

Rethinking the dynamics of rural transformation: performing different development pathways in a Philippine municipality

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(Forthcoming in Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, April 2010 pp. 237-255)

Abstract

Rural communities all over South East Asia are facing major challenges as they try to shape their economic futures in ways that will increase wellbeing for all. This paper argues that researchers who describe and explain rural change play a powerful role in shaping imagined futures and the practices of local development. We foreground the theoretical choices made in representing rural change and call for a rethinking of the dynamics of transformation, one that highlights complexity, uncertainty and possibility. Following Robert Chambers and Jane Jacobs we draw on ecological representations of habitat maintenance, diversity and interdependent development and co-development to help inspire new ways of thinking and performing change. We illustrate theoretical and practical choices that can strengthen resilience in rural communities, using examples from our action research intervention in the Philippines.

Keywords

Philippines, rural transformation, representation, diverse economies, ecology, resilience

Introduction

How rural change is described and explained shapes how the future is imagined and has the potential to constrain or open up possibilities for local development. Over the last two decades scholars studying rural transformation in Asia have identified agricultural mechanization, monetization, commoditization, proletarianization and out-migration as key drivers of change. This paper is concerned with the performative effect of representing the determinants of rural change, or ‘rural dynamics’ as we refer to them here, in terms of these unidirectional processes associated with capitalist development. We argue that by reinforcing the power and predictability of processes seen to be animated by the international expansion of capitalism, scholars leave local communities and their governments with few options but to attempt to join in the inexorable march of capitalist globalization. Our interest is in expanding the range of available representations of rural change by attending to multi-directional processes taking place in the diverse economies of rural areas. Drawing on insights from an action research project conducted in a rural municipality in the Philippines, we outline how alternative representations of rural dynamics can animate development pathways that strengthen community economies and create wellbeing directly.

In rural municipalities in the Philippines and other parts of South East Asia where the decentralization of governance has shifted responsibility for economic development from the national government to the municipal level,ⁱ provincial and municipal governments are faced with the challenge of raising standards of living and increasing opportunities for poor households to make a decent living. Local governments are now expected to generate revenue by becoming more entrepreneurial, either by themselves or by initiating partnerships with the private sector (Brillantes 1999, 8; Timberman, 1998, 11). They are being advised to build infrastructure that will connect them to the “growth engine of the world economy” as the fastest growing regions are those that have done so (Balisacan and Hill 2007, 3). Hoping to attract a transformative trickle of growth, municipalities and provinces scramble for investment to develop ports, roads, airports and telecommunications. This poses a dilemma for the rural municipality. Low rates of economic growth seemingly generated by greater integration into the world economy have yet to be transformed into income growth and poverty reduction for most rural households (Balisacan and Hill 2007, 29). It seems that the high degree of inter and intra-regional inequality in income and assets “blunts the effect of income growth on poverty” (29). Given this situation, out-migration of a family member to become a contract, or indentured, migrant worker appears to be the only reliable way of securing an adequate livelihood.

This paper asks, how can researchers enhance the ability for municipal governments to conceive of alternative pathways that build economically and socially resilient communities, and stem the tide of out-migration of their youngest and most energetic residents? We begin by examining representations of rural change that have the effect of naturalizing the classic economic development pathway of capitalist modernization. Our concern here is the choices researchers and thinkers make to represent the world one way or another. Given that our provisional ontology is encapsulated in the catch cry of the World Social Forum—“Another world is possible”—we suggest there might be other thinking strategies better suited to imagining and enacting different futures. Such strategies could involve keeping our empirical eyes open to the diversity of economic practices that support livelihoods and our theoretical minds attuned to the complexity of influences that produce change. We introduce the notion of ‘ethical dynamics’ as a way of rethinking the determinants of rural transformation. This idea removes the term ‘dynamics’, or what determines change, from its usual connections with atomistic rational decision-making or with structures that unfold according to predictable mechanistic or organic logics. Ethical dynamics are not as oxymoronic as we might think when we note that ‘dynamics’ can be defined as “the physical or *moral* forces that produce motion and change in any field or system” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*, 1975 emphasis added). Here we are interested in ethical acts of transformation informed by ecologically-inspired moral principles.

The paper picks up on calls made by social researchers in the early 1990s for a rethinking of the identity and dynamics of ‘the rural’ in Asia. We argue that the sustainable livelihoods approach instigated an important shift in thinking about rural identity but that it was not matched by any serious attempt to re-present rural dynamics in new ways. We highlight some of the effects of representing the rural as heterogeneous, but rural dynamics as singular and unidirectional. In previous work we have theorized economic heterogeneity in rural areas and argued for local development strategies that build on and strengthen diversity (Gibson-Graham and Ruccio, 2003; Gibson-Graham 2005; McKay, Cahill and Gibson, 2007). In this paper we turn our attention to rethinking the dynamics of rural change drawing on ecological representations of complexity. We focus on contributors to rural vulnerability and resilience, theorizing a range of ‘ethical dynamics’ influencing rural transformation. The paper returns to the rural municipality of Jagna in the Philippines (discussed in previous work) to explore the effect of these representations on development strategies. We develop a new interpretation of the rich outcomes of an action research project focused on generating alternative pathways for local development that was

piloted in partnership with municipal governments and NGOs in the central and southern Philippines in 2003-2008.ⁱⁱ

Representing rural identity and the dynamics of change in rural Asia

Rural transition in Asia continues to fascinate and challenge geographers.ⁱⁱⁱ Our interests in the representation of rural areas and the dynamics of change in rural Asia have led us to the close reading of a 1994 book *Development or Deterioration? Work in Rural Asia* edited by Bruce Koppel, John Hawkins and William James. This rich volume is based on a 3 year comparative and cross-disciplinary examination of the “dynamics and significance of non-farm work in rural Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.” (Koppel and James 1994, 325). It begins and ends with two stimulating essays by Koppel and colleagues that raise important questions about how scholars at the time were theorizing rural change in Asia. Two issues stand out as problematic. The first is a common conflation of the rural with the agricultural sector, farm work, informal market networks and confinement to the local. The problem with the rural as a metaphor (or representation) of identity, Koppel and Hawkins argue, is its failure to recognize the presence in rural areas of non-agricultural sectors, non-farm work, formal markets and global connections (1994, 21-22).^{iv} The second issue is the determinism implicit in the portrayal of rural dynamics as unidirectional processes of transition from “nonmarket-to-market, agriculture-to-industry, or rural-to-urban” (20). The problem with such unilinear representations of transformation is their inability to attend to heterogeneous and multi-directional processes of change that do not accord with any theoretical expectation or preoccupation (26). Koppel and colleagues are uneasy with the blunt representations that are employed to describe and explain rural change. They are dissatisfied with the triumphalist interpretation of the growth of non-farm work as evidence of ‘development’. In this analysis rising agricultural incomes and productivity, and the related release of a surplus labouring population into a diversified non-farm sector, are read as heralding a step up the ladder of economic progress. But they are no more satisfied with the critical ‘deterioration’ reading that sees the growth of non-farm work as a desperate attempt to stave off rural out-migration, evidence of high agrarian population growth, stagnant agricultural productivity, increased inequalities in access to land and growth of the rural landless. Between these extremes, they argue, lie “heterogeneous transformation patterns” that urgently demand a nuanced theoretical language (Koppel and Hawkins 1994, 20).

