

## **Indigeneity and the Politics of Recognition: Honneth's Recognition Theory and its Relevance to the Manobo's Struggle for Justice**

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### **Abstract**

This paper attempts to diagnose the marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao by the forces of globalization through the lens of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. The paper shows that Honneth's theory of recognition is extremely relevant to the Surigao Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality as it provides the theoretical underpinnings to such a struggle which eventually points to the idea of their emancipation. The paper argues that the Manobos in Surigao have been marginalized by the forces of globalization such as logging and mining companies, which results in their continuous struggles and resistance. It argues further that the Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality deserves due recognition inasmuch as it is acknowledged at the outset that their right to ancestral domain has been violated.

**Keywords:** *Axel Honneth, politics of recognition, indigeneity, justice, self-determination, Surigao Manobo*

## Introduction

Recent history shows that the Lumads in Surigao, especially the Manobos,<sup>1</sup> have been severely marginalized by the forces of economic globalization, such as the mining and logging companies.<sup>2</sup> It must be noted that the Manobos as a group of indigenous people have depended entirely on the forest for their survival. Indeed, the forest and rivers are their life.<sup>3</sup> However, it is a fact that the mining and logging companies in Surigao had displaced the Lumad communities, forcing the latter to stage a series of protests to protect their rights to ancestral domain. Today, as we may already know, the Lumads in Surigao have boldly brought their struggle to the political sphere by marching the streets and even appealing to the international community to demand for the recognition of their rights. In fact, on one occasion, the Lumads in Surigao staged a lightning rally at the Sofitel, Manila, where representatives of the mining sector were holding a conference.<sup>4</sup> This move by the Lumads to demand recognition of their rights was met with brutalities perpetrated by some paramilitary forces believed to be working with the mining companies. As a result, several Lumad leaders have been killed. According to Arnold P. Alamon, 71 Lumad leaders have been killed from 2010 to 2015, not to mention the 95 cases of attacks against 87 alternative schools for indigenous children recently.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, as agents of globalization, the mining and logging companies and the military have taken a toll on the lives of the Manobos in Surigao. In fact, their “ancestral domain” has been substantially reduced, expropriated, and exploited by large

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Manobo” comes from the Malay “man” which means *humankind* or *people* and the term “tubo” means *to grow* and finally originally a Maguindanao word meaning *mountain people*. See Karl M. Gaspar, *Manobo Dreams in Arakan: A People's Struggle to Keep their Homeland* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011), 19. See also John M. Garvan, *The Manobos of Mindanao*. Memoirs of the National Academy of Science, Vol. 23 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold P. Alamon, “War of Extinction (The Lumad Killings in Mindanao, Philippines),” Article Online, accessed May 5, 2019, <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-21/lumad-killings-philippines/>.

<sup>3</sup> Garvan, *The Manobos of Mindanao*, 86-87.

<sup>4</sup> Belinda F. Espiritu, “The Lumad Struggle for Social and Environmental Justice: Alternative Media in a Socio-Environmental Movement in the Philippines,” *Journal of Alternative and Community Media* 2 (2017): 45-59.

<sup>5</sup> Alamon, “War of Extinction,” 1.

multinational agribusiness and mining companies.<sup>6</sup> This is clearly seen in the report made by the International Fact-Finding Mission in 2011 that land grabbing has become an urgent issue in the Philippines, particularly in Surigao.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the intrusion and penetration of the agents of globalization in Surigao have negatively impacted the overall health of the community. In fact, according to Burton, malnutrition, and disease have taken a heavy toll on the Lumads who are working in the mining industries.<sup>8</sup> Burton also pointed out that when logging and mining came to Mindanao, the forests of the Lumads were destroyed which eventually degraded their environment.<sup>9</sup>

Given this brief background on the way in which the forces of globalization have marginalized the Manobos in Surigao, this paper attempts to diagnose the marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao through the lens of Honneth's theory of recognition. This is inspired by the idea that it may contribute to the Manobos' dream of creating a better community as expressed most visibly in their struggle for social justice and equality. As already intimated above, Honneth's theory of recognition is particularly relevant in this case as it highlights the centrality of the experience of "injustice" as the basis of a form of social critique that points to the idea of emancipation.<sup>10</sup> With this, the paper argues that the Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality is morally justified - and thus deserves due recognition - inasmuch as it is acknowledged from the outset that the Manobos have been displaced through the intrusion and penetration by the agents of economic globalization. The paper further argues that the Manobos in Surigao are entitled to their right to self-determination as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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<sup>6</sup> Gaspar, *Manobo Dreams in Arakan*, 49-61.

<sup>7</sup> International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) 2011 *Idle Hectare: Agrofuel Development Sparks Intensified Land Grabbing in Isabela, Philippines. Report of the International Fact-Finding Mission*. 29th May - 6th June 2011. San Mariano, Isabela, Philippines; Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM) Inc. (2011) *Land conversion and agrofuel plantations in Mindanao: Promises and uncertainties*, *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 26 (1-2) (2011): 285-294.

<sup>8</sup> Erlinda M. Burton, *The Quest of the Indigenous Communities in Mindanao, Philippines: Rights to Ancestral Domain* (Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines: Research Institute for Mindanao Culture, Xavier University, 2003), 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (New York: Verso, 2003), 9.

The paper is divided into four major sections the first of which briefly sketches Honneth's theory of recognition. This section is important to understand Honneth's concepts of rights, recognition and misrecognition, respect and disrespect, social hope, and emancipation. This part is essential because these concepts serve as bases for the Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality inasmuch as this struggle is viewed primarily as a struggle for "recognition". The second section discusses the impact of globalization on the lives of the Manobos in Surigao. This part is also vital as it presents a clear picture of how the forces of globalization have intruded and penetrated the Manobo communities in Surigao. The third section shows how the Manobos in Surigao have reacted against the agents of globalization and highlights the mode of resistance they utilized. It is also in this section that the paper applies Honneth's theory of recognition in diagnosing the marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao. As already intimidated above, Honneth's theory of recognition provides the theoretical underpinnings to the Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality. Finally, the concluding section lays down the crucial key insights that are drawn from the study.

### **Honneth's Theory of Recognition: A Brief Sketch**

In this section, I will briefly sketch the key concepts of Axel Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition. Here, a critical engagement with his famous work *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* from a content analysis lens is made. However, given the broad scope of this monumental work which encompasses many important concepts in social philosophy and psychology, this section, as already mentioned, focused only on important concepts that helped materialize the aim of this paper.

Axel Honneth has been progressively acknowledged as a significant figure in contemporary Critical Theory and in contemporary social theory as a whole. According to Jean-Philippe Deranty and Emmanuel Renault, Honneth's work has significantly contributed remarkable ways to further develop the tradition of Frankfurt School Critical Theory.<sup>11</sup> For Deranty, the heart of Honneth's enormous philosophical project is found in his *Struggle for*

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<sup>11</sup> Jean-Philippe Deranty and Emmanuel Renault, "Politicizing Honneth's Ethics of Recognition," *Thesis Eleven*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (2007): 92-111. Also see Joel Anderson, "Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition," in *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays*, ed. Danielle Petherbridge (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 31-58.

*Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, which has been regarded as the most well-known of Honneth's works. Additionally, Deranty claimed that Honneth's *Struggle for Recognition* comprises the latter's proposal for a novel social theory that is based on Hegel's conception of a "struggle for recognition".<sup>12</sup>

In this seminal work, Honneth argued that "intersubjectivity" can be maintained when people recognize each other as equal individuals. With this, and through the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem viewed as the three modes of social relation, Honneth argued that a kind of identity formation could be attained. This kind of intersubjective relationship gives way to the conditions for self-realization. For Honneth, this is the kind of demand for recognition that is crucially needed for self-realization. On the contrary, the denial of this demand for recognition, which Honneth termed as "disrespect," results in social injustice and inequality. For Honneth, these experiences of social sufferings and injustice are the empirical evidence that reveal the forms of injustice in modern society.<sup>13</sup> Thus, for Honneth, according to Deranty and Renault, giving full recognition of the individuals' experiences of injustice rooted in actual social struggles is a way of emancipating them.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Honneth believed that a just society can only be attained through a kind of a struggle for recognition.<sup>15</sup> To this end, as Honneth sees it, social justice and recognition mutually inform each other since what counts as an injustice rests on some kind of mutual outlooks from others. This means that social injustice is an expression of an outward social misrecognition.<sup>16</sup>

To understand more fully Honneth's theory of recognition, it is worth noting to highlight Honneth's reaction to Hegel's Jena writings and Mead's social psychology. Honneth's reaction to Hegel and Mead provides both the context and foundation of his theory of recognition.

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<sup>12</sup> Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Beyond Communication. A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 185. See also Jeffry O'Carroll, "Engaging the Titans: A Marcusean Critique of Habermas, Foucault, and Honneth," *PHAVISMINDA Journal* Vol. 9 (2010): 33-45.

<sup>13</sup> Fraser and Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?* 129.

<sup>14</sup> Deranty and Renault, "Politicizing Honneth's Ethics of Recognition," 93.

