The Youth Speak:
Forms, Facilitators and Obstacles
to their Political Engagement

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The voices of the Filipino youth in response to the current issues in society and in governance, such as corruption, child abuse, armed conflict or poverty, seem to remain subdued. For those who believe that it will be the purity and sincerity of these young people's voices that will rouse and provoke the rest of us into action for moral and social change, their silence is disturbing. Many see the silence to be caused by an underlying apathy and cynicism the youth have for present social and political institutions. Johnson in 2005, for example, documented the concern of scholars regarding the civic disengagement among the young. It is feared that if this disengagement should continue, political and social systems will gradually deteriorate, and materialism and individualism will be valued more than community participation and the concern for nurturing family and relationships with others.

The fear is all too real when cynicism and apathy begin to form. According to Johnson, cynicism is a kind of pessimism characterized by a scornful attitude, as well as by a distrust of the integrity and motives of figures of authority, like government officials and leaders in business. Apathy, on the other hand, is described as consisting of a lack of interest and concern for the well-being of others and of society. When a person is apathetic, he or she is usually socially disengaged and will exhibit political withdrawal, disinterest for current societal issues, and withdrawal from the community and from building relationships with others. Cynicism and apathy are therefore generally characterized by a general disengagement, a loss of both agency and communion within one's social, physical and symbolic world.

This picture of apathy and cynicism has been presented very often to describe young people in the Philippines. Sandoval, Mangahas and Guerrero (1998) reported that even as the Filipino youth recognize that

economic matters remain an important problem to address in the country, they feel helpless and less interested compared to adults. The Youth Study in 2001 also reported young Filipinos' apathy towards cultural values and national affairs. The same study documented that by the time they reach the age of 19, the Filipino youth will have become cynical about government, politics, and life in general. They will eventually also lose their links with community and with social and political realities. The McCann Youth Study in 2000 reported that the consequences of this lack of hope in government and politics was an upsurge on self-reliance among the youth, or the feeling that they needed to mainly rely on themselves when faced with the difficulties in their communities. They felt the need to leave the country and work abroad even if they did not want to. And because of the weakened connection with his/her community, the young person exhibited a stronger value placed on personal advancement.

The impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada and the consequent EDSA 2 event raised the youth's political awareness, but these events left them with an attitude of disillusionment and fear (McCann Youth Study, 2000). They shared the feeling that political agenda can be articulated by various personalities for their own motives. They realized that individuals with an agenda of their own can gather a crowd for an empty, dishonorable cause. The McCann Youth Study further showed that the youth felt the restrictions of expressing their honest views in highly politically-charged discourses, where statements that are unpopular are rebuked and disregarded. As a result, they decided to remain silent.

It was observed many that the youth chose to be quiet when the whistle blower, Jun Lozada, started campaigning against corruption in government, while visiting various campuses. Thus it was once again clear that without youth engagement, issues soon fizzle out. And indeed, the Filipino youth are aware of how significant a force they are in effecting change in country. According to the PSSC report of 2003, young Filipinos

possess the belief that when they choose to act, they can generate changes in the country's political processes. This feeling of efficacy is, however, not clearly discernible from their participation in formal political processes and in organizations that serve the youth in political affairs, such as the Sangguniang Kabataan (PSSC, 2003).

These descriptions about the seeming political immobility of the youth in current times lead us to ask the following questions: What will make and keep them politically engaged? If they are political engaged, how is this exhibited? What will hinder them from civic or political engagement? We chose to ask young Filipinos from rural and urban environments these questions. We decided to have them speak and allow them to construct their notions of political engagement in a focus group discussion format. Through this format, the collective representations of political agency that form the basis of their actions would be captured. Comparisons between what the youth in rural environments and the youth in urban environments formulate regarding their experiences in political engagement could further mark the differences in the choices and values offered in these environments for political action (ref. Bucholtz, 2002). Through a methodology that would allow the perspectives of the youth to emerge, the contradiction between their sense of political efficacy and political inaction would be unraveled. Then, perhaps the models of political action and civic engagement that they are searching for as they become increasingly cynical and distrustful about political leadership, and the new forms of political discourses they are now crafting in attempts to replace previous and untenable ways of creating change, may be recognized (cf. Sta. Maria, 2007).

