away from where he was standing, he felt it would be best to lay low for a while overseas. His trauma notwithstanding, he discovered in Japan a ‘solidarity of multitudes that transcends nationality’ (Gonzaga 2009, p. 11):

It was really kind of a paradigm-shift actually... I felt the real experience of being a migrant... moving from one place to another, most especially to a place where the culture is totally different from yours, and how you are able to adapt and learn from this, and create something new out of it... We were raised to embrace nationalism, but I was able to broaden my mind and then accept cultures other than mine, or beyond my own identity, and it made me something else. I became different... I don’t think very exclusively now; I think inclusively... Some anarchist groups in the Philippines, they would say “I’m against nationalism” and all that, but actually, they still have this nationalist attitude... You can get very exclusive, you know? And you actually dispel other individuals and people who would have a possible interaction with you... I was able to hook up with other cultures, like Sri Lankan and Brazilian communities in Japan, so the idea of nationalism just suddenly dissolved, you know, talking with other cultures, with other people... You forget the idea of being a Filipino; you feel like you have this “multi-belongingness” [laughs].

What stands out here is that Leon speaks, not merely of interacting across difference, but of interactions that themselves give rise to difference. In loving the Other, we become something other than what we were. To love, therefore, is to become.
Beyond the embrace of ethnic and cultural diversity, an expanded xenophilia would be equally as receptive to different genders, sexualities, bodily abilities, and even political viewpoints. It is pertinent to raise this in relation to anarchism, since, as Gordon (2008, p. 5) writes, ‘diversity is by itself today a core anarchist value, making the movement’s goals very open-ended. Diversity leaves little place for notions of revolutionary closure or for detailed blueprints and designs for a free society’. This can be contrasted with the intolerance of divergence often present in traditional leftist institutions. As Graeber (2004b, p. 329) observes, Marxist and revolutionary nationalist parties tend to ‘organise around some master theoretician, who offers a comprehensive analysis of the world situation and, often, of human history as a whole. From this one official truth, an official path of action is prescribed. Anarchist groups, on the other hand, accept the need for a diversity of high theoretical perspectives, united only by certain shared commitments and understandings... [E]veryone agrees from the start on certain broad principles of unity and purposes for being in the group; but beyond that they also accept as a matter of course that no one is ever going to convert another person completely to their point of view, and probably shouldn’t try; and that therefore discussion should focus on concrete questions of action, and coming up with a plan that everyone can live with and no one feels is a fundamental violation of their principles... Just because theories are incommensurable in certain respects does not mean they cannot [co-]exist or even reinforce each other, any more than the fact that individuals have unique and incommensurable views of the world means they cannot become friends, or lovers, or work on common projects (Graeber 2004a, pp. 8-9).

The anarchists’ valorisation of difference extends to the rainbow alliances that they frequently involve themselves in, as well as to the future society they wish to create. Generally speaking, their goal is not to convert the masses of non-believers to
anarchism as a prerequisite for a better society, but only to encourage communities to self-organise in ways they see fit – hence the archipelagic confederation. Community for contemporary anarchists is not a homophilic unity, but a xenophilic multiplicity.

**Translocalism**

Accompanying the rise of xenophilic values in Philippine anarchism is a translocalist spatial imaginary, which the trope of the archipelago likewise embodies. Anarchist translocalisms function in resistance, not solely to the insularity of the nation, but also to the hierarchy of the state. As raised earlier, contemporary anarchism’s contribution is to combine cosmopolitan critiques of nationalism with anarchist critiques of statism, thereby addressing both halves of the nation-state form.

‘The hierarchical nature of the state’, said Umali (2006, p. 6) ‘inevitably creates a bureaucracy that concentrates governance and decision-making in a few representatives, akin to the institutional arrangement of the red bureaucracy’. The CPP, to which Umali was referring, is infamously hierarchical, as became clear to me when, atop an archival copy of one of Sison’s (writing as Liwanag 1992b, p. 1) papers, I noticed the following edict: ‘This is an internal party document. No Party cadre receiving a copy can reproduce it without authorization from a higher organ’. I took it as a small, though nonetheless indicative, instance of the kind of centralism being increasingly shunned by the younger generation.
Against the CPP’s legacy, Umali (2006, p. 8) calls for a renewed radical politics that would allow for ‘active, creative, imaginative and dynamic participation’. In the archipelagic confederation, collectives of ‘peasants, fishers, women, youth, indigenous people, vendors, tricycle drivers, jeepney\(^{83}\) drivers, homeless, gays, neighborhood associations, religious groups and other formations’ (Umali 2006, p. 8) would self-organise at the local level, converging in popular assemblies that would be horizontally-networked to other such assemblies elsewhere. From Umali’s perspective, when local communities are able to manage their own affairs, as well as coordinate between themselves translocally, the need for an overarching sovereign becomes superfluous.

Without wishing to deny its novelty, Umali’s re-imagining of social space along archipelagic lines did not take place in a vacuum, since translocalist tendencies have been present in anarchism more or less from the beginning. The pioneering anarchists, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin, for example,

stressed the idea of federalism, designed to facilitate relations between increasingly larger and more widespread groups of people. The initial building blocks of the federalist plan are the local, “face to face” groups, either neighbours or persons with common occupational interests – in any case they have a common mutual interest in working with each other for one or more ends... In order to facilitate these ends they “federate” with other similar groups to form a regional federation and in turn regional federations join with others to form yet a broader federation. In each case the power invested in the organised group decreases as one ascends the different levels (Barclay 1982, p. 16).\(^{84}\)

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\(^{83}\) A form of public transport unique to the Philippines, originally made from decommissioned US army jeeps.

\(^{84}\) In the liberal-democratic tradition, by contrast, power increases as one ascends.
That a similarly translocalist imaginary persists in contemporary anarchism is discernible in the following passage from Graeber (2004a, p. 40):

[A]narchist forms of organization would not look anything like a state... [T]hey would involve an endless variety of communities, associations, networks, projects, on every conceivable scale, over-lapping and intersecting... Some would be quite local, others global... [S]ince anarchists are not actually trying to seize power within any national territory, the process of one system replacing the other will not take the form of some sudden revolutionary cataclysm... but will necessarily be gradual, the creation of alternative forms of organization on a world scale, new forms of communication, new, less alienated ways of organizing life, which will, eventually, make currently-existing forms of power seem stupid and beside the point.

Anarchists in the Philippines, as much as those in the US with whom Graeber is most familiar, are challenging the notion that communities or societies should look like nation-states – ‘one people, speaking a common language, living within a bounded territory, acknowledging a common set of legal principles’ (Graeber 2004a, pp. 40-41) – and asserting the possibility of other, less confining forms of collectivity.

On top of translocalisms internal to nation-states are those that traverse national borders. ‘Transnational connections are important for anarchism’, writes Kuhn (2010, p. 13); ‘After all, a key notion of anarchism is its opposition to the nation-state.

Solidarity across borders and the desire to eventually eradicate these borders are inherent in the anarchist idea’.

Umali’s (2006) insights centred on maritime flows within the Philippine Archipelago, but history is also replete with flows linking the archipelago to its outside. James Warren (1981; 2002), for one, has consistently highlighted the historical interlinkages
cutting across the broader Southeast Asian region. The Sulu Sultanate, for instance – at its peak in the late eighteenth century – brought parts of the Philippine and Indonesian archipelagos into a single regional polity centred on the Sulu Sea (Warren 1981).

Philippine peoples also maintained trading ties with maritime communities in China and Indochina. Leon, being well aware of this history, commented in an interview:

> It’s really interesting because before Spanish colonization came to the Philippines’ shores, there was no Philippines, but... there was already civilization going on. There was already a kind of globalized network at that time between different cultures... various regions in the Southeast Asian Rim.

Acknowledging that the Philippines has long been a ‘crossroads of cultural traffic’ (Hogan 2006, p. 129) is one way of repudiating the perceived naturalness of the Philippine national community. Aside from the long-distance dealings of rulers and merchants, however, the seas were also plied by rebels and subversives. It was this aspect of maritime history that Filipino anarchist Jong Pairez (2012, pp. 1, 3) drew inspiration from in his proposal for an online journal of Asian anarchism:

> Polynesia and Madagascar, regardless of its opposite-end locations on the map, culturally share its language and habits with people from Southeast Asia; it’s the ocean that... provided the link... Metaphorically, I describe the journal as a balangay or pre-historic wooden boat of maritime Southeast Asia that transported subversive ideals... ceaselessly escaping the claws of governments, state and authority... By communicating our local struggles, I believe a contemporary grassroots brand of anarchism will emerge from the land of our ancestors who brought down the Khmer empire, the Majapahit, and the maritime empire of the Sri-vijaya... The journal at the moment is just an idea... Hopefully, with the help of our comrades in Indonesia who already have experience in producing local anti-authoritarian publications like Apokalips and Jurnal Kontinum, we could actualize the remaking of balangay and sail it again into the vast oceans of Malacca, Celebes Sea, South China Sea, Pacific Ocean, and to the corners of Indian Ocean and beyond.
The proposed journal has yet to eventuate, but the proposal itself nonetheless serves as a valuable text in its own right. What interests me is not the historical factuality or otherwise of Pairez’s claims, but the way he weaves the raw material of history into a subversive, future-oriented narrative. Although encouraged by the pre-colonial past, his aim is not to retrieve a lost golden age, so much as to re-remember history in ways productive of alternative futures. As Ella Shohat (cited in Hall 1995, p. 251) maintains, the recuperation of the past need not equate with essentialist romanticism in all cases; sometimes, what is restored is multiplicity, not a ‘static fetishized phase to be literally reproduced’. In Pairez’s (2012) case – as well as in Umali’s (2006) – pre-colonial cosmopolitanism is recalled only so as to enrich the radical possibilities of present-day cosmopolitanism. This helps to rob prevailing power arrangements of their air of inevitability, and renew confidence that things could again be otherwise.

