In Mysterious Ways

A study about the influences of narratives on peoples perception of their social environment

Meyke van de Bos 3012131

*"Lightning laced the sky with fire. The earth wailed in the painful, joyous sound of new life. The ground shuddered, the seas raged.The churning waters parted and from the ocean's womb was birthed an island of rock and fire. Thus did, according to legend, the island of Siquijor emerge from the sea."**

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INTRODUCTION

"One day in (June), when all students of Enrique Villanueva highschool were in class, something happened that changed the normal routine of other schooldays for many students, teachers, police officers and other inhabitants of the village at the east coast of Siquijor. According to the newspaper 'the Siquijor mirror', it was a normal school day until several students started to collapse and faint. Would this have happened in any other place in the Philippines, the teachers would probably have called the hospital or an ambulance, but not in Siquijor. The police was called, not to report a crime, but to assist the students to the nearest catholic church. There was no question whatsoever about the cause of the sudden suffering of the students: ancient spirits had once more possessed the bodies of students in Siquijor. In order to make the ancient spirits leave the bodies, the help of Father Albas was needed. Father Albas is not only the local priest, but is also a well known and appreciated manambal[1] (healer) in Siquijor. With candles, praying, healing incantations and a special mass, all students were finally able to go home safely and healthy."

(compilation of multiple interviews with Siquijodnon[2] between February and April 2009)

Siquijor, one of the many provinces of the Philippines, is known for its healers and magicians that shape and color the social environment of the Island. For some of us, especially tourists that come from far away and are not used to this kind of mystic presence in their social reality, this is appealing and forms an excitement that other places do not offer. For others, however, this presence is part of a social imaginary that surrounds the island and, as I will argue, leads to a process of social exclusion that cannot easily be undone. With 'others' I refer to the people of the Philippines that live 'safely' on other islands of the archipelago. In this thesis, I'll try to show the ways in which social imaginaries are formed and shaped by narratives and finally, not only reflect a perceived social reality but also construct that social reality.

The story at the beginning of this introduction, which is a compilation of many stories people told me about this 'event', is one of the many ways in which the Siquijodnon have incorporated their Catholic religion into the more traditional beliefs that the island is known for in the rest of the Philippines. Besides the healers and ancient spirits, mentioned in this story, the island is also known for its *mambabárang*[3] (bad-healers or magicians) and other creatures with supernatural powers. Rather than replacing old beliefs regarding healing and sorcery with contemporary Catholicism, Siquijor is a place in which these two ideas blended in order to be able to cope with the challenges that the modern world presents to them (cf. Junker in Mascunana & Mascunana 2004). One of these challenges is the experienced social exclusion from the rest of the Philippines.

So far, anthropologists have mainly focused on the ways witches, magicians and witchcraft have been perceived as a threat within society (e.g. Douglas 1970, Stewart and Strathern 2004). One of the aims of this thesis is to to put the manambal and mambabárang in a different light. Besides highlighting the ways in which they create fear, this thesis will focus on the ways they form a constructive 'characteristic' of the island, of Siquijor, as well. Theories about them, therefore, need to be complemented with the ways in which they can support community cohesion or, as Mascunana & Mascunana (2004) put it, help to cope with challenges presented to the community. By focusing on narratives regarding the island and the folk-healers and sorcerers that inhabit Siquijor, this thesis tries to shed light on the ways the inhabitants of Siquijor perceive their own island and their place within a wider social scope – whether this is their social recognition within the Philippine nation-state or their economical importance in a shrinking world.

This scope is enlarging due to globalisation processes. Ritchie once said that: "the horizons of islanders are limited and fixed" (1977), but that is rapidly changing with new technological improvements. The study of contemporary anthropology has been occupied with 'global forces' that change the situation and perception of people everywhere around the world (e.g. Appadurai 1996, Harvey 1989, Giddens 1990). Tsing (2008), among others, emphasizes the importance of analysing the effects of these global forces on people's daily lives. The aim of this thesis is to do so by focusing on the way globalisation processes influence Siquijodnon's perceptions of themselves and others. How do they identify and categorise themselves and others? In other words: what is the link between global forces and local life?

To do this, this thesis uses a relational approach towards the concept identity. People and groups of people identify themselves in relation to others. O'Rourke rightfully argues that, "the acceptance of coincidence of co-residence, common interests, and groupness, needs to be problematised" (2006, 2). Co-residency does not automatically imply that people feel they belong to the same group or the same community. Therefore, this thesis uses the four prerequisites that O'Rourke describes, which a group of people must have in order to be able to talk of a community.

Research question

The question that was formulated and that this thesis will try to answer is: *How do narratives about manambal, mambabárang and other creatures on Siquijor influence inhabtitants' imaginations of their social environment?* Narratives have been topic of debate in various academic disciplines. Despite the fact that the definitions of narratives are often notoriously contested (Wertsch, 2008: 120), it is important to mention the ways narratives have been addressed within the field and this thesis. The word "narrative stems from the Latin word 'narratio', which means: telling the tale" (Abma, 1999: 10). For this research, I have narrowed down narratives to orally transmitted tales[4]. Narratives are of importance because they reflect people's imaginaries (Taylor, 2002). In order to answer the research question, a distinction has been made between different forms of narratives. On the one hand there are myths and urban legends, on the other, I distinguish rumor and gossip. This distinction has been made because different forms of narratives can fulfill a different role within a community.