POLITICAL AGENCY

Studies show that the construct of agency is constituted by the following interrelated components: a well-differentiated and integrated positive sense of self (Kuperminc, Blatt, Shahar, Henrich & Leadbeater, 2004), a fusion of values and self-efficacy beliefs towards the production of behavior (Caprara & Steca, 2007), and an ability and determination to initiate and sustain movement towards a goal (Venning, Elliott, Whitford & Honnor, 2007). Political self-efficacy is therefore not sufficient to initiate or maintain political action. Ingredients of viewing the self in a positive way, as well as the abilities and values that promote political action, are equally essential. Furthermore, a positive sense of self and an awareness of relevant values are said to be reinforced by the presence of others who will welcome the young person's articulation of political ideas. Tedin (1980), for example, stated that the conditions that must be present for the exercise of political agency are: 1) the opportunity to communicate about the political subject with others, and 2) the receptivity of these ideas by others one has emotional ties with (e.g., family and friends).

Researchers point to the importance of providing the youth with a sense of personal agency when the young people's commitment to civic participation is to be developed (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). However, the greater exercise of agency will depend on the context within which political action is realized. According to Shanahan (2000), enhanced agency in the life course is experienced in modern societies because of the freedom the individual achieves from traditional constraints of family and community. In societies that are less urbanized, an individual's life is significantly influenced by the demands of family life. Shanahan adds that greater agency is manifested by the youth in the selection of institutional involvement, organizational participation and interpersonal relationships in more urbanized settings. Is this true for political agency? Let us now examine the life experiences of the youth in urban and rural environments.

Modernization of societies is usually associated with changes in the life course. Shanahan (2000) described one change in the increasing rigidity in life course changes, e.g., school completion, marriage, parenthood or beginning one's career. Shanahan mentioned that changes are also to be found in the life course sequence patterns. For example, in more modern societies, there are overlaps to be observed in familial and nonfamilial transitional markers. These overlaps make for greater diversity in sequence patterns and an individualization of the life course brought about largely by greater educational attainment and longevity, as well as lower infant mortality. In modern societies, the young person's transition to adulthood is therefore less determined by the family and the community.

The above changes in an urbanizing community make the rural-urban background a basic variable in most sociological researches. It is usually assumed that growing up and residing in these different environments will produce differences in attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and practices (Yi, Kung, Chen & Chu, 2008). Yi and his associates mention that in the studies conducted on urban-rural differences in adolescent socialization, distinctions are evident in the resource allocation, parental expectations, social positions and life chances. These distinctions, they note, are important in delineating the effects of environment in the formation of the young person's value orientation.

The rural-urban continuum concept has its roots in the writings about *Gemeinschaft* or community, and *Gesellschaft* or society, by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887, and in the ideas of the anthropologist Redfield in 1958 with his treatise on the urbanization effects on Mexican peasantry (Salamon, 2003). Recently, Patricia

Greenfield (2009) took these two sociodemographic prototypes and tried to elaborate on the distinctions in developmental pathways within these, or what she now considers as, contrasting sociocultural ecologies. Greenfield argued that there are forms of adaptation to each environmental prototype on the levels of cultural values, learning environments, and human development. Through values, the sociodemographic characteristics found in each environment type influence the learning environments that , in turn, influence developmental pathways. It is important to note that the sociodemographic characteristics impact on both cultural values and learning environments.

What follows is a summary of what Greenfield outlined as pathway distinctions between these two ecologies. *Gemeinshaften* are folk or rural societies that are small-scale, use relatively low technology, are homogenous and somewhat self-contained. Social relations are usually life-long, and enduring interdependence among kin is evident. *Gemeinschaften* exhibit collectivistic qualities like sharing among the extended family and relatively permanent kin-based relations. Prioritizing the family as the key collectivity is a feature of adaptation to the *Gemeinschaften*. Greenfield cites Keller's work with her colleagues in 2007, which demonstrated that earlier self-regulation, an outcome that develops the child for a social environment, and later self-recognition, an outcome that develops the child's individual psychology, are what characterize development in *Gemeinschaft* environments. Finally, in *Gemeinschaft* environments, individuals exhibit autonomy by taking the initiative to carry out responsibilities in the community.

