

# The Philosophy of Work of the Lumads in Surigao as an Alternative to Globalization

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## Introduction

As is well known, the notion of “work” plays a central role in human and social development. In fact, Karl Marx (1964) claims that work is the essence of humanity, that man ceases to be human the moment he ceases to work. According to Herbert Marcuse (2007), Marx views work as man’s affirmation of his being because through work, man can produce and reproduce an external, material objective world. Through work, therefore, man is able to transform and appropriate the material objects he encounters to satisfy his needs, a satisfaction necessary for the full realization of his potentialities and his becoming a truly free being. Put differently, work is man’s act of perfecting himself. In this sense, as already mentioned, work is man’s essence; it defines human being as conscious being distinct from the other animals, who, in producing and reproducing the objective world to his advantage, creates a world in his own image and expresses and perfects his own capacities. Work, therefore, cannot be conceived purely in terms of economics but as an “activity”, that is to say, an act of forming and shaping of human capacities.

In relative parlance, Sigmund Freud (1973) claims that work is the élan vital of civilization. Freud argues that without work, society would not have attained the kind of unprecedented progress that we witnessed today. As a matter of fact, for Freud, work is one of the foundations (the other is Eros) of society. He says that men “come together”, that is, live in society, first because they are forced to do so by economic necessity and, second, that they want to do so to acquire their basic desires. Thus, for Freud, civilization is first of all progress in work, that is, work for the procurement and augmentation of the necessities of life.

In Marx, as in Freud, work therefore must be viewed as “cooperative” work. This means that people would somehow need to sacrifice individual interests for the common good.

But with today's economic globalization, driven by the neoliberal policies of the West, all aspects of the work process, for example, what is to be produced, and how prices and wages are to be determined are solely determined by the producers themselves. As a result, the realization of the goal of work is perverted. Thus, social development is greatly jeopardized as people will hardly find satisfaction in their work. In addition, the idea of social solidarity and progress in civilization which cooperative work harbors has also been greatly undermined. Economic globalization has indeed produced numerous social problems across the world (Gray 1998), one of which is the perversion of the function of work resulting in what we can rightly call as the "structural transformation" of the communities in the periphery.

In the face of the tremendous power of modern industry, science and financial techniques, the appeal to indigenous work ethic might appear incredibly naïve. But this is only so if one forgets the immensely destructive nature of globalization. To speak very simply, and if one lets oneself be guided by the generally accepted notion that globalization has a destructive tendency: if the logic at work "at the center", which has been imported to the new emerging powers, and which has subjugated territories "in the periphery" like the Lumad communities in Surigao, is left to rule unchecked, only a catastrophe can emerge from it, either social (new wars) or environmental (climate change), or a combination of the two. Against this catastrophic background, the alternative model of work ethic presented by the Lumads of Surigao, and indeed the historical struggles that were waged in its name, suddenly appear anything but sentimental. Local work ethic, therefore, can be viewed as one of the rich sources of "social hope" in today's highly globalized society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This proposed research project aims to contribute in addressing some of the recent social problems that globalization engenders through an engagement with the way in which the Lumads in Surigao view work as a means for human and social development. In particular, this proposed research project will examine the impact of globalization on the work attitude of the Lumads in Surigao and explore some of the ways in which they draw on their rich cultural heritage to confront and resist such global concerns facing them today. This is premised on the idea that the model of work presented by these local people can be an alternative to the destructive tendency of globalization. We will argue that the local communities in the periphery (in this case the Lumads in Surigao) continue to practice "cooperative work" and, therefore, the championing of this work ethic would contribute greatly to human and social development. In light of the above argument, this proposed research project will be guided by the following questions:

- 1) What is work? How does the concept of work contribute in human and social development?
- 2) How do the Lumads in Surigao view work? What is their attitude toward work?
- 3) What is globalization and how does it impact on the role and function of work in the Lumad community in Surigao?

## Research Methodology

Throughout the project, we will employ textual analysis and ethnophilosophy as research methodologies. To the first, we will rely mostly on a number of critical scholarships on globalization, the philosophy of work, and indigenous communities. These include the works of Anthony Giddens on the impact of globalization on local subsistence economy and culture; the SUNY Levin Institute's project on Globalization 101; Patricia D. McGuire-Kishebakabaykwe's important work on the resiliency of indigenous knowledge against globalization; Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*; and Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. While we find these seminal works extremely important when considering our topic, we believe that they need to be developed further as they do not highlight the capacity of indigenous cultures in countervailing the destructive tendency of globalization. To the second, we will conduct key informant interviews with ten (10) Lumad elders in Surigao. We believe that these elders are "community experts" in their own right who can, with their particular wisdom, provide insight on the nature and dynamics of the Lumads' philosophy of work. In these interviews, we will highlight the informants' views on work and the way in which it impacts on their lives and the community.

The interview will be guided by the following major questions:

- 1) Please talk briefly about your life and how do you earn a living?
- 2) What do you think is the importance of work in your life? Do you think you find satisfaction in your present work?
- 3) How would you compare the nature of work before (say in the past 25 or 30 years) and now?
- 4) How do people in your community organize work? Can you say that people in your community work cooperatively for the common good?
- 5) Do you think that work has contributed significantly in the development of your community?

Lastly, we will also conduct participant observation in various settings in the Lumad communities in Surigao to get additional information about the Lumads' philosophy of work. This is intended to verify the data that we have gathered from the interviews.

