

Anthropology (『文化人類学』) Vol. 86 (1-2). The book review submitted by Zenta Nishio, focusing on the concept of sociality, discusses *Ethnographies of Development and Globalization in the Philippines: Emergent Socialities and the Governing of Precarity* (Routledge, 2020) edited by Koki Seki.

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Book Review

Ethnographies of Development and Globalization in the Philippines: Emergent Socialities and the Governing of Precarity.
 Edited by Koki Seki, 2020, UK: Routledge, 216 pages

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This book contains eight ethnographies that illustrate the neoliberal restructuring of various aspects of society and the precarious life situation in the Philippines through long-term fieldwork. The neoliberal discourse of self-responsibility demands that structural problems are not socially resolvable. Instead, they must be dealt with by each individual. The Philippines is a product of the neoliberal era, “exporting” migrant workers on the tide of globalization while contracting out simple tasks, such as online call reception and data analysis. The chapters of this book tackle the following subject matters: implementation of state social welfare policies that are linked to neoliberalism (Koki Seki); gentrification against urban slums (Koki Seki and Chester Antonio C. Arcilla); radical restructuring of community with the spread of non-government organizations’ (NGO) microfinance and conditional cash transfers and the emergence of residents’ agency to domesticate them (Wataru Kusaka and Itaru Nagasaka); young students struggling with the state’s migration policy and their families’ expectations (Yasmin Y. Ortiga); transnational voluntarism (Faith R. Kares); solidarity between residents and tourists under environmental conservation policies (Kentaro Azuma); and creation of “safe space” in the

precarious conflict zone (Yoriko Tatsumi). Each case describes how the Philippines copes with precarity in the era of neoliberalism and the process of fostering existing and new socialities alike.

The purpose of this book is “to trace the contours of emergent socialities and morality, and to assess their effectiveness as resources that enable people to deal with the diverse manifestations of precarity in the Philippines and, more widely, in the Global South” (p.3). This is a response to James Ferguson’s “What comes after the social?” or “possible form of welfare states in the Global South” (p.2). Ferguson (2015) has pointed out that the social welfare program of cash transfer in South Africa did not create society and individuals, but rather allowed a small amount of money to be distributed through concrete relationships, which in turn could foster sociality.

This review considers the book from the perspective of sociality. It defined sociality as “a connectedness among individuals that is fostered through interactions, co-presence, and conviviality within a community over a long duration” (p.2). According to the introduction, “the social” as modern social welfare (i.e., formal and impersonal) has encountered the local “vernacular sociality” (i.e., informal and personal). Hence, “emergent socialities” occurred at the intersection of these two. However, understanding this Venn diagram alone does not sufficiently explain why sociality is used instead of society. Moreover, it also does not explain what the concept of sociality implies. Why do we need to ask about sociality in this day and age? The concept of “society” is strongly connected with the modern nation-state in the global north. However, the concept of society here is related to the Durkheimian dichotomy of “society and individual,” which means a bounded totality or whole formed from the sum of its parts (Ingold 1996: 47). Considering this dichotomy, we believe that when neoliberalism cuts social security, society is lost

and the individual is left bare. However, the concept of “sociality” refers to the importance of relationships that people have within it. Even if there were no society, people would not become bare individuals. Instead, they would be bound together by multiple relationships. In reading this book, it is important to understand the tension between society and sociality.

In the global north, social welfare has declined. On the other hand, the states in the global south have actively introduced it. These trends appear to be contradicting each other. However, the social is an experiment in creating “productive individuals” together with society. Furthermore, new social welfare programs are concerned with the formation of the former in the global south. For this reason, social implementation is strongly tied to neoliberalism. How will the encounter between the social and vernacular sociality of the Philippines occur?