Gesselschaften, on the other hand, are urban, large-scale, high-tech, heterogenous and more permeable than *Gemeinschaft* entities. These are also characterized by less enduring kin relations, with marital dissolutions being more frequent. There are also fleeting relations in other

transactions, e.g., in commercial dealings. Individualistic values, such as privacy, are adapted to characteristics of *Gesellschaft* environments. The Keller study in 2007 was cited to have mentioned that, unlike in *Gemeinschaft* environments, self-recognition is earlier socialized than self-regulation. Kin-based relations are also less important in *Gesellschaft* societies. Unrelated friends and transitory acquaintances are common features in a person's life. In contrast to *Gemeinschaft* communities, autonomy is socialized as a personal choice.

A study that compared adolescent development in rural and urban communities is that conducted by Amon, Shamai & Ilatov in 2008. This research examined the importance of peer groups by focusing on the factors of teenager's preferences in leisure time activities, preferences for help providers, and their sense of attachment to the community. Questionnaires were administered to young people in a secondary school in the northern part of Israel. The study found that teenagers in the urban communities were more "home-centered," spending more time with their families and doing homework, while the rural teenagers were more community-centered as evidenced by their greater participation in youth movement activities. Attachment to the community was also found to be high among rural teenagers. The teenagers of the rural communities were therefore more community-oriented, with the females being most satisfied with community events, and most attached to their communities. The reason for this satisfaction and attachment was attributed to their having places of their own and the relative autonomy they enjoyed as they played out their roles in the youth movement. Amon, Shamai & Ilatov mentioned the important aspect of the community called the "sense of place," which consists of the meanings and qualities a person associates with a given locality. Previous studies have attested to the "sense of place" being more experienced by a rural population. This may explain the greater attachment felt by the study's rural youth to their communities.

Bauch (2001) also mentioned how in rural communities, relationships and connections to other people are more dominant, with direct verbal communication as the norm. Community norms, values and attitudes are said to be strengthened by "dense relational networks and strong intergenerational closure" (p. 211). Salomon (2003) suggested that the trust and commitment that exists in rural communities, as exemplified in joint acts of raising youth, provide the stimulus for the socialization of the youth as engaged citizens in their communities.

ENVIRONMENTS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Studies that have directly examined the influence of environments on the youth's political engagement are showing more engagement among the youth in rural communities. Jones & Perkins (2006) demonstrated that rural youth were significantly more positive on the construct of youth involvement than their urban counterparts. Atkins & Hart (2003) proved that youth from urban neighborhoods were less likely to participate in community service that rural youth. Political knowledge, however, was observed to be higher among the urban youth compared to those who lived in rural areas (Pienaar, 2000). Kahne & Sporte (2008) and Amon, Shamai & Ilatov (2008) refer to social capital as an explanatory construct in accounting for the greater civic participation exhibited by rural youth. Social capital, according to Amon, Shamai & Ilatov, is central in community building. The authors explain that social capital is made up of three elements: social networks; trust among people, community institutions and community leaders; and norms of reciprocity. These elements are said to enhance both solidarity and civic engagement. Social capital also contributes to greater community involvement in raising children (Amon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008). Young people who witness the reciprocity and concern for the community in their homes, in school, or in the neighborhood are more likely to also be committed to civic participation

(Kahne & Sports, 2008). In other words, observing social capital being demonstrated in the community in the forms of dealing with problems together, of adults looking after children, of neighborhoods supporting young people, influence the youth to exhibit greater civic commitment. Kahne & Sporte reported that higher levels of commitment to civic participation were seen among the youth who stated that their community is one in which the youth are cared for and where adults work to make the community better.

The present study explores the nature of youth political engagement as described by high school students in urban and rural environments. What they see as facilitators of, and hindrances to, these forms of engagement are likewise investigated. Several focus groups were conducted with young people to ask them about what they thought were the most important issues in present Philippine society, their sources of information on these issues, how they can participate in bringing about change in society, and what can help and hinder them in their participation.

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-six participants (18 males and 18 females) were recruited for the study. They were 3rd and 4th year high school students with an average age of 15. They were selected based on their residence in an urban or rural community setting. Nineteen participants came from two high schools in an urban community setting (Espiritu Santo High School in Tayuman, Manila and Teodora Alonzo Public High School in Bambang, Manila) while 17 of the participants came from a rural community setting (Sto. Angel Public High School in San Pablo, Laguna). They were specifically chosen by their respective class advisers and/or school administrators. For the urban

group, they were commonly from top classes in their respective schools. For the rural group, they were chosen based simply on availability.