<sup>15</sup> Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), xi-xii.

<sup>16</sup> Axel Honneth, "Grounding Recognition: A Rejoinder to Critical Questions," *Inquiry* 45, No. 4 (2002): 499-519.

## Honneth's Reactions to Hegel's Jena Writings and Mead's Social Psychology

It is important to note that Honneth's theory of recognition banked heavily on Hegel's early Jena writings in which Hegel suggests an intersubjective notion of the individual.<sup>17</sup> For Hegel, this kind of relationship is important because it gives us a new way of looking at ethical societies through a struggle for recognition.<sup>18</sup> For Honneth, as Hegel envisioned, this future ethical community is grounded on the idea of reciprocal relations, for which the category of solidarity between subjects goes beyond mere cognitive recognition.<sup>19</sup> As Gillian Rose asserts, "mutual recognition" expresses a kind of relationship that does not control or overpower but acknowledges the other's divergence and equality.<sup>20</sup>

In his further readings of Hegel's *System of Ethical Life*, however, Honneth found out that the social and philosophical model that aimed to explain man's ethical life, which Hegel intends to develop in Jena, was seemingly abandoned. This is what Honneth found to be insufficient in Hegel's system. Hence, for Honneth, Hegel's work is incomplete because it failed to develop the concrete interactions between individuals in the society. Honneth acknowledges Hegel's plan to give a philosophical reconstruction of the organization of individual ethical communities. However, as Honneth observed, Hegel sacrifices it for the sake of trying to erect a system based on the philosophy of consciousness.<sup>21</sup> In other words, Hegel's original plan was not completely pursued in favor of his other project. Hence, according to Honneth, Hegel failed to provide an empirical verification to this concept of the development of individual-consciousness, desire and recognition because he abandoned the project in favor of the philosophy of the mind.<sup>22</sup>

At this juncture, Honneth remarked that Hegel could not fully develop the spheres of recognition of love, rights, and solidarity, which are necessary for achieving an ethical life. Hence, for Honneth, there is

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<sup>17</sup> Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*, 1, 6. See also Christopher F. Zurn, *Axel Honneth: A Critical Theory of the Social* (UK: Polity Press, 2015), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Gillian Rose, *Hegel contra Sociology* (London: Athlone, 1981), 69. See also Jeffrey O'Conor, "Hegel Reframed: Marcuse on the Dialectic of Social Transformation," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 16 Issue 1 (2015): 102-109.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

a need to develop further Hegel's idea of shifting from "natural ethical life" to "absolute ethical life".<sup>23</sup>

Because of this shortfall, Honneth appropriates Mead's social psychology. Honneth argues that Hegel's original insight can be reconstructed through George Herbert Mead's social psychology.<sup>24</sup> This means that the reconstruction of Hegel's initial thesis can now be realized in the light of Mead's social psychology.<sup>25</sup> As Honneth noted further, Mead's social psychology explained the three-way interrelation between identity-formation of the individual and social patterns of interaction.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, it is the appropriation of Mead's social psychology that concretizes Honneth's theory of recognition.

Now, Mead's interpretation of the "I" is what Honneth considers as the driving force of historical transformation. In other words, Mead's notion of the "I" has been essential in the development of Honneth's notion of autonomy and morally responsible agents, which are the core ideas in the sphere of rights and solidarity. However, as Honneth sees it, Mead falls short in his attempt to develop a theory of recognition because, just like Hegel, he does not distinguish between the universalization of social norms and the development of individual freedom.<sup>27</sup> Honneth, therefore, argued that both Hegel and Mead failed to clarify the practical implications of their ideas. For Honneth, both thinkers were not able to ascertain the concrete social experiences that would produce the weight under which struggles for recognition would transpire within the historical process.<sup>28</sup> This further means that both Hegel and Mead could not highlight those forms of disrespect that would make social actors realize that they are denied recognition.<sup>29</sup> With this abounding realization, Honneth claimed that both Hegel and Mead settled only with the "purely theoretical" aspects of their thoughts and did not provide the actual analysis of recognition patterns. For Honneth, both could not pinpoint social experiences that motivate the individuals to struggle for recognition.

These perceived insufficiencies pushed Honneth to develop a new model of social theory, that is, the struggle for recognition based

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<sup>23</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, xx-xxi.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 70.

on the individuals' actual experiences of injustice.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, according to Deranty and Renault, Honneth reconstructed Hegel's original theory of recognition to develop his recognition theory, rejuvenating critical theory's fundamental project.<sup>31</sup> Also, for Honneth to point out a direction of emancipation, as Deranty and Renault see it, he has to develop a theory of recognition that provides a normative base of social critique that identifies the current social pathologies.<sup>32</sup> Because of this, Deranty and Renault regarded Honneth's theory of recognition as a strong model for a refurbished critical theory of society today.<sup>33</sup>

For Honneth, therefore, society's moral progress can be assessed by the degree to which persons are given legal and social recognition, especially if they are previously deprived of these. In this sense, social struggles can be understood as to how people demand recognition that is previously denied of them in their social interactions with one another.<sup>34</sup> In this connection, Honneth finds love, rights, and solidarity as the three major social recognition modes that a person needs to develop an undistorted relation to self. This is because Honneth believed that if a person is sufficiently recognized in these three spheres, it brings forth in himself respect, confidence, and esteem, correspondingly. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the outward denial of these three modes will result in disrespect, which denotes maltreatment of a person and a form of a disorder of the harmonious social relations he or she is indebted to other individuals.<sup>35</sup> As we will see later, this form of disrespect, for Honneth, results in some forms of injustice.<sup>36</sup>

In what follows, I will present very briefly the core concepts of Honneth's three spheres of recognition, namely, love, rights, and solidarity, to show how essential they are for modern subjects to acquire complete autonomy.<sup>37</sup> As is well known, complete autonomy is a prerequisite for individuals to attain full self-realization.<sup>38</sup> And as Honneth argued, to render every individual with recognition in the

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Philippe Deranty and Emmanuel Renault, "Politicizing Honneth's Ethics of Recognition," *Thesis Eleven*, Number 88 (February 2007): 92-111.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>34</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 94.

<sup>35</sup> Zurn, *Axel Honneth*, 31; See also Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Honneth, "Grounding Recognition," 500.

<sup>37</sup> Deranty, *Beyond Communication*, 271.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



sphere of love, rights and solidarity will, in turn, provide the subject with self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem.<sup>39</sup>

## The Sphere of Love

Honneth interprets the concept of love in a neutral sense in order to stay away from the restricted sense of “love” assimilated since Romanticism. For Honneth, love is an “expression of care” held over distance”.<sup>40</sup> With his concept of love, Honneth regarded “love relationships” as a strong emotional connection between parents and serves as a model of friendships as well as of the erotic relationship between lovers.<sup>41</sup> Hence, for Honneth as in Hegel, “love” is considered as an emotional and mental prerequisite in the development of self-confidence.<sup>42</sup>

Following Hegel, Honneth asserted that love has to be assumed “being oneself in another”.<sup>43</sup> This means that “love” can be viewed as an expression of a connection as the child advances in the formation of selfhood in his dealings with tangible others.<sup>44</sup> But Honneth also emphasized that love is not just a relationship between individuals, but also a practical relation-to-self. Hence, love for Honneth plays a crucial role in one’s emancipation. Any form of denial of the sphere of love, therefore, gives way to some kind of injustices. In fact, Honneth maintains that any form of disrespect or injustice impairs the subjects as it limits their freedom to act the way they positively understand themselves intersubjectively.<sup>45</sup> Hence, for Honneth, any form of disrespect against the sphere of love, such as “insult” or “humiliation”, may further result in some sort of injustice as it may disturb a person’s practical relation-to-self by refusing her recognition for certain dues to her individuality.<sup>46</sup> According to Honneth, this kind of injustice happens because the person is influentially denied the chance to

<sup>39</sup> Zurn, *Axel Honneth*, 28.

<sup>40</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 5, 118.

<sup>41</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 95. Also see Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), ch. 13.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 95, 107. See also Christopher F. Zurn, *Axel Honneth: A Critical Theory of the Social* (UK: Polity Press, 2015), 28.

<sup>43</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life (1802/03) and 'First Philosophy of Spirit' (Part III of the System of Speculative Philosophy 1803/04)*, ed. and tr. H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1979), 110.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Beyond Communication*, 288-289.

<sup>45</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

control and exercise her freedom over her own body.<sup>47</sup> As Honneth maintains, any form of humiliation against any individual creates in a person a sense of powerlessness against the other.<sup>48</sup> This is because this form of “physical injury” represented by, for example, “torture” and “rape” hinders an individual from having access to her affective and physiological needs. Hence, the misery of torture or rape is always associated with the phenomenon of distrust, which will eventually result in the downfall of one's basic self-confidence.<sup>49</sup> Thus, for Honneth, these forms of injustice prompt individuals to struggle for recognition.