Academic relevance

The academic relevance of this thesis is two fold. First of all, as Tsing (2008) noticed, it is important to look more closely at the ways in which globalisation processes influences people's daily lives. In addition, this thesis is written with the intention to further elaborate on the ways in which narratives are used within regions that become more closely linked with each other thanks to these processes. This means: the region of Siquijor itself and, besides that, Siquijor within a wider region, the nation-state and to a lesser extend the world as a whole.

Positioning as a researcher

Before I will elaborate on the research methods that have been used during the fieldwork period, a period that began at the end of January and lasted until the end of May, I would like to elaborate on my own place as a researcher within this thesis: the way I position myself within this role and the way I looked at, and interpreted the information gathered during the fieldwork period. Following Clifford Geertz (1973), I used an interpretative approach during the gathering and analysing of the information. According to him: "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in research of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (Geertz, 1973: 5).

The next couple of chapters provide an extensive description on the social imaginaries of Siquijodnon. To give this description is a method to interpret how Siquijodnon are situated within the 'web'. It is this detailed description, rather than empirical generalisation, that can give a deeper understanding of the ways Siquijodnon see themselves and identify themselves (in opposition to others). Yanow (1996) reminds us of the fact that 'meaning' is not something essential and rigid. According to her: "An interpretative approach of the human, or social world shifts the focus from discovering a set of universal laws of objective, sense-based facts to human capacity for making and communicating meaning" (Yanow, 1996: 5). In other words: meaning is communicated and created. Something that, within this thesis, will be shown by the analysis of narratives. Narratives that, as chapters two and three will show, not only reflect meaning but also create meaning. In this regard, it is important to remember that people are never completely free in doing this. Even though people have and employ agency, this is always curtailed by structures (Giddens, 1979).

In order to give a description of the way Siquijodnon imagine their social environment, it is important to reflect on my role in the field. I think it is fair to say that I, as a researcher and as a non-Siquijodnon, was present on the island. With present, I mean that my presence was felt and noticed by the inhabitants of Siquijor. This presence influenced the ways people acted and reacted around me. This showed, for example, in the ways Siquijodnon talked about themselves and the island. During the first couple of weeks, only positive characteristics of the island were addressed in conversations and interviews. This changed gradually over the period of my stay on the island, with finally one social situation that fortunately provided me with a 'ticket' into the gossip and rumor networks on the island. This social situation was directly related to me and a friend of mine that came to visit me. Because I didn't feel comfortable with the presence of this friend in the field, something that was noticed by some of the Siquijodnon close to me, I was able to enter the gossip and rumor networks. In the first place the conversations were mainly focused on the presence of foreign tourists but later also on other things that concerned them all.

This change in the way Siquijodnon approached me is an example of the ways in which information, in the form of narratives, is provided situationally. This depends on the people involved and there 'place' within the community. This brings me to a next topic that needs to be mentioned here. The information that was gathered that related to the mambabárang and manambal was often inconsistent. What one manambal told me was rejected by the next one. What is interesting here is that this bothered me in the beginning because I was looking for one consistent whole. Froilyn on the other hand, my translator, was not bothered by this at all. According to her: we are not able or aloud to know and understand these things. The fact that some of the information I gathered in the field does not correspond to the information other people gathered can be explained by this.

Research methods and research population

Now we have established that this thesis is build on a interpretative approach in search of meaning, I will now turn to the research methods that have been used. In order to be able to give an extensive description of the social imaginaries Siquijodnon have, I used various qualitative research methods. To use multiple methods is called data-triangulation. It serves the purpose that different methods can supplement each other and, besides that, can serve as a control mechanism on the validity of the information gathered by other methods. Especially the participant observation and the informal conversations have been useful during the research. Participant observation was used in public places like the market, cock-fight arena's and the disco's that were held every Friday evening in various barangay's[5]. Besides the data that was retrieved from this research method, it helped me to make contact with some of the inhabitants of the island. During the participant observation, informal conversations took place. These conversations often formed a stepping stone for informal conversations.

During the beginning of the fieldwork period I tried to make appointments for semi-structured interviews with various people. Quickly after I held the first interviews, it appeared to me that that was not the most useful and appropriate way to retrieve information. In addition to the fact that the informants didn't really seem to know what I expected from them, they were often trying to give the 'correct' answer to a question, rather than their view on things or the way they experience things. Therefore, I decided to depend more on informal conversations. Meaning, in this case, conversations without voice recordings or writing down detailed descriptions of questions and answers. The informal conversation, therefore, became a place, a situation in which people could narrate their own story. This has one big advantage over other qualitative research methods: "it gives people the opportunity to express their feelings within a dialogue" (Ghorashi, 2003: 16). Besides that, Nordstrom states that: "When the truth is too dangerous to tell, people don't stop talking. Instead, they shape truth into stories" (2004: 143). Something that was relevant on Siquijor when conversation topics related to the *mambabárang* and his or her practices. Informal conversations in this case helped to retrieve the ways Siquijodnon 'shape' the truth. As Bruner states, the narrator has the power to shape representations, a narrative is therefore not a "transparent window on reality, [but] a cookie cutter imposing a shape on it" (2002: 6-7).

