Social Categorisation in Philippine Organisations: Values Toward Collective Identity and Management Through Intergroup Relations

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ABSTRACT

The popularity of American-style management techniques in the Philippines implies an inevitable transition from the traditional values rooted in interdependent collectivism to the "modern" values of independent individualism. It is argued that an indigenous style of Filipino management is viable and imperative, which recognises the salience of collective identities in organisations. Based on a theory of social categorisation, a conceptual model of management through intergroup relations is presented. The main contention is that, in place of a dysfunctional conflict between Americanised management tactics and contemporary Filipino values, organisational effectiveness could ensue from a "synchronic synergy" between Filipino-style management tactics and the social categorisation effects of intragroup convergence and intergroup divergence.

INTRODUCTION

Modernisation of the Philippines, as a result of the lingering economic and social-psychological ties with a former colonial master, has to a large measure entailed Westernisation, or more specifically, the Americanisation of its organisations. "The influx of American ideas and social patterns in a broad range of institutions and the Filipinos' receptivity to them are well-known" (Arce & Poblador, 1977, p. 6). Whereas "Japanese institutions rooted in loyalty and groupism are difficult to replicate in the West where independence and individualistic values are strong", there has been "indiscriminate importation of institutions from the more advanced country (sic, the United States) to . . . the Philippines with social values rooted in the groupism of monsoon Asia" (Oshima, 1985, pp. 84, 93).

The observed transferability of American management techniques and organisational models to the Philippines may lead one to conclude that there will be a gradual but inevitable transition from the traditional, and presumably anachronistic, values rooted in interdependent collectivism to the "modern", and hence more appropriate, values based on independent individualism (R. Fernandez, 1984). Nonetheless, the moot point is that effective organisations may require indigenous management styles which cease to view inherent cultural mechanisms as constraints to the efforts of managers who are agents of planned value change. Drawing from the social-psychological theory of social categorisation as the central process in collective phenomena, the discussion explores the implications of collectivist values on an indigenous Filipino management style. The main contention is that the traditional but still contemporary values of social acceptance (Lynch, 1970) foster the salience of collective identities in organisations (de Leon, 1983), such that effective management of intergroup relations rather than of individual efficiency becomes the crucial concern.

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While some of the Japanese methods may not be readily replicable, the successful demonstration that workers can be motivated without excessive dependence on material incentives may be suggestive of ways in which Philippine management can innovate, taking into account Filipino values such as cooperation, groupism, and smooth interpersonal relations, which are closer to the ways of the Japanese than of the Americans. (Oshima, 1984, p. 94).

VALUES TOWARD COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

As verified in the classic study by Lynch (1970), the central theme of the Filipino value system is social acceptance which does not require the positive expression of linking implied in social approval. Social acceptance is acquired "when one is taken by one's fellows for what he is, or believes he is . . . is treated in accordance with his status . . . (and) is not rejected or improperly criticised" (Lynch, 1970, p. 9). Social acceptance is effected through smooth interpersonal relations (SIR), which entails the facility and effectiveness in getting along with others, as well as the sensitivity to and consideration for the feelings of people (Cuthrie, 1968; Hollnsteiner, 1970; Lynch, 1970). The four major cultural values which sustain SIR are *amor propio* (personal worth), *hiya* (sense of shame), *pakikisama* (concession), and *utang-na-loob* (reciprocity).

By being agreeable with others, even under trying circumstances, the Filipino grants a measure of social acceptance to those he deals with, and in the very display of courtesy himself gains or enhances his acceptance as a good member of society. (Lynch, 1970, p. 15).

Amor propio refers to the expectation that one should be treated as a person/subject and not as an object, to preserve a fragile sense of individual dignity (Guthrie, 1968). It protects the Filipino against loss of social acceptance, as well as motivate him to regain social acceptance once it has been diminished or lost (Lynch, 1970). As it ordinarily does not entail self-pride, *amor propio* seeks to preserve the social esteem that rightfully belongs to a person so as to ensure the integrity of his self-concept. In a sense, *amor propio* presupposes mutual respect between fellowmen, such that the Filipino is conscious of maintaining his own dignity and of acknowledging the dignity of others.

Hiya is a sensitivity to avoiding personal affronts, which prevents the violation of social proriety. Particularly it is "the uncomfortable feeling that accompanies the awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action" (Lynch, 1970, p. 16). To be described as *"walang hiya"* (without a sense of shame) is one of the gravest insults to a Filipino, because it implies the lack of awareness of appropriate behaviour. *Hiya* is a mechanism for norm-conformity: It supports *amor propio* by delineating what is acceptable (or unacceptable) to others.