### The Sphere of Right

While the cherished relationships of love and friendship result in having self-confidence, the relationships between the members of a legal community beget the practical relation-to-self known as self-confidence.<sup>50</sup> For Honneth, the similarity between the sphere of love and the legal sphere lies in the fact that both spheres can only be explained in the context of reciprocal recognition. Consequently, as Honneth remarked, as persons, we can only understand ourselves as the bearer of rights when we fully recognize that other persons, just like us, are also bearers of that right in the same manner.<sup>51</sup> Hence, for Honneth, we can only understand ourselves as “legal persons” when we claim that others are also bearers of the same right we possess.<sup>52</sup> Here, the core of Honneth's argument is that an individual member in the society can only wholly function as an agent if she recognizes an opportunity by which her claim can be addressed. This means that if the subjects accept the legal norms in society and freely agree among themselves to be alike, they can realize that they can make their own decisions about “moral norms”.<sup>53</sup> This is the developmental process

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 132-133.

<sup>49</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 133. See also see Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), ch.1.

<sup>50</sup> Zurn, *Axel Honneth*, 34.

<sup>51</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 108. See also Zurn, *Axel Honneth*, 34.

<sup>52</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 107-121. See also Danielle Petherbridge, *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays with a Reply by Axel Honneth* (Leiden: Bill, 2011), 265-270.

<sup>53</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 110.

that Honneth called the “rational will-formation,” which implies that everybody is equal in the sphere of right.<sup>54</sup>

Additionally, Honneth argues that through legal recognition, we can consider ourselves as autonomous persons; thus, we can make our personal decisions and act responsibly as members of society. In this way, as Honneth emphasizes, the interaction between rational subjects in the legal sphere grants the individual self-respect, which is a form of practical relation-to-self.<sup>55</sup> It is through this way that we act morally as persons when we recognize other persons as our co-equal.

In contrast, when an individual is denied of her rights as a full-fledged member of society, she feels neglected or denigrated, which will make her feel marginalized. For Honneth, one’s denigration experience disrupts a person’s “moral self-respect” because it forbids her to have certain rights in society.<sup>56</sup> For Honneth, therefore, a specific denial of a person’s rights implies that she is not considered to have an equal degree of moral responsibility and enjoyment, just like the other members of society.<sup>57</sup> As Honneth maintains, this denial of rights or ostracism shows a clear violation of the “intersubjective expectation” to be acknowledged as an individual capable of making moral judgments.<sup>58</sup> This type of disrespect results in the individual’s “loss of self-respect” and deprives the individual of every opportunity to ascribe “social value” to her skills and capabilities.<sup>59</sup>

For Honneth, when an individual loses “self-respect” because she is disrespected and denied of her rights, she experiences the moral feeling of “shame”. This kind of reaction, for Honneth, results in the “lowering of one’s feeling of self-worth” or the feeling of oneself as a being of “lower social value”.<sup>60</sup> And as we can see, all these negative feelings of being disrespected, denigrated and shamed entice the individuals to struggle for recognition.

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<sup>54</sup> Nancy Fraser, *Recognition or Redistribution? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. Joel Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke (London: Verso, 2005), 144.

<sup>55</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 111. See also Den Brink and Owen, *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the Tradition of Critical Social Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12.

<sup>56</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 133.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 134

<sup>59</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 134. See also Joel Feinberg, *The nature and value of rights*, in *Rights, justice, and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 143ff

<sup>60</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 137-138.

## The Sphere of Solidarity

In the sphere of solidarity, Honneth maintains that for the human person to be able to gain positive “relation-to-self”, she always needs a form of social esteem that permits her to convey her distinct traits and abilities confidently. This is, of course, on top of her experience of care and legal recognition.<sup>61</sup> Honneth argues that the sphere of solidarity is a precondition for the actuality of an “intersubjectively shared value horizon.”<sup>62</sup> This means that in the sphere of solidarity, the “self” and “other” can only reciprocally regard each other as individualized persons on the circumstance that they share an orientation to those values and goals that show to each other the importance of their abilities for the life of the other.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, Honneth argues that each individual plays an essential role within the universal system of “social life” in the sphere of solidarity.<sup>64</sup> Hence, for Honneth, it is in this sphere that an individual is granted self-confidence that enables her to become a significant contributor to society's advancement. It is important to note that while self-respect accords every subject with the idea of “similarity”, that is, one person is similar to others in terms of rights, self-esteem assures “individual differences” among subjects.<sup>65</sup> Thus, what is established in the sphere of solidarity is the subject's unique traits and abilities that are not common to all but are recognized and treasured by all. For Honneth, therefore, the sphere of solidarity supposes a kind of an intersubjective relation where individuals mutually esteem each other.<sup>66</sup> This kind of relation is termed as “cultural self-understanding of a society”.<sup>67</sup> For Honneth, this cultural self-understanding is regarded as the gauge for individuals' social esteem so that each individual's traits and abilities are duly regarded according to how they contribute to society's goals.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, Honneth regarded the attainment of self-esteem as a matter of cultural or group's struggle for recognition. For Honneth, solidarity describes

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<sup>61</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121.

<sup>62</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Deranty, *Beyond Communication*, 301.

<sup>65</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121-122.

<sup>66</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121. See also Paolo A. Bolaños, “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations: Some Notes on Axel Honneth's Materialist Philosophical Anthropology”, *Suri*, Volume I, Issue 1 (2012): 23.

<sup>67</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. See also Zurn, *Axel Honneth*, 39-40.

the normative behavior of oppressed individuals “coming up together” intending to attain self-esteem.<sup>69</sup> Here, individuals in society are bestowed with a kind of “social esteem” that allows them to feel “appreciated” to realize their societal goals.<sup>70</sup> With this realization, self-esteem grows, which gives way to self-worth that shapes one’s identity.<sup>71</sup>

However, when the status or the “value” of the person is being degraded, that is, misrecognizing her contribution to society will result in the individual’s feeling of having no significant value in the community.<sup>72</sup> For Honneth, this type of disrespect causes the denigration of an individual or collective ways of life, which is considered as an “insulting” or “degrading” form of behavior in society. As Honneth argues, this form of disrespect lowers the individual’s degree of social esteem. It strips every person of the chance to ascribe social values based on their capabilities. Consequently, this kind of social devaluation brings with it a loss of the individual’s self-esteem.<sup>73</sup> Thus, for Honneth, because of the emotional responses associated with shame or insult, as illustrated by, for example, physical abuse, the denial of rights, and denigration, the experience of being disrespected and disregarded of recognition ushers one to strive for recognition.<sup>74</sup>

To recall, Honneth, in the struggle for recognition, shows how the different forms of disrespect are formed in the three spheres. As we can see, in the sphere of love, one’s trust in the reliability of the social world or the basic self-confidence disintegrates when an individual experiences any physical or psychological abuse. In this sphere, one achieves self-confidence, but physical abuse like torture or rape hinders an individual from accessing her affective and physiological needs. Hence, this experience results in the loss of one’s self-trust. There is disrespect when a person experiences denial of rights or exclusion in the sphere of right or respect. In this sphere, one gains self-respect, but when an individual is denied of her rights as a full-fledged member of society, the feeling of “shame” arises. This feeling arises when one is denied or stripped of her capability to interact as a co-equal member in society and as one who can form

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<sup>69</sup> Petherbridge, *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays*, 272.

<sup>70</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 121–130.

<sup>71</sup> Bolaños, “The Ethics of Recognition and the Normativity of Social Relations”, 23.

<sup>72</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 133–134

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

moral judgments. While the second type of disrespect injures subjects concerning their self-respect, the kind of disrespect in the third sphere, the sphere of solidarity, involves negative significance for individuals or groups' social value. Consequently, the individual feels that she is insignificant in society; hence, she experiences denigration or insult.<sup>75</sup> For Honneth, all of these forms of disrespect forced the individual to struggle for recognition.

### **Disrespect: The Violation and Denial of Rights**

The prevailing arguments on the three spheres of recognition attest that each person needs a mutual sense of acceptance or approval from the other. This means that, as free individuals, each one ought to be respected equally, just like the rest of all other members in a given society. Honneth's theory of recognition aims to disclose the moral limits causing social interaction and is based on the assumption that society's inclusion will always progress through mutual recognition.<sup>76</sup> However, even today, there are still various members in the society, especially the poor and the numerous ethnic groups and indigenous peoples, who experienced being maltreated and degraded. For Honneth, these forms of disrespect, i.e., insult and humiliation, degradation and disrespect, impair the subjects and impede their freedom to act and injure the positive understanding of themselves.<sup>77</sup> As Honneth maintains, each human being's normative self-image relies on the odds of being continuously backed up by others. Hence, the experience of being disrespected injures the identity of the person as a whole and provides the stimulus for "social conflict".<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, Honneth argues that these forms of disrespect give way to some kind of "social shame," which in turn inflicts a kind of "scars" or "injuries" upon individuals.<sup>79</sup> When these individuals realize the repercussions of these forms of disrespect, this awareness drives

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 132-134.

<sup>76</sup> Anita Chari, "Toward a political critique of reification: Lukacs, Honneth and the aims of critical theory", *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 36, No. (2010): 591.

<sup>77</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131. See also Axel Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, trans. Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 86.