A concrete example of anarchist translocalism is offered by the ad hoc, Asia-Pacific-wide network that formed in opposition to the G8\(^8\) summit held in Toyako, Japan in July 2008. The idea for the network first emerged at Transmission Asia-Pacific, described on its website as a ‘5-day camp for web developers and video activists about developing online video distribution for social justice, the environment and media democracy’ (Transmission 2008, p. 1). The camp took place in the highlands of West Java in May 2008, with local Indonesian activists joined by delegations from the

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85 The G8 or ‘Group of Eight’ is a forum for cooperation between eight of the world’s largest economies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the US, and the European Union. Since the advent of the Alternative Globalisation Movement, it has been targeted by activists as one manifestation of the supranational power structure underpinning and promoting global capitalism. Since the Crash of 2008, the G8 has been trumped in importance by the G20, which, in addition to G8 members, includes major developing world players such as Brazil, China, and India.
Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, India, Australia, and elsewhere.

Among the participants was Leon, who informed me that following a presentation by Japanese activists organising against the Toyako summit, the campers collectively resolved to expand their scope beyond online video distribution to also mount coordinated anti-G8 demonstrations across the region. That the project took on a translocal flavour was owing, not solely to the participants’ anarchist sensibilities, but also to their modest financial means: ‘Because most of the Southeast Asian nations are poor, we cannot go to Japan to protest’, explained Leon, ‘so what happened is we decided to just have our own local actions in our respective localities during the actual G8 summit’.

No prescriptions were issued; the idea was rather that each local group would decide for itself what its own particular action would look like. At the time of my fieldwork, the Manila event was still at the brainstorming stage: ‘We’re thinking of throwing a party as a way of protesting, rather than the grim-and-determined form of protest with just all these angry people; we’re thinking of music, to just clog the whole traffic system with people dancing’, mused Leon. What ended up happening, though, was quite the opposite: a silent vigil outside the Japanese embassy. Local actions elsewhere ranged from festive to militant, their differences in no way compromising their translocal solidarity.
With the kind of translocal networks and nonsovereign globalities being enacted by anarchists in the Asia-Pacific and beyond, the world itself becomes something of an archipelago – or better yet, an *anarchipelago*. All the better to challenge the new nesology in our midst: the island-continent of supranational sovereignty.

*Green-Black solidarity*

Having riffed on the radical implications of archipelagic confederalism, I will change tack now to highlight its affinities with bioregionalism, the vision of community outlined in the preceding chapter.

As a first indication of the commonalities, one Filipin@ anarchist group proclaimed: ‘As anarchists, we are radical ecologists... Human beings are just part of the infinitely diverse global ecosystem; we are not above it’ (Gasera Collective 2010, pp. 3). Here, the anarchist critique of social hierarchy is extended to the hierarchy of human beings over nature. At the time of my fieldwork, rumour had it that a clandestine band of eco-anarchists were carrying out a campaign of strategic property destruction in northern Luzon, sabotaging bulldozers and logging trucks in order to prevent the even greater destruction that would have been wreaked on the region’s rainforests and social fabric. As much as I was tempted to pursue this lead, I had already committed to Metropolitan Manila as a fieldsite. My exploration of the Green-Black relationship was, as a result, largely confined to coffee shop conversations, inquiring into environmentalists’ perceptions of anarchists, and vice versa.
With respect to the former, Pedro described his organisation’s stance as follows:

The [GFM] in political terms... might be called “semi-anarchist” in the sense that we share with the anarchists a basic distrust for centralized power... Much of the Left (communism and socialism), well, they talk of “democratic centralism”, so in that sense they’re very power-oriented, very center-oriented. They talk of “centralized planning”. So we are very distrustful when you concentrate power in a few hands... We believe more in the diffusion of power, which probably makes us kind of anarchist... but we also, we can accept some kind of a hierarchy, but not too much.

From the other side of the Green-Black relationship, Leon expressed similarly amicable sentiments towards his environmentalist allies:

I believe the [GFM], in some way or another, I believe they’re sympathetic to the anarchist movement... They don’t have a problem with us, with the [MMAC]. They actually keep in contact with us, and they’re very kind... unlike with our former leftist friends, when it comes to protest actions in the streets, when we started to march, all of us wearing black, they started to quell us down. They want to keep us separated from their group. Well, this is how we experienced it with our former friends in the Left. They’re very hostile to us.

Listening back to the recording, I noticed that as Leon was speaking these words, Procul Harum’s ‘A whiter shade of pale’ was playing over the cafe’s stereo. What came through in the interview was a greener shade of black, which complemented the blacker shade of green brought to light by Pedro. The trends I was picking up on could not have been put more tersely than when the Gasera Collective (2010, p. 4) in Manila declared ‘Green and Black as the new Red’ [italics mine].

Green and Black each demonstrate a favourable view of difference. No longer the limitation that past activists often deemed it to be, contemporary anarchists and

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Bioregionalists tend to maintain that diversity (whether cultural, political, biological, or otherwise) is essential to the vitality and health of a given community, and that to deny it is to thwart life itself.

Furthermore, both anarchists and bioregionalists imagine a future in which large-scale social aggregates presided over by a sovereign – not least of all, the imagined community of the nation-state – are broken up into smaller, self-governed polities, each at once more democratic and ecologically-sound by virtue of being predicated on local specificities. It does not follow, however, that each locality must languish in isolation, since what most activists in the anarchist and bioregionalist camps seek is to replace the Westphalian ideal of a community of nation-states with a new kind of world community: ‘a million villages’, as Bill Mollison (1988, p. ix) likes to put it. A horizontal network of villages, balancing local autonomy and translocal solidarity without contradiction, would arguably make redundant national and supranational sovereignty alike.

Bioregionalism’s emphasis on decentralisation – that is, on democratic decision-making at the local level, particularly as concerns natural resources – is such that one author even asserts that it is, in fact, a form of anarchism (Eckersley 1992). Conversely, anarchism may itself be considered a form of environmentalism, as seems to be suggested by Goldman (1963, p. 50):

Anarchism, whose roots, as it were, are part of nature’s forces, destroys, not healthful tissue, but parasitic growths that feed on the life’s essence of society. It is merely clearing the soil from weeds and sagebrush, that it may eventually bear healthy fruit.
For Peter Kropotkin (cited in Kinna 2005, p. 8), anarchism similarly promised, against the ‘artificial’ order of the state, ‘the blossoming of the most beautiful passions’.

Perhaps the recurring use of ecological metaphors by seminal anarchist thinkers is not simply poetic fancy, but a reflection of a generative, earthbound ontology shared by Black and Green alike.

To conclude, I will revisit a point first made in the prologue to this chapter; namely, that the anarchists’ key contribution to today’s cosmopolitan radicalism is their resolutely anti-statist perspective. I argued that this is vital for the precise reason that any project aiming to free social relations from the nation-state cannot rely on a critique of nationalism alone, but must also take aim at the nation-state’s in-built statism. While some political actors aspire to nations not premised on the state\(^86\), and others to states not premised on a single nation\(^87\), contemporary anarchists aspire to communities resembling neither nations nor states.

None of this can be understood without reference to the recent past. The twentieth century saw one revolutionary movement after another (whether communist, 

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\(^86\) Early German anarchist, Gustav Landauer, for instance, wanted each ethnos to govern itself horizontally, sans an overarching sovereign. As Landauer (cited in Gordon 2008, p. 27) himself phrased it, ‘I do not proceed in the slightest against the fine fact of the nation... but against the mixing up of the nation and the state’. Isabelo de los Reyes of the Philippines was another nineteenth-century anarchist to espouse a peculiarly anti-statist nationalism. By and large, nationalist sympathies have since been dropped from anarchism, with contemporary anarchists like Richard Day (2005, p. 178) now given to celebrating emergent forms of community that, by way of what he calls ‘affinity-based relationships’, embrace the different and the non-self-similar.

