WHERE MACHINES RANT, RECITE POEMS, AND TAKE OUTRAGEOUS SELFIES: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF A TEACHERS' FACEBOOK GROUP

Maria Mercedes "Ched" Estigoy Arzadon

ABSTRACT

The author conducted an ethnography of a social network site (SNS), a secret Facebook (FB) group with more than 60,000 members consisting of public school teachers from all over the Philippines, with the country being one of the fastest growing markets for FB in Southeast Asia with 47 million active FB accounts. The author frames her analysis of a social media group for educators within the larger socio-historical context of the Philippines to explore teacher agency. Teachers in the Philippines have historically held a low social and occupational status, shaped in part by colonialism, and maintained in policy discourse, social perceptions of cultural capital. Within a social media group, teachers are able to express frank views, but also reinforce certain norms. The chapter posits that the nuance of teacher status can be revealed from ethnographies that explore and promote teachers' historical narratives. This study was undertaken during the initial stage of the implementation of

New Directions in Educational Ethnography: Shifts, Problems, and Reconstruction
Studies in Educational Ethnography, Volume 13, 65–96

ISSN: 1529-210X/doi:10.1108/S1529-210X20150000013003

the K-12 reform when various directives regarding curriculum, materials, pedagogy, medium of instruction, assessment, and reporting systems are being issued from the central office based in Manila to all 46,404 schools spread in the three major island groups.

Keywords: Facebook; social media; teachers; education policy; online ethnography; the Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Educational policies are constantly changing in many countries in the world. The phenomenon has been described as "epidemic of change" (Levin, 1998) and "hyperactive policy change" (Hill, 2008). During periods of educational reform, teachers are positioned at the forefront (Christenson, 2006; Huang, 2008), either as agents (Cardozo, 2015; Connell, 1985, 2009; Gardinier, 2011; Meidl & Baumann, 2015), like foot soldiers (Cuban, 2012) or obeisant workers (Bautista, Bernardo, & Ocampo, 2010). They can also ambivalently take a shifting position depending on the resources and space available for maneuvering (Cardozo, 2015).

Education reforms especially in populous countries like the Philippines often involve both educationists and governments orchestrating big systemic changes. White papers to support the reform often begin with prevailing problems and weaknesses that seem to have emerged distinctly from the local setting, showing poor ratings in school enrollment, retention, literacy, and numeracy. The drift of these white papers follows a certain predictable pattern:

> The case for systemic change follows an all-too-familiar logic, rightly focusing on schools, their purpose, and their role in society. We are told that schools do not work because they do not teach the right learning things in the right way; that they are out of date and behind the learning curve; that onesize-fits-all can never be right; that tests are not a true test of learning. Oh! And teacher quality is too low; it is a coin toss whether to sack them, back them, or pay them more! Best to start again. (Barnard, 2013)

The teacher, especially the public school teacher, during periods of reform is closely scrutinized. Goldstein (2014) wrote that public school teaching has become the most controversial profession in America. Teachers are both resented and idealized.

> No other profession operates under this level of political scrutiny, not even those, like policing or social work, that are also tasked with public welfare and are paid with public funds.

The Philippine Congressional Educational Committee (EDCOM) report, which became the basis of major educational laws in the 1990's, identified the Filipino teacher as the central figure in debates on quality education. The EDCOM report argues that problems of teacher quality are often blamed on teacher education institutions that have become a "dumping ground," opening their gates to "academically inferior" students. Report authors also articulate that reform measures should address the low prestige and inferior status of teachers. The report's famous line makes this point: "Yet while teachers are always the butt of criticism, they are also seen as the best hope of reform" (Savellano, 1993).

Ten years after the reforms brought by EDCOM, another educational reform was introduced through the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). The reform white papers foregrounded the critical role played by qualified and capable teachers who will raise the prevailing mediocre standards "to meet demands for better learning outcomes" (DepEd, 2005, 2006). This reform program came about after the issuance of America's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, which frequently references "highly qualified" teachers and school personnel (see No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002). Also, around this period, a report by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) stated that although a body of research shows that the "largest source of variation in student learning is attributable to differences in what students bring to school – their abilities and attitudes, and family and community background," policy makers have more control over teacher quality as a factor "potentially open to policy influence" (OECD, 2005).

An incisive analysis was made about teacher quality during the implementation of BESRA in 2005–2010 to determine why "reforms don't transform" in the Philippines. The report described inertia and resistance to change, hierarchical relationships and a "culture of obeisance" that prevailed among teachers. Despite the heavy workload and sanctions they suffer, teachers remain uncomplaining and deferent to their superiors (Bautista et al., 2010).

The latest wave of education reform began in 2012 with the introduction of the new K-12 Curriculum through Republic Act 10533 "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2012." A discussion chapter of the K-12 program started with the familiar narration about pitiful performance of pupils in National Achievement Tests (NAT) and their consistent bottom ranking in Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The chapter proposed that quality education through the new K-12 program would require "highly qualified and adequately trained teachers" (DepEd, 2010).

The K to 12 Toolkit that followed declares that the new K-12 reform is meant to "upgrade" the educational system and "align it to the requirements of the 21st century" (SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012).

This chapter argues that education reforms initiated by the state (influenced by global forces) necessitate an implicit "battering" of teachers, faulting them for poor education outcomes. Along with it is the compulsion to work harder and become the qualified teacher prescribed by the reform. Teachers struggle with the suggestion that teaching is the cause of poor education outcomes, as well as with the immense workload required by changes to curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting systems. In the process, the teachers involved in this study find support in a Facebook (FB) group, through which they share resources and ideas with colleagues across the country. Simultaneously, the FB group – made private through the use of security settings – offers a safe place for free, human expression that contrasts against the robotic visages of their work.

THE STUDY

This study was undertaken during the initial stage of the implementation of the K-12 reform when various directives regarding curriculum, materials, pedagogy, medium of instruction, assessment, and reporting systems are being issued from the central office based in Manila to all 46,404 schools spread in the three major island groups.

The study examined the ways teachers navigate and respond to the manifold demands brought by state-initiated education reform. In what ways are they becoming agents of reform and/or mere reform technicians? Particularly, it examines how teachers' social and occupational status is played out in the process.

In order to answer this question, I conducted an ethnography of a social network site (SNS), a private FB group with more than 60,000 members consisting of public school teachers from all over the Philippines. The country, with a population of about 100 million people, is one of the fastest growing markets for FB in Southeast Asia, and boasts 47 million active FB accounts, notwithstanding economic and infrastructure-related difficulties (Dela Paz, 2016). The Philippines ranks first in Asia in terms of the percentage of the total population that has a FB account (Internet Users in Asia November 2015, n.d.). This may be explained by the need to communicate to family and friends who live abroad. Almost all Filipino families have at least a family member, relative, or friend who are counted among the 10

million Filipinos working in more than 200 countries. Remittances by Filipino workers abroad have kept the Philippine economy afloat thus these expatriates are called "bagong bayani," or modern heroes (ABS-CBN, 2012; Aguila, 2009; GMA, 2013; Liebelt, 2008).

Given the affordances of technology and the fact that many K-12 instructional materials are being created as the new curriculum is being implemented, teachers are and constantly sharing resources through social media platforms like FB. One particular FB group with a high privacy setting was created exclusively for public school teachers in June 2013. Its membership has grown to more than 60,000 during the period of this study. The FB group that became the site for fieldwork in this study is to be called Teachers FB Group (TFG).

THE FACEBOOK AS A RESEARCH SITE

Ethnographic studies on the internet, especially focusing on the youth and their use of SNS in education are growing (see Birnbaum, 2013; Tilton, 2012; Vivian, Barnes, Geer, & Wood, 2014). SNS provide opportunities for collaborative learning experiences among peers and the support needed as students navigate their way in a new school environment.