<sup>78</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131; Also see, as a whole, Glyris M. Breakwell: *Threatened Identities* (New York: Wiley, 1983).

<sup>79</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 135.

them to struggle for recognition.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, this negative experience of being disrespected gives way to the feelings of being angry, pained, or outraged.

To furnish a concrete basis for how this feeling of disrespect has affected individuals' emotions, Honneth appropriated John Dewey's pragmatist psychology. According to Dewey, as Honneth views it, negative feelings such as anger, indignation, and sorrow are formed when an individual finds it challenging to realize the desired action.<sup>81</sup> By contrast, positive feelings of joy or pride occur when one can attain an appropriate answer to an urging problem.<sup>82</sup>

In Dewey's sense, as Honneth sees it, an individual's reaction when her expectations are violated results in moral indignation emotions. When human freedom is violated, and human actions are not realized, moral conflicts arise in society.<sup>83</sup> Logically, the feelings of "misrecognition" and "social contempt" arise when subjects are misrecognized or disrespected since they attack the very conditions of practical identity.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, for Honneth, in agreement with Dewey, the experience of injustice or disrespect gives way to a moral feeling of shame where an individual feels as being of lower social value. These negative feelings of shame, being disrespected and being denied recognition serve as an impetus for a struggle for recognition, which becomes a motive for political resistance.<sup>85</sup>

As we can see, the above discussion shows that social struggles exist when there is disrespect, misrecognition, and unequal treatment in society. Social struggles arise as long as there are forms of injustice around. This is the reason why Honneth considers society as pathological. As Honneth reminds us, the purpose of social critical theory is to identify the misdevelopments of the intersubjective relationships that persist in society – what he calls social "pathology".<sup>86</sup> Honneth asserts that the purpose of social critical

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 133-135.

<sup>81</sup> John Dewey, "The Theory of Emotion, I emotional Attitudes." *Psychological Review*, Vol. 1 (1984): 553-569, [https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey\\_1895.html](https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Dewey/Dewey_1895.html) (accessed 29 March 2020)

<sup>82</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 136.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>84</sup> Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Beyond Communication. A Critical Study of Axel Honneth's Social Philosophy* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 311.

<sup>85</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 138-139.

<sup>86</sup> Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 56.

theory is to identify social structures that restrain members of society from living the “good life”.<sup>87</sup> Hence, to emancipate people from the repressions brought about by disrespect, misrecognition, and social injustices, individuals must be given due recognition in their respective demands and expectations in society.<sup>88</sup> In this sense, therefore, Honneth’s theory of recognition can be an alternative in emancipating all those considered marginalized members of society today.

### **Marginalization of the Manobos**

This section discusses the impact of globalization on the life of the Manobos in Surigao. Here, the term “globalization” is taken along the lines of Jeffrey Ocaj’s notion of “globalization,” following Anthony Giddens, to specifically mean “economic globalization,” which undermines local subsistence economies and has caused familial and cultural distortions.<sup>89</sup>

To make sense of how economic globalization has impacted the lives of the Manobos in Surigao, a brief engagement with the Philippine Government’s development initiatives and the local government unit in Surigao is vital. These development initiatives aim to provide economic development and sustainability, poverty alleviation, and enhance people’s well-being. However, these economic development initiatives resulted in the organizational alteration of the Manobos’ customs and traditions and even the loss of their identity and self-determination.<sup>90</sup>

According to Karl Gaspar, the causes of the present-day adversities that the indigenous peoples (Ips), including the Manobos in Surigao, encountered could be traced back to the beginnings of the country’s colonial history.<sup>91</sup> As recalled, many among the original

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 3, 56.

<sup>88</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 135. See also Christopher F. Zurn, “Recognition, Redistribution, and Democracy: Dilemmas of Honneth’s Critical Social Theory”, *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 13, Issue 1 (April 2005), 89-126.

<sup>89</sup> Jeffrey Ocaj, “Ethics of Refusal: Globalization and the Penan People’s Struggle for Recognition,” *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 19.2 & 19.3 (2015): 169–195 (accessed August 14, 2020).

<sup>90</sup> For more detailed discussion on the rise and development of domination in the Philippines, see Jeffrey Ocaj, “Shifting Pattern and Sophistication of the American Colonial Domination in the Philippines: From Colonialism to Technological Domination,” *Silliman Journal* Vol. 55 No. 1 (January-June 2014):117-152.

<sup>91</sup> Karl M. Gaspar, *The Lumad’s Struggle in the Face of Globalization*, (Davao City: AFRIM, 2000), 5-12. See also Jeffrey Ocaj, “The History of Domination and



settlers remained outside the towns and fled into the mountains and forests when the Spaniards established the township. Bringing with them their beliefs and practices intact, they were considered *remontados* (that is, people who fled to the hills like the IPs now) and *infideles* (infidels).<sup>92</sup> Under the *Spaniards' jura regalia doctrine (Regalian Doctrine)*, all lands in the Philippine archipelago were treated as lands of the Spanish crown.<sup>93</sup> Hence, no one has a legal right over the land if he has no land titles. Thus, the indigenous people who chose to live outside the pueblos had virtually no right to their land.<sup>94</sup>

After the Spaniards, the Americans subjugated the Philippines after they won the battle against the former colonizers. Under the Treaty of Paris of 1898, the Philippines became a U.S. colony.<sup>95</sup> The U.S. government implemented a series of land laws to govern the so-called “public lands” and the uncultivated and unoccupied public lands, including indigenous peoples' ancestral domains. These lands were then classified as agricultural lands to be distributed to those who wanted to use them, including U.S. citizens.<sup>96</sup> Under the Public Land Act of 1902, the U.S. government open the land to corporations or associations up to 1,024 hectares for his use. This provision also nullifies any relocation and transfer of land titles if the American government does not authorize them. The 1902 Land Registration Act No. 496 declared that all land title system is under the power of the U.S. government, while the 1903 Philippine Commission Act No. 178 categorized all unregistered land as part of the public domain.<sup>97</sup>

It must be noted that Surigao, a former Spanish district, became a chartered province of the Philippines on May 15,

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Resistance in the Philippines: From the pre-Hispanic through the Spanish and American Period,” *LUMINA: Interdisciplinary Research Journal of Holy Name University*, Vol. 21 No. 1 (March 2010): 35-61.

<sup>92</sup> Rey Ty, “Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines: Continuing Struggle,” *Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center* Vol. 62 (December 2010), <https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/2010/12/indigenous-peoples-in-the-philippines-continuing-struggle.html> (accessed October 6, 2020).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> “Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain; December 10, 1898”, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/sp1898.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/sp1898.asp) (accessed October 6, 2020).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

1901 *under* the Philippine Constitution Act 127. But it was dissolved in 1960 to comprise what are now known as the provinces of Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Dinagat Islands.<sup>98</sup> The aborigines of Surigao del Sur were a conglomeration and mixture of different racial types, namely: Mandaya, Mamanua, Mansaka and Manobo.<sup>99</sup> Based on the National Council of Churches' study in the Philippines – People's Action for Cultural Ties (NCCP-PACT) in 1988, the whole Manobo population totaled 250, 000.<sup>100</sup> In 1994, the Manobos and their subgroups occupy the core areas from Sarangani island into the Mindanao mainland in Agusan del Sur, Davao provinces, Bukidnon, North, and South Cotabato. The entire land area of Surigao del Norte is 197,293 hectares, of which, according to the DENR, 7.68%, or 15,155.36 hectares, is the total land area covered by mining tenements.<sup>101</sup> The land area of Surigao del Sur is 523,050 hectares or 5,230.50 sq. kilometers of which 32.22 percent are classified as alienable and disposable while 67.78 percent is forest land. Endowed with rich quantities of metallic and non-metallic minerals, Surigao del Sur is abundant with gold, chromite, copper, nickel, cobalt, and zinc. Clay diatomite and bentonite, limestone, coal and feldspar, and coarse/fine aggregates are the non-metallic minerals.<sup>102</sup> The fatty mineral deposits have attracted both small and large scales mining companies to operate in Surigao.

The exploitation of the Manobos' ancestral lands had been exacerbated when the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1995, Mining Act of 1995. This Act gave the American colonialists the right to mine public lands, and the Presidential Decree 705 or the 1975 Revised Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines were enacted

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<sup>98</sup> Fernando A. Almeda, "*Surigao Across the Years: Story of a Province*. Philippine National Historical Society", ISBN 9789718851012 (Retrieved July 10, 2021).

<sup>99</sup> "Surigao del Sur", [https://infogalactic.com/info/Surigao\\_del\\_Sur](https://infogalactic.com/info/Surigao_del_Sur) (accessed July 9, 2021).

<sup>100</sup> CCP Encyclopedia of Arts 1994, 120.