Procedure

The present study is part of a bigger research project on youth development initiated by the Department of Psychology of DLSU-M, funded by the Social Development Research Center of the College of Liberal Arts. The research project started in the earlier part of the first term of the academic year 2006-2007. This area, which is specific to youth political participation, lasted more than two months (June 22, 2006 September 4, 2006).

Key persons in the host learning institutions facilitated the recruitment of the participants. All necessary permissions were sought in all three schools through a letter written by the primary researcher. Schedules for the FGD sessions were arranged to suit the availability of the participants. A total of four FGD sessions were held. There were two sessions for each community setting. During the scheduled day of each FGD session, the participants were either excused from their class or from the day's school activity.

All FGD sessions were held in a well-lighted area in the respective schools, intentionally secluded from any possible interruptions. At the start of each FGD session, a moderator explained the nature of the research while a note-taker simultaneously solicited some demographic data from the participants using a profile sheet. The participants were also given an informed consent form to fill out. The participants were asked questions regarding the contents of the consent form to determine whether they understood the main issues of their consent. During each session, participants were told to freely express their opinions, beliefs, and experiences regarding the subject matter because there were no right or

wrong answers in the discussions. Additionally, they were instructed and encouraged to affirm or oppose any of the opinions and beliefs they heard from other participants if they found them contradictory to their own experience. The moderator ensured that there was a natural flow in the discussion and that the participants took turns in speaking.

Permission was also sought from the respondents regarding the use of a digital voice recorder, and the eventual presentation of their responses in academic conferences or any research-oriented endeavor. As a final ethical consideration, the respondents were all given an opportunity to ask questions about the research. The primary researcher answered the questions raised by the respondents.

Guide questions were used to facilitate the flow of all the FGD sessions. The questions focused on the following: (1) Problems of the Youth, (2) Sources of Information about Social Problems, (3) Forms of Political Participation, (4) Blocks to Participation, and (6) Promoters of Participation. The duration of each FGD session averaged one hour. After each session, a quick recap was facilitated by the note-taker. During this time, the participants were again encouraged to check the accuracy of information noted down during the session. They were also instructed to correct misperceived responses and to give additional information if ever the researchers missed important things in the discussion. After each FGD session, the researchers thanked and gave snacks to the participants as a gesture of appreciation. All the FGD sessions were later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to extract themes from the transcribed FGD. Data segments, and meaningful narratives of the respondents, were lifted from the transcriptions using the main FGD questions as a start list for the

analytical domains. Themes from the narratives were then independently identified by the first author and the second author. The process of identifying themes from the narratives continued until all the narratives were analyzed. Both researchers noted the similarities in the themes and contrasts were reconciled. Themes were then clustered to form categories. As a reliability check, the categories and data under each category were presented to the other research project teams during a project meeting. The resulting categories are discussed in the next section.

RESULTS

The findings show the themes under the domains for both urban and rural environments. This general presentation precedes the identification of themes emerging that are particular to each environment.

Forms of Political Participation

Some of the participants expressed their intention not to engage in any form of political participation. They felt that they should be focusing on their studies. This desire to remain uninvolved was expressed by the participants in the following manner:

"Wag na lang muna makialam."

"Pabayaan mo na lang muna sila, kasi trabaho rin naman nila iyon."

"Di mo naman trabaho ang makialam sa pulitika."

"Kailangan ko po munang -prioritize ang studies ko...Sa school muna ang pag, kunwari nasa school po ako, school muna ang iisipin ko."