In the early years of the internet, discussions about internet-related research would often touch on the ontological issue of the internet as a fieldwork site. Online and offline social spaces were viewed separately, but as more and more people increase time spent using multiple internet applications for work, school and personal concerns, the boundary between online and offline becomes blurred (Baker, 2013; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015). Furthermore, it was found that the internet has made possible the formation of new imagined communities, means of social and political resistance and activism, and new identities that are not parallel to the traditional conceptualization of community and other collectives (Rosa & Bonilla, 2015; Vivian et al., 2014).

Merry (2011) argues that ethnography can be a means to expose and resist the disempowering effects of the regime of indicators, standardization and evidence-based governance. An ethnography of indicators would involve tracing the history of the creation of an indicator and its underlying theory, participating in technical working group meetings at local and internal levels where indicators are debated and defined, including its data collection and use for decision-making.

Internet ethnography provides a vantage point for ethnographic gaze that can generate unique insight. Unlike in offline fieldwork, SNS allow the

observation of participants away from school or the workplace, opening arenas as personal as holiday trips and as unexpected as periods of bereavement (Baker, 2013).

FB is among the most popular SNS. One can create a FB account by registering in the site using one's email address. The account holder will have to create a profile by filling out a form that asks for one's name, telephone number, places where you lived, workplace, and schools attended. Each account is provided a FB page or wall where one can add text, links to other websites, and multimedia files sharable with other accounts connected in a friend's list. One can control what information is visible on one's page and who can read or view what is posted to one's wall. FB also allows the formation of groups among its members. Any FB member can create a group easily by clicking a "create a group" link and indicating the name of the group, names of members (from one's list of friends), and privacy setting (which can be public, closed or secret). The FB group owner will be asked to write a description of the group, choose from a list the nature of the group (business, school, project, cause, family, etc.), and upload a cover photo. The FB group page also has its own directory of members, events page and file section. There is a search box and a window where you can type names of people you want invited to the group.

When one posts something in the FB group wall, that individual has the choice to write a text, share a photo or video file, create a poll, sell something, add a file, create a photo album, create a document, or create an event. Anyone can reply to a post by clicking the like button. Later, FB included other reaction face icons showing various labeled either as love, haha, wow, sad, or angry.

The virtual exchanges among public teachers from various parts of the Philippines reveal much about the nature of engagements teachers have with their pupils and their parents, their peers and superiors, other members of the community, the state bureaucracy, and other sectors and forces. Though I am not a public elementary or high school teacher, I was invited to join the group by one of the administrators after she read some K-12 related information and materials on my own FB page. I joined the group in the same month and year it was founded in 2013 and was reading posts and participating in some discussion threads during the six months of online ethnography. As a student of ethnography, I tried to make sense of the growing volume of exchanges (about 30–50 posts each day, each prompting a thread of conversation) using the analytic constructs I know. My main data sets came from excerpts of the FB group exchanges for a period of six months of study in the first half of 2015. During that period,

follow-up personal messaging (including face-to-face interview with one administrator) was conducted with administrators and selected members.

Profiling the FB group at the initial stage involved examining the description of the group, house rules and links. I also reviewed various parts of the FB group page like the files section, member profiles, events pages and filed photos and video files. To address ethical concerns, I had to seek permission from the owner and the administrators of the FB group so I could use the various materials in the FB group page for my study. I also had to use a generic name for the FB group and not specify the name of any member. As a regular FB user and an owner and administrator of 20 FB groups, as well as a member of a dozen more, I am able to understand the dynamics of online exchanges like the impact of a certain post by the number of clicks of the "like" button, face icons and the number of replies. Words in capital letters are equal to shouting or ranting. I can interpret icons, memes, and abbreviated comments. I can also understand the relational dynamics among FB group owner, administrators or moderators, members and former members (who either unsubscribed or were removed and blocked by administrators).

Doing FB ethnography required that I read posts on a regular basis (daily or every other day). I participated by clicking the like button on posts that I found worthwhile and I also posted replies to some posts. Since I am a teacher educator in a university, I would especially address concerns of teachers about their graduate thesis and research work. Since the members are all members of one bureaucracy, they tend to use jargon and make reference to certain policies, procedures, and events. Because of this, I would regularly visit the website of the Department of Education to read new department orders, memos, advisories, and news reports. At times, I had to send a private message to members who are subscribed as my friends. FB makes it difficult to communicate with members who are not in your friend list. Private messages sent to them would end up in their archive list and not in their regular private message box. One trick was to include in the private message a common friend. Note taking became easier because I just captured the posts I needed, copied the texts, and organized them in folders along with my notes. As themes developed, I identified possible keywords that would mark a theme and type each word or phrase in the search box and all posts bearing that word or phrase would appear. Without the search box, it would be difficult to read and process the volumes of text and multimedia materials in such a large FB group.

One difficulty in reading the materials on the FB group wall was the non-chronological sequencing of posts. When any member clicks the like

button or replies to a post, it will immediately be repositioned at the top of the wall. Even if the post appeared a year ago, if somebody responds to it, it will appear as if it was just posted. Another difficulty was marking the participants. Although many use their real name, there are also a growing number of members who use a pseudonym and do not use their own photo for the profile picture. Unless they are in a friend list, one cannot find any other information about gender, nature of work, and location.

CONCEPTUALIZING TEACHERS AGENCY IN EDUCATION REFORM

Bourdieu (1991) wrote about "symbolic structures" which can powerfully structure reality. Such symbols give the appearance that there is consensus and legitimacy. Symbolic violence is a "gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims," operating within the realm of "doxa" (or orthodoxy), the condition that makes possible the correspondence between the social order and the agents' internalized disposition and perception.

Similar to symbolic violence is Gramsci's concept of hegemony. It is "the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent." Bourdieu does not consider consent in his formulation because habitus or the internalized disposition is located "beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will." Instead of consent, he used misrecognition and common sense. This is where the difference lies. Gramsci sees the possibility of "collectively transforming the world as the basis of good sense." He also sees the possibility of formation of intellectuals, especially the organic intellectual who can unmask domination and mobilize people. Actually, according to Gramsci, all people can be intellectuals but there are traditional intellectuals (or intelligentsia) and there are organic intellectuals who emerge from the dominated class and can theorize about social relationships (Burawoy & Holdt, 2012).

In Bourdieu's (2000) "Pascalian Meditations," which was written in the latter part of his career, he introduced an entirely different dimension regarding the symbolic social order – "a space of relative autonomy with a margin of freedom for redefining the world and opening up new possibilities." Such space provides a possibility for reinterpretation and contestation (ibid). This interplay of structure and agency may resonate among various constructs like Scott's (1984) resistance through the use of hidden

and public script, Wenger's (1998) cultural broker and Meyerson's (2001) "tempered radicals." Carlone, Haun-Frank, and Kimmel (2010) deployed the notion of tempered radicals to make sense of science teachers' attempts to "invoke both imagination (a sense of the future) and history (a deference to the past) in their daily practices amidst dominant and narrowly prescribed curriculum and high-stakes testing practices brought by NCLB."

THE HEAVY BURDEN OF K-12 REFORM

The scope and complexity of the changes brought by the new K-12 curriculum in the Philippines is breathtaking. It introduced changes regarding the age of compulsory education from six to five years old, making kindergarten (which was formerly optional) a part of basic education. The medium of instruction, previously limited to Filipino (national language) and English, now includes the child's mother tongue which can be any of the 183 living languages of the Philippines (Ethnologue, 2016). Additionally, materials are to be contextualized and localized. The new K-12 curriculum also introduced the practice of arranging and teaching content in a spiral manner. It revised lengths of time for each learning area, added subject areas, and increased schooling by two years following grade 10. The last two years include four tracks – academic (leading to university), technical vocational, arts and sports, or entrepreneurship. The new program was planned, institutionalized into a law and implemented in six years (2010–2016) among 24 million students and 600,000 teachers and non-teaching personnel (Alcober, 2014; Luistro, 2015). The K to 12 toolkit (SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012) presents 12 characteristics that K-12 teachers should embody: multi-literate, multi-specialist, multi-skilled, self-directed, lifelong learner, flexible, creative problem solver, critical thinker, has passion for excellent teaching and high emotional quotient. With these attributes, teachers are expected to understand the K-12 curriculum, partake in training to implement the K-12 curriculum and advocate for the new reform before various stakeholders.