<sup>101</sup> "Surigao Del Norte Mineral Profile", <http://www.mgbr13.ph/MGBR13DataFiles/MMD/2017/MineralStatistics/QuickFacts/Surigao%20del%20Norte%20Quickfacts.pdf> (accessed September 22, 2020)

<sup>102</sup> "Surigao Del Sur Geography", <https://mujaju.wordpress.com/2015/01/14/surigao-del-sur-geography/> (accessed September 22, 2020)

as laws.<sup>103</sup> Included in the PD 705 is the Industrial Tree Plantation Lease Agreements (ITPLA) formation of 1975. It was continued through DENR's Industrial Forest Management Agreements (IFMA) up to the present times. These programs give way for more industrial and commercial tree plantations and logging projects funded by transnational financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP).<sup>104</sup> Under this development, most of the Manobos' ancestral lands in Surigao were opened to economic activities, such as mining, logging, and tree planting activities.<sup>105</sup> Because of these happenings, the Manobos in Surigao and other IPs had significantly been displaced.

For instance, the entire land area of Surigao del Norte is 197,293 hectares, of which, according to the DENR, 7.68%, or 15,155.36 hectares, is the total land area covered by mining tenements.<sup>106</sup> This development resulted in massive deforestation throughout the Philippine archipelago for the last few decades.<sup>107</sup> There was a peak of 471 Timber License Agreement (TLA) holders in the Philippines, controlling an aggregated area of more than 10M ha, which indicates the logging companies control much of the country's natural resources.<sup>108</sup>

I will show how the mining and the logging companies marginalized the Manobos in Surigao in what follows.

**On Mining.** As is well-known, Surigao has the most significant nickel deposit in the Philippines and also holds a rich deposit of other precious and base metals such as gold, silver, copper, and chromite.<sup>109</sup> This explains why Surigao has a long mining history from the ancient period up to the present. The first big mining town was established in

<sup>103</sup> "Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines", <http://www.gov.ph/1975/05/19/presidential-decree-no-705-s-1975/> (accessed September 26, 2020)

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., see also Petrola, "Economic Globalization and the Manobo Peoples' Struggle for Social Justice", 1891.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> "Surigao Del Norte Mineral Profile", <http://www.mgbr13.ph/MGB-R13DataFiles/MMD/2017/MineralStatistics/QuickFacts/Surigao%20del%20Norte%20Quickfacts.pdf> (accessed September 22, 2020)

<sup>107</sup> Rodel D. Lasco and Florencia B. Pulhin, "Carbon Budgets of Forest Ecosystems in the Philippines", *Journal of Environmental Science and Management* 12 (1) (June 2009): 1-13, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265740827> (accessed September 5, 2020).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Hideyuki Kurita, "Case Studies of Medium/large-scale Mines in the Philippines (1)", *愛媛経済論集, Ehime University*, Vol.35, No.1 (2015): 37-60.

the municipality of Claver after the success of Taganito Nickel Mines by Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC), which started mining operations in 1989. Since then, many investors have been attracted by the immense success of TMC. In the study of Kurita, by 2012, seven mining companies have been operating in Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur, namely the Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC), Platinum Group Metals Corporation (PGMC), Shenzou Mining Group Corporation (SMGC), Cagdianao Nickel Project (CNP), Carrascal Nickel Corporation (CNC), Adlay and Dahican Nickel Project (ADNP), and the Mercventures Mining and Development (MERC).<sup>110</sup> In 2017, Surigao del Norte had four giant Mineral Resources Development Projects, specifically Nickel Mines, namely: Tagana-an Nickel Project (Hinatuan Mining Corporation); SIRC Nickel Project (Surigao Integrated Resources Corporation/ Platinum Group Metals Corporation); Taganito Nickel Project (Taganito Mining Corporation); and Urbiztondo Nickel Project (Adnama Mining Resources, Inc.). It also has one (1) Processing Plant, the Taganito HPAL Project (Taganito HPAL Nickel Corporation).

Because of this rich mineral deposit, no wonder there are small and large scales mining activities in the province. The Marc Ventures Mining Development Corporation (MVMDC) is a large-scale mining company operating at Carrascal and Cantilan with about 50 sq. km. which focuses on gold-digging activities. Also, in Carascal is the CTP Construction and Mining Corporation, which focuses on gold and nickel extracted in 35.64 and 48.6916 sq. kilometers, respectively. The Carac-an Development Corporation, also in Carrascal, operates with an area of 506.3764 sq. kilometers. There are also small-scale mining activities found in the municipalities of Barobo, Carmen, and San Miguel.<sup>111</sup> In the study of Sarah Herbst, most of these mining companies are mainly Chinese companies. According to Herbst, these mining companies are not inclined to discuss issues about mitigating environmental impacts or talking about sustainable practices”.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Kurita, “Case Studies of Medium/large-scale Mines in the Philippines (1)”, 52-60.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Sarah Herbst, Mining in the Caraga Region, Philippines: Insiders’ Perspectives on Emergent Social and Environmental Problems,”<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/MINING-IN-THE-CARAGA-REGION%2C-PHILIPPINES%3A-INSIDERS%27-Herbst/c5dd74458abcd802831d2994af2d9f64c709132c> (accessed October 7, 2020).

***On Logging Companies.*** In the last few decades, massive deforestation has been observed throughout the Philippine archipelago.<sup>113</sup> Lasco and Pulhin noted that when the Spanish colonizers first set foot in the Philippines in 1521, 90% of the country was covered with lush tropical rainforest (ca. 27M ha) of 30M total land area.<sup>114</sup> However, in the last century alone, the Philippines lost 14.9 M ha of tropical forests or an average of about 150,000 ha/yr.<sup>115</sup> This enormous loss of forest cover in the country has been historically caused by the logging activities since in the 1970s when there was a peak of 471 Timber License Agreement (TLA) holders in the Philippines controlling an aggregated area of more than 10M ha, which indicates the logging companies control over much of the country's natural resources.<sup>116</sup> However, the ultimate driving forces of deforestation are more complex than merely blaming loggers because Lasco and Pulhin observed that the issue of deforestation in the Philippines is also tied up to the broader issues of corruption, poverty as well as high population density that led to the migration of people to upland areas.<sup>117</sup> For instance, in Bislig, Surigao del Sur, the Paper Industries Corp. of the Philippines (PICOP) with a massive timber license covering 186,692 hectares of forest lands was granted as a logging company since 1952.<sup>118</sup> The whole concession area provided a steady base for selective logging of the mature Philippine hardwood forests that have a natural logging cycle of 25 to 35 years.<sup>119</sup>

Moreover, the continuous operations by the mining and logging companies in Surigao have caused various conflicts. As Holden et al. argued, the most immediate clash between the government's aggressive promotion of mining and the indigenous inhabitants is the inconsistency between the law promoting mining and the Indigenous

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<sup>113</sup> Rodel D. Lasco and Florencia B. Pulhin, "Carbon Budgets of Forest Ecosystems in the Philippines", *Journal of Environmental Science and Management* 12 (1) (June 2009): 1-13, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265740827> (accessed September 5, 2020).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. See also David M. Kummer, *Deforestation in the Postwar Philippines* (Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992), 177ff.

<sup>118</sup> Gerardo P. Sicat. "RISE AND FALL OF PICOP – MINDANAO'S TIMBER PLANTATIONS (PART II)", *The Philippine Star*, August 12, 2015, <https://www.fef.org.ph/gerardo-sicat/rise-and-fall-of-picop-mindanaos-timber-plantations-part-ii/> (accessed July 9, 2021).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).<sup>120</sup> As a result, conflicts between mining and indigenous peoples has generated substantial controversy, including protests, litigation, and allegations of violence and human rights abuses.<sup>121</sup>

Now, let me highlight the way in which the Manobos in Surigao have been marginalized by the forces of globalization, specifically the mining companies.

The initial form of dispossession of the Manobos in Surigao by the mining companies was through the purported fraudulent IPRA consent from indigenous communities. The acquisition of FPIC, according to Ilagan, "can be cheated, bypassed, and even ignored by companies who want to exploit ancestral lands."<sup>122</sup> This fraudulent acquisition of IPRA consent resulted in indigenous peoples' physical displacement.

Another concrete manifestation of the marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao as a direct result of the fraudulent acquisition of free, informed consent is the destruction of their sacred sites. Mountains and other sacred places of the Manobos, for example, are destroyed by mining operations due to mineral deposits' location.<sup>123</sup> This is important to highlight because, as we can see, one of the main reasons why the Manobos reacted against globalization agents is the destruction of their sacred sites as their burial places. In fact, Tauli-Corpuz has emphasized that the Manobos' struggle for the defense of their ancestral domain is itself a defense of this earth-based religiousness.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>120</sup> William Holden, Kathleen Nadeau, and R. Danial Jacobson, "Exemplifying Accumulation by dispossession: Mining and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 93 (2011): 141-161, DOI:10.1111/j.1468-0467.2011.00366.x (accessed July 24, 2020).

<sup>121</sup> William Holden & Allan Ingelson, "Disconnect between the Philippine Mining Investment Policy and Indigenous Peoples' Rights," *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*, 25:4 (2007): 375-391, DOI: 10.1080/02646811.2007.11433469 (accessed August 13, 2020).