Reflecting the growing concerns of the day with representation and its effects, they call for a reassessment of such terms as “rural”, “informal” and “proletarianization” asking, “How do

metaphors explicitly organize and orient learning, and how do they implicitly select and value what can be learned?" (24). Sadly Bruce Koppel was struck with a debilitating illness just two years after this 1994 edition appeared and died in 2002. Our reading leads us to surmise that development studies lost an important thinker who would have made a real difference to the way knowledge came to be shaped over the next decade. What Koppel and colleagues pinpointed was the tendency for analyses to focus on certain "guiding dynamics" and thereby lose the ability to apprehend the variation, difference and heterogeneity of the rural (23). While there were different evaluations of rural change (the 'development' reading offering a positive spin and the 'deterioration' reading a negative one), the guiding dynamics animating change were seen to be the same, those of capitalist development. This singularity produced uncomfortable analytical disjunctions:

Rural households throughout Asia typically appear to be involved in several economies, each of which traditionally has been described in dichotomous terms—rural/urban, formal/informal, agrarian/nonfarm, and so forth. Intrahousehold division of labor—for example, by gender, age, birth order, affinity—appears to vary significantly even within communities. Markets display wide variety in forms of segmentation based on economic, ethnic, religious, political, spatial, and commodity forces. And a maze of "quasi" and hyphenated categories arise from neo-Marxists, liberal economists, and strongly functionalist forms of anthropology and sociology—[indicating] a shared recognition of *content that does not lie within the boundaries of existing metaphors and metaphors with boundaries that are not synchronous with observed relationships.* (22 insert and emphasis added)

In the concluding essay of this book Koppel and James worry that unilinear and top-down understandings of changes in rural employment are not only simplistic but could also be "fundamentally misleading" (1994, 277).

Subsequent work has elaborated problematic implications arising from "misleading" representations. One such is the reductionist interpretation of waged, or paid, labour as an indicator of rural proletarianization, a process which classically involves people being separated from their means of production and left to sell their labour for survival. A brief example illustrates what is at stake in the choice of this representation. In a thoughtful study, Frank Hirtz (1998) documents a situation in Bongabon municipality, a poor rural area of Nueva Ecija Province, Central Luzon, in which farm labour gangs, the *kabesilya*, are now paid varying amounts of cash to plant and harvest rice fields. Daily wage rates are closely negotiated and one reading

sees farmers as forming a coalition to “deal with the use and selection of free labour” (260). Hirtz warns against a reading of the rise of paid rural labour in terms of proletarianization and a capitalist transformation of the countryside that implies the severing of one class of people’s access to land (260). This ignores the “quasi-right to the land” that non-owners are granted within extended family relationships (260). In Bongabon, landowners have an employment obligation to the *kabesihya*, who are mainly landless unmarried women relatives. These ‘non-capitalist’ social relations of obligation and access rights contribute to distinctive forms of social cohesion based on the interdependence of the landed and landless. Thus in places such as Bongabon agrarian land reform laws risk a lack of compliance and cooperation. Well-intentioned though land reform policy may be, it begins with the ‘modern’ assumption that ‘wage’ labour works on farms where property has been expropriated by the landed class and turned into an abstracted factor of production. This unilinear interpretation of rural change with its representation of divided property ownership, while applicable in some areas of the Philippines, ignores the complexity and nuance of other local situations.

A questioning of how the rural landscape and its changes are ‘read’ raises issues of epistemological choice and the performative effects of the readings produced. Since Koppel et al.’s intervention there has been considerable discussion within social theory and social science of the problems with guiding metaphors of identity and change that claim to accurately ‘reflect’ the world but in actuality ‘perform’ it (Butler 1990, 1993, 1997; Mitchell 2005, 2008; Gibson-Graham 2006a, 2006b; Latour 2004; Callon 2005; Law and Urry 2004). Representations can no longer be portrayed as innocent ciphers of meaning. For many of us the challenge is not to produce ‘better’, more ‘accurate’ reflections of what is going on in the world out there, but to be more attuned to the epistemological and ethical decisions involved in our choice of representations and the material effects of the discourses we produce. This meta-theoretical engagement with how rural transformation is thought resonates, for us, with the very contemporary concerns about the performativity of social knowledge articulated so pointedly by Law and Urry:

...to the extent social science conceals its performativity from itself it is pretending to an innocence that it cannot have. And to the extent that it enacts methods that look for or assume certain structural stabilities, it enacts those stabilities *while interfering with other realities*. (2004, 404 emphasis ours)

What concerns us here is that “other realities” may have been interfered with by the use of certain representations of rural change. As the example of Hirtz’s work demonstrates, the theoretical choices researchers make, whether to attend to difference or focus on sameness, have

real effects. His intervention allows for new strategies of land reform to be imagined—ones that do not abstract from and delegitimize the social fabric of rural habitats and the contemporary and valuable norms that shape the conduct of rural life. Researchers have some choice as to how to proceed. The question is, how might we enrol different representations that allow us to step aside from performing the inevitability of capitalist development?

Rural identity rethought

In the search for a new language of the rural we need look no further than the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) pioneered by Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway (1992), Frank Ellis (1998), Ian Scoones (1998) and many others. This practical and theoretical intervention was critical in re-presenting the rural with its call for greater appreciation of the diverse livelihood practices engaged in by poor rural households. As a result of this intervention the rural can no longer be easily equated with agriculture and farm work. New concepts like ‘pluriactivity’, ‘occupational multiplicity’, and ‘a portfolio approach’ have been enrolled to denote the complex mix of farm and off-farm work, market and non-market transactions, local and global networks that ‘rural’ households draw upon to make ends meet (Rigg 2004, 994; 2005, 179). Even so, scholars are still at pains to challenge the “farming and land-focused vision” of the poor/rural world (Rigg 2006, 180) and the single focus of rural development policy on agricultural productivity (Ellis and Biggs 2001, 445). Jonathan Rigg has made a major contribution to shaping thinking about agrarian transition in development geography based on fieldwork in Thailand and Laos as well as his extensive knowledge of the ‘rural South’ (2005; 2006). Echoing Koppel et al.’s challenges of the early 1990s, Rigg calls again in 2006 for the dislodging of entrenched associations of the rural with farming (181), non-monetized informal exchanges (189), land ownership (196) and with agricultural (but not non-farm) diversification (195). The rural must be represented in its heterogeneity, but how to do so?

Chambers and colleagues took up the task of developing a new language of the rural, drawing upon ecological representations of diversity, complexity, sustainability, resilience and vulnerability.^v Ecological theory proposes that the great biodiversity of ecosystems provides nature with a robust base that has the potential to recover from natural and unnatural disasters (2000, 83; Capra 1996, 303). Chambers is one of a growing number of scholars who have taken the idea of resilience, which describes the way that natural processes reassert a life force, heal wounds, create new habitats and move on from disturbance, and extended it to describe human processes that build *social* resilience (see, for example Adger 2000, 347; Adger *et al.* 2002).

Chambers uses ecological concepts to communicate what he has learnt from years of observations and conversations with poor people in rural contexts. In his experience,

- increased complexity and diversity in livelihood systems normally add to the number, size and spread of flows of food, income and other resources;
- complex and diverse livelihood and farming systems reduce vulnerability and enhance security;
- increases in the number, size and spread of livelihood flows and greater livelihood security contribute to wellbeing; and
- diversity [of livelihood opportunities] adds to [household] independence and to the quality of [individual] experience (2003, 170 inserts added).