TFG WAS ORIGINALLY MEANT FOR FILE SHARING

The TFG was created as a response to logistical requirements of the new K-12 program in the Philippines. One major task that teachers have to accomplish in the new K-12 system is submitting a new set of digitized forms to profile each learner. At one point in 2013, the online help desk of the Department of Education Learners Information System announced

that they would delete all modified school macro forms in their website. Eve, a science elementary teacher in the Visayas island, was an active member of the online help forum who was assisting other teachers in locating a form. She suggested the creation of a FB group for transferring forms. One member of the group, Tony from the Luzon Island, sent a private message to Eva informing her that he had created the TFG and had uploaded all forms there. Eva also shared her bulletin board display artwork and many new members of the TFG appreciated her work. She uploaded other teaching resources she could find in her file, and other teachers followed suit. Eva was surprised that so many wanted to join the FB group and could not have imagined that it would grow to more than 60,000 members.

One reason for the quick growth was a delay in many parts of the country of the delivery of hard copies of the K-12 Teachers Guides and Learning Materials. Teachers began to ask for electronic copies, and there were many who sought to be part of the group. In the first month, the major activity was file sharing of K-12 materials. Later, the TFG members began to ask for other instructional materials like flash cards, art materials, certificate templates, songs and dances (text, audio, and video files), stories, varied charts, classroom décor, and so forth. One innovation that became popular was what they call "tarpapel" which literally means "paper tarpaulin." It is a cheaper version of tarpaulin and something that teachers can do using their computer and printer. The tarpapel was useful as teachers had to create new charts and posters that come with the K-12 curriculum, backdrops during school events like graduation, and placards used in one mass action (Fig. 1).

Another creative output shared by the members are poems. When one searches for the word "tula" "makata" or "poem" in the group, it yields about 80 poems. Teachers shared the original poems that they wrote, which were mostly about teachers' lives and ongoing presidential elections period. In the Philippines, thousands of teachers are deployed to man voting centers, many of which are found in hard to access places in the mountains or island communities. The poems about elections describe their concern about their safety and their hope for a clean and peaceful election processes.

The volume of materials shared and uploaded was large enough to slow the processing of access to the site's file section. In the third year of TFG, the file section became totally inaccessible. The administrators and other members provided alternative ways to find the files.

In addition to sharing files and information about K-12 curriculum changes, members began to share a variety of work-related concerns, like dealing with peers, superiors, parents, misbehaving children, promotions,

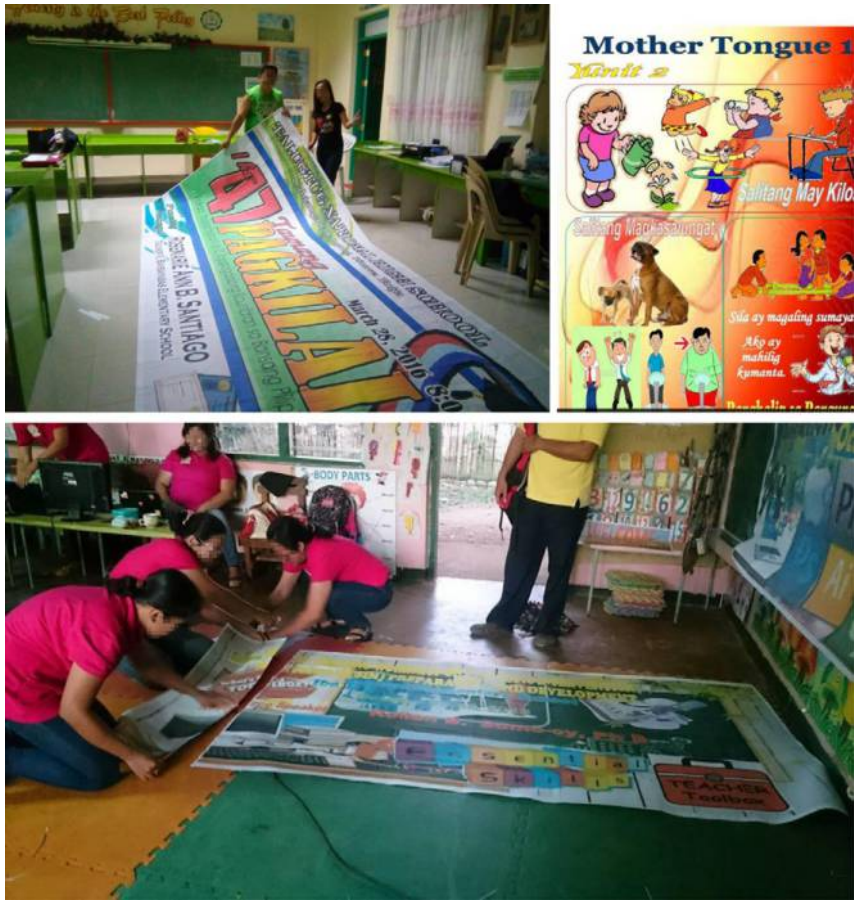


Fig. 1. "Tarpapel" (Copy papers glued together to imitate a tarpaulin). *Sources* (clockwise): Eudolfo A. Flores Jr., Eda Fabale Ponaran and Marilou Emlano.

graduate studies, newspaper articles about teachers and education-related matters, and the most discussed topic, the Performance-Based Bonus or PBB. As time passed, personal content began to be discussed. There were questions about names that could be given to newborn children, suggestions for architectural designs of houses, paints to use, and remedies for ailments. There even came a point that some expressed their openness for the possibility of a romantic relationship.

The following post describes how the nature of interaction evolved:

> Personally, I joined this group hoping to learn many things, especially about making instructional materials, about teaching strategies, etc. But what I often read are birthday greetings, PBB, money problems, jokes, informal exchanges, etc etc. That's okay, no problem!! Just do what you want, teachers. Maybe this group depicts the reality teachers face. Be cool, no scripts, no rules, no policy. This is where members of this group are free to express themselves amidst life's challenges.

There were members who admitted that checking the TFG became a normal part of their daily routine. Eve, one of the administrators said that the TFG became a place where teachers can process their emotional load.

TOILING AT THE UNDERBELLY OF PHILIPPINE SOCIETY

A poll was conducted to determine which regions were represented by group members, finding that all 17 regions of the Philippines were present, with heavy concentration in highly urbanized regions near the capital city of Manila. The stories narrated by members about the situations in their own locality reveal that many live in vulnerable situations – high conflict areas infested by terrorist groups, inadequate infrastructure, resultant devastation from super typhoons, and extreme poverty where pupils are without adequate food and clothing. There are negligent and abusive parents and corrupt and violent local government officials. One teacher posted photos of the precarious terrain they travel to school – driving a bike across broken or make-shift bridges, plodding through thick heavy mud and crossing a fast-flowing river (Fig. 2). Another teacher showed a picture of her school after it was transformed into an evacuation center following a major typhoon. One teacher from Tacloban, the center of the strongest Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), posted a story in which her students asked for a "groupfie" in response to a typhoon prediction, fearing that they might not see each other again, given their near death fears from Super Typhoon Yolanda of the prior year.

TEACHER FACTOR FOR LIFE!