However, some participants contend that focusing on one's studies can also be a way to contribute to change. As one participant stated: *"Yung pinakamadali na kaya naming gawin eh yung mag-aral ng mabuti."*

To bring about the needed changes in society, some participants stated that they should engage in prosocial acts. Prosocial behavior can be exhibited by providing assistance to those who are need:

> *Tulungan po yung walang mga trabaho, halimbawa po nawalan po sila ng pagkain, kung meron po akong pambili maari ko po silang suportahan.*

Another form of prosocial activity would involve giving advice to, or assisting youth who have gone astray:

> *"Yung mga estudyante na naliligaw ng landas gawa po ng mga kabarkada eh pwede pong kausapin ng walang pagtatalo na nagaganap, para po mabago yung kanilang ugali na po mag-aral sila ng mabuti kasi para din sa kanila yun."*

Another way of participating politically was to avoid criminal activities, by avoiding deviant peer groups, by being good citizens who follow laws, or by choosing to act in morally steadfast ways. As one participant stated, a person is able to effectively engage in political actions when "*Hindi niya magpapasok ng masama kahit sino po ang magbuyo sa kanya o kaya sabihin sa kanya.*"

Participating in political mass actions is another way of getting politically engaged. As one participant shared: "*Ipaparating natin ang nais nating iparating sa isang rally.*" However, the participants were aware of the abuse that can be committed by others in these forms of mass actions. As a participant expressed: "*Ngayong meron na, kumbaga, ngayong meron na tayo [karapatang magsalita], may binigay na sa atin, parang umaabuso na po ang mga tao.*"

Political participation for some of the participants also meant making full use of community resources and activities. When there are, for example, opportunities to learn, one should not hesitate to take advantage and make full use of these. This is a way for one to be engaged. As one

participant mentioned: "*Pag po kunwari may libreng edukasyon susubukan ko na po, sayang po kasi ang pagkakataong binibigay sa atin kung hindi po natin susubukan iyan.*"

Blocks to Political Participation

The participants identified the lack of self-efficacy, the lack of desire to learn, or sense of complacency as important hindrances to engagement:

> "*Yun pong ano, yung kawalan ng tiwala sa sarili, kasi minsan po meron kang gustong gawin pero maiisip mo na hindi mo kaya, yung wala kang kakayanan.*"

> "*Yung iba po ayaw na po nila mapaganda yung kanilang buhay kasi sanay na po sila, kapag hindi mo po papaganahin iyan kung may maiisip ka puro katangahan lang.*"

Not having adequate time for engagement is another identified block. According some participants:

> "*Minsan po kunwari talagang gusto nating tulong or may gusto tayong gawin, kaya lang hindi po natin magawa dahil po sa ano sa lack of time.*"

> "*Kumbaga siyempre may mga things din pong kailangan nating i-prioritize na*
> *yung parang… ang hirap pong... katulad sa aming… sa mga estudyante po. 'Di ba ang dami na pong ginagawa assignment, projects.*"

Another important block to participation is what they observe to be the lack of encouragement from others. As one participant expressed:

> "*Pero kung tutulong po ako tapos ung tao ung parang susumbatan pa ako, kasi naman hindi ko kailan ng tulong … parang nawawalan po ako ng gana.*"

Promoters of Political Participation

There were five important themes that emerged from the participants' responses to the question regarding what can facilitate their political participation. The first theme has to do with trust in oneself. The statements on this theme were all similar and are best represented in one of the participants' statement:

> *"Kaya po lahat ng di mo makakayang gawin eh magagawa mo pag may tiwala ka sa iyong sarili. At kung may tiwala ka sa sarili mo kaya mong gawin lahat para sa ikakabuti ng sarili mo."*

The second theme was related to the young person's courage and determination, which the participants often referred to as "*lakas ng loob*," or what can be referred to as the strength of the inner self. According to the participants, a young person has to have resolve and not waiver when facing challenges or when accomplishing a task. Here are some excerpts from the participants' responses:

> *"Dapat lang po eh lakas ng loob… ang hahadlang eh balewalain lang po."*
> *"Determinado ka sa lahat ng bagay, determinado ka sa lahat ng gawain mo."*
> *"Para wala pong takot na kung sino man po... dapat laang po eh lakas ng loob, ang hahadlang eh balewalain lang po."*

A third theme has to do with the possession of knowledge. Growing in knowledge is important to enable one to reach a certain level of maturity to address social and moral problems. This theme is best captured by the following statement from a participant:

> *"Para sa akin po eh yung paganahin po iyong utak, kasi po matured na naman kami kaya dapat paganahin yung utak namin."*

The fourth theme is concerned with the sense of commitment one has in performing one's duties in society. This commitment or devotion to duty is expressed in the following statement from a participant:

> "*Sa mahalin mo ang ginagawa mo … gusto ko itong trabahong ito, mahal ko itong trabahong ito, bakit ko gagawin itong trabahong ito kung makakasama sa akin.*"