\(^87\) President Evo Morales, for one, has re-christened his country the Plurinational State of Bolivia (see Gustafson 2009).
nationalist, or a mix of both) seize the reins of the state, only for each ostensible victory to be revealed in the end as a failure – at least in certain respects, since the dictators who assumed power would disagree. Despite Fanon’s forewarnings – ‘[W]e must find something different... let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her’ (Fanon 1961, pp 251, 254) – the postcolonial regimes that came to power throughout Africa and Asia in the Sixties and Seventies became barely distinguishable in their tyranny from the departed colonial masters. A change of heads had occurred, but the institutional body of the state stayed intact.

Gandhi (1998, pp. 120-121) claims that Fanon’s writings ‘are almost prophetic in their predictions’ about what would happen should anticolonialists continue along the trail first blazed by imperialists, but seemingly forgets that Fanon would have had, as a reference point, the nineteenth-century independence movements in Latin America. In regressing into statism-as-usual once securing self-rule, a precedent was set. Before Fanon, too, was the Russian anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, who, in 1872, led a breakaway faction from Karl Marx’s International Workingmen’s Association over the issue of the state. While Marx believed the state could serve liberatory ends, Bakunin (cited in Barclay 1982) maintained that Marx’s so-called ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ would be ‘nothing else but despotic rule over the toiling masses by a new, numerically-small aristocracy’. This was the original Red-Black split, of which today’s trends are recapitulations. If there is now a twenty-first century sequel, it is because Bakunin and Fanon were proved right about state-centric revolutionary strategies, thereby prompting new explorations into what it might mean to ‘change the world without
taking power’ (Holloway 2005). I have offered a glimpse into one such exploration in the Philippines – a unique case, though very much in line with anarchistic resurgences everywhere.
Conclusion

Populating this account has been a colourful cast of characters – from the Fil-Ams of the eastern Pacific to the Filipin@s of the western Pacific, varyingly Red, Purple, Green, and Black. Whether in the ‘belly of the beast’ or at the sharp end of its claws, all are responding in their own ways to the challenges of the present. Implicit in their various activisms are critiques of prevailing forms of community on the one hand, particularly the nation-state, and visions of what community could be on the other. How community is being re-imagined in light of processes postcolonial and global has been the very subject of this thesis. I will retrace and further extrapolate on my investigation into community in the following section, before then proffering some final thoughts on intergenerational relations and prospective futures.

Re-imagining community

The opening scene of this thesis was the office of an environmentalist coalition in Quezon City. In that room with me were Filipin@ and Fil-Am activists of the twentieth and twenty-first century political generations. These four intersecting demographics have formed a good part of the architecture of this work, as have a number of key motifs, ‘community’ included. Each generation is itself a community of contemporaries, while social movements are communities definable, in part, by their dreams of how community in a larger sense might be reinvented for the better. As
Jean-Luc Nancy (1991, p. xxxvii) asserted, ‘the political is the place where community as such is brought into play’.

I have traced the shift away from the nation-state towards more open, cosmopolitan conceptions of community through means historical, philosophical, and ethnographic, each bleeding into the other. What emerges is a picture of large-scale collective learning through time: Countless activists through countless interactions, forging diverse understandings or maps of the world that in turn become tools with which to shape it, mobilising on the basis of these shared imaginaries before changing conditions render one or the other untenable. Then, a divergence: the changes prompt some activists to formulate new imaginaries better suited to the altered terrain, while others remain intransigent – their ideas reifying into dogma, and their ‘adhocracies’ (Toffler 1970) into bureaucracies. In the latter case, the learning ceases.

My interest, though, has been in the learning processes otherwise described in this work as acts of re-imagining or becoming-cosmopolitan. Faced with the nationalists’ oppressively-homophilic notion of Self, for instance, proto-cosmopolitans began re-imagining community along intra-xenophilic lines. Faced with the allied nationalist habit of segregating Self from Other, these same cosmopolitans began assigning value to inter-xenophilic community-building across customary divides. Lastly, where nationalists reduced community to discrete, hierarchically-governed national territories, cosmopolitans learnt over time to substitute patchwork for network space, and hierarchy for horizontality – hence the translocalist imaginary.
Inversion and subversion

That anticolonialists paradoxically adopted their colonisers’ designs is a recurring theme in postcolonialists’ reflections on what went wrong with the national liberation project (Abu-Lughod 1991, p. 144). Wrote Partha Chatterjee (cited in Gandhi 1998, pp. 118-119) with respect to Indian nationalism, for example: ‘Even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premises of “modernity” on which colonial domination was based’. One might call this the politics of ‘inversion’ (Mbembe 2002, pp. 256-257). As I have maintained, it is a similar case in the Philippines, where revolutionary nationalists share with the national bourgeoisie an adherence to the nation-state, and its homophilic and hierarchical logics.

There is the danger, though, that in refusing complicity in modernist oppressions, one may unwittingly reinforce newer oppressions associated with postmodernity. Even if one is conscious of postmodern or supranational sovereignty, I have argued that it is not enough to fight globalism with globalism, any less than it is to fight nationalism with nationalism. Nationalism and globalism are permutations of sovereign power, and sovereignty cannot be dismantled if the movements challenging its effects end up reinforcing its premises.

Becoming a mirror-image of one’s enemy has been theorised by Friedrich Nietzsche (1886; 1887) as ‘ressentiment’, meant as a critique of Hegel’s (1807) ‘master-slave’ dialectic. The creature of ressentiment takes inherited master-slave relations and seeks to invert them; to affirm the subordinate side of the dialectic, while overlooking the
basis upon which such relations are founded. Recalling an earlier analogy, this is akin to contenting oneself with a chess game between black and white, while neglecting to question the game itself. For Nietzsche, one remains enslaved for as long as one operates within the master’s framework, even if the tables are turned and the slaves become masters. This is the tenet behind his warning that ‘[w]hoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he [sic] does not become a monster’ (Nietzsche 1886, p. 89), which some twentieth-century revolutionaries would perhaps have done well to heed. Freedom is attained only when the master’s framework is abandoned and an autonomous ‘creation of values’ (Nietzsche 1885; Nietzsche 1886) – and, by extension, of communities – takes place.

While anticolonial strategies were limited to ‘reclaiming community from within boundaries defined by the very power whose presence denied community’ (Brennan cited in Gonzaga 2009, p. 25), more recent postcolonial strategies seek to go beyond those boundaries altogether. While the former has been dubbed the politics of inversion, the latter could be understood as the politics of subversion, with ‘subversion’ defined as ‘the invention of new forms of community... a practice of freedom... the production of oneself with others in struggle’ (Negri 2004, p. 3). The creation of the new is conceived here as the very means with which to subvert the old. Breaking from ‘already codified options’, the subversive becomes an autonomous ‘creator of values, of experiences, of worlds’ (Colectivo Situaciones 2003, pp. 6-7).

This new politics is well-exemplified by the radical cosmopolitanisms emerging from the ruins of the national liberation project. Anational forms of community have always
lurked beneath the Westphalian world map, but only now are coming to the fore. Starting with San Francisco, I encountered there a host of Fil-Am radicals for whom community was no longer equivalent, as it was for the Maoists, with the Philippine nation-state, their lived experiences as diasporans scrambling traditional notions of national belonging. I traced the genealogy of such ideas in Chapter 5, beginning with the KDP’s critique of the CPP’s pan-nationalism and its blindness to diasporic subjectivity. This led to the emergence of the bi-nationalist imaginary, by which KDP members saw themselves as having an equal stake in two national communities, and as a consequence, an equal commitment to both the US and Philippine revolutions. The translocalist imaginary later broke from the Westphalianism of pan-nationalism and bi-nationalism alike.

On to Chapter 6, rising cultural hybridity further problematised the articles-of-faith held by revolutionary nationalists. In place of homophily, a new generation of Fil-Am activists began to admit otherness into their notions of Self, rejecting the assumption that sameness is requisite for community or effective political action. As theorised through the figure of the Fil-Whatever, non-essentialist commonalities within the category of ‘Filipin@’ are looked on today with new favour, as are cross-cultural community-building initiatives like Soul Adobo.

Over the same period – the 1970s to the present – becomings-cosmopolitan continued abreast in the Philippines itself. In Chapter 8, I looked at how a section of women within the NDM grew dissatisfied with both its nationalist and patriarchal norms. These women went on to found the Autonomous Women’s Movement, within which
developed a cosmopolitan feminism that carries on today in multi-ethnic coalitions like IWNAM.