One generative term in TFG is "teacher factor." The term when used in scholarly literature refers to the contribution or impact of teacher's action or intervention (sometimes measured quantitatively) in a particular practice

Fig. 2. Roads to School. *Source*: Lourdes Wenceslao Culibra-Opaon.

like teaching and learning ESL (Oladejo, 1991), teaching language and mathematics (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2009), teacher-child relationship building in pre-school education (Chung, 2000) and other practices. The term teacher factor has been used in popular discourse, especially in education communities. This term or an equivalent is often mentioned in TFG. Teachers express their sadness and exasperation that "teacher factor" is identified as the cause for a variety of problems, like the unruly behavior of students, poor reading skills, poor grades and failure, school dropout, and poverty. Teachers expressed weariness in the face of persistent blame. One teacher said they have to endure blame their entire lives – "teacher factor for life." One meaning of the term's use is to portray teachers as indifferent to school and social problems.

> Sawang-sawa na po ako kapag sinasabi at ipinamumukha sa ATIN yung TEACHER FACTOR … WALA BA TAYONG GINAWA? (I am so tired when they say to our face the "teacher factor." Have we not done anything?
>
> If anything bad happens, they would quickly say it is teacher factor. The truth is we dip into our own pockets to spend for classroom repair, buy school supplies, feed pupils with no lunch money, ink to print for test materials and reports! And the government does not refund. I am glad God is there …

Exchanges on teacher factor are often generated by complaints about unruly behavior of pupils. Members counter the message that they are at fault by saying that such children are already "formed" before they come to school. In addition, pupils spend only six hours in school and the rest is spent at home. They see a focus on teacher factor as narrow, arguing that there are other factors like curriculum, school leadership, parents, the students themselves, and the education system as a whole.

One particular exchange that generated 43 responses centered on an incident between a teacher and a high-ranking official during a seminar. The official asserted teacher factor as a reason for poor academic performance. The teacher tried to argue that parents have a major role to play, but the official was relentless in her stand. At the end, the teacher responded, "Okay, ma'am. Thank you, so it is really my fault." One teacher shared a similar experience and tried to analyze the circumstances.

> In the seminars I attended, the officials never admitted that there is problem with the system. I suppose they do not want to be reprimanded by their superiors. They would say that they should simply state the official stand of the government otherwise they might lose their job. I think our government does not want to hear the truth. They just want to hear positive reports even they are not true. I really do not understand our government. They say ours is democracy but they always insist on what they want.

Aside from the reference to teacher factor, the line "lagi na lang kami ang sinisisi" (we are always blamed) is repeatedly posted by members of the FB group. One posted, "we are always faulted! where is justice?" Another teacher said that teachers have become the "Jack of all Tirades."

TEACHER ARE NANNIES

Common speculation is that teacher education has become a common choice for children from poor backgrounds, especially in rural areas, in the face of a proliferation of teacher education institutions with relatively low tuition costs. There was once a question in the TFG asking how many among the members had to work as a "housemaid" (katulong) to support their schooling. Some were offended and angered that such question was asked. However, there were many who admitted that they did indeed work as housemaids to support their studies. Some said that they took similar blue collar jobs like selling, working in hair salons, driving, waitering and hand washing clothes for other families (labandera).

There were posts that compared teaching to the work of a yaya (nanny), including some that claimed teaching was even more challenging than

nanny work. One member challenged the assertion, emphasizing that what actually makes one a teacher is the ability to play many roles.

> During our time today, we should not be called a "teacher" anymore. We should be called a "yaya" (nanny) hahaha! Professional nanny! Like nannies, we watch over children, we scold them, comfort them to stop crying. We feed them during feeding time, we play with them at times. Some parents tell us, "ma'am, my kid has a cough so please wipe his back when you see him perspiring ….Parents will call us to inquire about the whereabouts of their child … they would ask us, "ma'am can you please take my child to our home?"
>
> We are also story books writer, singer/entertainer in the classroom, creative consultant during contests, social worker, agriculturist in the school garden, psychologist for the pupils, parents, school head and fellow teachers ….we are asked by the cafeteria manager to sell the bowls of soup to our pupils, we wash the curtains and the rags used in the classroom, we wash the dishes used by the pupils, we are carpenters because we repair broken desks, including windows and doors, we are also electricians when the wires trip. We are plumbers to unclog the sink and the toilet bowl. We oversee the production of performances, we serve food to guests who visit our school, answer the telephone at the principal's office. We are encoders, interior decorator of the principal's office, nutritionist, dressmaker too as we sow torn skirts, blouses, shirts of our pupils. We are also preachers, catechists. Teachers are like that, flexible, all-knowing, dedicated and loving. If can only list down three to four of the tasks mentioned earlier then you cannot say that teaching is your missionary calling.

LOW REGARD BECAUSE OF LOW IQ AND LOW ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

The exchanges in the FB group would often dwell on a persistent belief that teachers experience low regard (mababang pagtingin. (sp)). One member handled such concern head-on.

> With due respect to the members of this group, I am wondering why we I often read about the low regard people have for teachers. Is that what become of our image before pupils, parents, school heads and to the general public? Is it true that we are indeed lowly creatures to most people, or is it just our own perception?

There were those who affirmed such sentiment explaining that the reason for such a view is the lack of respect teachers would show for each other and because teachers act in a disrespectable manner. Some claimed, however, that in their locations (mostly rural areas), teachers are always respected: "Wherever we go, even in the market, people call us 'madam.' "

Teachers' lack of intellectual sophistication was another topic of discussion. It is interesting that one's proficiency in the English language became a proxy for intelligence. Someone shouted the following:

> NOT ALL WHO ARE INTELLIGENT CAN TEACH WELL. … WHERE WE ARE, HAVING RECEIVED A LATIN HONOR LIKE CUM LAUDE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY MEAN THAT YOU ARE SMART … . SOME THINK IF YOU SPEAK ENGLISH IN A GRAND MANNER, YOU ARE ALREADY A GOOD TEACHER. WHAT BECOMES TO THOSE WITH AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE LIKE ME? SO UNFAIR.

> It is not about how intelligent you are but how did you affect the life of your student … I would rather love a slow teacher with high EQ than a smart and intelligent teacher who has low EQ … we aspire for wisdom and not intelligence … I am proud of those hardworking teachers …

The debate on IQ versus EQ revealed that many teachers in the group believe that teaching effectively requires more than academic knowledge. They view effectiveness to include making sure that children actually learn intended lessons, speaking English at the level that children can understand, hard work and heartfelt dedication.

The owner of the FB group thought of imposing an English Only period every Saturday morning. Posts in the usual medium, or Filipino, were deleted. In response to the policy, the word "nosebleed" was expressed frequently through artful text, cartoons, pictures, and various memes. The FB administrator observed a low volume of postings during the English Only period and people who would pop in just to ask if the English Only period had ended. Many of the posts during the English Only period revealed grammatical errors and some members attempted to correct them. The rule spurred discussions about feelings and attitudes toward the use of English in education. Some humbly admitted their limited proficiency. In a poll asking members to grade individual English proficiency (10 highest and 0 lowest), most members scored themselves between three and six. The highest score was eight, and the lowest was 0. Some members differentiated oral from written English (with written English getting the higher grade) in qualifying their scores. Many stated an appreciation for the English Only period as a way to improve their English proficiency. However, there were members who wrote critically about the privileging of English, saying that it is not a measure of one's intelligence and there are non-English speaking countries that are doing well economically.

LAMENTATIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE-BASED BONUS

Starting in 2012, the Performance-Based Bonus (PBB), as its name implies, became linked to the performance of individual teachers and their respective schools. In 2012 and 2013, the PBB ranged from 35,000 pesos ($760) for the top performing schools to 5000 pesos ($108) for the lowest performing. The PBB policy statement (DepEd Order 33 s.2014) provides "systematic and evidence-based mechanisms, procedures and criteria for the granting of PBB in DepEd." It provides "a unified and integrated Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) across all departments and agencies within the Executive Branch incorporating a common set of performance scorecard to serve a single source of information on the status of government performance." The PBB guidelines issued in 2014 detailed specific indicators and metrics for performance related to NAT scores, dropout rates, the liquidation of a school's maintenance and operating expenses (MOOE), and a plus factor.