He hints here and in subsequent work (eg 2005, 187) at important dynamics, relating increased livelihood diversity with reduced vulnerability, enhanced household security, wellbeing and independence.

The performative effect of the SLA reframing of rural identity has been remarkable. Whole development programs have been reshaped to focus on supporting and diversifying the livelihoods of poor rural households (Scoones 1998). While there has been concern about the framework's lack of attention to the wider politics of survival and exclusion, and the power differentials within households, critics have usually sought to refine and build on this important "analytical structure" (de Haan and Zoomers 2005, 30).

Our question is, what impact has this important reframing of rural identity had on rethinking representations of rural change? Chambers alludes to problems of representation in his discussion of the "under-perceived dynamism" of the complex and diverse livelihood strategies employed by the rural poor (2003, 172). Perhaps this is not surprising when the language by which SLA has been codified refers to individuals and households as 'trading-off' between 'investments' in the five capitals that constitute their life worlds—natural, physical or produced, financial, human and social 'capital'. Development interventions guided by the SLA have sought to enhance the diversification of rural livelihoods through micro-credit lending, micro-enterprise development and technical training. As Laurie (2005) points out, these supportive strategies are represented as strengthening the 'five capitals' in order to promote the growth of output via private enterprise. Once again development pathways are represented as animated by the growth machine logic of capitalist development, and there is little conceptual space left for other forms

of dynamism. Perhaps this is what Chambers is alluding to when he writes that “[f]ailure to understand how complexity contributes to stability and sustainability may stem from the mental models of machines and the controlled tidiness of normal [economic] science” (170 insert added).

In our view there has been disappointingly little rethinking beyond unidirectional logics of capitalist globalization and development as ‘motors’ of rural transformation (see also Brookfield 2008). Still discernible in much analysis is the tendency to read social processes via arguments that overstate the extent and depth of transitions identified as “from family to wage labor, from peasant to market production, from human to mechanized labor, from rural to urban sociocultural organization” (Koppel and Hawkins 1994, 24) or from a ‘moral’ economy centred on subsistence security to a ‘rational’ economy in which the market rules (Scott 1976).^{vi} Left unchallenged, these representations have the potential to interfere with the messy task that the SLA initiated—namely appreciating diverse and complex dynamic systems (Law 2004). Our interest is in how might we strengthen the rural dynamics Chambers hints at with new kinds of thinking.

Rethinking rural dynamics

Encouraged by the SLA’s productive rethinking of rural identity we return to ecology, a field where thinkers are grappling with how to represent complex and unpredictable systems, as inspiration for rethinking rural dynamics. We do so via the pioneering work of Jane Jacobs. In *The Nature of Economies* (2000) Jacobs revisits the themes of her 1983 E.F. Schumacher lecture in which she lays out the dynamic principles of natural ecosystems and links these representations to what she knows about the economic vitality of regions. Jacobs proposes that we cultivate economic sustainability by imitating the complex dynamics of natural ecosystems. This involves supporting modes of **habitat maintenance**, promoting the growth of **diversity and resilience** and keeping tabs on the complex **interdependence of developments and co-developments**. We discuss each dynamic in turn.

In natural ecosystems habitats are maintained by continual adjustments and corrections to the relations between communities of organisms. Extending this idea to include human communities, Jacobs speculates on interacting cultural processes involved in natural **habitat maintenance**. She includes the aesthetic appreciation and admiration of nature that contributes to environmental protection; a sense of morality embodied in definitions of just and unjust behaviour; the capacity

to feel awe for nature's power and beauty and fear of retribution for transgression of nature's laws; the use of language that infuses care and respect for environments, warns about threats, and persuades people to act; and the capacity for corrective tinkering and contriving (2000, 127-132). Might we extend this thinking further and identify the processes involved in social and economic, as well as natural, habitat maintenance?

Echoing Chambers' observations about livelihood diversity, Jacobs notes that the greater diversity of niches in natural ecosystems, the more effective they are in supporting life (1983, 25). Thus, she argues, **diversity creates resilience**:

In an ecosystem, the essential contributions made within the conduit are created by diverse biological activities. In the teeming economy, the essential contributions made within the conduit are created by diverse economic activities. In both systems, thanks to the diversity with which received energy is used, fragmented, and reused, that energy/matter leaves much evidence of its passage through the conduit. (Jacobs 2000, 59)

The gifts of nature and the ingenuity and creativity of human effort are what kick start the circulation of energy in an economy.^{vii} Jacobs calls the capture and recycling of energy by diverse economic/ecological activities within the conduits of an economy/ecology, 'self-refuelling'. The continued refuelling of a system contributes to its resilience.

The last dynamic that Jacobs alerts us to is that of the complex **interdependence of developments and co-developments** that evolve in an unpredictable but self-organizing manner. Any one development is activated by a constituting set of conditions and results in multiple and related co-developments. Maintaining the sustainability of a system involves precarious processes of balancing and correcting. In an economic system this means keeping tabs on the unpredictable dynamic impulses that ripple through an ensemble of communities and taking action when habitats and diversity are threatened.

Of course the extension of these ecological dynamics to the social and economic domain must take into consideration the significant differences between ecosystems and human communities. Capra, for example, argues that

[t]here is no self-awareness in ecosystems, no language, no consciousness, and no culture; and therefore no justice or democracy; but also no greed or dishonesty. We cannot learn anything about those human values and shortcomings from ecosystems. But what we *can* and must learn from them is how to live sustainably. During more

than three billion years of evolution the planet's ecosystems have organized themselves in subtle and complex ways so as to maximize sustainability. (1996, 298)^{viii}

Like Capra, Jacobs is aware that what distinguishes human communities from natural communities is the ethical and political moment—the space of decision. She is also cognizant of the destructive impact of human ignorance that frequently counters (often unintentionally) these life-sustaining dynamics. From our perspective, her extension of ecological understandings to the economy offers a way to help identify the choices facing communities interested in increasing economic wellbeing by activating ethical, rather than structural, dynamics.

In *The Nature of Economies* Jacobs reflects that economists have chosen to pay little attention to the dynamics of natural or social habitat maintenance, to economic diversity and resilience, nor to the complex workings of development and co-development (107). As researchers who also decide what to represent and what not to represent we are implicated in the production of this sociology of absences (Santos, 2004). Law and Urry make this point well:

If methods are not innocent then they are also political. They help to *make* realities. But the question is: which realities? Which do we want to help to make more real, and which less real? How do we want to interfere (because interfere we will, one way or another)? (2004, 404)

By representing rural change largely in terms of the unilinear, 'structural' dynamics of capitalist development, capitalism is inadvertently made more real and the possibility of alternative economic futures is interfered with. If complex processes of change are theorized in which ethical decisions play a key role in creating, destroying or recreating resilient rural livelihoods, this new knowledge about rural dynamics might support a diverse range of economic and ecological habitats. The spaces of decision where ethical choices could enact different futures might be pinpointed. In the next section of this paper we demonstrate how Jacobs' ecologically inspired analysis has helped us to rethink rural development pathways and experiment with bringing more sustainable rural communities into being.