Meanwhile, as examined in Chapter 9, the Philippine environmental movement developed an intersectional critique of its own. Seeing the links between ecological destruction and the developmentalist imperatives of the nation-state (not to mention of the new regime of supranational sovereignty), environmentalists whom I met in Manila articulated a compelling alternative: a bioregionalist vision of community intended as an antidote to both anthropocentric and autocratic hubris. It should furthermore be reiterated that bioregionalism values cultural, and not just biological, diversity, which is why I have seen fit to include it under the cosmopolitan rubric.

From the feminist and environmentalist cosmopolitanisms in Chapters 8 and 9, I turned in the tenth chapter to anarcho-cosmopolitanism. While contemporary feminists and environmentalists fuse their critiques of the capitalist nation-state with their critiques of male-centric and human-centric hierarchies respectively, the anarchists’ critique is of hierarchy itself. Their professed anti-authoritarianism extends to diffuse forms of authority like patriarchy and heteronormativity, but special ire is reserved for the state, in which relations of domination are codified into law and backed up with the threat of force. Fusing their critiques of the state with postcolonial-style critiques of the nation, they arrive at a rounded assessment of the two halves of the nation-state conjunction. From there, alternatives like the archipelagic confederation are put forth – a vision of community at once liberated from nationalist homophily and statist hierarchy.
The four sectors just reviewed – the diasporans, the feminists, the environmentalists, and the anarchists – each make important contributions to radical politics in the contemporary era. I maintain, though, that it is not a question of one or the other becoming dominant, but of rainbow coalitions that can draw on all of their strengths. Movements that seek to colonise all others, as did the NDM, are today being taken less and less seriously.

‘We shall employ the great proletarian cultural revolution to keep the political color of the Philippines Red’, proclaimed Sison (writing as Guerrero 1970, p. 166). Despite his efforts, Dalisay observed that Philippine radical politics ‘is becoming more colorful’. The new taste for rainbow alliances was memorably described by Broad and Cavanagh (1993, p. 133) when they likened one coalition in Manila to a favourite Philippine desert, the *halo-halo* (literally, mix-mix), a combination of ice-cream, ice, fruits, gelatin chunks, and a sprinkling of corn flakes, corn, and other unlikely ingredients – all of which taste fine on their own, but take on a new and surprisingly enticing flavor when combined. Like *halo-halo*, in union these groups become something more than the sum of their parts.

Perhaps ‘union’ is the wrong word, though, since the goal of this new politics is not always ‘to become the same, or even to unite, but to link together in an expanding common network’ (Hardt 2004, p. 113). To move from the preceding discussion on subversion to the present one on multiplicity is not the deviation it may at first seem, since the two tend to go hand-in-hand in contemporary radical politics. It is why Judith Butler (1990, p. 19) writes of the ‘subversive multiplicity’ of gender that seethes beneath the hegemonic constructs of ‘male’ and ‘female’. In a world of forced unities –
gender, sexuality, nation, etcetera – that serve sovereign power, multiplicity, in a certain respect, is already subversive.

Xenophilia ascribes value to multiplicity and turns its defence and liberation into a political project. Translocalism, meanwhile, renders the world an irreducible multiplicity of places, at odds with the standardising impulses of predominant spatial imaginaries. As forms of becoming-cosmopolitan, these tendencies do not subvert nationalism alone, but also the kind of one-world cosmopolitanism critiqued in Chapter 3 as the benign guise of a malignant global capitalism. The possibility for an alternative many-worlds cosmopolitanism then opens up. My concluding albeit inconclusive remarks on xenophilia and translocalism, which I maintain are key to understanding today’s future communities-in-the-making, are offered in turn below.

**Xenophilia**

‘Communism is not love. Communism is a hammer which we use to crush the enemy’, declared Mao (cited in Petras & Petras 1996, p. 602). Che Guevara (1965, pp. 225-226), another leading communist and Third World nationalist icon, expressed an altogether different view when it came to the place of love in the revolution: ‘At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love... Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people’. According to Rebecca Solnit (2013, p. 111), although Guevara initially became a revolutionary out of ‘the most tender-hearted empathy for the suffering’, he became callous and hard-hearted as a guerrilla leader, only ‘dedicated to humanity in the abstract’.
Later, Benedict Anderson (1991, pp. 141-142), in a rush to defend the movements that have so inspired him, made an argument that Third World revolutionary nationalism is less about hate than love. Assuming love to be uncomplicatedly positive, he overlooked the possibility that love in some forms – the exclusive love for one’s own kind, for instance – can also function as a hammer. Is love of whatever description an improvement on Mao’s non-love if love itself is sometimes destructive? In thinking today about love as a political concept, Guevara’s abstract love – or pagmamahal, as a Tagalog speaker might understand it – seems insufficient. Nor does homophily seem adequate in a globalised, postcolonial world in which diverse peoples are ‘tumbled into endless connection’ (Geertz cited in Ang 2001, p. 14).

This thesis has demonstrated that what is emerging today is a more generous notion of love ‘that functions through the play of differences, rather than the insistence on the same’ (Hardt cited in Schwartz 2009, p. 813). The former is what I have designated as ‘xenophilia’, the latter as ‘homophily’ – sensibilities I became familiar with on the ground, even before I had a name for them.

To reiterate, the political value of homophily stems, in my estimation, from Hegel’s identity-difference dialectic, introduced into revolutionary politics by Marx. Identity-difference dovetails with the aforementioned master-slave dialectic in the sense that sameness (or the benign-sounding ‘unity’) has historically been deemed essential for galvanising the oppressed against the oppressors. In the Old Left, the unity that was sought was that of the working class. In the New Left of the 1960s, appeals for different kinds of unity emerged: Third World nationalists called for the unity of ‘the
people’ against foreign imperialists, Pan-Africanists for a unified African race, and feminists for a unified sisterhood. While these were understandable responses to injustice, history has shown that the levelling out of differences internal to marginalised groups led to a host of new oppressions.

The tyranny of homophil,’ as I have called it, could be seen to involve two distinct problems. The first is essentialism – the prescription of a rigid set of essences to which people must conform if they are to qualify as ‘authentic’ members of a given community. The second is representation. Who are the people thrust into leadership positions, and who are those spoken on behalf of but denied a voice of their own? There is often an apparent link between those who conform to the supposed essences of a given community and those afforded the power to speak in its name. Behind every unity is a subset of people claiming to represent it, meaning that homophilic politics tend to go hand-in-hand with centralised command structures.

The NDM is no less exemplary of the dangers of homophily than any other Third World movement for national liberation. For the CPP-NPA and its civilian allies, the outside to the Philippine national community consisted, not just of US imperialists and their domestic lackeys, but also of ordinary Filipinos who failed to live up to preordained notions of ‘authentic’ Filipino-ness: Muslims, indigenes, Amerasians, diasporans, and so on.

According to Roland Barthes (1972, p. 155), the work of power is to inject ‘into reality some purifying essence which will stop its transformation, its flight towards other
forms of existence’. The traditional Left, in ‘giving us only various programs for the realization of an essence of community’ (Nancy 1991, p. xxxviii), has evidently reached an impasse. In response, radical thinkers and practitioners are abandoning the demands of similitude, and forging new or renewed forms of community comprised of a ‘co-belonging of non-identical singularities’ (Gandhi 2006, p. 26). This was referred to in Chapter 6 as *inessential commonality*: commonality sans essences.

Nascent communities of this kind are underpinned by the political value of xenophilia, the idea behind it being that togetherness-in-difference both within and between inherited social categories is an antidote to past unfreedoms. It is being increasingly realised that the work of the revolutionary is not solely to dismantle the stratifications separating rulers from the ruled, but also to dismantle the borders separating friend from enemy, and Self from Other. Differences then cease, not only to be hierarchised, but also to be compartmentalised. What we are left with are ‘innumerable little hangings-together’ (James cited in Lazzarato 2010, p. 27) not subordinate to any predefined whole.

As for xenophilic values within Philippine social movements specifically, consider Serrano (1994, p. 81), who, not long after defecting from the CPP, spoke of the necessity of the ‘principle of diversity’, applicable ‘to both society and nature’. ‘We’, by which he meant the Popular Democratic breakaway faction, ‘will oppose any tendency to homogenize and monopolize. It is tragic that socialism didn’t do any better than capitalism in this respect, probably because they both basically share the same
modernization model to human progress’ (Serrano 1994, p. 81). From early intimations such as this, xenophilic tendencies proliferated.

I mapped a range of xenophilias in this thesis, but each could be grouped into a few major streams. Most pertinent to the theme of cosmopolitanism is the xenophilia within and across cultural, ethnic, and racial lines. This was explored ethnographically in Chapters 6, 8, 9, and 10, all of which demonstrated that what is emerging today is an ethos of more than an ethnos: a spirit of community not reducible to a single people. Correspondingly, homophily (in the sense of ethnocentrism) was shown to be a contingent, rather than inevitable, mindset serving particular political interests.