The complaints about PBB were at first directed at a delay in the release of funds. For several months, members asked almost daily about the situation. When the PBB was finally distributed to many teachers, concern shifted to perceptions of irregularity across scorecards. There were questions around the low ranking of some schools that also had high performing teachers and students. The following post summarizes the teacher reactions:

> What would account for such basis of our bonuses? It's pointing all accountability to all teachers. They want high scores in National Achievement Test (NAT) of our pupils but books and modules are inadequate. When a pupil drops out or fails, it is our fault. Do we need to cheat in the NAT to raise our score? Do we need to pass those who are not learning anything? What kind of government do we have? Other government officials receive fat bonuses. I feel demotivated to work hard and be concerned over few misbehaving students.

What appeared glaringly questionable to teachers about PBB was the use of NAT scores as indicators, despite common knowledge that results are made unreliable through the questionable practices of some schools. The other contentious issue was the use of Dropout Rate as an indicator. Data on the demographics of dropout and the reasons for school leaving provided by the Philippine Statistics Office indicated that most of the reasons given for school leaving are beyond the teacher's control – that is, high cost of education, illness, school distance, transportation, and need to find work.

Teachers in the group, having observed the complex interactions between life in school and in the community argued that development is contextual. They were incredulous that DepEd found truth about teacher performance through numbers. Their disbelief is shown in their suspicion about the results. For example, they attributed the high performance rating of a particular school to the fact that the principal is married to a high-ranking official. They believed certain schools were among the first to receive their PBB because they have teachers who are members of the PBB taskforce. Amidst changes in the PBB policy from 2013 to 2014 – which included the addition of 23 pages of guidelines, a refinement of the system, an extension of indictors, a new classification system, the substitution of tests, an adjustment of grade requirements, and the disaggregation of some indicators – teachers in the group lodged complaints that changes would require more documentation and paperwork, depriving them of time, and energy for teaching.

WE ARE NOT A ROBOT NOR A CARABAO!

Part of the PBB mechanism includes the RPMS – a performance evaluation system to show in numerical terms the teacher's accomplishments in light of objectives, key result areas and required competencies (result-management, professionalism, result focus, teamwork, service orientation, innovation, achievement, managing diversity, and accountability). The ratings are quantified and described in Tables 1 and 2.

Many TFG members were floored by the notion that an outstanding rating required "130% and above." They stated that it is unthinkable for anyone to surpass 100% given the kind of backbreaking work that they already do. They perceived the requirement as oppressive and dehumanizing. One quipped, "no wonder the target of RPMS is 130% so that nobody will qualify to receive any PBB." One teacher declared, "we are teachers, not a carabao[1]!" Teachers would also compare their treatment to that of robots, especially when they are asked to report for work even when sick.

There were many instances when group members questioned the directions coming from the Central Office. The new K-12 program, which includes the use of an information system, required teachers to complete and submit many forms and reports. This was a major concern for members, with one quipping, "they said that we are supposed to be child-centered, but we are becoming paper-centered!"

Teachers' agency and resistance is plainly seen in oppositional statements like those cited above. These are hidden scripts, exclusively

Table 1. RPMS Ratings.

Scale	Adjectival	Description
5	Outstanding (130% and above)	Performance represents an extraordinary level of achievement and commitment in terms of quality and time, technical skills and knowledge, ingenuity, creativity, and initiative. Employees at this performance level should have demonstrated exceptional job mastery in all major areas of responsibility. Employee achievement and contributions to the organization are of marked excellence.
4	Very satisfactory (115–129%)	Performance exceeded expectations. All goals, objectives, and targets were achieved above the established standards.
3	Satisfactory (100–114%)	Performance met expectations in terms of quality of work, efficiency, and timelines. The most critical annual goals were met.
2	Unsatisfactory (51–99%)	Performance failed to meet expectations, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met.
1	Poor (50% or below)	Performance was consistently below expectations, and/or reasonable progress toward critical goals was not made. Significant improvement is needed in one or more important areas.

articulated within the group's circle of fellow teachers, not to be seen by non-members.

One poignant expression or assertion of teacher humanness is through the endless posting of personal announcements, such as of one's own birthday, using poetry, humor, artful text, selfie photos, memes, and other graphics. This happens despite endless admonitions from administrators and other members to minimize personal content. Members begged for the indulgence to display selfie photos, causing the administrators to eventually provide a special thread for this purpose. Most selfies are of happy smiles and wacky poses. One shows a bald head with the caption, "my last chemotherapy." The pictures show made-up faces and well combed hair. Some wear costumes – a princess, Kung-Fu fighter, hula dancer, police, runner, and a swimmer. There are also "groupfies" with colleagues, family members, boyfriends or spouses, students, and pets. These posts are received warmly and with compliments. Birthday celebrants receive hundreds of well wishes.

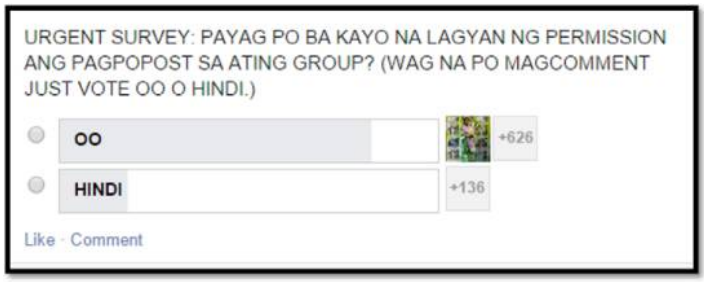
FACEBOOK POLITICS

On occasion, administrators would discuss the issue of censorship, such as this invitation through a group poll.

Table 2. Reasons for School Leaving.

Reason for Not Attending School	Both Sexes				Male				Female			
	Total	6–11	12–15	16–24	Total	6–11	12–15	16–24	Total	6–11	12–15	16–24
Number of Out-of-School Youth ('000)	6065	549	949	4568	2809	302	609	1897	3257	247	339	2670
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Schools are very far	1.2	5.6	2.5	0.4	1.5	7.0	1.6	0.5	1.0	3.8	4.1	0.3
No schools within the barangay	0.5	2.0	0.8	0.3	0.6	2.8	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.7	0.2
No regular transportation	0.8	3.3	1.0	0.5	0.9	2.9	0.9	0.6	0.7	3.8	1.0	0.4
High cost of education	28.9	10.5	25.9	31.8	29.6	10.5	22.4	34.9	28.4	10.6	32.0	29.6
Illness/disability	5.1	10.7	8.7	3.7	5.9	9.2	7.8	4.8	4.4	12.5	10.2	2.9
Housekeeping	6.6	1.0	1.4	8.4	1.3	0.8	0.4	1.7	11.2	1.4	3.2	13.1
Marriage	14.0	0.1	1.3	18.4	1.5	–	0.2	2.1	24.9	0.3	3.2	13.1
Employment/looking for work	11.2	0.4	5.9	13.6	13.8	0.6	6.4	18.3	9.0	–	5.0	10.3
Lack of personal interest	27.5	44.4	47.8	21.2	39.9	44.8	55.7	34.1	16.8	44.0	33.6	12.1
Cannot cope with school work	1.4	2.8	3.0	0.9	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.4	1.2	3.2	4.7	0.5
Problem with school record	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.2
Problem with birth certificate	0.2	1.9	0.2	–	0.1	1.1	0.1	–	0.3	2.9	0.3	–
Too young to go to school	1.5	16.1	–	–	1.7	15.8	–	–	1.2	16.4	–	–
Others	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.4	–	0.3	0.4

Source: National Statistics Office (2010) Annual Poverty Indicators Survey.
Note:"–" denotes zero count or less than 0.05%.



Translation: Do you agree that each post in this group has to be approved? Do not comment, just vote yes or no.

The FB group's settings can be changed by the administrator to make censoring and filtering possible. There were posts that were deleted and members who were blocked because they violated the house rules (like selling their wares) and from discovery that they were not really public school teachers.