### **Organization of the Study**

This proposed research project is divided into two parts. Part one will discuss the socio-economic and philosophical foundations of the notion of work. It will also include a discussion on the way in which globalization transforms the role and function of work in contemporary societies, with emphasis on those societies located in the periphery. Part two will be a detailed discussion on the philosophy of work of the Lumads in Surigao. It is here where we argue that "cooperative work" can be an alternative to globalization.

### **The Respondents and the Study Area**

The Lumads formed an organization called Mapasu or Malahutayong Pakigbisog Alang sa Sumusunod/ Preserving Struggle for the Next Generation. Most of them are found in the hinterlands of barangay Diatagon, lianga, Surigao del Sur. They are also found in outskirts of the municipalities of San Augustine, San Miguel, Tago and Marihatag.

The diocese of Tandag helped them built their own school: for grade school, Trifpss or Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur and high school, Alcadev or Alternative Center for Agricultural Development.

### **Ethical Consideration of the Study**

Before the conduct of the study, a Prior Informed Consent (PIC) will be secured from the Chieftain of the Lumads. Full disclosure of the Study will be explained to respondents. Individual Consent (IC) from each respondent will be voluntarily secured. Anyone who refuses to participate in the interview shall be excluded from the survey.

### **Expected Outcome and Significance of the Study**

The expected outcome of this proposed research project will be in the form of a conference paper and journal article. First, we will present the output of this project in anthropology or cultural studies conference and then publish it in an Asian studies journal. With this communication and outreach strategy, the effect of this proposed research project will be threefold, namely: first, a better understanding of the notion of work and its impact on local cultures through the production of a critical assessment of the notion of work of the Lumads in Surigao; second, the enhancement and promotion of "local knowledge" and

in responding to the “problem of contextualization”; and third, to contribute to the promotion of social justice and the articulation of social hope and emancipation in contemporary indigenous societies.

## References

Freud, Sigmund. 1973. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Edited by M. Masud R. Khan and translated by James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Giddens, Anthony. 1999. *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*. London: Profile Books.

Gray, John. 1998. *False Dawn: The Delusion of Global Capitalism*. London. Granta Books.

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Marcuse, Herbert. 1955. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press.

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Marx, Karl. 1964. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. Edited with an introduction by Dirk J. Struik and translated by Martin Milligan. New York: International Publishers.

## Timetable of the Study

March 2019 to December 2019

Activity	Months									
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Researchers conduct library and archival research and write the first part of the research project										
Researchers conduct fieldwork research and write part two of the research project										
Researchers revise the first draft of the manuscript										
Researchers present the research output in academic community										
Researchers prepare the final output for publication										

### Detailed Budget

#### Personnel Services

Project Leader	1 X P2500/mo X 10 months	25,000.00
Co-researchers	3 X P2000/mo X 10 months	60,000.00
		85,000.00

#### Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses

Transportation and Travelling Expenses		
(Transportation = P3,000x 4pax x 2 (back & forth) x 3 trips)		72,000.00
(Per Diems = 4 pax x 800/day x 21 days)		67,000.00
Supplies (Bond papers, inks, ticklers, pencils, pens, USB, envelopes/bags, audio recorder)		20,800.00
Communication		5,000.00
		P 139,200.00

**GRAND TOTAL**

**P250, 000.00**

## Profile of Proponents

**Anesito L. Cutillas** is an Associate Professor at Cebu Technological University handling Philosophy subjects both in the Graduate School and in the undergraduate programs. He is currently taking up MA Philosophy at Silliman University and took up his AB Philosophy at the Rogationist Seminary College- Cebu which is affiliated to the University of San Jose-Recoletos. He previously served as the Chair of the Social Sciences Department, and Dean of the Graduate School. His research interests in on Social Sciences and currently in Philosophy.

**Hemres M. Albuero** is a Full Professor at Cebu Technological University handling courses in research, Forestry and Public Administration. He has a background in Forestry and obtained a degree of Master in Arts in Public Administration at the International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan as a fellow of the Japanese Grant-Aide for Human Resource Development Scholarship. He was working on a research on Community-Based Biodiversity Conservation. His other research interests is on birds and bats.

**Raymond Montero-Ambray** is the parochial vicar of Holy Child Parish in Lingig, Surigao del Sur. He obtained his MA in Anthropology in Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City. He took his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy at the Rogationist Seminary College, Labangon, Cebu City in 1998. Cuurrently he is a member of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines and Caraga Watch. He has been active in philosophical research presentations in various conferences talking about “Negotiating Cultural Citizenship in the language of the New Social Movements, an Indigenous Peoples’ struggle in the hinterlands of Surigao del Sur.”

**Jeffry Ocay** is currently a Full Professor of Philosophy at Silliman University, Dumaguety City. He obtained his doctoral degree in Philosophy from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia in 2013 and a postdoctorate from Frankfurt University, Germany in 2016. He obtained his master’s degree in Philosophy from the University of San Carlos, Cebu City in 2005 and a second master’s degree in History from Silliman University in 2007. He previously served as Chair of the Philosophy Department at Silliman University for 2 years and Associate Dean of the same Institution for 4 years. He has served as Coordinator of the Villanova Institute, University of San Agustin, Iloilo and Editor of the *Augustinian Journal*. He is a member of the Editorial Collaborative of *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* and member of the editorial Board of *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*. He is also a regular reviewer of the *Humanities Diliman* of the University of the Philippines and *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* of the Ateneo de Manila University. He edited recently the book *Introduction to the Philosophy of the Human Person* published by Subverso.