Utang-na-loob is the voluntary, informal, noncontractual form of reciprocity which develops into a strong sense of personal obligation to those who have done one a service. It refers to a system of personal favours between relatives or friends, through which the social relationship continues and is further strengthened by motivating overt expressions of gratitude. An apt description of *utang-na-loob* was given by Hollnsteiner (1970, p. 78):

One does one's duties and performs one's obligations as need arises; failure to do so arouse deep bitterness and the feeling that a secret unifying bond has been torn asunder and . . . betrayed.

Pakikisama is the "lauded practice of yielding to the will of the leader or majority so as to make the group decision unanimous" (Lynch, 1970, p. 11). It is derived from the Filipino custom of *bayanihan* which fosters cooperative efforts through unsolicited assistance, out of a sense of "togetherness". As the term *pakikisama*

translates into "act of going along with others", the Filipino exhibits a priority for camaraderie, trust, confidence and loyalty towards significant others, over the expression of his personal agreement or disagreement with the matter (Jocano, 1984).

Amor propio and *hiya* are psychological imperatives which regulate a sense of social propriety. *Pakikisama* and *utang-na-loob* are mechanisms of social interaction in accordance with one's own and others' *amor propio* and *hiya*. Hence a Filipino practises concession and reciprocity in his social relationships, motivated by his respect for his own and others' personal worth and controlled by his sense of shame in violating social propriety, so as to maintain the smooth interpersonal relations which accords acceptance to others as well as to himself.

The importance of social acceptance occurs out of the socialisation of Filipinos which emphasises the family as the source of security, protection, and well-being (Bulatao, 1970). "Security is sought not by independence so much as by inter-dependence" (Lynch, 1970, p. 15). The social network of the Filipino is an extended kinship system (Silos, 1985), such that the nuclear family is a model for all social relationships. Primary relationships are maintained with close as well as distant relatives (by birth, marriage, or ceremony on the paternal and maternal sides) and friends considered "as relatives"; and secondary relationships are changed into primary relationships whenever possible (e.g. by ceremony) (Guthrie, 1968).

Such collectivist values ensue from a belief in the life principle of scarcity, rather than of abundance. As pointed out by Lynch (1970), Filipinos view benefits acquired for oneself are only at the expense of others, and consider success to be brought by *suerte* (luck or fate) and hence should be shared with others. Consequently the "kinship orientation" emphasises membership in a collectivity to which individual interests are subordinated (Silos, 1985, 1986). Bulatao (1970) provided evidence that Filipinos place a value on the sacrifices made by individuals for the good of the group. Silos (1985, p. 9) explained further:

> As an individualist the American feels no responsibility to any group that would be more important than his responsibility to his own personal "integrity" . . . The Filipino has strong sensibility to social harmony and the integrity he seeks is social rather than individual.

The cited values instill a sense of collective identity in the Filipino, in that "he seeks the integrity of the whole rather than of the part (Silos, 1985, p. 9). Bulatao (1963, p. 177) discussed the significance of group membership to the Filipino:

> When contrasted with the Americans, the Filipino is less autonomous, more dependent . . . He finds it easier to submit than to assert his individuality. He likes to take care of others and be taken care of. In brief he values *small-group belongingness*.

In a cross-cultural study of values, Hofstede (1980, 1984) verified that collectivism is still a characteristic of contemporary Philippine culture, which he described as "a preference for a tightly-knit social framework" with a high degree of interdependence. Collectivism implies that "belongingness may have to come above ego-needs like self-actualisation or esteem" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 87), such that the *subject* is "we" rather than "I" (Hofstede, 1980, 1984; Silos, 1985, 1986). The notion of collective identity was apparent in Lynch's (1970) concept of *equivalence,* which he defined as the operation in Philippine society through which individual group members represent or are perceived as equivalent to the total membership.

SOCIAL CATEGORISATION IN ORGANISATIONS

Integral to collective interaction is the process of *social categorisation,* which is the perceptual structuring of the social milieu in terms of membership to discrete

social divisions, as theorised and empirically validated by European social psychologists (Doise, 1978; Tajfel, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b). Recognising that the intellectual richness and scientific integrity of the theory is beyond the present purpose, its fundamental tenets are taken as the critical assumptions of the discussion on the collectivism in Philippine organisations. The intent is to explore the possibilities in which the study of the impact of Filipino values on management styles can be approached from the theoretical framework of the social psychology of intergroup relations.