Additionally, I went beyond cosmopolitanism when considering, even if only tentatively, xenophilia in relation to other modes of difference such as gender and sexuality. I connected this to the kind of political xenophilia found in rainbow coalitions, in which diverse subjects act in concert without needing a totalising framework. Collectivities of this description, which figured in Chapters 8 and 10, can be understood as ‘spaces of encounter where no single subject (immigrant, student, industrial worker) is believed to be the principal agent of change, but rather where encounters across subjective positions allow for the creation of new collective habits’ (El Kilombo Intergaláctico cited in Herbst 2008, p. 2).

Xenophilia then goes from being an attribute of cosmopolitanism to being a value in its own right – one with the potential to connect the dots between the various theories of difference that have been developing in parallel in postcolonial studies, gender studies,
queer theory, political ecology, and so on. Where the cosmopolitan engages on an equal, non-oppressive footing with her cultural, ethnic or racial others, the xenophile (in this latter enlarged sense) does likewise, albeit with others of all kinds.

Lastly, in thinking about biodiversity and evolutionary flexibility in Chapter 9, I found cause to apply xenophilia to life itself. ‘The eyes of the axolotls’, penned Julio Cortázar (1971, p. 5) in a short story that continues to haunt me, ‘spoke to me of the presence of a different life, of another way of seeing’. The protagonist, having developed an affinity for axolotls, eventually became something of an axolotl himself. In learning to love the non-human Other, the provincial world of humanity opens back out onto its ‘constitutive outside’ (Butler 1993), sparking expanded possibilities for human becoming.

For me, the world is less a set of static, abutting differences, than a swirl of attractions and intermixtures, from which differentiations never cease being generated. There is difference, and there is ‘difference that makes a difference’ (Bateson cited in Bateson 2000, p. xi). Building on an earlier point, difference is an ontological fact, but xenophilia strips it of any air of adversarialism, and makes its liberation into a political project. What matters, in my estimation, is that ontological creativity, inclusive of both cultural and biological evolution, remains free to flourish, rather than be curbed and domesticated in the service of sovereignty.

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88 One could draw a parallel here between xenophilia and ‘biophilia’ (see Kellert & Wilson 1993).
Beyond the sovereign preference for homophilic unities – whether of nations, brand loyalties, or even humanity as a whole (as envisioned by Kantian cosmopolitanism) – lies the permanent encounter of singularities from which all newness springs. This frame-of-mind, once applied to space, translates into translocalism.

**Translocalism**

Xenophilia and translocalism, as I have theorised them, resist the flattening of multiplicities into unities: the former in relation to collective identity, and the latter in relation to space – not as a given, but as it is imagined and constructed socially (Soja 1996, p. 1). The two are related in the sense that social space is *identity enacted* (Bonus 2000, p. 4). Homophilic identities are thus accompanied by equivalently insular spatial imaginaries, while xenophilic identities find their corollary in equivalently open and outward-looking notions of space.

Although frequently making a case for transnational over national affinities, I have maintained that some transnationalisms, particularly those associated with corporate expansionism, come with their own set of tyrannies. Consider the contrasting transnationalisms of the corporate executive, WTO bureaucrat, drug-smuggler, tourist, asylum-seeker, overseas contract worker, activist, migrant, and even migratory bird. Some, to greater or lesser degrees, are constitutive of sovereign globalisation, others of nonsovereign globalisation – the latter at times in explicit rebellion against the former. The term ‘transnationalism’, therefore, although ground-breaking in the Nineties, has since become blunt through overuse.
In the case of the transnational actors with whom I worked, I found I needed a finer-grained concept better able to capture the precise spatial modality by which they operate, as distinct from other modalities of transnationalism. It was hence that I decided on ‘translocalism’. I will now proceed to review this concept, giving equal weight to both the ‘trans’ and ‘local’ parts of the conjunction.

As established in Chapter 3, the translocalist imaginary sees the world, not as a patchwork of nation-states, nor as the kind of totality in which the local is superseded by the global and ceases to matter. Rather, it imagines the globe as a ‘constellation of places’ (Thomashow 1999, p. 129), seeking to empower emplaced communities against the overarching apparatuses of national and supranational sovereignty alike. It suggests a new kind of world order: a flexible, self-regulating network of a million places and villages, balancing local autonomy and translocal cooperation.

One theorist to articulate such a vision is Mignolo (2011, p. 283), who wrote that the global society of the future would be composed of “communal nodes” around the planet cooperating rather than competing with each other, and there will be no node that, like the one inhabited by Kant, envisions itself extending all over the planet in a grand cosmopolitan salvation mission.

Against Kant’s ‘imperial cosmopolitanism’, Mignolo (2011, p. 293) advocates for ‘cosmopolitan localisms’. I initially came to translocalism, though, not through theory like this, but through grappling for a name for a particular spatial sensibility that first
presented itself to me in the field. There, I encountered myriad activists for whom translocal work proceeds from, rather than replaces, the work of the local.

Again, as I have argued and attempted to demonstrate throughout, translocalism does not erase the local in pursuit of a global ideal, but rather regards it as the home-base from which nonsovereign globalities must be built. It actually took me a while to really grasp this. Lamenting one evening to my partner about the political depression I had fallen into, she responded with acuity: ‘Well, the idea of “changing the world” is kind of grandiose to begin with, isn’t it? Maybe change your scope a little and focus on where you are. If everyone did their bit locally, I think there’d be more cause for hope’. And so I came to take on as my own the localist and translocalist sensibilities of my research participants. I could choose to rail against Big Oil as an abstract generality, or I could be more targeted and find Perth-specific pressure points where I, along with others, could wield much greater leverage.

Operating at the local level is also about growing autonomy from the bottom up, as opposed to seizing state power so as to bring about change from the top down. ‘Local autonomy is the only available antidote’ for nationalist and globalist aggressions, according to Esteva and Prakash (1998, pp. 37, 165); ‘local/regional movements... are challenging the nation-state in order to return the government of their lives into their own hands’.

The contemporary renaissance of local movements in the Philippines and beyond is accompanied by the proliferation of translocal solidarities between them, and the
concept of translocalism endeavours to encapsulate both. The varying ways it played out over the course of this thesis will be briefly recapped below.

The notion of translocalism was first applied ethnographically in Chapter 4; in particular, to the novel form of transnational activism practiced by FAEJI. In Chapter 5, oral histories revealed that it was born of two ruptures in the Seventies and Eighties: firstly, from the pan-nationalism of the CPP, and secondly, from the bi-nationalism of the KDP. FAEJI subsequently became one of the first Fil-Am activist groups to develop an anational spatiality, with Federico describing its rationale as follows:

There’s still a fairly strong sort of nationalist concept in Philippine activism, but within the environmental movement, I think the change has been easier, by the very nature of the problem... It’s much clearer to people doing work on the environment how everything is interconnected, and therefore it breaks this very dominant concept of being nationalist.

FAEJI recognised, though, that dispensing with nationalism is not enough, given that there is also supranational sovereignty to contend with. Their *rearguard* battle against the modernist oppressions of old is hence complemented by a *vanguard* battle against the new oppressions that come with globalisation and postcoloniality. The genius of FAEJI was to take the nonsovereign globalities associated with diaspora, and use them as the means through which to challenge the sovereign globalities of multinational corporations.

From FAEJI’s diasporic translocalism, I then turned in Chapter 8 to IWNAM – that network of feminist anti-militarists from around the Pacific. Coincidentally, at the same
time that IWNAM gathered in San Francisco in 2007, APEC met on the other side of the Pacific in Sydney. I saw in this a poignant contrast between two divergent visions of the Asia-Pacific. On one side, it is lauded as global capitalism’s new centre-of-gravity (not forgetting the US military’s role in guaranteeing the smooth functioning of the ‘free’ market). On the other, it is dreamt of as a translocal community-of-communities premised on ideals of social and environmental justice.

In Chapter 9, I investigated translocalism amongst environmentalists. The localism from which translocalism sprouts is clear in the bioregionalist affinity for place, but bioregionalism also emphasises the connections between places. Networks of locally-rooted environmental struggles in the Philippines and beyond demonstrate that bioregionalism and cosmopolitanism are entirely compatible. Contrary to the adage ‘Think global, act local’, the work of translocal environmental alliances calls less for ‘thinking globally’, and more for ‘thinking and acting locally, while forging solidarity with other local forces that share this opposition to the “global thinking” and “global forces” threatening local spaces’ (Esteva & Prakash 1998, p. 33).

Finally, I turned to anarchist translocalism in Chapter 10. Taking their inspiration from the geomorphology of the Philippine Archipelago, Filipin@ anarchists developed a vision of an archipelagic confederation consisting of self-governing localities cooperating horizontally without recourse to a higher sovereign unity. Pairez (2012, p. 1), for one, spoke of the creation of ‘shared meaning that holds a network of communities together without being necessarily homogenous’. Although novel in one respect, archipelagic confederalism could also be seen as a continuation of a
translocalist thrust long present in anarchism. Take Kropotkin (cited in Juris 2008, p. 86), for example, who wrote in 1905 of the possibility of a social order, not held together by state coercion, but arising from ‘an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium... an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national, and international’.