The last theme has to do with the support provided by the family. The family serves as an inspiration and the strength to move into the world and engage in its activities. The love found in the family prevents one from doing acts detrimental to others in society. One participant expressed this in a particular way:

> "*Kasi po ang pamilya po ay isang inspirasyon po. Kunyari ang isang bagay na gusto mong gawin, siempre iisipin mo ring pamilya na kaya ko itong gawin. Kaya po nagagawang makihalubilo ng isang kabataan sa ibang tao.*"

In summary, different themes on the forms of political engagement, and the barriers to and promoters of engagement, highlight the importance given by the youth to the interactions with others in the conduct of political activities. The emphasis on prosocial behaviors as forms of political action and the encouragement from others as an important support for the maintenance of political action is noteworthy. The young people of the study seem to regard self-related factors as the main impetus for action. The inner courage, a sense of determination, a resolve to increase one's knowledge, and an emphasis on commitment to the performance of one's duties are indicative of the youth awareness that political action springs from within and not from inducements from others.

Let us now compare the differences in notions of political engagement between the youth from urban environments and those from rural

environment. Table 1 indicates the presence and absence of the above-mentioned themes in the discussions of the youth in these environments.

Table 1. Themes for each Dimension among the Youth in Urban and Rural Environments

DIMENSION	THEMES AMONG URBAN YOUTH PARTICIPANTS	THEMES AMONG RURAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS	THEMES COMMON TO URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH
Forms of Participation	Focusing on ones studies Participating in mass actions Being good citizens by observing laws	Engaging in Prosocial Acts Making use of available community resources and opportunities	Avoiding engaging in criminal activities
Blocks to Participation	Lack of time	Lack of self-efficacy, lack of trust in ones capacities	No appreciation from others for young persons political engagement
Promoters of Participation	Commitment to ones civic duties	Trust in oneself Growth in knowledge Support from the family	

It is evident that among the urban youth, political participation takes the form of exercising what they are expected to do as youth and as citizens of society. In some instances, when political mass actions are staged, they see these as opportunities for engagement. Among the rural youth, political engagement involves a movement towards others and into the community. The blocks for participation among the rural youth would therefore be those that hinder this movement, which they find to reside within themselves, i.e., when they no longer have trust in themselves, when they no longer have a sense of self-efficacy.

Among the urban youth, it is important that they have time to focus on their studies and participate in political activities. Compared to the rural youth, the blocks presented by the urban youth do not reside within the self, but in the way their lives are structured around activities that need to be performed in their daily lives. Both groups, however, emphasize the importance of others' judgment of their behavior as political actors. It is apparent that importance is placed on encouraging whatever acts of engagement are exhibited. There seems to be a need for these acts to be validated by their social world to establish the impact of their acts on others. Emphasis on citizenship is also apparent among the urban youth. They describe their engagement as facilitated by a sense of devotion and commitment to their civic duties, which is not highlighted in the rural youth's discussion. The rural youth, on the other hand, place greater emphasis on the self and self-growth, and on the value of the family as another source of action.

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to explore young people's notions of political participation and to determine whether these notions differ among the youth in urban and rural environments. The findings show that political participation is conceived in at least two ways among the youth in this study. The first way is to view participation in terms of doing one's duty, to perform what is expected, and not to engage in behaviors that are detrimental to the peaceful and orderly existence of the community. The second way is to see participation in terms of one's connection with others and with one's community. The first notion of political participation, articulated mostly by the urban youth in this study, is a common notion of political participation in civic education. More emphasis seems to be placed on civic responsibility, rather than on "making a difference." The second notion of political participation is

found to be expressed mostly by the youth in rural environments. They see participation in terms of varied forms of assistance they may provide to others in society, and in terms of their involvement in community activities. These results are analogous to the findings of Amon, Shamai & Ilatov (2008) which showed that teenagers in urban communities are more centered on the activities in their homes, while rural teenagers were more community centered.

The findings of the present study suggest that political participation among the rural youth is more centered on building social capital, and as such, much of the political actions they find themselves engaged in revolve around the elements of social capital (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Participation in social networks, being involved in interactions that serve to enhance trust in leaders and institutions, and behaving in ways that serve to reinforce community norms form the pathways for political socialization among the rural youth. The rural youth participants in the study talked about the relations within the family as a facilitator of their engagement in political actions. This is consistent with how social capital can serve as a major influence to political engagement in rural communities.