The social-psychological construct of *salient* collective identity proposed by de Leon (1983) pertains to an internal criterion which ensues from the individual's self-identification with a specific social category or group, whereas "group membership" is the external classification by observers of individuals into *social* categories. Without resorting to a 'group mind fallacy' (which assumes that a social system acquires an identity greater than or separate from the individual participants), the contention is that the salience of collective identity occurs when groups are "not mere conglomerates of individuals, but are in themselves *unitary social actors* which function as *integrated behavioural organisms*" (de Leon, 1983, p. 12).

The main principle in the proposed model of collective interaction is that the social categorisation process entails the dual mechanisms of intragroup convergence and intergroup divergence, which emerge from salient collective identity (de Leon, 1983). *Intragroup* convergence pertains to the motivation towards conformity that is aroused by group membership which calls to mind attitudinal and behavioural norms. Research on intergroup relations has demonstrated that the awareness of ingroup-outgroup boundaries, which arises from the socially categorised situation, accentuates perceived *similarity* within the group. As collective interaction occurs simultaneously between as well as within groups, an interrelated mechanism of intragroup convergence is *intergroup divergence* which heightens attitudinal and behavioural *differentiation* of the ingroup from the outgroup (e.g. Doise, 1978; Sherif, 1967; Tajfel, 1982a, 1982b, 1984a, 1984b). Because of the stereotypic character of intergroup relations, outgroups are targets of bias because they are perceived as a collective entity that is comprised of de-individuated "dissimilar others".

Although the "small-group belongingness" of the Filipino is "more often the exact opposite of what one would expect to find in a modern corporation" (Arce and Poblador, 1977, p. 6), intragroup convergence in Philippine organisations is enhanced by the 'preference . . . for group-centred activity" (Baldwin, 1975, p. 68). Arce (1974) found that among women workers in the Philippines, evaluation of the "intrinsic rewards" of jobs were correlated with evaluation of the company as a "social unit", but were not related to the evaluations of the work nature. A study on a government agency by Andres (1985) showed that employees who felt there was a *lack* of concern or cooperation among fellow-employees tended to have poorer attendance records.

Gatchalian (reported in Andres, 1985) concluded from his findings that Filipinos prefer to work in groups rather than alone on individual tasks. He observed that when assembly-line workers in a factory were subdivided into small groups and worked in a circular formation with face-to-face interaction, factory output increased and job quality improved. Collective identity and intragroup converence had been further enhanced by management's evaluation of group outputs, and not of individual performance.

Torres (1984) reported that factory workers in Metro Manila specified *pagtutulungan* (helpfulness, cooperation) as the factor which helped the work group meet their outputs, and as the main characteristic of their relationship with co-employees. She further discovered that "the affective value of smooth interper-

sonal relations is strong ... since such interactions result in job satisfaction" (Torres, 1984, p. 150). In domestic commercial banks in the Philippines, job satisfaction was examined by Marzan (1984). It was shown that the "desire to be socially accepted" and the "fear of rejection" were pervasive among managers:

> The Filipino values that tend to surface, or seem to explain the findings on job satisfaction are those that pertain to the kinship structure and the desire of the Filipino to be accepted ... and ... those that relate to the preservation and maintenance of the group structure. Another value that appears to explain the findings is the Filipino's tendency to maintain harmony in interpersonal relationships, thereby preserving friendship in personal, and even official, interactions. (Marzan, 1984, p. 91).

A cross-cultural survey of need-importance and need-fulfilment was conducted by Oltramare (1986) among managers in the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Comparisons indicated that Philippine nationals (irrespective of ethnic origins) gave esteem needs and social needs more importance than was the case among the other nationalities. Furthermore, the Filipino managers expressed the highest degree of fulfillment of social needs.

Exploring the transferability of Japanese management practices, Tomita (1983) investigated the attitudes of Filipino employees of Japanese-affiliated companies. Although the middle managers expressed high appreciation for "good teamwork spirit", their "sense of belonging ... is only limited, as a rule, to the scope of their job responsibility" (p. 75-76). Unlike the Japanese who had "the idea that both corporation and employees were unified in a sense of mutual trust", the Filipinos "insisted that having a job did not mean being involved in the company" (p. 75-76).