Habitat maintenance, economic diversity and interdependent development in a rural municipality

The following discussion of the Jagna Community Partnering Project is refracted through the lens of Jacobs' extension of ecological to economic thinking. Our action research took place from December 2003 to December 2008 in formal partnership with two locally based researchers, one representing Jagna's municipal government and the other, the NGO Unlad

Kabayan Migrant Services Foundation, Inc. and later, its offshoot, Bohol Initiatives for Local Development, Inc, (BoholDev). Unlad Kabayan has pioneered the strategy of Migrant Savings for Alternative Investment, working with migrant investors all over the world and local governments in the Philippines to facilitate social entrepreneurship and pro-poor local economic growth.^{ix} Four community researchers recruited from economically marginalized groups also joined the research team. Larger numbers of community members were enrolled into enterprise research and development groups as the action research process unfolded and these groups later drew on the technical expertise of government departments in the municipality and province.^x The steps of the research process and its outcomes have been documented elsewhere (see Cahill 2008, 2009; Cameron and Gibson 2005b; Gibson, Hill and Maclay 2008; Gibson-Graham 2005; McKay 2009; McKay *et al.* 2007; Robinson *et al.* 2004). In on-going interactions with Jagna community members since the formal project ended we have developed the more theoretically inflected rear vision view of our research findings presented here.

Ethics and practices affecting habitat maintenance

Producing a knowledge and a specific language of what sustains human habitats is, Jacobs suggests, a first step toward understanding the complex dynamics of survival. Here we extend Jacobs' ideas about the cultural processes involved in natural habitat maintenance to identify the processes involved in *both* natural and social habitat maintenance as the two are inextricably interwoven. Our action research employed an 'assets-based' approach that engaged different groups in the community (older women, young mothers, landless labourers, poor farmers) in inventorying Jagna's physical, institutional, social and individual needs and assets (Gibson-Graham 2005: 10-11). This exercise produced descriptions of specific practices and guiding ethics that were identified, in discussion with our community researchers, as either 'positive' and community strengthening, 'negative' and undermining of community, or ambiguous and conditional.^{xi} In Figure 1 we have grouped the practices in terms of their varied contribution to habitat maintenance, broadly defined. These kinds of practices and ethics are often identified as 'social capital', a capitalocentric category that obscures the specificity and potential that we are interested in here, harnessing diversity into narratives of capitalist development.

Include Figure 1 here

Most destructive of the local habitat are the practices informed by a lack of respect for the natural environment, for sustainable ways of interacting with nature and for the community whose lives depend on a healthy environment. Significant disapproval was expressed by the

community researchers for the kind of individualism that leads to disregard for the fortunes and efforts of others (*ija ija*, extortionate interest rates and rents) and lazy or self-disrespecting group behaviour (*mañana*, the dole-out mentality). These practices disrupt social mores—they obstruct flows that meet basic needs, enhance consumption differences between groups, and endanger the livelihoods of those who depend on the natural commons.

Jagna participants agreed that many of their long-standing local economic practices enact an ethos of care, sharing and equity that works to maintain and stabilize the local society. Certain practices safeguard and strengthen the social and natural habitat, ensuring that flows of food, income and resources meet people's needs. These practices maintain acceptable minimum levels of consumption by reducing the vulnerability of widows, the landless, the sick and disabled. They create, sustain and share out the social commons that defines the community, and promote the circulation of surpluses within the community to produce material and social wellbeing for all. They embody an ethic of care for nature and the agriculturally modified physical environment.

There were particular ethics and practices that were seen to affect governance and contribute to a kind of habitat maintenance about which there is some ambivalence. Respect for authority or superiors, for example, is a valued part of the local culture when it comes to the elderly, as embodied in the common act of making *mano*, where the young person takes the elder's hand and places it on their forehead. But the fear and awe of politicians that leads to vote-buying at election times is denigrated, though practiced with somewhat embarrassed resignation.

It was clear that in Jagna complex practices interact to maintain the social and natural habitat in varying states of sustainability. Each practice is linked to a guiding ethic concerning community and individual wellbeing, social obligation toward kin, neighbours and patrons, and respect or disregard for nature and culture.^{xii}

Economic activities contributing to the diversity and resilience of Jagna's eco(nomic)-system

Jacobs suggests that local economic development is connected to the expansion or decline of diversity and resilience. Her extension of ecological concepts to the economy focuses attention on the number of different product niches and sectoral activities in a region that capture and reuse received energy—by, for example, generating a range of jobs or adding value to local product. The greater the variety of self-provisioning sectors and the more import replacing activities a local economy hosts, the less dependent it is on outside forces, and the more able it is

to find favourable modes of relating to other local and distant economies. Our extension of the concept of economic diversity focuses not only on the number of sectors and thus products produced, but also on the range of transactions, forms of labour remuneration and enterprises that orchestrate surplus appropriation and distribution. A significant challenge for this theoretical extension is that formal knowledge about what informally sustains rural lives and economies is largely non-existent. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues, modern monocultural knowledge has actively produced the non-credibility of local ecologies of difference and presence (2004, 238; Gibson-Graham, 2005). Again, researchers must make a conscious ethical choice to represent economic difference and make it credible.

As part of the action research we conducted a participatory inventory to identify the components of Jagna's diverse economy.^{xiii} Our inventory employed Gibson-Graham's diverse economy framing (2006b, 71) as it offers a set of categories that can be used to proliferate ecologies of difference in the economic landscape. Diversity is conceptualized here both in terms of Jacobs' different product niches and sectoral activities (rice farming, mango growing, fishing, fabrication, wholesaling, retailing, etc.) but also in terms of different kinds of enterprises, transactions, and forms of labour that support daily living in place (see Figure 2).

Include Figure 2 here

In workshop discussions the community researchers and our research team started to systematically note down and define the local terms that made up Jagna's language of economic diversity.^{xiv} This listing contained many overlaps with terms documented by Urich and Edgecombe (1999) for the town of Batuan in nearby central Bohol. Moreover Jagna's range of reciprocal and collective community based activities were found to be similar to those identified by Tadem (2009) as part of a vibrant peasant moral economy in Central Luzon and Aguilar (2008) whose research with households of overseas migrant workers highlights a lively network of gift and reciprocal exchanges in which money often substitutes for products and labour.

A local economy is likely to be more resilient to the devastating impacts of pricing fluctuations and boom-bust trade and investment cycles if it contains a diverse range of economic activities supporting wellbeing. Our expanded account of economic diversity includes alternative and non-market transactions, alternatively paid and unpaid labour, and alternative capitalist and non-capitalist enterprises. By excavating and representing the extent of economic diversity in Jagna, research participants began to see their local economy in a new light. It could now be seen as

already ‘working’ to provide social and habitat maintenance, and as having assets that could be developed to increase wellbeing.

Development and co-development

Our two inventories of habitat maintenance practices and diverse economic activities in Jagna present a point-in-time picture of interacting economic and ecological systems in continual flux. Jacobs’ ecological view suggests that to maintain the sustainability of a system precarious processes of balancing and correcting must take place. Extending this idea to the economy we get a glimpse at how interventions intended to produce development outcomes have been accompanied by co-developments that have undermined diversity and resulted in the imbalances that characterize the unsustainable state of rural economies in many parts of the Philippines.^{xv} It is also possible to recognize powerful developments and co-developments that have made corrections so that these systems continue to sustain and strengthen habitats. As researchers interested in activating ethical dynamics of development, we must make an effort to uncover these precarious counter-acting and experimental movements as they are a key to constructing more sustainable futures.