<sup>122</sup> L. Ilagan, "Legislative actions on the mining issue in the Philippines", in V. Yocogan-Diano, T. Kashiwazaki, M. Llanza, and H. Advani (eds): *Mining and Women in Asia: Experiences of Women Protecting their Communities and Human Rights against Corporate Mining*. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Chiang Mai, (2009): 115-123.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Victoria Tauli-Corpuz and Eryln Ruth E. Alcantara, *Engaging the UN special rapporteur on indigenous people: Opportunities and challenges* (Baguio: Tebtebba, Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education, 2004), 100.

Environmental degradation is another concrete manifestation of the marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao. Often minerals that are found in ore deposits contain high amounts of sulfur, which generates acid.<sup>125</sup> There will also be the migration of heavy metals, such as arsenic, that frequently occurs due to acid mine drainage, which is impossible to stop.<sup>126</sup>

Still, another indication of marginalization of the Manobos in Surigao comes when mining and even logging companies replaced the Surigao Manobos' subsistence from being dependent on their land and forest to a cash-based economy. Hence, with the advent of mining, the usual way the Manobos conduct their daily living is superseded by the market economy over which indigenous peoples lack control. This effect of mining leads to the marginalization of the Manobos, who are primarily producing their food according to their traditional way.<sup>127</sup>

The final and most problematic way mining companies have dispossessed the Manobos in Surigao is through the militarization of areas where mining projects are located. It is essential to note that the military is almost always visible in the mining industries to provide security.<sup>128</sup> However, the military's presence has caused numerous armed and violent conflicts in Mindanao, most notably in Surigao. These various conflicts have led to large-scale and involuntary out-migration, particularly from the areas of direct and massive conflict, mainly in the forms of human displacements and movements.<sup>129</sup> Such conflicts have primarily involved the Manobos in Surigao, who are not combatants out of the conflict zones. For instance, due to the intensified military operations under the BS Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan in 2014-2015, it was reported that there were around 6,000 Lumad evacuees for the whole of Mindanao.<sup>130</sup> In 2015, some 2,700 Lumad evacuees are the Manobos in Surigao del Sur. They were forced to leave their homes again when they were faced with the reign

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<sup>125</sup> Meriam A. Bravante & William N. Holden, Going through the motions: the environmental impact assessment of nonferrous metals mining projects in the Philippines, *The Pacific Review*, 22:4 (2009): 523-547, DOI: 10.1080/09512740903128034 (accessed July 5, 2020).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Holden et. al, "Exemplifying Accumulation by dispossession", 154.

<sup>129</sup> Jorge V. Tigno, "Migration and Violent Conflict in Mindanao." *Population Review* 45, no. 1 (2006) doi:10.1353/prv.2006.0013, 23.

<sup>130</sup> Inday Espina-Varona, "UNHCR to pull plug on Minda operations as lumad displacement woes heat up", *ABS-CBNnews.com*, 8 October 2015, <http://goo.gl/J8Sr1l> (accessed July 8, 2021).

of terror exerted by the paramilitary and military forces.<sup>131</sup> Again, in Surigao del Sur, 1,173 individuals, or at least 244 families from at least nine *lumad* communities in Barangay Diatagon, Lianga and Barangay Buhisan, San Agustin, as well as 406 students and 59 teachers of nine tribal schools fled when the 75th IB launched operations near their communities.<sup>132</sup> Again, in 2017, some 2,512 mostly Manobos from far-flung communities of Barangay Diatagon, Surigao del Sur, and adjacent areas have had to leave their home villages for fear of ongoing military operations.<sup>133</sup> On July 16, 2018, over 1,200 evacuees from upland communities of Diatagon, Lianga in Surigao del Sur, and neighboring villages who fled their homes, fearing that military forces' presence in their place would invite attacks by the New People's Army.<sup>134</sup> All they wanted is the pulling out of soldiers from their place as they are directly affected by the on-going warfare.<sup>135</sup> Just recently, in mid-February 2020, some 67 Manobo lumad families in the neighboring hinterland in Surigao del Sur fled their homes, fearing hostilities between Army soldiers and NPA rebels.<sup>136</sup> They fled because they were so afraid they might be caught again in the crossfire and died like some of their fellow Manobo elders and members.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, just recently, on June 17, 2021, soldiers killed three indigenous people, including a minor, in the troubled southern island in an armed encounter with rebels, but human rights groups called it an attack

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<sup>131</sup> Dee Aryoso, "2000 Lumad "bakwets" flee to Tandag City", 3 September 2015, *Bulatlat.com*, <https://www.bulatlat.com/tag/lumad-forced-evacuation/> (accessed July 8, 2021).

<sup>132</sup> Interaksyon, "UN rapporteur on IPs informed of lumad 'bakwit,' 'massacre' as volunteer teachers report harassment", 8 December 2017, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2017/12/08/112135/un-rapporteur-on-ips-informed-of-lumad-bakwit-massacre-as-volunteer-teachers-report-harassment/> (July 9, 2021).

<sup>133</sup> "2,500 Manobos displaced again in Diatagon by military operation", <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/breaking-news/2017/07/14/84699/look-2500-manobos-displaced-again-in-diatagon-by-military-operation/> (accessed July 11, 2021).

<sup>134</sup> Froilan Gallardo, "Military has last word on 'bakwit' in Surigao Sur, says village chief", *MindaNews*, 22 July 2018, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2018/07/military-has-last-word-on-bakwit-in-surigao-sur-says-village-chief/> (accessed July 9, 2021).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Chris V. Panganiban, "67 Manobo families in Surigao flee homes anew", *Mindanao Daily News Online*, 29 February 2020, <https://www.mindanaodailynews.com/news/front-page/todays-top-stories/67-manobo-families-in-surigao-flee-homes-anew> (accessed July 9, 2021).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*



against civilians.<sup>138</sup> Every now and then, a number of the Manobos and other indigenous community members fled from their homes out of fear that the military presence would again lead to human rights violations and killings in their tribal communities.<sup>139</sup>

Moreover, in the guise of development, the government takes sides with the mining industry and considers every form of opposition to mining as hostility to the state itself. The government has allowed a constant military presence in the communities of the Manobos in Surigao due to the presence of NPAs.<sup>140</sup> This scenario is quite disturbing because the battlegrounds between the New People's Army (NPA) and the military are inhabited by the Manobos in Surigao.<sup>141</sup> As mentioned, there have been various cases where the Manobos are caught between the forces of the State apparatus' military and paramilitary arms (who are mostly in partnership with the corporate firms' private armies) and the New People's Army. Hence, it cannot be denied that the presence of NPAs causes part of the continuing militarization in Surigao; in fact, it is common knowledge in some areas of Surigao. Hence, some questions arose about whether or not the Manobos are part of the movement are at least supportive of their cause. This remains to be validated because according to numerous human rights defenders, the lumads, like the Manobos, have been falsely tagged as members of the New People's Army. In fact, every time the Manobos air out their opposition to the mining and logging companies, they are constantly accused of rebellion.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, as we can see in the brief discussion above, the Manobos in Surigao have been marginalized by the forces of globalization.

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<sup>138</sup> "Three Lumad dead in military operation in the south – rights groups", <https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/killings-three-lumad-dead-in-military-operation-in-the-south-rights-groups> (Retrieved July 11, 2021)

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Augusto B. Gatmaytan, "Martial Law, Militarization, and the Manobos of Han-ayan", <https://verafiles.org/articles/martial-law-militarization-and-manobos-han-ayan> (accessed November 4, 2020).

<sup>141</sup> N. Capuyan, "Resisting development aggression: mining and militarization in Mindanao, Philippines." In *Mining and Women in Asia: Experiences of Women Protecting their Communities and Human Rights against Corporate Mining. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Chiang Mai* (2009): 112-115.

<sup>142</sup> INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING SECRETARIAT OF THE PERMANENT PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL, *Repression and Resistance: The Filipino People vs Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, George Bush, et. al.: Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, Second Session on the Philippines*, The Hague, The Netherlands, Quezon City: IBON Books, March 21-25, 2007.

## Responses of the Manobos in Surigao to Marginalization

After years of manipulating their land by the agents of globalization, the non-violent Manobos and other indigenous peoples in Surigao finally took action against the vast mining in 2010.<sup>143</sup> First, the Manobos in Cantilan and Carascal filed a case against MERC to the Surigao del Sur Regional Trial Court. As a consolation to the Manobos, Surigao del Sur RTC ordered Temporary Environmental Restraining Order (TEPO) in 2010. However, the DENR did not enforce MERC to follow the TEPO, so that the decision issued from Surigao del Sur RTC was left in the air.<sup>144</sup> As a reaction to this kind of development, the Manobos of Surigao held a series of barricades to different mining sites to express their anger and discontentment for breaking a promise and insincere response from the local government. For instance, on May 7, 2012, the IPs in Surigao had taken the mine site of Shen Zou Mining Group Corporation located at Kilometer 90, at the boundary of Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur. The Manobos set up barricades and campsites at the entrance, including the guardhouse, to bar the entry and exit of company officials and staff, including their vehicles, because the company failed to pay them an estimated P24 million royalty.<sup>145</sup> On June 15, 2013, another IP group in Claver town in Surigao del Norte put up a barricade against Adnama Mining Resources Incorporated (AMRI) in Barangay Urbiztondo for alleged non-payment of royalty amounting to P30 million.<sup>146</sup> In that same year, the Manobos barricaded the mining site entrance of MERC in 2013. As a result, all 160 laborers who also participated in the barricade were fired.<sup>147</sup>

Another form of response and a mode of resistance utilized by the Manobos is “bakwit”, a term taken from the “evacuate”. “Bakwit” is

<sup>143</sup> Hideyuki Kurita, “Case Studies of Medium/large-scale Mines in the Philippines (1)”, *愛媛経済論集, Ehime University*, Vol.35, No.1 (2015): 55-57.