The findings of the cited studies revealed that the Filipino sense of collective identity in organisations is separate from the formal structure. That is, the sense of belongingness so important to the Filipino worker occurs in informal, fluid, and personal networks within the larger organisational system. In her study of a sugar-manufacturing complex, Dungo (1969) described the presence of informal groups as beneficial to the formal organisations:

> The more formal structures, however, does not in itself thrive sufficiently to maintain the organisation even with the conscious direction of activities toward the fulfillment of organisational goals. A further meaningful organisation finds expression in its more informal patterns of collective behavior. It is within the network of personal and intimate social relations that binding ties develop to strengthen and reinforce the formal organization. The familiarity that results from this type of social relations brings about more effective working relations if directed appropriately to the goals of the organization. (p. 36).

The Filipino is neither an individualist as is the American, nor a universalist as is the Japanese. The homogeneity of Japanese society has instilled a collectivism in which the family, the corporation, and the nation are one and the same. The consequence of such "unlimited acceptance of responsibility" (Tomita, 1983) is that the Japanese collective identity is impersonal and abstract, easily aligned with formal social structures. Within a particular organisation, the total social system is perceived to be a single entity. With the absence of informal networks, factionalism and ingroup-outgroup differentiations are rarely observed in such highly cohesive structures. As such, it is contended here that social categorisation is not a relevant mechanism to explain collective interaction in Japanese organisations.

Lynch proposed the construct of segmentation to describe the process by which "the social world is divided by various criteria into ... mutually exclusive segments (Lynch, 1970, p. 18). The formation of strongly loyal ingroups among Filipinos is accompanied by "a distance from others not belonging to ... (the) circle of intimates" (Bulatao, 1963, p. 177). Hollnsteiner (1981, p. 330) concluded that "the Philippine society is intensely segmented, very ingroup conscious, and very outgroup rejecting". In Silos's (1985) view, *pakikisama* can either refer to

kami as "us without you", or to *tayo,* as "us with you".

> The ingroup, of which the nuclear family is the core, is characterized by familiarity and ease in one another's presence. In effect, one's guard is down in the knowledge that he can be himself and not bother to adopt the over-solicitous attitude and euphamistic language characterizing relationships with outgroup members. The term "tayo-tayo lamang" ("just as") is used to refer to this primary group. This difference in feeling and behavior toward those who are close and those who are not, illustrate a more general social valuation in the Philippines, the keen consciousness of the near, and the diffuse awareness and the disregard for the far. (Hollnsteiner, 1970, p. 73).

From the kinship orientation of his value system, the Filipino derives a sense of belongingness that is a form of *particularism,* or small-group centredness (Andres, 1981, 1985; Silos, 1985, 1986). That is, collective identity is restricted to a small, cohesive ingroup of intimates. Consequently within a particular organisation, there exists a proliferation of ingroup-outgroup boundaries. Factionalism, *barkada* (ingroup) rivalry, and intergroup differentiations are prevalent within the formal system. Hence it is proposed here that in Filipino organisations which are characteristically "segmented" (Lynch, 1970), social categorisation is a *critical* mechanism.

MANAGEMENT THROUGH INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Ensuing from the value for authority inherent in the Filipino's kinship orientation (Bulatao, 1970), the indigenous management style is paternalistic. Surveys done in four large hospitals in Metro Manila in verified that the prevalent management practices are characteristically authoritative-benevolent (Tan, D., 1981; Tan, E., 1981; Silao, 1981; Villanueva, 1981). Hofstede (1980, 1984) verified that there is a large power distance in the Philippine culture, but explained that subordinate dependence on "a paternalistic superior who respects the norms of his or her society" does not lead to the abuse of power (1984, p. 90).

In large power-distance societies, decision-making is centralised and the hierarchy is reflected in visible status differences (Hofstede, 1980). Participation in a decision-making group with superiors, peers, and subordinates was the focus of a study conducted by de Leon (1976) on the Philippine advertising industry. The findings showed that the perceived extent of participation correlated with the degree of perceived influence, and the predictive variable of influence was perceived status in the decision-making group. The managers evaluated their influence as equal to that of superiors participating in the group, and as larger to that of peers. The implication of these observations is that decentralisation of decision-making in a culture with large power distance was interpreted by the Filipino manager *not* as a reduction of authoritarianism, but as his sharing of legitimate authority.