The suggestion to screen each post was strongly resisted. One asked, "why did you have to create an FB group if you do not give freedom of expression of opinion?" Group members viewed the social media space as one for open and free exchange, a shift from the structured public sphere and school settings where ranting and arguments are usually shunned. The group became a platform for sharing issues and problems, and for the magnification of collective action articulated and relocated in various parts of the country. Engagements with progressive and cause-oriented groups like Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) and Teachers Dignity Coalition (TDC) become possible as members of these groups would share content from their organization's website. However, the social media platform also created new forms of asymmetric relationships – between the administrators and the members and between the techies and the non-techies. The non-techies' ignorance of FB technologies is sometimes outrightly ridiculed.

DISCUSSION

It is a common observation among my colleagues who are involved in qualitative research that gathering information from public school teachers proves to be challenging in the Philippines. First, there are

permission requirements from higher authorities and second, most teachers tend to be reticent about sharing what they really think and feel, especially if those feelings are critical of organizations. Teacher tendency is to repeat the official stand of the bureaucracy. Gaining access to the teachers' secret FB group, where I could freely read teacher exchanges was like entering a magical place where teachers express as unrestrained human beings, and as social media agents, are able to communicate in a multimodal manner through text, photos, video, memes, emoji, and emoticons. Through time Facebook has been expanding its dialogic capacity – from simple "like" to a choice of emoticons, from single thread to nested conversations and who knows what's next. This supports Baker's (2013) observation that FB can provide unique insight into participants. I also felt that ethnography in this context is like an act of eavesdropping, especially since it was impossible to seek consent from each of the tens of thousands of participants who cannot be contacted individually due to FB privacy settings.

The online activities of the TFG extended beyond the initial purpose of requesting and uploading materials, eventually gravitating toward a platform for the sharing of thoughts and feelings provoked by a flurry of events that came with K-12 curriculum changes. Teachers discussed how various groups view their work. They grappled with the expectations of reform and the valuation of their performance. They also struggled with self-image as they faced reminders about their low social and occupational status and as they were faulted for a mediocre quality of education.

The online FB group provided these members the space to pour out their emotions and rant about the load of work, and blame that they receive. They challenged the power of the FB administrators, sometimes accusing them of wrongdoing. They found the freedom to break from stereotyping expectations of prim and proper, dutiful teachers by displaying their capacity to be outrageous takers of selfies, congratulating themselves for accomplishments, and greeting each other during birthdays and other special events.

Their ranting and outrageousness affirm their human agency, that they are not a machine or a work animal. They are actually knowledgeable and insightful about how education should be carried out on the ground, challenging the irrationality and unworkability of official directives. They are resourceful and creative, able to improvise given limited or absent resources. However, they also chose to contain all their rantings, outrageousness, and critical insights in the secret space of FB, maintaining the group's secret privacy setting which renders it unsearchable and invisible to non-members.

Teacher Derision

The low social and occupational status of teachers in the Philippines can be explained as a product of historical colonial domination and elite rule. During the Spanish colonial period, teachers were chosen from amongst the most obedient, prayerful and compliant students by parochial priests. When Americans came to colonize the country, students who mastered American literature, history and the English language became assistants to American teachers (Alzona, 1932). Connell (2009) wrote that the establishment of a mass school system during the period of colonialism was an intervention "into a turbulent colonial society, designed to achieve social control over working-class and rural youth who might easily escape it." The capacity for independent thought was not recognized. The conception of a good teacher during this time was "above all, an obedient servant of the authorities."

Despite expectations of teacher obedience, there were reports of primary school teachers who helped the resistance movement. Some of them (including women) actually joined battles and led positions of command. When found by the Spanish colonial masters, they were dismissed from their posts and some were killed (Alzona, 1932; Concepcion, 2012, 2014). This account of teachers' participation in the resistance movement is not mentioned in standard history books or teacher education texts, nor is it presented during Teachers Day celebrations.

After World War II, the government rebuilt schools to accommodate sudden increases of students at the primary level. Teacher education was given less priority and so low resourced private colleges began to offer non-degree teaching certificates, limiting preparation for primary school teachers to a mere two-year course. In the same period, a paradigm shift took place, linking education to economic development and the process as a series of inputs treated as investments (Corpuz, 1967). In the years to come, especially during President Marcos' authoritarian rule (1972–1986), teachers were used as mouthpieces of Martial Law propaganda, forcing some teachers to resist and suffer the consequences of that resistance (Constantino, 1981).

It was also during the period of Marcos' that school curriculum, organization, and processes in the education sector conformed to structural adjustments imposed by western funding agencies. Curriculum began to include vocational subjects and there was a decrease in the teaching time of Social Studies. Education reforms funded by international agencies like the World Bank from the 1980s onwards paved way to a discourse of quality and global competitiveness in education through a neoliberal, business-oriented governance model (del Rosario-Malonzo, 2007; Remollino, 2007).

Ball (2008) describes the time between 1977 and 1997 as the period when "teacher derision" was most intense in the United Kingdom. Thomas (2011) found that both media and education policy texts in Australia, which influence public policy and commonsense understandings, constructed teacher quality in a deficit manner. In the United States, the entire teaching profession was indicted as "a pool of intellectual stagnation."

Goldstein (2014) attributes the low social occupational regard for teachers to the kind of pre-service training that they received. Normal schools' curriculum at the turn of 20th century only included literacy training and good manners, deprived of intellectually challenging courses from the liberal arts and sciences. Teachers (mostly single women) were recruited because of their natural capacity to "nurture" schoolchildren rather than for their intellectual capacity.

For a period in the Philippines, a high school diploma was enough for employment as a primary teacher. After World War II, teacher preparation included a two-year college certificate. It was only in 1949 that normal colleges began to offer a four-year bachelor's degree (Savellano, 1993).

In the 1970s, teacher workloads increased as professional status declined. Open enrollment policies in teacher education institutions, which would accept "academically inferior" students, were cast blame, particularly in urban areas. Selecting the best and the brightest is commonly thought to be a solution to education ills (ibid).

It is interesting that in both reasons given – inadequate pre-service training and the open enrollment policy – were decisions of policy makers and the teachers were just recipients or the victims of such unfortunate arrangements. However instead of holding the government responsible, the teachers are the ones who are faulted. It is also questionable to equate intelligence with length of schooling. The common notion is that intelligence is something innate and can only be nurtured by education.

Furthermore, there were also other departments or colleges, aside from normal colleges, that had an open enrollment policy like commerce, social sciences, and mass communication. However, there is no pervasive belief that accountants, business administrators, psychologists, sociologists, and journalists are intellectually inferior.

In the BESRA concept paper there was a suggestion that the inferior quality of teachers is evidenced by their poor English language proficiency (DepEd, The Schools First Initiative, 2005). Esposo (2009) considers English to be "the Filipinos' big hang-up," as proficiency is usually equated to intelligence.

The view of teachers as intellectually inferior has been normalized as common sense knowledge through various official pronouncements inserted in education reform documents, popular media and daily conversations. Barba-Aquino's (2015) study on selected Filipino commercial films finds that the prototypical Filipino teacher is often portrayed as a woman, acting as a caring and nurturing parent, wearing unfashionable clothes and hairstyle, working hard and demonstrating selflessness. Teachers are never portrayed as competent and intelligent. The idea that teaching is not an esteemed profession is also reproduced in popular daily discourse. Elders exhort their children, especially high achievers, to not choose a teaching career, because it does not pay well. They warn underperforming female children that poor performance in school will result in her being sent to a teachers' college.

Bourdieu (1977) explained that people who speak the language of prestige ably act refined exercise cultural capital, which is often misconstrued as natural intelligence. Teachers, who are often women, lacking in cultural capital, and associated with the working class, are made vulnerable to discrimination. The TFG members who repudiated their humble past show how their habitus has been shaped by the status quo.