Koki Seki discusses post-authoritarian sociality in the case of “People’s Plan,” a socialized housing program for the poor through slum relocation. Since its democratization in 1986, the state has emphasized its moderating role, aiming to “encourage non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations that promote the welfare of the nation” (p.23). Developing laws and institutions in accordance to this idea, the People’s Plan is an emergent social program from entanglement and its processes between NGOs, community associations, and the private sector. The rise of NGOs is related to the split within the Communist Party of the Philippines between reaffirmists, who maintain the revolutionary side, and the rejectionists, who have abandoned the armed struggle and cooperated with the state. The latter has moved to legal representative politics (p.27). The reorientation of left-wing activists and the rise of reform-oriented politicians have greatly transformed Philippine

politics in the 2010s, leading to the emergence of the People's Plan, a participatory democratic program. However, the People's Plan is not always desirable for the residents because the social housing it provided is also a place where neoliberal governance, such as capacity building, spatial legibility of relocation sites, and self-reliance, was implemented. Permanent housing is attractive for residents. However, they also feel an attachment to the slum community as "co-presence" and "conviviality." The People's Plan has made them face a moral dilemma between the divergent meanings of the community. This chapter draws on the case of the People's Plan to show the complex interweaving of various actors, ideas, and institutions. For Seki, emergent sociality is the historical and multilayered assemblage of actors described above. Assemblage is "the product of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic" (p.38). In this case, sociality is considered as both the character and effect of the assemblage. The sociality that emerges from the negotiation of diverse logic and their entanglement encompasses contingency and possibility as a continuous mediator between diverse actors.

Chester Antonio C. Arcilla has discussed the subaltern political socialities of a slum community in Metro Manila. The slum, which is located next to large shopping malls and railroad stations, has been designated as an intensive development area under the Quezon City Central Business District Project. This has led to conflicts between slum residents and the National Housing Authority, which is in collusion with the private sector. He describes in detail the strong local solidarity of residents in terms of resistance to the state's forced demolition through the formation of a human barricade, and the subsequent conflict and division that ensued in the community. His case study focuses on the dynamism of the disjuncture within the slum community, which tends to be assumed as monolithic. Such

strong resistance seen in barricades has won concessions from the state and the private sector alike. However, as on-site socialized housing far exceeded their ability to pay, grassroots organizations shifted their strategy to extract the best possible relocation conditions from the state and private sectors. This negotiation excludes new residents and renters. On the other hand, an organization with radical and militant politics has accepted those who were excluded from other organizations. This case reveals the dilemma that politics based on negotiation with the state could easily risk becoming exclusive by means of differences in the socioeconomic status of residents, while more radical politics could not provide local and pragmatic solutions. Arcilla illustrated the difficulties faced by contemporary subaltern politics with pluralistic differences. His meaning of sociality refers to the variety of strategic agencies that are rooted in the community.

In response to the question of why Rodrigo Duterte's administration, which extrajudicially executes drug dealers and users, retains a very high popularity rate despite being violent and authoritarian, Wataru Kusaka argues from the discourse of discipline. The Duterte administration has killed more than 7,000 people in its violent drug war campaign. President Duterte tagged drug dealers and users as "evil others" or demons, and justified such war as a necessary disciplinary measure against them. Before Duterte's presidency, Filipinos had been required by the global market to discipline themselves and become "good citizens" through neoliberal governance. According to Kusaka, the irritation and anger towards "evil others" by the "disciplined people," along with the penetration of neoliberalism, has led to the rise of President Duterte to power. He illustrated this radical moral shift in subjectivity and sociality in the case of Leyte, where Typhoon Haiyan radically destroyed the basic

livelihoods and social relationships of communities in 2013. According to him, the social is enabled by the support for reconstruction by NGOs and microfinance projects that have penetrated the communities. The social would rapidly spread to the affected areas, replacing the credit transactions of patron-client relationships among coconut farms who were lost in the typhoon. Borrowing money is combined with accepting various rules and regulations, and the villagers' survival is always conditional on quickly learning the required "discipline." Such spread of discipline has resulted in the exclusion of those who do not comply as "evil others." He understood sociality in terms of his deep involvement with the community. Because the disaster has caused the loss of livelihoods, it has led to the collapse of the community, showing the multiple fragmentations of socialities and morals, and the conflicts between villagers.