Kahne & Sporte (2008) mentioned the association that exists between the reciprocity and concern witnessed by young people in homes, schools and neighborhoods and their commitment to civic participation. The exposure to interactions that display social capital provide the youth with the mental models and value orientations to behave in socially committed ways. In their research, Khane & Sporte also observed that higher levels of commitment to civic participation were reported by the youth who regard their communities as places where youth are cared for and where adults work to make the community better. Indeed, the socialization into the elements of social capital or the socialization into the norms, social networks and relationships, according to Bauch (2001), make for the close bond between the young person and the community. This teaches

the young person to value a sense of community as he or she is growing up. The findings further suggest that the youth in urban communities are socialized in different ways. Forms of political action they are exposed to are less communal in nature. In contrast to their rural counterparts, the young person in an urban environment is exposed to political action as described in ways that involve one's performance of civic duties, or in one's compliance to government laws and ordinances. This type of political action is perhaps what the youth learn in the classroom. These youth are also exposed to mass action as documented by media. They then see participation in these actions as possible ways of engaging themselves politically. For the urban youth, political engagement takes the form of those actions described in school courses on citizenship, or documented in media. Social capital in community activities and interactions has little effect on the political socialization of these youth.

The consequences of these two forms of socialization can be seen in what they view as blocks to their engagement. The urban youth see blocks that are largely external, while the rural youth see themselves as responsible for any lack of participation. This suggests that the sense of political agency can be stronger among the rural youth. As mentioned earlier, agency is a fusion of positive sense of self, values, self-efficacy beliefs, and a determination to initiate and sustain a behavior. This is the picture given by the rural youth in their descriptions of what it takes to be politically active: to have trust in one's capacity to deal with challenges. It is in this sense that one can say that the sense of political agency is more apparent among the rural youth. Although there may be more agency in the life course exhibited by urban youth, as argued by Shanahan in 2000, this form of agency may not be extended to one's political engagement perhaps because life course agency pertains more to self-recognition, an outcome that develops in individual psychology, rather than self-regulation, an outcome that is developed in the child for a social environment (Keller, 2007 as cited in Greenfield, 2009).

The findings of the study are consistent with the developmental pathways that predominate in *Gesellchaft* and *Gemeinschaft* environment types, as elaborated on by Greenfield in 2009. The socialization in urban, or *Gesellchaft*, environments are shaped by more individualistic values, while in the rural, or *Gemeinschaft*, environments, values that favor community relationships are central in socialization practices. The young people from the rural environment who participated in this study describe political participation in self-regulatory terms more than their counterparts in the urban environments.

It is also important to note that what is common to both categories of participants is their view on how important the appreciation of others is in the maintenance of their political actions. This finding is consistent with the statement of Tedin in 1980, which underscored the exercise of political agency occurring only when there are opportunities to communicate ideas with others, and when there is a receptivity of these ideas by significant others. For both rural and urban youth, the lack of recognition is expressed and stressed as an important factor that can lead them to disengage. This lack of recognition may be what the youth are experiencing if we take into account, once again, the present observations of apathy and disengagement among the Filipino youth. Determining in what ways, under what conditions, and through which messages the youth experience this lack of recognition needs to be explored in further studies.

From the results of this study, we can draw several conclusions about political participation among the youth. For participation or engagement to occur, the youth need to recognize their agency. Moreover, they should be provided with the social conditions to express this agency. Political agency is felt more strongly and is effectively socialized through exposure to social capital as it exists in their communities. Teaching political engagement cannot happen solely within the confines of the

classroom, or through family discussions. Learning to be politically active takes place in a social context where the youth are placed in active contact with a range of ideas, and where processes of learning allow abstractions to take their tangible forms in lived situations with others in their communities (Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2007). Our young people must know and observe how people care for one another, how they engage in reciprocal relations with one another, how they are equally committed to sustain community goals and resources, and how they move together to make the changes that they desire happen. Being exposed to and participating in these events in one's community will make for political engagement among our youth. Indeed, these were the very events that moved them to become effective political actors in both EDSA 1 and EDSA 2.

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NOTES ON THE PAPER

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