<sup>144</sup> Kurita, “Case Studies of Medium/large-scale Mines in the Philippines (1)”, 55.

<sup>145</sup> Vanessa L. Almeda, “Tension grips Red Mountain anew as Mamanwas take over minesite”, *MindaNews*, 7 May 2012, <https://www.mindanews.com/uncategorized/2012/05/tension-grips-red-mountain-anew-as-mamanwas-take-over-minesite/> (accessed October 3, 2020).

<sup>146</sup> Roel Catoto, “Mamanwa Lumads barricade mining firm in Surigao Norte”, *MindaNews*, 15 June 2013, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2013/06/mamanwa-lumads-barricade-mining-firm-in-surigao-norte/> (accessed October 3, 2020).

<sup>147</sup> Kurita, “Case Studies of Medium/large-scale Mines in the Philippines (1)”, 57.

an issue that otherwise would have just been classified as simple “evacuation” and “displacement” and not as a form of resistance. However, for the affected Manobos, “bakwit” opens them a chance to turn their “victimhood” into an opportunity for self-assertion. For example, due to the intensified military operations under the BS Aquino regime’s Oplan Bayanihan in 2014-2015, it was reported that there were around 6,000 Lumad evacuees for the whole of Mindanao.<sup>148</sup> On July 16, 2018, over 1,200 evacuees from upland communities of Diatagon, Lianga in Surigao del Sur, and neighboring villages fled their homes, fearing that military forces’ presence in their place would invite attacks by the New People’s Army.<sup>149</sup> All they wanted is the pulling out of soldiers from their place as they are directly affected by the ongoing warfare.<sup>150</sup> Just recently, in mid-February 2020, some 67 Manobo lumad families in the neighboring hinterland in Surigao del Sur fled their homes, fearing hostilities between Army soldiers and NPA rebels.<sup>151</sup> They fled because they were so afraid they might be caught again in the crossfire.<sup>152</sup> In the sense of the above narrative, a simple “bakwit” can also be taken as a form of resistance for the Manobo people due to the series of reported “militarization” in their villages accusing them of being active members of the NPA. In short, “bakwit” as an issue that otherwise would have just been classified as simple “evacuation” and “displacement” opened many other points of educative debates. Amidst these, the conditions were ripe to not only intensify the issue into a broad national and international concern but for the affected Lumad themselves to turn their “victimhood” into an opportunity for self-assertion and to reinvigorate their radical, “anti-oppressive state” history.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Inday Espina-Varona, “UNHCR to pull plug on Minda operations as lumad displacement woes heat up”, *ABS-CBNnews.com*, 8 October 2015, [http://goo.gl/J8Sr1l/](http://goo.gl/J8Sr1l) (accessed October 2, 2020).

<sup>149</sup> Froilan Gallardo, “Military has last word on ‘bakwit’ in Surigao Sur, says village chief”, *MindaNews*, 22 July 2018, <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2018/07/military-has-last-word-on-bakwit-in-surigao-sur-says-village-chief/> (accessed October 6, 2020).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Chris V. Panganiban, “67 Manobo families in Surigao flee homes anew”, *Mindanao Daily News Online*, 29 February 2020, <https://www.mindanaodailynews.com/news/front-page/todays-top-stories/67-manobo-families-in-surigao-flee-homes-anew> (accessed October 6, 2020).

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* For a discussion on the theoretical basis of the Philippine indigenous peoples’ resistance to postcolonial domination, see Jeffry Oca, “The Peasant

Another vital way of expressing the Manobos' predicament is through *lakbayan* or "people's political sojourns". For the Lumads, the *lakbayan* is a way to popularize their quandary and deepen the nation's (and even the international community) understanding of Mindanao Lumad issues.<sup>154</sup> The overall campaign was well-covered by the national media, and it attracted support from Manila-based personalities and celebrities. The Manilakbayan was one of the most visible gains in the lumad *bakwit* and was also largely successful in heightening awareness, "mainstreaming" the formerly marginalized issues of the Lumads, and forging alliances with sympathetic individuals and institutions. However, the deep-seated reasons for the *bakwit* remain, and no perpetrators from the mining or logging industries have been brought to justice. This development only tells us of the deeper roots of the structural causes for these events and hints at the long struggle of the IPs and the Manobos in Surigao to achieve lasting solutions.

Aside from these several forms of responses by the Manobos, there have been various ways where solidarity is expressed not just among the Manobo themselves but between them and the groups supportive of their struggle. Between and among the Manobos themselves, it must be noted that the Council of Elders has the autonomy to decide on the fate of their community, through the traditional process, especially when there is developmental project introduced in the area. This means that in getting the consensus of the affected community, a consultation shall be conducted through the facilitation of the Council of Elders. In harmony with the tribal elders, other organizations like the Diocese of Tandag's clergy, religious and BEC leaders have been in the forefront of the solidarity movements, resulting in a lot of red-tagging. For instance, Fr. Raymond Montero Ambray, the Parochial Vicar of the Holy Child Parish in Lingig, Surigao del Sur, was tagged as a member of the NPA. In fact, Fr. Ambray was linked to the MAPASU organization believed to be a protector of the

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Movement and the Great Refusal in the Philippines: Situating Critical Theory at the Margins," *KRITIKE: An Online Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 12 No. 3 (April 2019): 43-67, and Jeffrey Oca, "Philosophy at the Margins: Exploring the Philosophy of Work of the Elderly People in some Remote Areas in Negros Oriental," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (2015): 1-18.

<sup>154</sup> Carol Pagaduan-Araullo, "Manilakbayan 2015's opening salvo", *Bulatlat.com*, 3 November 2015, <https://www.bulatlat.com/2015/11/03/manilakbayan-2015s-opening-salvo/> (accessed October 6, 2020).

Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).<sup>155</sup> Other clergy members of the Diocese of Tandag are also red-tagged after they expressed their support for the alleged tribal killings and harassment suffered by indigenous peoples in Surigao.<sup>156</sup>

### **Honneth's Theory of Recognition and the Manobos' Struggle for Justice and Equality**

After a brief exploration of how the Manobos in Surigao have been marginalized and disenfranchised by the agents of globalization in the previous sections, I will now attempt to apply Honneth's theory of recognition to the Manobos in Surigao's struggle for social justice.

The Surigao Manobos' experiences of displacement and denigration are what exactly Honneth refers to as disrespect. For Honneth, one's denigration experience disrupts a person's moral self-respect because it forbids her to have certain rights in society.<sup>157</sup> As Honneth maintains, this denial of rights shows a clear violation of the "intersubjective expectation," which would result in the individual's "loss of self-respect" and would deprive the individual of every opportunity to ascribe social value to her skills and capabilities.<sup>158</sup> For Honneth, when an individual loses self-respect because she is disrespected and denied of her rights, she experiences the moral feeling of shame. This kind of reaction, for Honneth, results in the "lowering of one's own feeling of self-worth" or the feeling of oneself as a being of lower social value.<sup>159</sup> Still, Honneth argues that the experience of being socially denigrated or humiliated endangers the identity of human beings. When this happens, when actions guided by norms taken to be valid are violated, Honneth says, this will lead to moral conflicts in the society, which, in turn, compels the individuals to struggle for recognition.<sup>160</sup> For Honneth, therefore, this is a form of

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<sup>155</sup> Raymond Montero Ambray. "PERSONAL STATEMENT ON RED-TAGGING". Roman Catholic Diocese of Tandag, May 12, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/TandagDiocese/posts/923355241443582> (accessed July 11, 2021)

<sup>156</sup> "Philippine church leaders link tribal killings in Mindanao to mining operations". Catholic News Service, Oct 2, 2015, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/philippine-church-leaders-link-tribal-killings-mindanao-mining-operations> (Retrieved 11 July 2021)

<sup>157</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 133.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.,134. See also Joel Feinberg, *The nature and value of rights*, in *Rights, justice, and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy*,143ff

<sup>159</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 137-138.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

disrespect that denies the Manobos' identity, which is practically tied up to their ancestral land. The denial of their sense of identity leads the Manobos into self-doubt. Being uncertain of their identity, they cannot achieve self-respect because they are deprived of exercising their rights over their ancestral land. This scenario suggests that they are not entitled to live as one recognized community. As Honneth would have us believe, these conflicts that they encountered serve as stumbling blocks in achieving progress and social justice in their locality.