As the broker state reinforces the export policy of migrant workers, Yasmin Y. Ortiga focused on how education has become an investment in human capital and how to maintain migration aspirations abroad. She has been interviewing students, focusing on the case of the nursing "boom" in the 2000s (p.102). Educational background is important in the Philippines. However, what is often studied depends on the will of the family or relatives who are funding the tuition, not the student. It serves as an investment in the form of support. However, due to the 2008 global financial crisis and the excess supply of Filipino nurses, migrating as a nurse has become a more difficult choice. Ortiga examines the students who are caught between the expectations of their families and the difficulties of reality. Her interview also revealed that one-third of the students opted out of their overseas aspirations. Giving up migration and stepping away from the pressures of their families is the reality of a

former student who is currently working as a local public health professional. From the students' perspective, this overlap of social and vernacular sociality shows the specific difficulties that are faced by contemporary Filipinos.

Faith R. Kares focuses on NGOs that help second-generation Filipino Americans (Fil-Ams) reconnect with the homeland from which they were disconnected. Gawad Kalinga (GK) is a Philippine NGO that aims to alleviate poverty by providing housing to families living in slums and similar areas. Kares discussed why many affluent Fil-Ams have come to participate in GK activities. As shown in the case of Seki, the state actively encouraged NGOs and other actors to participate in nation building. In this context, GK has also made great progress and become an actor in the provision of housing for the poor. GK utilized the discourse "Be a Hero" and actively recruited volunteers from outside. As a minority in American society, Fil-Ams have struggled with discriminatory experiences of their families' origin and ethnicity, and sometimes even harbored resentment. Such discourse has provided an opportunity and space for Fil-Ams to participate in nation-building, cultivating their Filipino pride and belonging. Kares considers sociality an emergent affective relationship that is not limited to kinship networks, relying on the affective theory of Sara Ahmed and others (p.137). In the case of Ortiga, overseas Filipino workers and students construct subjectivities through kinship relationships, while in the case of Fil-Ams, the subjectivities are formed by discourse, participation, and practice. Furthermore, the circulation of affect encourages them. In the former, the state acts as a broker to mobilize migrant workers for nation-building through the discourse of "Bagong Bayani" (New Hero), while in the latter, NGOs use the same discourse to mobilize transnational Fil-Ams for nation-building. Sociality here can be said to refer to connections and

relationships.

Kentaro Azuma discussed Boracay Island, one of the world's leading beach destinations. It has been attracting attention not only because of its beauty, but also because of its increasing pollution, which forced the Duterte administration to close it for six months. He illustrated how the images of powerful conservation and sustainable development against pollution have been extracted from the past as a "lost paradise" between locals and tourists, two groups of people who essentially share nothing. The popular appeal of Boracay Island has resulted in its destruction and current closure. However, it does not end there. In the context of tourism, Azuma examined the possibility of "inoperative solidarity" (p.151). Although people do not share a definite past, they can be united by the beauty of the different pasts that they recall. The social aspect that Azuma refers to is a symbolic object or past that connects people in various ways.

The case of Itaru Nagasaka examines the livelihood strategies used by relatively poor households in rural communities that have been sending migrants since the 19th century. With limited land resources, villagers have migrated to Hawaii, California, and Italy. The strong and weak ties of kinship that are woven by the history of migration are essential safety nets for those who remain in the villages. As Janet Carsten (2008) argues, kinship is not rigid but is always in the process of becoming through negotiation and practice. In Nagasaka's case study, support from relatives is developed through negotiation and moral appeal. Villagers have continued to negotiate for their livelihoods, and readily accepted conditional cash transfers and microfinance as ways to diversify their livelihood strategies, despite the need for complicated meetings and lectures. They have adopted not only social welfare programs but also local rotating credit associations from other villages. Moreover, their agency activates

multiple systems, kin relations, and local associations to stabilize their lives (p.170). In this ethnography, sociality has been an agency and strategy for stabilizing the livelihoods of households and communities. The migration history of the community shows that the rural village does not have a clear boundary, but is undergoing a process of negotiation between the expansion and contraction of kin ties. Nagasaka recognizes the possibility that villagers will be able to exercise their agency in a social setting that has neoliberal purposes.