In Hofstede's view, large power distance in collectivist cultures adds a "moral component" to the employer-employee relationship. "It is felt to be similar to the relationship of a child with its extended family where there are mutual traditional obligations" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 87). Silos (1985) stated that if authority is acceptable to the subordinates in Filipino organisations, it is because "in exchange for filial loyalty, they expect paternal care" (p. 10). It is therefore apparent that benevolent authoritarianism will characterise Filipino management style for as long as management is conceived to be influence directed at individuals.

Nonetheless the salience of collective identity and the operation of social categorisation in Philippine organisations present the possibility for an indigenous management style that seeks influence of *small groups.* "Management is symbolic activity . . . managers influence . . . through wielding symbols that have meaning for these persons and motivate them towards the desired actions" (Hofstede, 1984, p. 82). Considering the collectivist values of the Filipino, management through intergroup relations could derive its effectiveness from an

EXHIBIT 1

A Proposed Model of Management Through Intergroup Relations In Philippine Organisations
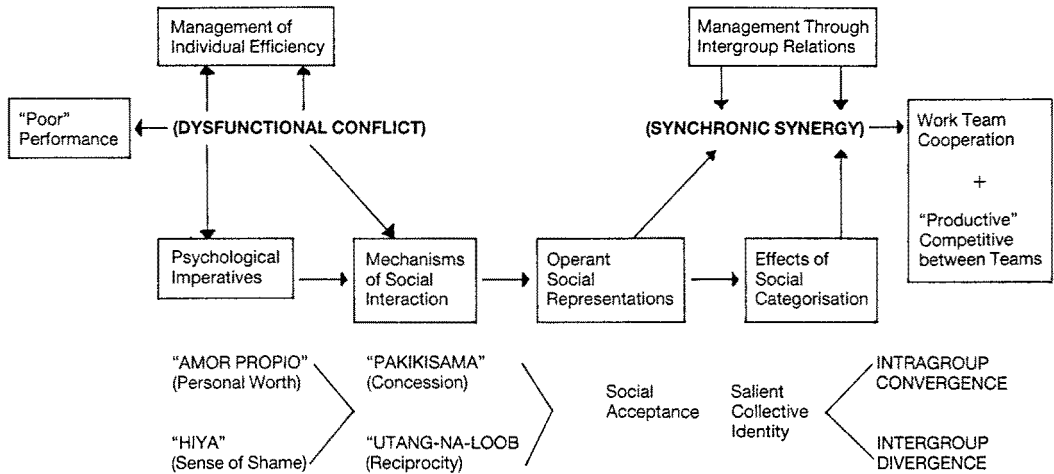
understanding of the social categorisation process, as shown in FIGURE 1. Specifically, an indigenous style of management would attempt to elicit cooperation through the naturally occurring intragroup convergence within work teams, and to motivate efficiency and productivity through the competition arising from inevitable intergroup divergence effects.

As presented in the proposed model (EXHIBIT 1), the Filipino value system sets the psychological imperatives of *amor propio* and *hiya* which encourage *pakikisama* and *utang-na-loob* as the preferred mechanisms of social interaction. Western-type management styles which emphasise individual efficiency may possibly explain the "poor performance" of Filipino employees as an effect of the "dysfunctional conflict" of such management tactics with the aforementioned values. The fundamental argument here is that the psychological imperatives and mechanisms of social interaction ensue in the operant social representations of social acceptance and salient collective identity, which initiates the process of social categorisation in Philippine organisations. The main contention of the model is that management through intergroup relations attempts to achieve "synchronic synergy" with the social categorisation effects of intragroup convergence and intergroup divergence, so as to encourage cooperation within work-teams and "productive" competition between groups.

By emphasising the collective identities of work-teams, management through intergroup relations will de-individuate performance, and hence will separate performance appraisal (by groups) from negative implications on the individual's *amor propio* and *hiya*. Furthermore the strengthening of *pakikisama* and *utang-na-loob* through collective activity should enhance intragroup convergence effects and further cooperation. Such a management style is a modern application of the traditional *bayanihan* system of reciprocal assistance which should ensure effective functioning of organisations.

> Because it has negative connotations, one might too easily conclude that *pakikisama* is one of those behavioral patterns that we have to unlearn and substitute with more Western "professionalism". And yet *pakikisama* is a very fundamental value in Philippine society; in fact, it is an expression of what I have called the Asian orientation. The change must therefore be not substitution but integration. (Silos, 1986, p. 7).