So, Honneth's idea of legal recognition, which is based on the principle of "universal equality", is really very applicable here. As we already know, in this sphere, the individual is afforded equal rights and legal protections along with others and recognizes her as a full-fledged member in the society capable of making rational and responsible decisions. But the denial of this right brings into the individual the feeling of social shame. Moreover, this form of disrespect results in an individual having a feeling of being neglected and of being marginalized. And as we can see, all these negative feelings of being disrespected, denigrated and shamed entice the individuals to struggle for recognition. Thus, again, for Honneth, a recognition of the Manobos' struggle for ancestral domain is necessary to promote justice and social equality in this community.

The second instance of disrespect that we can observe here is when the Manobos in Surigao were denied of their freedom and security. Needless to say, every person must be allowed to express her sentiments and concerns freely and remain secured in her life. However, what happened to the Manobos in Surigao was a contradiction to this. For instance, when the Manobos gathered together and launched those barricades as a form of protest against the mining companies for not releasing the royalty promised to them, they were met with brutalities and violence. Meanwhile, the military presence in the Manobo community shattered the people's peaceful and ordinary lives. In fact, some Manobo civilians were caught and killed in the crossfire between the military and the NPAs. Eventually, various killings among the Manobo leaders and elders also happened when the military suspected them as members of the NPAs even without valid proofs.

This phenomenon has developed a culture of fear among the Manobos in Surigao up to the present. As observed, thousands of Manobos in Surigao had to leave their home villages out of distress and fear of their lives. In some instances, the Lumad communities did

some forced evacuation and found temporary shelter in a gymnasium or a safety school.<sup>161</sup> In those evacuation centers, the Manobos felt that their value as persons is being degraded. This phenomenon brought about by the constant presence of the military, for Honneth, promotes a culture of fear. This kind of complexity restricted the Manobos' freedom to act and move as autonomous individuals. It further denies the Manobos' capacity to contribute to the society's welfare that would help them achieve their valued self-esteem. For Honneth, this type of disrespect causes an individual's denigration as this is considered as "insulting" or "degrading" form of behavior in society. As Honneth argues, this form of disrespect lowers the individual's degree of social esteem. Thus, for Honneth, in view of the emotional responses associated with shame or insult, as illustrated by, for example, the denial of rights, and denigration, the experience of being disrespected and disregarded of recognition ushers one to strive for recognition.<sup>162</sup> Thus, to promote social justice and equality among the Manobos in Surigao and develop self-esteem within themselves, as Honneth would have strongly recommended, the government and other stakeholders should grant the Manobos the recognition that they truly deserve.

Another instance of disrespect occurred when the Manobos in Surigao were denied their rights to equal protection and non-discrimination. As recalled, the IPRA law was seen as the hope of the IPs as it protects their rights and privileges as citizens. On the contrary, the government seems to be unsympathetic by not implementing the provisions of IPRA. Instead, the government allows the continuous intrusion of the mining and logging companies into the IPs' ancestral lands, like those of the Manobos in Surigao, as proven by the unceasing extra-judicial killings, displacement, and destruction of the Manobos' source of life. This reality shows the government's direct misrecognition of the Manobos' rights to be equally protected and not to be discriminated as Filipino citizens. For Honneth, this phenomenon is a clear manifestation of the society's denial of the Manobos' rights and expectations.

Indeed, a deliberate denial of the Manobos' rights for equal protection and non-discrimination is a concrete manifestation that

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<sup>161</sup> "Manobos in Surigao flee homes", <https://mindanaogoldstardaily.com/manobos-in-surigao-flee-homes/> (accessed November 4, 2020). For a detailed discussion on how communities become resilient during evacuation, see Anesito, Cutillas, et. al., "Coping Strategies of Communities Affected by the Bohol Earthquake" *Journal of Agriculture and Technology Management* [Online], (5 February 2018):1-11 (accessed October 21, 2020).

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

they are treated as unequal members in the society. For Honneth, as already mentioned several times, these forms of disrespect bring about insult and humiliation that impair the subjects and impede their freedom to act. Such reality also injures the Manobos' positive understanding of themselves.<sup>163</sup> As Honneth maintains, each human being's normative self-image relies on the odds of being continuously backed up by others. Hence, the experience of being disrespected damages the identity of the person, which also provides the stimulus for social conflict.<sup>164</sup> When these individuals realize the repercussions of these forms of disrespect, they are then forced to struggle for recognition. This is because this negative experience of being disrespected gives way to the feelings of being angry, pained, or outraged. Indeed, in the case of the Manobos in Surigao, these feelings made them think that they are less-valued and their existence is insignificant to society.

Again, for Honneth, this is a clear manifestation of the society's denial of the Manobos' civil rights and beliefs. In terms of their right to life and property, the Manobos in Surigao is not treated as co-equal members of society. As Honneth remarked, as persons, we can only understand ourselves as bearer of rights when we fully recognize that other persons, just like us, are also bearers of that right in the same manner.<sup>165</sup> Hence, for Honneth, we can only understand ourselves as "legal persons" when we claim that others are also bearers of the same right we possess.<sup>166</sup> This further means that if the subjects accept the legal norms in society and freely agree among themselves to be alike, they can realize that they can make their own decisions about "moral norms".<sup>167</sup> This is really a concrete instantiation of what Honneth calls "practical self-relation", where an individual is regarded as a "full subject" delegated to act in her most responsible way. Indeed, this is for Honneth how the subject recognized as a full member of the society can attain "self-respect".<sup>168</sup>

However, the various forms of injustice experienced by the Manobos in Surigao that I have just articulated above have made the Manobos feel indignant. In fact, they felt so disenfranchised that it

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<sup>163</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131. See also Axel Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, 86.

<sup>164</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 131.

<sup>165</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 108.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-121.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.



seems there is no other option for them but to fight. For this reason, I argue that, following Honneth, what they can do is resist, that is, struggle for recognition, if they wish to be liberated from this system of domination. Indeed, Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition is very applicable to the Manobo's struggle for justice and social equality. For sure, Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition provided the theoretical underpinnings to the Manobos' resistance to the forces of economic globalization that marginalized and disenfranchised them.

## **Conclusion**

After engaging Honneth's theory of recognition and the concrete instantiation of this theory in the Manobos in Surigao, these are the crucial key insights that we can draw from the study. As presented, Honneth's theory of recognition is very applicable to the Manobos' struggle for recognition in Surigao as it provides them with the theoretical basis of their struggle for social justice and equality. In this way, we can really say that the Manobos' struggle for recognition, that is, struggle for social justice and equality is both legally and theoretical justified because it is guided by a clear and strong theory.

Moreover, Honneth's theory of recognition suggests that the Manobos in Surigao have a more elaborate identity formation concept. In so far as recognition is concerned, it can be observed that both the State and the NPAs misrecognize the integrity of the Lumad to be the agents of their own liberation. As repeatedly mentioned, there are no concrete shreds of evidence of the Manobo communities' outward support to the NPAs. However, they are constantly accused of rebellion every time they air out their opposition to the mining and logging companies. For Honneth, participating in the public realm means participating without shame, developing their capability spontaneously, and developing a personal sense of identity. Hence, Honneth shows the Manobos in Surigao the possibility of misrecognition, creating a false and distorted image of themselves that, when internalized, could become a powerful form of restraint and domination by society as well as the agents of globalization.

Indeed, Honneth's theory of recognition is genuinely relevant to Surigao Manobos' struggle for social justice. Honneth's theory of recognition could genuinely contribute to their dream to create a better community, as expressed most visibly in their struggle for social justice and equality. As it highlights the centrality of the

Manobos' experience of injustice, Honneth's theory of recognition offers a critique that points to the idea of their emancipation. To reiterate, the Manobos' struggle for social justice and equality is morally justified and thus deserves due recognition as it is acknowledged from the outset that they have been displaced through the intrusion and penetration by economic globalization agents, such as the mining and logging companies. Thus, in the light of Honneth's theory of recognition, the Manobos in Surigao is, indeed, entitled to their right to self-determination.

On a final note, it must be noted that Honneth's theory of recognition can only do so much, that it cannot be viewed as a panacea. While I argue that Honneth's theory of recognition is very relevant to the Manobos' struggle for social justice, it has also its own limitations. For one, since the State's military and police forces are in place, not to mention the incessant political indoctrination of the masses, especially those leaning to the right, one might also argue if the Manobos can constitute a decisive force and leave the State no choice but grant them recognition. Despite this practical deficit of Honneth's theory of recognition, I am convinced that the Manobos remain the key players in the emancipation of the indigenous peoples in Surigao. Hence, I continue to argue that the Manobos in Surigao deserve to be given the privilege of preserving and practicing their rich culture and traditions for the national and international communities. Likewise, this will allow them to enrich their customary laws and practice their system of governance. However, this can be achieved through the sincere implementation of the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) in the Philippines and the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, hence, again, the need to fully implement these pertinent laws. Also, the welfare of the Manobos in Surigao and other IPs in the Philippines can be assured in terms of the issuance of the Certificate of Ancestral Domains (CADTs), provision of social services like livelihood programs, and educational assistance. I am convinced that these programs, which can be viewed as forms of "recognizing" their rights, would surely help the Manobos in Surigao in their struggle for social justice and equality.

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