Translocalism, then, is not solely about inter-local connectedness, but also about horizontal relations between autonomous localities that make hierarchy and sovereignty redundant. In Hardt and Negri’s (1994, p. 312) words, ‘when subjects have become autonomous producers of wealth, knowledge, and cooperation, there is no reason for an overarching sovereign power external to their own power’. Assumptions that nation-state imperatives are necessary features of communities in general – that a given community must be organised hierarchically on the one hand, and be possessed of a degree of uniformity on the other – are thrown into doubt by this thesis, which demonstrates that community beyond both hierarchy and homophily is possible.

As much as I have tried to make a case for translocalism and xenophilia, I do acknowledge that they are not without their potential pitfalls. The point of developing new concepts is to open up new vistas, but every field of vision comes with its own blindspots. It would be unfortunate, for example, if an affirmation of the translocal and xenophilic were to shade into a bigotry against those deemed ‘provincial’ or ‘monocultural’ or for whatever reason not as amenable to the twenty-first century

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global environment. In online forums for ‘Third Culture Kids’\(^{89}\) (TCKs), so-called ‘monoculturals’ or ‘monos’ are sometimes disparaged, prompting one blogger (Hash 2013) to critically reflect on the ‘arrogance’ of some TCKs, including his own.

Marginalised on account of exclusivist forms of community, TCKs and other cross-cultural subjects are increasingly building on- and offline communities with each other (I myself was part of one for several years), but when such communities themselves become exclusivist, they perpetuate the very problem they were established to overcome. This is another case of ressentiment, an ever-present danger whenever trying to establish alternatives.

There are no doubt many more conceptual blindspots in this thesis of which I am not aware, but I trust that hindsight and the critical feedback of readers will bring these to light in time.

**Intergenerationality**

Having rounded off the concepts of community, xenophilia, and translocalism, I am left now with intergenerationality. This thesis was framed from the outset as an inquiry into generational change in the Philippine social movement landscape. The national liberation model, which, in the Sixties and Seventies, turned the Third World into a ‘worldwide zone of revolution’ (Hobsbawm 1999, p. 434), ran aground in the Eighties and Nineties, prompting a new generation to reinvent what ‘changing the world’ means. Where once it meant seizing power so as to bring about change from above, it

\(^{89}\) The ‘Third Culture Kid’ is someone whose parents are from one culture but who is raised in another, and so develops his or her own hybrid ‘third culture’ (Pollock & Van Reken 2009).
is now increasingly signifying the empowerment of communities from below.

Additionally, where once it was synonymous in the Third World with nationalism, it is now becoming increasingly cosmopolitan.

As outlined in Chapter 3, humanity’s trajectory towards an enlightened, cosmopolitan society was likened by Kant (1784; 1794) to a child’s development into adulthood – a keystone of European imperialist ideology. Colonisers designated themselves as adults, and their colonial subjects as children in need of parental guidance. The former were deemed cosmopolitan; the latter merely parochial.

In my usage of the term, unlike in Kant’s, cosmopolitanism is not a colonial project, but an anti-, or better yet, postcolonial one; not an escape from childish immaturity, but – in a certain respect – a return to it. Revisiting the figure of the child first introduced in Chapter 3, childhood is that time of a person’s life when the imagination has yet to be fully adulterated by adult rationality. No child is born racist, sexist or classist; s/he learns dichotomies of us-them and superior-inferior from adults.

From Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987, pp. 305-306) theory of ‘becoming-child’, I developed the concept of ‘becoming-cosmopolitan’. Cosmopolitanism, once uncoupled from the Kantian adult and associated instead with the Deleuzoguattarian child, is a constitutive rather than teleological force. It represents, not the end, but the beginning of things; a generational changing-of-the-guard ‘from that which is fully grown’, actually or ostensibly, ‘to that which is about to grow’ (Perez 1990, p. 14). This means unlearning of centuries of nationalist and statist programming, while also
resisting the globalist programming of the present, to tap into that part of us not yet molded by rationality. Dispelling teleological rationality in particular, we restore a sense of possibility that the globalising, postcolonial present seems to invite.

Contemporary social movements are increasingly parting ways with the nation-state, but a curious contradiction emerges when one uncouples nation and state for a moment, and considers the divergent ways in which defections from each have customarily been viewed. In keeping with Kantian cosmopolitanism, the flight from the nation is usually seen as a *progression*; yet in keeping with humanity’s assumed linear evolution from bands to tribes to chiefdoms to states (Service 1962), the flight from the state is often seen instead as a *regression* – a ‘descent’ into ‘anarchy’.

Underpinning both views is a linear conception of time, allowing only for forwards or backwards movements.

My view is that to defect from either nationalism or statism is to move *outwards*. Rather than nations, states, and nation-states being seen as inevitable developments on a linear timescale, I regard them as contingent islands of order in an ocean of flux. They are abstracted out of nationless and stateless ways-of-being that have always been with us. Such sensibilities preceded nation-states, persist amidst them, and will also succeed them. When the adult recognises the contingency of the island on which s/he stands and looks to the horizon for new possibilities, we are in the presence of a becoming-child or becoming-cosmopolitan. A becoming is an outwards movement; an unfolding onto ontological flux. Wrote Nietzsche (1885, p. 221): ‘You shall be fugitives
from all fatherlands and forefatherlands! You shall love your *children’s land*’ [italics in original].

During my Manila fieldwork, I attended an art exhibition that now strikes me as serendipitously relevant to the present discussion on intergenerationality. Entitled *Rejuvenilia*, its aim was to irreverently affirm Manila’s youth culture in the face of criticism by the older generation. As expressed in the Artists’ Statement: ‘We refuse to allow the routinized system of workaday labor to snuff out the fires of creative thought, imagination, and play time – all the hallmarks of a child-like openness to new possibilities’. The exhibition’s title appears to have been drawn from the work of Christopher Noxon (2006), who proposes the ‘rejuvenile’ as a new breed of adult; one determined to remain playful and open, in spite of the pressures and expectations of adulthood.

In radical politics as in art, rejuveniles are making their presence felt. Returning one last time to the opening vignette of this thesis, Cesar’s description of the Philippine political landscape as a wasteland was qualified by a further lament that ‘young Filipinos these days are very apolitical’. This was a common refrain amongst the veteran activists I talked to in Manila. ‘Today’s youth would rather go to a rock concert than a political demonstration’, complained another. To my reading, though, it is not that the youth are apolitical, but rather that they practice politics in an entirely different sort of way – not as ‘G&Ds’\(^{90}\), but as rejuveniles. Consider, for instance, the

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\(^{90}\) Derived from the phrase ‘Grim and Determined’, this is a term by which young activists in the Philippines jokingly refer to their older counterparts.
creative approach being experimented with by an anarcho-punk collective in Quezon

City, as recounted by Danny from the AIDD:

Jess Santiago, he’s a folk singer... he has this concept which I really like. It’s called the barrio tour... It’s something that [we] try and do in urban areas – close down streets, get a few bands to play, try as much as possible to get a mix of different types of, I guess, aesthetic contributions. We have street painters, just to get, you know, people involved. It’s a cultural event. You get around ten minutes to try to deliver a message of sorts. What’s fun is at least people are getting together, I mean... many of the communities do not have that many opportunities for them to get together that are self-initiated. It’s usually the barangay calls everyone... As much as possible in these barrio tours or these community tours, we try to get local organizations, even nonpolitical ones, to get involved in the process of putting together this event... It’s about people getting together and to start managing their own affairs – you know, whatever, whether it’s a concert or some community event or hopefully, you know, their own survival.

What Guattari (2009, p. 139) had to say about youth movements in 1980s Europe evidently remains true of young Filipin@ radicals today:

Perhaps a new kind of ‘68[91], of a completely different style, is developing behind the scenes. Your students, your youths, your rockers – their preoccupations are literally imperceptible to “normal people”. Some might say, “people like that don’t even know what they want. What they want doesn’t make any sense”. And since nothing registers in these people’s minds, they consider them completely crazy. Except that, from time to time, something does register... completely unexpected things come about... When this happens, those in charge ask themselves “Where did that come from? Who are their ringleaders? Who is putting such ideas into the heads of our youth?”

Perhaps the generation gap will always be with us, but Kantian-style metaphors

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91 Guattari is referring here to the now-fabled 1968 student-led uprising in France.
pertaining to immaturity and maturity need not be. I have already highlighted the challenge to the gerontocracy posed by Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming-child, but one further challenge merits attention – this time from Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a student leader of the near-revolution in France in 1968. Following Lenin (1920), who branded as ‘infantile’ those of his leftist contemporaries who rejected his doctrine of ‘scientific socialism’, Cohn-Bendit’s Marxist-Leninist elders were similarly ageist in their criticisms. He turned the tables on his critics by arguing that it was not his student cohort that was infantile, but the older political generation that had become senile (Gandhi 2006, pp. 187-188). Then as now, young people do not necessarily need to overcome their youthfulness in order to become rational political actors, but alternatively, can disregard the gerontocrats and simply be themselves.