From both our action research and past academic research it is possible to trace how modernizing development interventions have reduced the capacity for ecological and social habitat maintenance and decreased the viability of diverse economic activities in Jagna and places like it. Urich (1993), for example, documents the “rapid decline in bird and aquatic species” that accompanied the introduction of green revolution agricultural technology, specifically pesticides, in the delicate karst landscape of Bohol in the 1970s. Researching in a community some 25 kilometres inland from Jagna, he describes how social self-help organizations such as the *gala*, *dayong* and *hongos* were disrupted when populations were forcibly relocated in the face of insurgency (133-134). Important interactions between economic and ecological systems were thus affected. For example, the local *hongos* (the same communal labouring organization that is known as *hungus* in Jagna) had a knowledge of the environmental possibilities and limitations of karst landscapes handed down over five centuries of wet rice growing in this vulnerable ecosystem. They had “developed creative solutions, such as the construction of terraces for erosion control and cave and or swallet management for regulation of irrigation water” (134). The disbanding of these groups, imposition of private property rights over communally held land and introduction of chemical fertilizer and pesticides caused water systems to become polluted. People and livestock suffered illness and death. Growing awareness of the detrimental environmental

impacts of agricultural modernization has led to a more critical approach to new technologies and a return by many farmers in the Philippines to older organic rice growing practices that use farmer-bred seeds and resuscitate communal work traditions (Wright, 2008 228-229).^{xvi} The learning process triggered by these events has led to heightened public awareness. When the provincial government started promoting the planting of oil palm for export in Jagna in 2003 at the outset of the Community Partnering Project, a public meeting was held and outspoken resistance to the plan voiced by farmers and environmental activists alike on the grounds of its destructive impact on the ecology of the region (Gibson field notes 2003). The development was subsequently blocked.

Other interventions to promote export crops such as coconuts, mangoes, ginger and bananas aimed at expanding cash incomes have also impacted on the diversity of the local economy. For example, the delicately balanced social contract involved in gleaning has been ruptured in response to production pressures on coconut and mango plantation owners and increased population pressure. With regulations now prohibiting gleaning from coconut groves, the diversity of (non-market) transactions has been reduced. In another case it has been increased. In response to the environmental and economic vulnerability of export-oriented farmers in the central Philippines a people-to-people fair-trade arrangement was set up by the NGO Alter-Trade Japan to export organic Balangon bananas from Bohol and other provinces to Japanese consumers (2009). This alter-trade network has established a secure, ethically governed export market for Jagna producers. It has stimulated economic activity in the farming sector and promoted cooperative networks and ecological practices that strengthen the social and environmental habitat.

The continuing out-migration of labour as overseas contract workers (OCWs) is, perhaps, the greatest pressure on the sustainability of the Jagna economy.^{xvii} As people leave, they discharge energy from the economic system, removing sources of creativity that could be used to replenish and refuel it. But interesting co-developments have emerged. In one barangay a migrant decided to donate a portion of his remittances to fund a collective project of sealing the farm-to-market road that was impassable in wet weather. Drawing on the communal tradition of *bayanihan* barangay residents worked with the concrete and gravel provided to improve the road infrastructure, thereby giving everyone all weather access to markets and the town centre.^{xviii} Farmers can now regularly market their agricultural products and have been encouraged to diversify crops and grow more.

These examples of developments and co-developments, of delicate balancing and correcting, of diversity destruction and creation, of local actions and international connections suggest that researchers can, if they choose, analyse the dynamics of complex ecological and economic systems and begin to take ethical actions that will increase diversity and strengthen the resilience of habitats.^{xix} In the final section of this paper we discuss how the Community Partnering Project experimented with increasing the diversity of enterprise forms in Jagna's economy as a new development strategy.

Experimenting with increasing enterprise diversity and strengthening resilience in a rural municipality

The most common enterprise form in Jagna is that of the subsistence oriented self-employed independent operator. In the municipality of some 30,000 residents there are only a handful of consumer credit and marketing cooperatives and a small number of capitalist enterprises (Figure 2). Our NGO partners and the action research team were particularly interested in experimenting with community-based social enterprises as a way of expanding **enterprise diversity** and strengthening the resilience of the Jagna economy. Community-based social enterprises involve "a community acting corporately as both entrepreneur and enterprise" (Peredo and Chrisman 2006: 310) in a business "with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (Lyon and Ramsden 2006: 27). In contrast to privately owned micro-enterprise the larger size of community enterprises allows for a division of labour, offers opportunities for sharing use of space, machinery and market networks, and enables the enterprise to generate greater surpluses (Biswas 2001, 137). Because of their explicitly social objectives these businesses foreground ethical decision-making around individual income levels, consumption expectations and the destination of surplus distributions, and are more likely to privilege reinvestment in the community and an equitable distribution of wealth (Gibson-Graham 2003; Prayukvong 2005, 1179). Instead of harnessing local assets to support individual entrepreneurial development, we raised the idea of community-based social enterprises because of their potential to provide a more secure business structure that could harness local practices of mutual support that were deeply valued.

We asked people to identify assets that could be mobilized in new enterprises. Four groups made up of local residents drawn from occupational, life stage and neighbourhood communities each selected a product niche in which to research the feasibility of community enterprise development (see Figure 3).^{xx}

Include Figure 3 here

In an upland barangay a group of 10 elderly women members of the Jagna Council of Women were keen to experiment with ginger products as fresh ginger was a plentiful local resource that farmers could not market easily. They formed a working group to make sweet ginger tea powder, or *salabat*, which, when combined with boiling water, is a popular beverage with acknowledged health benefits for pregnant women and others experiencing nausea. By 2009 the enterprise has grown to involve up to 30 women and some men, earning P90 (Au\$2.30) per production, with 2 to 3 productions per week (Gibson 2009 field notes; Community Economies Collective and Gibson 2009: 129-131).

A group of six younger women neighbours, all with small children, researched the feasibility of making a set of school graduation gowns (toga and mortar boards) to be hired on a regular basis to the local schools. They secured the loyalty of local principals and the schools offered start-up cash so that the group could get started. They made a set of some 70 outfits that they regularly hire out not only for graduations but for religious processions.

A mixed gender group of 11 small coconut farmers from across the municipality came together to experiment with making coconut products. Initially they looked into virgin coconut oil production but discounted this idea as there was no local market for this relatively expensive product. They settled on making *nata de coco*, a popular gelatinous dessert made from coconut water. The group began production at two sites—an upland barangay hall and the local NGO office in the town centre. For a few years they were producing regularly and supplying this luxury item to local consumers at fiesta time. Some members also experimented with producing healthy snacks to be sold to school children. The enterprise stumbled to a halt in the absence of effective facilitation to help coordinate the cross municipality activity, but the group is keen to resume (Community Economies Collective and Gibson 2009: 132-134).

Five members of the 80 strong Jagna Porters Multi-purpose Cooperative decided that they wanted to purchase a truck and start hauling cargo to and from the port and more distant and

upland areas of the municipality. After visiting a successful trucking business in Mindanao the group realized that the organizational and capital demands of this kind of enterprise were beyond them. Instead they strengthened the organization of their cooperative, sacked their corrupt treasurer, negotiated alternative labouring jobs for their membership when the port closed for renovations and built an office to act as a hub for interaction and future activities.