Hollnsteiner (1965) proposed that Philippine organisations could increase efficiency by "farming out" unique and separate projects so as to keep inter-group competition to a minimum. However Baldwin (1975) took the view that friendly competition can be effectively utilised to motivate, as long as it was group-oriented:

> Individual competition is not as effective, since it runs counter to the need for social security and social acceptance. Group competition lessens the individual's exposure and makes use of the need for affiliation. Competition can generate renewed interests and imitation by the employees working towards management's objectives. (p. 65)

Survey findings reported by Andres (1985) showed that Filipinos working together in groups produced higher morale, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover. Such positive consequences may be due to intragroup convergence effects in which "competence and responsibility for tasks to be performed, roles to be filled, and goals to be achieved are perceived . . . (in the) communal context and not the other way around (Silos, 1985, p. 5). As Ordonez (1982) pointed out, "the camaraderie built up by belonging to a group is a natural source of motivating employees" in the Philippines (p. 9).

Andres (1985) suggested that Filipino management formalise the informal social network found in organisations. He proposed that friends should be assigned to work teams, jobs be rotated within the group to strengthen identification, trans-fers out of the group minimised, and group rewards given. It is proposed here that in the Philippines, organisational effectiveness may require management through intergroup relations, which would use the formation of work teams as a facility tactic. The structural implication is that a fluid organisation may occur, which arises from the voluntary formation of work team. The elements of the organisation would be similar in nature and function to the self-contained, semi-autonomous social units found in Norway and Sweden.

An argument against the effectiveness of work team formation is the potential dysfunctional effects of enhanced involvement with an ingroup, to the detriment of loyalty to the organisation as a whole. In a study of Swedish subsidiaries in Malaysia, Selmer and Nilson (1984) reported that the inclusion of informal social networks into the corporate structure (through recruitment of friends on a personal basis) rendered formidable power to certain officers, beyond formal authority. However it is the contention here that the extension of the highly per-sonal Filipino social networks to organisations would occur on its own accord and momentum, despite active efforts of management to prevent their occur-rence. Therefore, without intending to present a facile counter-argument, there seems to be no viable alternative short of widespread change of Filipino values, but to harness and make full use of such phenomena as a tactic of effective management.

Drawing an example of viability from the Scandinavian model of work team organisation is undeniably a tentative conclusion, to be further discussed and investigated at a later stage. It may be argued that the success of work teams in Norwegian and Swedish cultures which are characterised by high individualism and small power distance (Hofstede, 1980, 1984) may not be as easily achieved in the Philippines where the culture is characterised by high collectivism and large power distance (Hofstede, 1980, 1984). Furthermore, Forss, Hawk and Hedlund (1984, p. 28) presented evidence contrary to Hofstede's findings, con-cluding that individualism "is not a value which is explicitly recognizable among the patterns of behavior described" in Swedish organisations. As the "collectivist tendency in Swedish society" (Forss, Hawk and Hedlund, 1984, p. 28) may account for the success of work team organisation, it is quite possible that the formation of semi-autonomous, self-contained work groups in Philippine organi-sations may draw its effectiveness from the collectivism arising from traditional kinship systems. As discussed earlier, management by intergroup relations may

decrease the benevolent-authoritarian nature of Filipino power relations through de-individuation and increased collective power of the subordinate work team. The formation of work teams could conceivably reduce the power distance between management and individual employee.

CONCLUSION

The discussion has tried to show that an indigenous style of Filipino management is viable, if not imperative. The intent was to stress that deep-rooted collectivist values, based on a kinship orientation, predisposes the Filipino to cultivate salient collective identities. Hence social categorisation was identified to be a critical mechanism of the Filipino's organisational behavior. Management through intergroup relations therefore relies on the intragroup convergence and intergroup divergence effects to enhance organisational effectiveness.

As an initial exploration into the matter, the propositions presented here were based on general assumptions liberally borrowed from the social psychological theory of social categorisation as the central process in intergroup relations (Doise, 1978; Tajfel, 1981, 1982, 1984a, 1984b). It is apparent that the conceptual analysis needs further elaboration, through a comprehensive theoretical framework. Essential to the endeavour would be the formulation of hypotheses for empirical validation on the mechanisms and effects of intragroup convergence and intergroup divergence, in relation to collectivist values. A related investigation would be on the development and nature of collective identities in work organisations, delving particularly into social representations of social acceptance which provide the ideological base for group formation (de Leon, 1983),

> For the time being let us say that in some Asian . . . countries, the individual feels mentally connected to others in the group, works with others without rigid division of labor and with flexible unwritten adaptability to changing situations, and feels responsible for the success or failure of the entire group. (Maruyama, 1984, p. 103).

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