_Bandung and beyond_

Although having mostly commended the young and impugned the old, I do recognise that, in many ways, my generation stands on the shoulders of the older political generation, even as we strive to differentiate ourselves from them. We are the inheritors of their failures, as well as the beneficiaries of their successes. Third World revolutionary nationalists did bring about the end of empire in a formal sense, which was no small feat, and could hardly have known that a new era of ‘informal empire’ (Young 2003, p. 3) was just beginning.
For all my criticisms, I do admire the older political generation and acknowledge that revolutionary nationalism should be given its dues. Despite having renounced his earlier nationalism, Miguel\textsuperscript{92}, too, concedes its momentous historical contributions:

The period of national liberation movements of which the Philippines found itself in... was an important signal event in the history of the world... that folks rose up and tried to claim, you know, culturally, economically and politically, a self-determination of the majority of people in that nation. Third World nationalism was a motivating force... that galvanized societies in order to claim self-determination against exploitation of both foreign interests and the interests of the elite class in that area. So it was a very, very important historical moment.

That I am in complete agreement with Miguel shows that my relationship with my predecessors is more complicated than first appearances. Never was my ambivalence more apparent than during a visit to the Indonesian city of Bandung in 2011. There, I made a special point of visiting the Museum Asia-Afrika, located on the site of the Asian-African Conference of 1955 (see Image 20). As mentioned in Chapter 6, this gathering was one of the defining moments of the twentieth century, bringing together anticolonial leaders from across the two continents then in revolt against European imperialism. In the early 1900s, ‘85 percent of the world’s surface was under Europe’s direct colonial dominion’ (Hawkins 2012, p. 43). Latin America freed itself in the early decades of the twentieth century, but the rest of the Third World’s time did not arrive until after World War II. Bandung was perched at the crest of a wave that, by the time it finished crashing over Africa and Asia, swept most of the remaining European colonial regimes from power.

\textsuperscript{92} Formerly active with the National Democratic Movement, Miguel since defected and is now a key figure within FAEJI, as readers will recall from Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
Strolling around the museum, I felt moved by the palpable hope in people’s faces in all the black-and-white photographs on display. How powerful a feeling it must have been to have stood together on the cusp of a new world in the making – and how heartbroken the delegates would be today to see that independence did not translate into the anticipated freedom and self-determination. Realising this, tears welled up in my eyes. I cried for the dashed hopes of an exemplary rebel generation, as well as for the prospect of my own generation’s revolutionary efforts going up in smoke in the same way. How much could any of us ever really change the world?
The Bandung generation fought and struggled and made mistakes. We are no different today, and will likely be faulted by our kids and grandkids too. Social movements renew society, but as Paul Goodman (cited in Kinna 2005, p. 3) stresses, their work is never done: ‘It is always a continual coping with the next situation, and a vigilance to make sure that past freedoms are not lost and do not turn into their opposite’. Against all millenarianisms, there will be no final cataclysm heralding an eternal paradise, which is why I have placed emphasis, not on cosmopolitanism as telos, but on becoming-cosmopolitan, understood as an ongoing liberatory process.

The old and the new

I will shift focus now from intergenerational relations between the old and the young to philosophical questions around the old and the new. The role that activists play in ‘the production of the new’ (O’Sullivan & Zepke 2008) has been a core interest of mine from the beginning. I set the tone to this theme in the opening epigraph, with a quote each from José Rizal and Salman Rushdie – literary giants of the anticolonial and postcolonial moments respectively. While the former was fearful that the new era of independence would slip back into the bad habits of old, the latter was concerned with how, in light of a profusion of such slips post-independence, the genuinely new might be brought into existence and defended from reactionaries. The questions posed in The satanic verses – ‘How does newness come into the world? How is it born?’ (Rushdie 1988, p. 8) – were answered some years later in Imaginary homelands, when Rushdie (1991, p. 393) stated that his work
celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs... Melange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world.

His thesis is that the new does not appear ex nihilo, but is sparked from recombinations of old elements. Consider the ‘recombinant ecologies’ (Holmgren 2010) produced through trans-Pacific organising efforts, as well as through the rainbow alliances supplanting the monochromatic movements of old. Consider too the ‘new and unexpected combinations’ of ideas and stories from which this work is assembled. Stories big and small, global and local, sovereign and nonsovereign, historic and ethnographic, anticolonial and postcolonial, Filipin@ and Fil-Am, as well as personal and interpersonal, are all constellated in these pages.

On the topic of stories big and small, Lyotard’s (1979) famous thesis – that our present ‘postmodern condition’ is characterised by the collapse of ‘grand narratives’ – was very real for Filipin@ activists in the 1990s, which saw the collapse of Maoism as a grand, guiding narrative for the Left. Amidst the crisis, the Forum for Philippine Alternatives convened in San Francisco, bringing together a range of Filipin@ and Fil-Am defectors from the NDM to collectively search for a new way forward. In one panel discussion on postmodernity, there was considerable anxiety in some quarters around the perceived need to replace Maoism with a new ideology. ‘Where are the new narratives we need to guide us?’ was the gist of it. It was then that a feminist named Prosy de la Cruz (cited in Lloyd et al. 1993, p. 248) intervened with an incisive reality check:
Can I just give a comment?... What struck me most is the [difference between the top-down] way this workshop was put together and... the workshop that I just came from, which is the gender workshop. And the gender workshop was started by finding and listening to the individual stories. Totally different... It’s almost like why are you looking for things out there when there is the women’s movement that we need to probably almost rediscover?... And I think that when you start doing that, then you will stop questioning ”Where are the stories?” because it’s out there... Who creates history?... It’s been done every day by these individuals... It is right there, it is being done.

In the same spirit, I have tried in my research to work from the bottom-up; ‘to follow the actors themselves... to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands’ (Latour 2005, p. 12). This is a crucial aspect of the method I dubbed in the Introduction as the futurology of the present.

**Revisiting the futurology of the present**

To compartmentalise time into past, present, and future is to artificially dam an indivisible flow, according to Henri Bergson (1911). There is really only the ‘perpetual present’ (Guattari 1995, p. 92), cumulative of what *has been* as well as generative of what *could be*. Foucault’s method – the history of the present – attends to the contingent histories shaping current realities, while the futurology of the present scours those same realities for intimations of alternative futures.

I have regarded social movements, in particular, as hotbeds of social innovation; sites where new forms of collective life are imagined and experimented with. They are, in a sense, embryonic communities struggling to be born, and it is the work of the
futurologist of the present to help bring them to light. On this note, consider the mode of ethnographic practice proposed by Graeber (2004a, p. 12): One role ‘for a radical intellectual’, he writes, might be ‘to look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities – as gifts’. Unlike some radical intellectuals in the past, who handed down prescriptions from on high, Graeber follows the lead of grassroots actors themselves.

In my own case, movement ethnography became a kind of philosophy by other means, since the theoretical questions I found activists grappling with on the ground were the same ones I took up in my research. This made me a ‘co-theorist’ (Gordon 2008, p. 7) amongst others, thinking with and not just about social movements. I have also tried to be a theorist, not of victimhood, but of liberation. Historically, more scholars have inquired into what is wrong with the world than have investigated what people are doing to change it. Marx, for instance, focussed in much greater detail ‘on capitalist domination than on working class subjectivity’ (Cleaver 1992, p. 4). That he did so was likely owing to the dialectical premise that negation must precede affirmation; in other words, that one must tear down the old before building up the new.

Negation, for Marx, was a step on the way to affirmation, but there are some scholar-activists who become so preoccupied with negation that they lose sight of the future altogether. When all their energies are expended on the dominant, ‘the “dominated” virtually disappears as an active historical subject’ (Cleaver cited in May 1994, p. 35).
Take Gilroy (2004, p. 70), for instance, who, in critiquing the ethnic absolutisms inherited from the colonial era, laments:

[W]e are all sealed up inside our frozen cultural habitats, and there seems to be no workable precedent for adopting a more generous and creative view of how human beings might communicate or act in concert across racial, ethnic, or civilizational divisions.