Since the formal project ended another community enterprise has been consolidated with the help of the NGO BoholDev to manufacture *ubi* powder and confectionary made from the aromatic purple yam that Bohol is famous for. This enterprise involves some 80 *ubi* growers and 13 process workers and it sells to local consumers and to other food producers who have developed an *ubi* flavoured *calamay*, another Bohol delicacy that is very popular as a traveller's gift or *pasalubong*.

In the community-based social enterprises begun as part of the Jagna Community Partnering Project people began to make ethical decisions that would activate new dynamics of rural transformation. We can begin to identify what the elements of an ecologically inspired economic development strategy might be by reflecting on their experiment. First and foremost they began to strengthen what was at hand, their social and economic habitat. The businesses are in Jacobs' terms doing the job of "self-refuelling"—providing new conduits by which local resources are captured, used and passed around. The collective enterprises draw on and thereby validate community practices of mutual aid, reciprocity, voluntarism and trust in both production and marketing activities. These businesses are increasing well-being directly by generating new cash incomes and interest-free micro-credit funds for members. Enterprise participants report using their earnings to access health care, buy spectacles, food and pay school bills (Community Economies Collective and Gibson 2009: 130). Each business also produces benefit for the wider community by supplying a greater range of affordable products and services to local residents. Only after establishing stable supply to meet local demand have the enterprises sought ethical trade relations with non-local consumers.

Second, the resilience of the economy has been strengthened by increasing its enterprise diversity. Each group experimented with a new enterprise form in Jagna—community based enterprise. In the absence of a legal status for this new enterprise form they have tested out the association and cooperative models to accommodate their collective interests. In the most

successful enterprise (the *salabat* making) surpluses have begun to be generated and the group is interested in spinning off additional enterprises to be run by more community members.

Third, the enterprise development has activated co-developments in civil society. The usual suspicion of outsiders, even of other barangay residents, has been overcome as enterprise members market their products all over the municipality and, in the case of the *nata* group, work together. All enterprise members have commented on their greater public involvement and willingness to challenge authority since starting their businesses and many have experienced a sense of pride in their capacities.

In summary the Jagna community based social enterprises are bringing credibility to hidden economic activities that are habitat maintaining, and promoting economic diversity by replacing imports and developing new product niches.^{xxi} They are maintaining practices that are central to the equity, security and safety of their social and natural habitat. They are co-developing multiple enterprises and engaged civic sensibilities. All these initiatives have the potential to strengthen the resilience of Jagna's community economy.^{xxii}

Conclusion

As the world economy falters in the face of rising oil prices, financial crises and the uncertainties of climate change it is less clear than ever before how communities in out of the way places can rely on connecting to the capitalist 'growth engine' to pull them out of poverty. This paper has called for a rethinking and re-presentation of the dynamics of transformation in rural areas of Asia so that new development pathways can be imagined and enacted. Bruce Koppel's co-authored essays on rural transformation provide timely reminders of the dangerous effects of the metaphors researchers choose when representing the world. We have been concerned that representations of rural change highlighting capitalist developmental dynamics have had the unintended consequence of denying credibility to a host of other dynamics that might be creatively harnessed into more sustainable and experimental development pathways. Koppel's thoughtful insights have prompted us to look for more innovative and imaginative representations of non-deterministic, complex systems in which rural change is opened up to unpredictability.

We have drawn from thinking in many different quarters in this experimental analysis. From Koppel we turned to Robert Chambers and his inspirational commitment to representing the

diversity of rural livelihoods. Chambers gestured towards representing non-linear developmental dynamics and we have drawn upon the creative and hopeful work of Jane Jacobs to further this project. Jacobs sees in nature complex development dynamics that our economies can mimic. Her interest in understanding the vibrancy of local economies in terms of ecological dynamics has provided a way of interpreting the findings of our action research intervention in the Philippines municipality of Jagna and developing insights into the possibilities of post-capitalist regional development.

If the economy is seen as something that is produced, that is socially constructed and performatively constituted, then it is a space of decision, and resilience has to be actively achieved through ethical decision-making, not by relying on any structural imperative or logic. We have argued here for greater attention to the heterogeneity of dynamics that produce rural change, including those of social, economic and natural habitat maintenance and those that sustain and expand economic and ecological diversity. We have also called for more research into the interdependence of developments and co-developments in rural areas. This might involve tracing the diverse uptake and unpredictable impacts of mechanization, monetization, commoditization, proletarianization and out-migration, outside of the narrative framing of capitalist development. From such work, new insights into sustainable ecological and economic development pathways can emerge.

What does this analysis offer local and provincial governments charged with the task of accelerating economic development? In our action research we pursued only one strategy of alternative local development—namely increasing the diversity of enterprise forms. Local government has a crucial role to play in supporting this diversity by connecting and networking community based enterprise initiatives. The local government officers representing the Departments of Agriculture and Science and Technology are invaluable sources of knowledge and organizational assistance and, with training, could take a more creative facilitative role in generating and incubating enterprise ideas. At the provincial level support is needed to set up regional organizations of social enterprises so that localities are not in competition with each other, but are part of coordinated marketing and distribution networks. Where regional community economies are flourishing around the world, such as in Quebec, the Basque cooperative complex in Spain, and Brazil there is increasing evidence of their resilience in the face of global capitalist economic crisis (Amin 2009).

But our analysis suggests that local economic development could be opened up to a much wider range of strategies that would strengthen the resilience of ecological, social and economic habitats. Enterprise diversity could be accompanied by support for diverse transactions—reciprocal exchange, local currencies, fair-trade networks; and diverse forms of labour—in-kind labour remuneration, reciprocal labour exchanges, neighbourhood care networks.

In all this discussion we have been keen to place the theoretical choices researchers make in the foreground, so that the political and world-shaping import of thinking actions can be recognized. The space of decision that is the economy includes the decisions theorists make when they represent the economy to themselves and others, as well as the decisions local people make as members of communities that are always becoming, evolving, breaking down and reforming. An alternative geography of possibility might emerge if researchers attended more closely to diverse habitats and economies in place. By theorizing heterogeneous, non-deterministic dynamics of change room to experiment with ethical interventions would be created and it might be more possible to perform different development pathways.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the participants in our action research project and members of the Jagna community for their insights, interest and inputs. Thanks also for the comments and suggestions made by our anonymous reviewers and by those who heard versions of this paper presented at the Australian National University, University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, University of the Philippines, Diliman and at the South East Asian Geography Association conference, Manila 2008 and the Second Global Conference on Economic Geography, Beijing, 2007. Finally, thanks to Sandra Davenport for her valuable research assistance and Jenny Cameron, Michelle Carnegie, Julie Graham and Ann Hill for insightful theoretical and editorial suggestions.