Yoriko Tatsumi discusses the sociality of double peripheries in the Mindanao region, which is at the periphery of Christian majority Philippine society and the Islamic world. When the jihadist Maranao militant groups engaged in a civil war in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur in May 2017, how did the people there secure a safe space in multiple marginalized and precarious areas? In conflict zones, the safety provided by the state does not work, and kinship and patron-client relationships are critical to their survival. Maranaos are known to have feuds among kinship groups, and kinship relations trigger conflicts and confrontations, which appear to be a risk to outsiders. However, Tatsumi argues that kinship relations are not just about risk and discusses their potential in the case of Macmod, a young Muslim man. Macmod, who did not finish college and was not a priority among his kin, was looking for a way to be independent. He tried to make his way through his high level of communication skills, but his relationships with relatives and patron-client connections prevented him from being independent. He turned to a piety movement to keep him distanced from this network. Joining such movement meant separation and isolation from his previous ordinary life, including his kinship ties, and imbibing a new sense of unity in religious groups (p.187). Tatsumi did not analyze why he participated and left the movement, but she points out that while he was a

completely different person, the people surrounding him were still waiting and closely observing his situation. Kinship relations took his participation in the piety movement as a kind of moratorium and secured a “safe space” for him to come back at any time. Kinship here is not a traditional and essential bond but rather an emergent sociality that has emerged with the current precarious situation in Mindanao. Tatsumi discussed sociality as a type of safety net based on kinship and patron-client relations. This sheds light on the possibility of revitalizing the classics of Maranao social studies by Mednick Melvin and Thomas Kiefer in a contemporary context.

How has this book responded to “what comes after the social”? The emergent socialities in this book were: (1) improvised and contingent combinations of intersecting discourses, relations, and strategies (assemblage by Seki, political agencies by Arcilla, and livelihood strategies by Nagasaka); and (2) variable solidarities and connections based on imagination and empathy that transcend territorial and kinship ties (i.e., transnational connections by Kares, solidarity among those who share nothing by Azuma, and kinship networks by Tatsumi). As Nagasaka has clearly shown, socialities positively incorporate or domesticate the social under neoliberalism. On the other hand, (3) the mutual reinforcement of community and kinship norms and neoliberal discipline (i.e., moral divide in the community by Kusaka and complicity between migration policy and family plan by Ortiga) was also indicated in a different direction. The penetration of the social, as shown by Kusaka, also causes fragmentation of the community and its sociality. It is impossible to predict how the encounter between the social and vernacular sociality will unfold in the cases that were cited in this book, which explains why sociality is emergent.

Sociality in this book indicates the direction to re-evaluate the

heterogeneity, contingency, and plurality of social relationships in the Philippines. It seems to capture the kin network, reciprocity, and patron-client relationship as starting points and their changes with social encounters. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult to grasp the differences between vernacular and emergent ones. Emergent sociality seems to be an expanded concept of vernacular sociality. By reserving interpretations of existing concepts and discussions, it would have been possible to start more closely with a specific level of sociality, such as heterogeneity, contingency, and plurality of social relations. In other words, it is necessary to question the concepts of communities, kinship networks, and reciprocity. In particular, the cases of Ortiga and Kusaka prompted a rethinking of the concepts that underpinned Philippine studies.

The issues mentioned above do not diminish the value of this book, but even call for discussions. Therefore, not only researchers engaged in Philippine studies and the global south but also those interested in anthropological theories and sociology will gain important insights from this book.

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