Many members admitted that teachers indeed have poor English communication skills (when in fact such poor English ability has been observed in many other professions too, including law). However, they simultaneously attempted to problematize the privileging of English proficiency by arguing that their experiences as teachers involve a complex mix of emotional and intellectual ability.

TEACHERS' HARD LABOR

The constant hankering to receive copies of the new K-12 teacher's guides, learners' materials, modules, assessment forms, checklists, story books, report forms, and other materials provided by the Central Office of the Department of Education may demonstrate eagerness to comply to the standards of the K-12 program, strengthening the teachers' identity as hard working and aligned to the standard of performance of K-12. That perception was reinforced further through narratives of "going the extra mile" efforts and sacrificial good deeds. One teacher wrote: "In fact, I am ill right now, I have asthma attacks and my child is also sick. But I cannot be absent today because nobody will teach the children. Is this our lot, that we are not allowed to get sick?"

Foregrounding their hard work and sacrificial good deeds served to deflect insinuations that they lack intelligence and sophistication (due to poor English proficiency). Ironically, their constant demand for instructional materials, forms, and templates provided by the Central offices could also be inferred as dependence on ready-made materials and a lack of creativity and originality. Since the logic of intellectually inferior teachers was only deflected and remain unchallenged, teachers remained vulnerable to continuing a projection of intense work, poor compensation, and constant scrutiny.

Norming the teacher in a deficit discourse as lacking intelligence and creativity is necessary to justify a series of education reform programs. In other words, a reform is needed because there is a problem or shortcoming. It also justifies the demand for foreign aid. Education reform programs in the Philippines have been largely funded by hundreds of millions of dollars loaned from international financial institutions like the World Bank (del Rosario-Malonzo, 2007).

The OECD Report (2005) acknowledges that the state focuses on teacher quality because this is an area that they can legislate. They conduct these efforts despite a body of research that closely associates student learning to "differences in what students bring to school – their abilities and attitudes, and family and community background" (*ibid.*). In other words, teacher quality as the focus of reform conceals the state's failure to distribute wealth equitably, provide adequate basic services and infrastructure, curb corruption, strengthen local industries, and provide employment.

BUSINESS MODEL EDUCATION REFORM

The neoliberal business model of education has reconceptualized the notion of good teacher from a scholar-teacher (of the past) to a competent teacher model. This model promotes the notion of "teacher effectiveness" that can be controlled through quantitative research. This particular perspective views teachers as embodying measurable variables like attitudes, qualifications, and strong leadership, to be correlated with pupil outcomes that are also quantified through standardized tests (Connell, 2009).

This business model inspired notion on teacher effectiveness informs the oppressive discourse of "teacher factor" that was used to blame teachers. Because of the view that teachers are the levers of education reform, they have to be closely watched and monitored. Their actions have to be calibrated with specific competencies so that they become "auditable." The mechanism of PBB and its reliance on a quantification of competencies is a

means to achieve that purpose. In the end, they become mere technicians (ibid) or "curriculum dispensers" (Abaya, 2014). Furthermore, their lives and their worth are reduced to numbers. If those numbers do not meet the "standards," they are blamed for not delivering adequate results relative to investments.

As curriculum technicians, they are constrained from practicing autonomy as professionals. Connell (2009) wrote that "market-oriented neoliberalism is profoundly suspicious of professionalism; it regards professions as anti-competitive monopolies. Specifically, neoliberalism distrusts teachers." Giroux (2011) described the process as de-skilling or de-professionalization, hindering teachers from becoming transformative intellectuals (see also Apple, 2000).

The increasing use of evidence-based business model governance also creates a new knowledge production model where the magic of numerical figures create an appearance of certainty and objectivity that tends to replace political debate with technical expertise. Numerical indicators claim the power to "convert complicated contextually variable phenomena into unambiguous, clear, and impersonal measures" (Merry, 2011). These numerical indicators, meant to represent the work of teachers on the ground, seek to bracket the contradictions and the emotional load of teaching in a challenging environment. It is a means to impose an unmessy and depoliticized version of realities.

In the United States, this neoliberal and business model of education is felt in every school district through the use of standardized tests. This practice results in the further reproduction of existing inequalities and the creation of new ones (Lipman, 2009). The teachers' Performance-Based Bonus (PBB) can potentially increase the marginalizing of students, especially those who for varied reasons – like sickness, disability, work demands, and family circumstances – are struggling to meet school requirements. These struggling students can be marked as culprits, decreasing school rankings.

The use of quantitative measures through standardized tests also subscribes to a simplistic and narrow view of reality, ignoring the particularities of each school.

> Students, as well as teachers, with all their communities, in all their complexity – their failings, inadequacies, strong points, superb and weak teachers, ethical commitments to collective uplift, their energy, demoralization, courage, potential, and setbacks – were blended, homogenized, and reduced to a stanine scored and narrow business model of "success" or "failure." In the process, brilliant spots in the schools were rubbed out rather than cultivated and extended. A few uncommitted and unprepared teachers were driven out, and others were upgraded to standardized teaching. Instead of inducing schools to develop their curricular and pedagogical strengths, accountability policies

> promoted or reinforced a narrow focus on specific skills and on test-taking techniques. (Lipman, 2009)

The PBB indicators and metrics can be interpreted as a form of tacit non-recognition of the world as it is seen by teachers, in favor of the state's preferred reality.

CONCLUSION

I have been captivated with the posts that appear daily in the TFG. Narratives capture moments as they occur in school and community lives through highly textured, emotive, artful, animated, multilingual and expressive forms and modalities. They frame the story of education as a human endeavor mediated by real human beings. Commentary about Philippine education renders participants as transformative intellectuals and worthy agents of bottom-up education reform. Policy makers and educational leaders would learn valuable lessons from the words of wisdom shared in the group. The story of Philippine education presented through cold statistics as preferred by policymakers and corporate stakeholders simply pales in comparison. The official version of this story, as it is legitimated in official, scholarly and popular documents, relies on indicators, numbers, and a caricature of the Filipino teacher. It "non-recognizes" the stories of those at the forefront of reform. That relationship between these two narratives perpetuates the existing social order.

The Philippine Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers demands that teachers be the "intellectual leader in the community" and that they engage in knowledge production and expansion. So the question remains, are teachers intellectually inferior and thus not fulfilling their ethical duty? This study argued that teachers are imagined as inferior to rationalize education reform proposals. They become justification for funding and foreign loans. Furthermore, the inferior image subjugates teachers as compliant technicians in business-oriented reform. However, an examination of their private scripts posted in FB secret groups shows that the structuring power of neoliberal education reform is not total. In the secret Facebook group is another world where machines rant, recite poems, and take outrageous selfies.

NOTE

1. A carabao is same as a water buffalo, used by farmers in plowing the soil.

REFERENCES

Abaya, E. (2014). *Lectures on educational sociology (EDFD 231)*. College of Education, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, the Philippines.

ABS-CBN. (2012). OFWs use internet, not landlines, to keep in touch. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from http://news.abs-cbn.com/global-filipino/01/31/12/ofws-use-internet-not-landlines-keep-touch.

Aguila, A. (2009). Living long-distance relationships through computer-mediated communication. *Social Science Diliman*, *5*(1–2), 83–106. Retrieved from http://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/socialsciencediliman/article/view/2045.

Alcober, N. (2014). Teachers to receive bonuses this month. *The Manila Times*. Retrieved from http://www.manilatimes.net/teachers-receive-bonuses-month/133316/.

Alzona, E. (1932). *A history of education in the Philippines, 1565–1930*. Quezon City: University of Philippines Press.

Apple, M. (2000). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age*. London: Routledge.

Baker, S. (2013). Conceptualizing the use of Facebook in ethnographic research as tool, as data, as context. *Ethnography and Education*, *8*(2), 131–145. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2013.792504.

Ball, S. (2008). *The education debate*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Barnard, P. (2013). *The systems thinking school: Redesigning schools from the inside-out*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Barba-Aquino, L. (2015). *Portrayals of teachers in selected filipino films*. Unpublished thesis, College of Mass Communication, University of the Philippines.