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Figure 1. Habitat Effects of Local Ethics and Practices

Effect on Habitat	Ethic	Practice
Physical Habitat Destroying	Lack of respect for commons	Illegal extraction of river sand and gravel, illegal logging on uplands, over-fishing, gleaning too often, vandalism in limestone caves
Social Habitat Undermining	Lack of respect for commons	Property theft, vandalism
	Individual gain at expense of others	<i>Ningas gogo</i> (lack of sustained commitment, especially if no immediate personal or household benefit) <i>Ija ija</i> (each out for their own) <i>Gali ulo</i> (hard headed, rational or uncaring behaviour) <i>Gaya kaya</i> (imitating rather than innovating, a wait and see attitude) <i>Mañana</i> (people postponing making a contribution and thus not pulling their weight in group activities)
	Entitled to make excessive demands	Dole-out mentality; blow out sharing; extortionate interest, rents
Physical Habitat Maintaining	Respect for the environment	Ritual offerings to spirits of land and trees
	Responsibility for maintaining environment	<i>Tingub</i> (regular voluntary work on irrigation channels) CIVAC ('citizen's voluntary action' led by barangay captain to do road fixing, street cleaning)
Social Habitat Maintaining	Mutual respect across difference	Upland-lowland barter (rice for coastal fish, wine, cigarettes, pots, salt)
	Responsibility for maintaining community	Volunteering <i>Bayanihan</i> (communal work to help households or barangay) <i>Gala'</i> (dances and money offered in honour of patron saint—fundraising for church)
	Charity for less fortunate	Fundraising, interest free loans, houses built, water sealed toilets constructed <i>Pamula</i> , (gleaning of fruits and vegetables after harvest) <i>Hagpat</i> (access to fish catch by poor)

	<p>Trust-based sharing of labour, goods, cash</p> <p>Gifting</p> <p>Patronage</p> <p>Community sharing of surplus</p>	<p><i>Guno</i> (access to corn harvest by landless) <i>Sagod</i> (access to rice harvest by landless)</p> <p><i>Inigsoon</i> (brotherly love) <i>Hungus</i> (group labour on rice fields swapped between farms) <i>Badsanay</i> (exchange of individual labour services) <i>Dajong</i> (neighbourhood mortuary assistance incl. money, food and services) <i>Gala</i> (families give money, rice, wood to family of marrying son) <i>Kubaway</i> (households pool money to buy fiesta carabao and access funds for credit during year) <i>Repa-repa</i> (revolving credit associations used to access large amounts for housing, land, major appliances) <i>Tampuhay</i>, (savings group, funds divided at end of year)</p> <p>Church donations, <i>gala, gala'</i> Remittances</p> <p><i>Suki-ay</i> (store credit or discounts in return for loyal customer patronage) <i>Suking tindahan</i> (credit from sari-sari stores for basic goods) Loyalty payments/gifts <i>Fiesta</i> (annual feast organized at family and barangay level)</p>
Ambiguous Impacts	<p>Solidarity Respect for authority/superiors Stigmatization</p>	Tolerance of insiders, including corrupt practices Politeness to elders Fear, awe of politicians and wealthy people Suspicion of outsiders

Source: Jagna Community Partnering Project local research team, community researchers and enterprise group members. Terms in italics are in local vernacular.

Figure 2. Jagna's Diverse Economy

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
<p>Goods: furniture, agri-vet supplies, hardware, pharmaceuticals, groceries, motor cycles</p> <p>Services: internet, medical, telecommunications, rental properties</p> <p>Credit: First Consolidated Bank 2% monthly interest, 7 registered lending inst. and pawnshops</p>	<p>Private business</p> <p>Farm labourers</p> <p>General labourers</p> <p>Port office workers</p> <p>Municipal employees:</p> <p>Provincial Govt. employees</p> <p>NGO employees</p>	<p>Merchants: 75 retailers, 6 dealers, 2 trading, 1 wholesaler</p> <p>Bank: First Consolidated Bank</p> <p>Manufacturing : 6 businesses (incl. welding, catering, dressmaking)</p> <p>Services : 59 (incl. private hospital, schools)</p>
ALTERNATIVE MARKET	ALTERNATIVE PAID	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST
<p>Local trading systems</p> <p><i>Sari sari</i> stores, <i>suki</i> relations</p> <p><i>Ukay ukay</i> used clothing sales</p> <p>House-to-house and sidewalk vending</p> <p>Alternative currencies</p> <p>Rice paid for use of thresher and plough</p> <p>Underground market</p> <p>Drug trade</p> <p>Co-op exchange</p> <p>Alter-trade banana network</p> <p>Small coconut farmers co-op marketing</p> <p>Barter</p> <p>Upland rice for coastal fish, wine, cigarettes, pots, salt</p> <p>Alternative credit</p> <p>Multi-purpose co-ops: porters, coconut growers</p> <p><i>Suki-ay</i>: store credit or discounts in return for loyal customer patronage</p> <p><i>Kubaway</i></p> <p><i>Suking tindahan</i></p> <p><i>Repa repa</i></p> <p><i>Tampubay</i></p>	<p>Self-employed</p> <p>Farmers, fishers, traders, drivers, producers, porters</p> <p>Cooperative</p> <p>Porters</p> <p>Indentured</p> <p>781 Overseas contract worker (OCW) seamen and domestic helpers</p> <p>Reciprocal</p> <p><i>Hungus</i></p> <p><i>Badsanay</i></p> <p>In kind</p> <p><i>Sagod</i>: landless perform weeding and harvest labour in return for 1/6 share of harvest</p> <p>Tenant farmers: paid with 50%, 66% or 75% of harvest, depending on inputs</p> <p>Hired labour: harvest coconuts for P70/day plus meals</p> <p><i>Guno</i>: harvesting corn for farmer with entitlement to 1/7 of what is picked</p> <p><i>Hagpat</i>: helping pick fish from fisherman's net in return for 1/3 of catch</p> <p>Pension</p> <p>Retirees</p>	<p>Environmental ethic</p> <p>none</p> <p>Social ethic</p> <p><i>Botica sa Barangay</i>: pharmacy run by political party that sells cheap medicine to less well off</p> <p>State capitalist</p> <p>Philippines Port Authority</p>

<i>Transactions</i>	<i>Labour</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>
NON-MARKET <p>Household flows Food sharing Child care sharing Care of house and animals</p> <p>Gifts Charity to poor—house built, water sealed toilets constructed <i>Dajong</i> <i>Gala'</i> <i>Gala</i> Dory: local store that offers credit for no interest in gratitude for customer loyalty</p> <p>Indigenous exchange Ritual offerings to spirits of houses, land and trees</p> <p>Gleaning <i>Pamulak</i></p> <p>Theft Stealing crops to settle gambling debts Illegal extraction of sand and gravel Illegal logging on uplands</p>	UNPAID <p><i>Tingub</i> <i>Bayanihan</i> CIVAC Parish Pastoral Council Jagna Council of Women beautification projects</p> <p>Housework/family care Cooking, cleaning, child care, care of sick and elderly Family work on farm Family work in small business</p>	NON-CAPITALIST <p>Non-profit NGOs Schools Alter-trade organization</p> <p>Communal Pangdan Water Cooperative Small coconut farmers marketing cooperative Porters' multi-purpose cooperative</p> <p>Independent Fishing enterprises Farms Trading business Small scale producers: carpenters, drivers, chain saw ops, cock breeding, video game rental, tricycle transport</p> <p>Feudal Tenant farms</p>

Sources: Jagna Community Partnering Project local research team and community researchers; figures on businesses and employment are from the Bohol Provincial Medium Development Plan 1998-2003; numbers of people in various occupational categories are from Barangay Development Plans and Unlad Kabayan's unpublished survey of Overseas contract workers (OCWs). Terms in italics are in local vernacular, many have been defined in Figure 1.