I do not question Gilroy’s commitment to social justice, nor begrudge him his momentary despair. It is a feeling I know well, but also feel we would do well to avoid assisting the ruling elites in their efforts to ‘destroy any sense of possible alternative futures’ (Graeber 2008, pp. 1). The risk is that we become so consumed with challenging or lamenting the present order that we fail to appreciate the many alternative futures continually coming to being in our midst. In light of the plethora of ‘workable precedents’ unearthed by my research and presented in this thesis, Gilroy’s claim that there are none strikes me as myopic. To dissect or decry what we are up against is well and good; to refuse to issue prescriptions in the style of the twentieth-century overlord is well and good too; but to overlook or obscure the multifarious pathways fanning outwards from any given moment is to undermine hope and so risk bolstering the status quo. The futurology of the present, in contrast, rediscovers hope in real-life, real-world futures already in construction in the present. We are reminded thus that tomorrow is wide open, which translates into Tagalog as ‘bukas ay bukas’, since the words for ‘tomorrow’ and ‘open’ are the same.

A few years ago, I wrote a theoretical paper exploring some of these ideas and submitted it to a journal for consideration. The editors declined to publish it, not
because they were unimpressed with its content, but because they were curious to see what an actual futurology of the present would look like – a demonstration, and not just a description, of the concept. Here, finally, is what they were seeking, albeit in hugely expanded form.

It was just fortunate that a case study chosen for personal reasons pertaining to my ethnic heritage was incredibly suited to my scholarly and political interests too, since, as Broad and Cavanagh (1993, p. 157) remarked, the Philippines is ‘one of the most fertile countries in the world for experiments based on a different kind of people’s power’. That this remains true should be amply evident in these pages. In the Philippine experience are indispensable lessons for movements and communities-in-the-making everywhere, showing that what are assumed to be the margins often turn out to be central.
Postscript

Since no object of research holds still for its portrait\textsuperscript{93}, I will outline here some of the more pertinent developments in my field of inquiry since my formal period of fieldwork ended in 2008.

Firstly, in what is testament to the power of activism, as well as to the tenacity and resilience of those who worked for over a decade on the campaign, the Philippine Supreme Court has ordered that the Pandacan oil depot be shut down, stating in its ruling (cited in Torres-Tupas 2015, p. 1) that such a hazardous facility ‘has no place in a densely populated area’.

It must be said, too, that beyond the Philippines, Third World nationalism remains a significant force. Maoists came to power in Nepal in 2008, while next door in India, the Maoist insurgency continues to rage. Palestine, Kurdistan, West Papua, and other oppressed nations likewise carry on their struggles for national liberation, each hoping to become the world’s newest nation-state. That title at the moment belongs to South Sudan, which won independence in 2011. It was not long, however, before celebrations gave way to civil war, with rival ethnic factions vying for the reins of power – a repetition of the fate of the nominally-victorious independence movements of the Bandung generation. Independence is certainly a vital first step, but what becomes of the dream of freedom when in reality only a re-organisation of hierarchies.

\footnote{93 This formulation is indebted to anthropologist James Clifford (1986, p. 10), who famously wrote: ‘“Cultures” do not hold still for their portraits’.}
takes place? Must revolution always be synonymous with the nation-state? Clearly, the questions grappled with by Filipin@ revolutionaries since the 1970s, and that I subsequently took up in my research, remain relevant across a range of contexts.

Even if a post-revolutionary nation-state were to resolve its internal problems, the external problem of supranational sovereignty would still need to be addressed. This new apparatus of rule operates through an ever-modulating compact between transnational corporations, hegemonic polities like the US, and multilateral institutions like the WTO and World Bank, all dedicated to the advancement of global capitalism. APEC has historically been its main champion in the Asia-Pacific region, but remains merely a forum for discussion. To really move things forward, a select group of APEC members\textsuperscript{94} resolved that a formal binding agreement would be needed, therefore initiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP, under secret negotiations at the time of writing, would grant unprecedented new rights and privileges to major corporations, while weakening the power of regulators to rein them in. It even proposes an international tribunal through which companies could sue governments for anything that interferes in their operations, including environmental and labour protections, GM food labelling, and so on (Sutherlin 2012, p. 1).

The United States’ involvement in the TPP began in 2008 under the Bush administration and was later embraced by Obama, who made it one of the centrepieces of his so-called ‘Pacific Pivot’ (Manyin et al. 2012) – a strategic re-

\textsuperscript{94} The initial twelve negotiating parties are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the US, and Vietnam. The Philippines is being considered as a possible future member.
orientation towards Asia, in line with the transfer of the world’s economic centre-of-gravity from the North Atlantic to the Pacific Rim. Included in this set of policies is an expansion of the US military’s Pacific presence, with new troop rotations and deployments planned for the Philippines, Singapore, and Australia (Manyin et al. 2012, p. 5). In stating that US security efforts help ‘create the conditions for growth’, Hillary Clinton (2011, p. 1) made plain the link between military and corporate expansion.

Although branded as new, the Pacific Pivot could also be seen as the latest manifestation of a very old trend. With the United States’ triumph in the Spanish-American War and its subsequent annexation of the Philippines and Guam, it effectively usurped the Spanish dream of ‘a Pacific Rim trading bloc, managed by Spaniards from Mexico’ (Malaspina cited in Mercene 2007, p. 62) and made it its own. Said John Hay (cited in Naisbitt & Aburdene 1990, p. 6), the US Secretary of State at the time: ‘The Mediterranean is the ocean of the past, the Atlantic the ocean of the present, the Pacific the ocean of the future’.

The Pacific today, as always, is a vast arena of contestation, not just between sovereign entities like the US and China, but also between sovereign and nonsovereign globalities. Comprising the latter are trans-Pacific protest networks like IWNAM, along with networks formed in more recent times in resistance to the TPP. The challenges ahead are enormous, but given successes in the recent past against the WTO, as well as against the once hoped-for Free Trade Area of the Americas, alternative globalisation activists know that the TPP is anything but a fait accompli (Flush the TPP
They may even find inspiration and insight in the rich history of trans-Pacific activism between the Philippines and the US.

Aside from the political storms raging over the TPP, the Pacific also brings the perils of storms in a more literal sense. Only one example is needed here: that of Typhoon Haiyan (known in the Philippines as Typhoon Yolanda). Formed over the warm – and, might I add, warming – waters of the western Pacific, Haiyan smashed into the Philippines in November 2013, killing thousands and displacing millions. Filipinos are used to typhoons, but this was unprecedented: it was in fact the most powerful storm to have made landfall in recorded history (Fischetti 2013).

At the UN climate talks in Warsaw days later, the Philippine Climate Change Commissioner, Naderev Sano, gave an impassioned speech, linking Haiyan with global warming and urging his fellow negotiators to wake up to the reality of what was happening. Proving causation is difficult, but the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change did confirm in a 2013 report (cited in Vidal & Carrington 2013, pp. 1-2) that the frequency, duration, and intensity of storms in the western Pacific have all been on the upswing since the 1970s.

If anthropogenic climate change is a contributing factor to extreme weather events like Typhoon Haiyan, could we continue to refer to them as simply ‘natural’ disasters? This points to the continuing relevance of the Environmental Justice perspective, which marries ecological and social concerns. Recently, Environmental Justice has morphed into the new, though related, discourse of ‘Climate Justice’ (Moore & Russell 2011).
This is the direction in which the environmental activists with whom I worked are heading, in the eastern and western Pacific alike – particularly in the wake of Haiyan.

Of the many responses to the supertyphoon that my former research participants were involved in, one stood out above the rest: The Solar Guerrilla Autonomous Response Team, as it was called, was an *ad hoc* collective of Manilan anarchists who, over the course of several missions to Leyte, the worst affected island, delivered their own distinct style of disaster relief. They came armed with a mobile solar panel to help locals charge their phones and so keep communication lines open, while at the same time demonstrating and prefiguring more sustainable futures. They also distributed free cooked meals and medicines, and organised games and art workshops for local children.

How the Solar Guerrillas (2013, p. 8) were received by their host community was narrated as follows:

> The community treats us good... [They] asked why institutions are not working efficiently and creatively to provide support... It’s not normal [for them] to see strange-looking people... heavily-tattooed, body-pierced, weird hairstyles... active in the front-line of disaster to extend solidarity... Our appearance raised curiosity which made people come, mingle and interact with us. They are expecting “formal” and “decent” people to come to help in exchange of political allegiance or spiritual favor. They are really surprise[d] to know that strange-looking people like us are here to share base[d] on our capacity without asking anything in return. For us this is not a heroic act, we believe that helping is a normal and common relationship...

The nascent Climate Justice Movement will need characters of all kinds and of all colours of the political rainbow. One of its newest recruits is none other than Naderev
Saño, who, in a surprise move, resigned from the Philippine Climate Change Commission on Earth Day 2015 to instead continue his work at the grassroots. Saño (2015, p. 2) stated in a press release that if ‘so-called leaders refuse to act adequately to confront climate change... the People will create a new parallel world where the climate crisis can be averted’. Such a world is one amongst a range of possible futures. The extraordinary solidarity shown in the aftermath of Haiyan has already given us a glimpse of it, but it need not take another calamity to spur it into being.
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