Bautista, M., Bernardo, A., & Ocampo, D. (2010). *When reforms don't transform: Reflections on institutional reforms*. Washington, DC: Human Development Network Research Monograph. 2010–2001.

Birnbaum, M. (2013). *The fronts students use: Facebook and the standardization of self-presentations*, v54 n2 pP. 155–171 Mar-Apr 2013, p. 17.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A. H. Halsey (Eds.), *Power and ideology in education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian meditations*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Burawoy, M., & Holdt, K. (2012). Conversations with Bourdieu: The *Johannesburg* moment. Michael Burawoy Faculty Page. Retrieved from http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/Bourdieu.htm.

Cardozo, M. (2015). Bolivian teachers' agency: Soldiers of liberation or guards of coloniality and continuation? *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*(4), 1–24. doi:10.14507/epaa.v23.1713

Carlone, H., Haun-Frank, J., & Kimmel, S. (2010). Tempered radicals: Elementary teachers' narratives of teaching science within and against prevailing meanings of schooling. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, *5*, 941–965. doi:10.1007/s11422-010-9282-6

Chamorro-Premuzic, T. (2015). How different are your online and offline personalities? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/sep/24/online-offline-personality-digital-identity.

Christenson, T. (2006). *Listening to reading teachers: Reflections on literacy teacher preparation programs* (Order No. 3225722). (A. f. (305305772., Compiler) Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/305305772?accountid=47253.

Chung, L. (2000). *A study of teacher factors in teacher − Child relationships with preschool children*. (E. c.-L. AAI9976982., Compiler) Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI9976982.

Concepcion, G. (2012). *Maestros and empire: Teachers in the Philippine revolution of 18961*. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/download/34351942/Teachers_in_the_Philippine_Revolution.pdf.

Concepcion, G. (2014). Disciplinary cases of Filipino teachers in the late 19th century. *Social Science Diliman*, *10*(1), 1−27. Retrieved from http://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/socialsciencediliman/article/view/4331.

Connell, R. (1985). *Teachers work*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education*, *50*(3), 213−229.

Constantino, L. (1981). Educating for dependence in towards relevant education. In E. Forum (Ed.), *A general sourcebook for teachers*. Quezon City: Education Forum.

Corpuz, O. (1967). *Education and socio-economic change in the Philippines, 1870−1960's*. Quezon City: University of Philippines Press.

Cuban, L. (2012, July 30). *The paradox of teachers and technology in the U.S. Larry Cuban on school reform and classroom practice* [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://larrycuban.wordpress.com/2012/07/30/the-paradox-of-teachers-and-technology-in-the-u-s/

del Rosario-Malonzo, J. (2007). Economics of Philippine education: Serving the global market. In B. Lumbera, R. Guillermo, & A. Alamon (Eds.), *Mula Tore Patungong Palengke: Neoliberal education in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ibon.

Dela Paz, C. (2016). Filipino Facebook users most engaged voters in Asia-pacific. *Rappler*. Retrieved from http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/132423-filipino-facebook-users-engagement.

DepEd (2005). The schools first initiative. Department of Education, Republic of the Philippines.

DepEd (2006). Basic education sector reform agenda (2006−2010). Department of Education, Republic of the Philippines.

DepEd. (2010). *Discussion paper on the enhanced K+12 basic education program*: DepEd discussion paper. DepEd.

Esposo, W. (2009). English as the big Filipino hang up. *The Philippine Star*.

Ethnologue. (2016). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*, 19th ed.. M. P. Lewis, G. F. Simons, & C. D. Fennig (Eds.). Dallas, TX: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com

Gardinier, M. (2011). Agents of change and continuity: The pivotal role of teachers in Albanian educational reform and democratization. *Comparative Education Review*, *56*(4), 659–683.

Giroux, H. (2011). Teachers as transformatory intellectuals. *Critical Educators*, 46−49.

GMA. (2013). *OFW guide: Fast facts on top 10 destinations of Pinoys abroad*. Retrieved from http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/293843/news/pinoyabroad/ofw-guide-fast-facts-on-top-10-destinations-of-pinoys-abroad#sthash.ovfWctWz.dpuf. *GMA NEWS Online*. Retrieved from http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/293843/news/pinoyabroad/ofw-guide-fast-facts-on-top-10-destinations-of-pinoys-abroad.

Goldstein, D. (2014). *The teacher wars: A history of America's most embattled profession*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Hill, M. (2008). Preface. In S. Ball (Ed.), *Education debate*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Huang, R. (2008). *The strategies and factors influencing the professional development of the women teachers in middle schools* (Order No. H240224). (A. f. (1027908232)., Compiler) Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1027908.

Internet Users in Asia November 2015. (n.d.). Retrieved from internet webstats. Retrieved from http://www.internetworldstats.com/.

Kyriakides, L., & Creemers, B. (2009). The effects of teacher factors on different outcomes: Two studies testing the validity of the dynamic model. *Effective Education*, *1*(1), 61–85. doi:10.1080/19415530903043680.

Levin, B. (1998). An epidemic of education policy: (What) can we learn from each other? *Comparative Education*, *34*(2), 131–141.

Liebelt, C. (2008). "We are the Jews of today": Filipino domestic workers in Israel and the language of diaspora. *Hagar*, *8*(1), 63–81. 122. doi:http://search.proquest.com/docview/214407072?accountid = 47253.

Lipman, P. (2009). Beyond accountability: Toward schools that create new people for a new way of life. In A. B. Darder (Ed.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Luistro, A. (2015). K to 12 Basic education program midterm report. Department of Education, Republic of the Philippines. Retrieved from http://www.deped.gov.ph/datasets

Meidl, T., & Baumann, B. (2015). Extreme make over: Disposition development of pre-service teachers. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, *8*(Spring 2015), 90–97.

Merry, S. E. (2011). Measuring the world: Indicators, human rights, and global governance. *Current Anthropology*, *52* (Suppl. 3), S83–S95.

Meyerson, D. (2001). *Tempered radicals: How people use difference to inspire change at work*. Harvard Business School Press.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 20 U.S.C. § 6319. (2002).

Oladejo, J. (1991). The teacher factor in the effective teaching and learning of ESL in developing English speaking countries: The case of Nigeria. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *12*(3), 1991.

Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD]. (2005). Teachers matter: Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. OECD.

Philippine Statistics Authority. (2010). *Percentage distribution of OSYs by reason for not attending school, age group and sex: Philippines*. Retrieved from: https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/hsd/pressrelease/PRAPIS2011-83TAB3.pdf

Remollino, A. (2007). Philippine education in the neocolonial period. In B. Lumbera, R. Guillermo, & A. Alamon (Eds.), *Mula tore patungong palengke: Neoliberal education in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ibon.

Rosa, Y., & Bonilla, J. (2015). #Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist*, *42*(1), 4–17.

Savellano, J. (1993). Teacher education: Some issues and concerns. In T. C. Education (Ed.), *Making education work*. Congressional Oversight Committee on Education, 121–130.

Scott, J. (1984). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. London: Yale University Press.

SEAMEO-INNOTECH. (2012). *K to 12 Toolkit: Resource guide for teacher educators, school administrators and teachers*. Quezon City: SEAMEO-Innotech.

Thomas, S. (2011). Teachers and public engagement: An argument for rethinking teacher professionalism to challenge deficit discourses in the public sphere. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *32*(3), 2011.

Tilton, S. (2012). *First year students in a foreign fabric: A triangulation study on Facebook as a method of Coping/Adjustment (Order No. 3561420)*. (A. f. (1369530859)., Compiler) Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1369530859?accountid = 47253.

Vivian, R., Barnes, A., Geer, R., & Wood, D. (2014). The academic journey of university students on Facebook: An analysis of informal academic-related activity over a semester. *Research in Learning Technology*, *2014*(22), 24681. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v22.24681.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.