Figure 3 Assets, Groups and Enterprise Ideas in Jagna

Local asset	Group	Community enterprise idea
Fresh ginger	Older women in existing organization in Laca barangay	<i>Salabat</i> ginger tea powder making
Coconuts	Men and women coconut farmers from all over the municipality	Virgin coconut oil and/or <i>nata de coco</i>
Active port	Port labourers, members of the Jagna Multipurpose Porters' Cooperative	Hauling truck
Sewing skills	Young mothers in Malbog barangay	Making and hiring of school graduation garments

ⁱ Republic of the Philippines Local Government Act 1991.

ⁱⁱ This action research was part of a larger collaborative project funded jointly by the Australian Research Council and Australia's official development assistance agency, AusAID (Australian Research Council Grant No. LP0347118 "Negotiating alternative economic strategies for regional development in Indonesia and the Philippines"). Katherine Gibson, Deirdre McKay and Amanda Cahill were responsible for research activity in the Philippines. In the context of recently decentralized governance, the four year research program tested out the utility of the Community Partnering model, an approach that was piloted as part of an action research project in the Latrobe Valley of Australia (Cameron and Gibson 2001; 2005a).

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, the exciting international collaboration of 23 scholars, mainly geographers, around Challenges of Agrarian Transition in South East Asia (http://www.caac.umontreal.ca/en/chatsea_concepts.html).

^{iv} In the context of this debate, the term 'metaphor', which usually involves the application of a descriptive term to something to which it is not directly applicable, is used to denote what we might now more usually call a representation (see Harrison, 2001).

^v Ian Scoones (1999) documents the 1990s explosion of interest in interdisciplinary thinking about social, economic and ecological processes. While Chambers was leading research on sustainable livelihoods, Harold Brookfield led a similarly influential research initiative on agrodiversity in which new ecological concepts were brought to bear on the persistence of indigenous farmers' knowledge about agroecosystems and the adaptive dynamism, or resilience, of agrodiversity (Brookfield and Padoch, 1994; Brookfield 2001; Brookfield, Padoch, Parsons and Stocking 2002).

^{vi} Even studies with a nuanced awareness of the powerful effects of representation focus on the 'logics' of globalization that are driving change and the acts of 'resistance' to them. In his rich study of the human geographies of economic change in the Philippines, for example, Philip Kelly's represents resistance counter dynamics as ambivalent and ambiguous (2000, Chapter 6).

^{vii} The concept of 'energy' in an economic system could be variously conceptualized as labour value, money, natural and manufactured resources or services. For the purposes of this paper we use the metaphor without attempting a more operational definition.

^{viii} The degree of certainty in this statement about maximal sustainability reflects the largely unexamined realist epistemological stance of much ecological thinking. This need not detract from its relevance in the argument of this paper. We view ecological theories of natural systems as performative discursive interventions and are interested in experimenting with their usefulness in understanding and enacting rural change. We do not posit a 'real' nature captured in theories of natural dynamics that can then be applied to society.

^{ix} <http://www.unladkabayhan.org/>

^x Doctoral scholar Amanda Cahill spent more than 12 months in Jagna working alongside the local researchers and facilitating the action research in consultation with Katherine Gibson and Deirdre McKay who made periodic visits to conduct workshops and monitor the process.

^{xi} While many may read these practices as forms of ‘social capital’ we resist this capitalocentric terminology because of its performative effect of normalizing narratives of unilinear economic development.

^{xii} At the time of the action research we were not consciously seeking information on habitat maintenance. Had we been doing so we might have taken a different research approach. For example, we might have tried to gather more information on ritual practices or folk stories to do with negotiating water management between upland and coastal users, or inter-marriage within and without the local community, or farming practices that maintain soil fertility. Figure 1 contains what emerged from the assets and needs mapping and we later came to rearrange in this way.

^{xiii} In much the same way that Chambers documents the diverse livelihoods of poor rural households (2003, 164-165), data was generated in conversation with our local researchers and community researchers selected from economically marginalized groups—poor farmers, older women, young mothers and port labourers. Meetings in the 31 barangays (previously named barrios, the lowest unit of government) of the municipality were also conducted to gather information and discuss the inventory, and recently completed Barangay Development Planning Reports offered quantitative data on different occupations and enterprises.

^{xiv} Many of the practices of habitat maintenance and destruction listed in Figure 1 reappear in the diverse economy table in the lower cells of the transactions, labour and enterprise columns. A more detailed discussion of our inventory is in Gibson-Graham (2005).

^{xv} By taking this ecological perspective on sustainability and dynamics that promote balance as a guide for enacting alternative economic development pathways we find ourselves flying in the face of the newest development orthodoxy as enunciated in the 2009 World Development Report. The authors of this document blatantly accept, if not celebrate, the unbalanced economic geography of growth. They argue against area assistance to address spatial disparities and, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, continue to predict that inclusive development can result from allowing concentrating market forces free reign (World Development Report 2009). Critics of this report note a puzzling refusal to address the “social and environmental origins and consequences of the processes and policies that it addresses and promotes” (Rigg et al 2009:132). From our standpoint this report reveals the deep resistance to anti-essentialist and non-linear thinking within mainstream economics that effectively renders non-credible the kinds of interactions between developments and co-developments that we focus on here.

^{xvi} The Philippines social movement MASIPAG or Farmer-Scientist Partnership for Development formed in response to the problems generated by green revolution technologies and the expert approach to knowledge. Wright’s sensitive research with MASIPAG highlights its uniquely experimental, hopeful and socially and ecologically reparative approach to subsistence agriculture (2008).

^{xvii} See McKay (2003) for an important study of the overseas migration of women from Ifugao Province in the Philippines and economic and ecological co-developments in their home communities.

^{xviii} This creative extension of locally understood practices of gifting and voluntary labour to building up the social commons and the resilience of the agricultural economy provided one of the inspirations for the experiments with community enterprise development that our action research conducted.

^{xix} In a similar vein Parnwell refers to the “crowding out and clawing back” of practices involved in maintaining ecological and social balance in rural Northern Thailand (2005b, 2006). He provides a critical overview of the ethical interventions to establish sufficiency and self-reliance in local community economies led by local Buddhist monks and extra-local NGOs.

^{xx} For more on social enterprise development in the Philippines including footage and discussion of the enterprises introduced below see Gibson, Hill and Maclay (2008), Community Economies Collective and Gibson (2009) and MacKay (2009). These more ethnographically oriented materials include the voices of enterprise participants who, unfortunately, cannot be heard in the limited space of this article.

^{xxi} The new pathway for local development sketched out here is not to be confused with Japan’s One Village, One Product initiative which has been introduced in top down attempts at local economic development in Thailand as One Tambon, One Product (Chandeeovwit, 2003). These government-led initiatives supply luxury local products to urban customers and risk activating dynamics of dependence rather than self-refuelling. The pathway described here has more in common with that discussed by Prayukvong (2005) and Parnwell (2005a,b, 2006) though there is less of an emphasis solely on ‘self-sufficiency’.

^{xxii} In our other research field site in the mixed ethnic and religious context of Lanao del Norte Province, Mindanao, the parallel Linamon Community Partnering Project (LCPP) similarly contributed to new development pathways. Here the challenge to build resilience is greater given historical and current conflicts over land, in-migration and political rights. One of the LCPP enterprises formed by Muslim and Christian youth was chosen for a British Council award for peace building in 2007, giving us some hope that ethical dynamics of habitat maintenance can be activated even in a conflict situation.