By keeping record of the topics that were covered during the conversations back at the 'desk', I was able to cover things that didn't come up in previous conversations the next time. The normal day routine in the field normally involved appointments, conversations and/ or participant observation in the morning, and desk activities in the afternoon in order not to loose the information retrieved during the day. I wrote down the most important information and tried to quote some of the specific and interesting things people told me. In addition, semi-structured interviews were held with some of the people that I was more familiar with. In a few cases, expert-interviews were held with people that work in the public/political sector. Almost all the informants that helped this research came from two out of the six districts of Siquijor: Larena and Enrique district[6].

Besides the people I met during the participant observation, I came in contact with some of the informants thanks to an introduction of a Dutch women that lives on Siquijor and is involved in volunteer work. These were often introductions to people living in *barangay's* that had a member of the family with a physical disorder or a disease because that was the line of work she was involved in. Besides that, I had some contacts on the island before I arrived that were introduced to me via Facebook[7]. After these first introductions, a snowball effect allowed me to get to know more people. In addition to these Siquijodnon, twelve *manambal* showed their support during the fieldwork period. With some of them I held interviews, with others this support existed of participant observation during healing sessions and informal conversations.

As a result of the interviews I held during the first weeks of the research, interviews that did not provide valid data because people gave socially acceptable and desirable answers, I hired a translator. From that moment on, Froilyn -the translator-, joined me on almost all the appointments I had with informants and on the various trips to the mountains to visit *manambal*. For obvious reasons, needing a translator forms an obstacle to the validity of the data retrieved. You get the information not from first, but from second hand. It, however, also gave me a better insight in some of the social situations that we were involved in during our trips because Froilyn was able to explain certain things. Besides that, it was often interesting to see how a Siquijodnon experiences the different healing sessions and rituals from *manambal*.

Outline of this thesis
The first chapter gives an introduction on the island and its inhabitants, thereby starting to analyse the imaginaries of Siquijodnon with regards to their own island. In the second chapter, myth and urban legend will be discussed and analysed. The focus in this regard will be on the way we need to interpret them but, in the same time, the focus will also be on how myth and urban legends influence the social imaginaries Siquijodnon have about themselves and the island. In the chapter that follows, not only O'Rourke's (2006) prerequisites will be discussed, but the focus will be on the role of rumor and gossip within a community as well. Chapter four will then turn to the relation of Siquijodnon with other Filipino's. In the last chapter, a summary of this thesis is provided. Besides that, the consequences for some of the theories that have been used will be discussed.

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1. See the glossary for an extensive description on the various Cebuano words that are used in this thesis.
2. Siquijodnon is what the inhabitants of Siquijor call themselves.
3. See the glossary for an extensive description on the various Cebuano words that are used in this thesis.
4. In other studies, narratives are often addressed as being present in written language, images and gestures as well.
5. See the glossary for an extensive description on the various Cebuano words that are used in this thesis.
6. See pages 14-15 for a map of the island and the various people that provided their help during the research period.
7. A medium on the Internet that allows 'friends' or people involved in the same organisation or interests to communicate with each other. It is therefore also a medium to meet people.

Ayan is a mother of three boys. Ayan lives with her husband and her children in Sandugan. She was born in Nunoc but decided to move after a family dispute. Ayan works as a maseuse. Ayan had some bad encounters with mambabárang over the last few years. Luckily for her and her family, her uncle is a manambal and she knows a few other manambal that always manage to heal her or her family members.

Ifi and her boyfriend adopted her cousin. She is in charge of Islander's Paradise Beach Resort. Ifi is one of the few protestant people on the island. She says she doesn't believe in anything else than God but admits to being careful around people from the mountains. Since her boyfriend tried to cut a tree and broke his arm, she decided to leave the tree, and the black giant that lives there, alone.

Robert came to Siquijor because he married a Siquijodnon, they have two daughters. Robert is a tricycle driver. Robert sees white ladies when he is working late at night and he is all alone on the road. He used to be very scared of them, but since he met so many manambal during the research, he is now convinced white ladies have a good nature. No need to be afraid.

Eden is a single, 23 year old woman. She was born on Negros but grew up with her grandparents in San Juan. She works at Kiwi resort. She likes her job because it allows her to meet people from different countries and learn about the world. Eden only works in places of which she is certain that no other (supernatural) creatures live. She likes to freak her colleagues out by pretending to be a white lady or a spirit.

Siquijor

Cang Agong

Municipality of Siquijor

San Antonio

Ponong

San Juan

Cang Asa

Municipality of San Juan
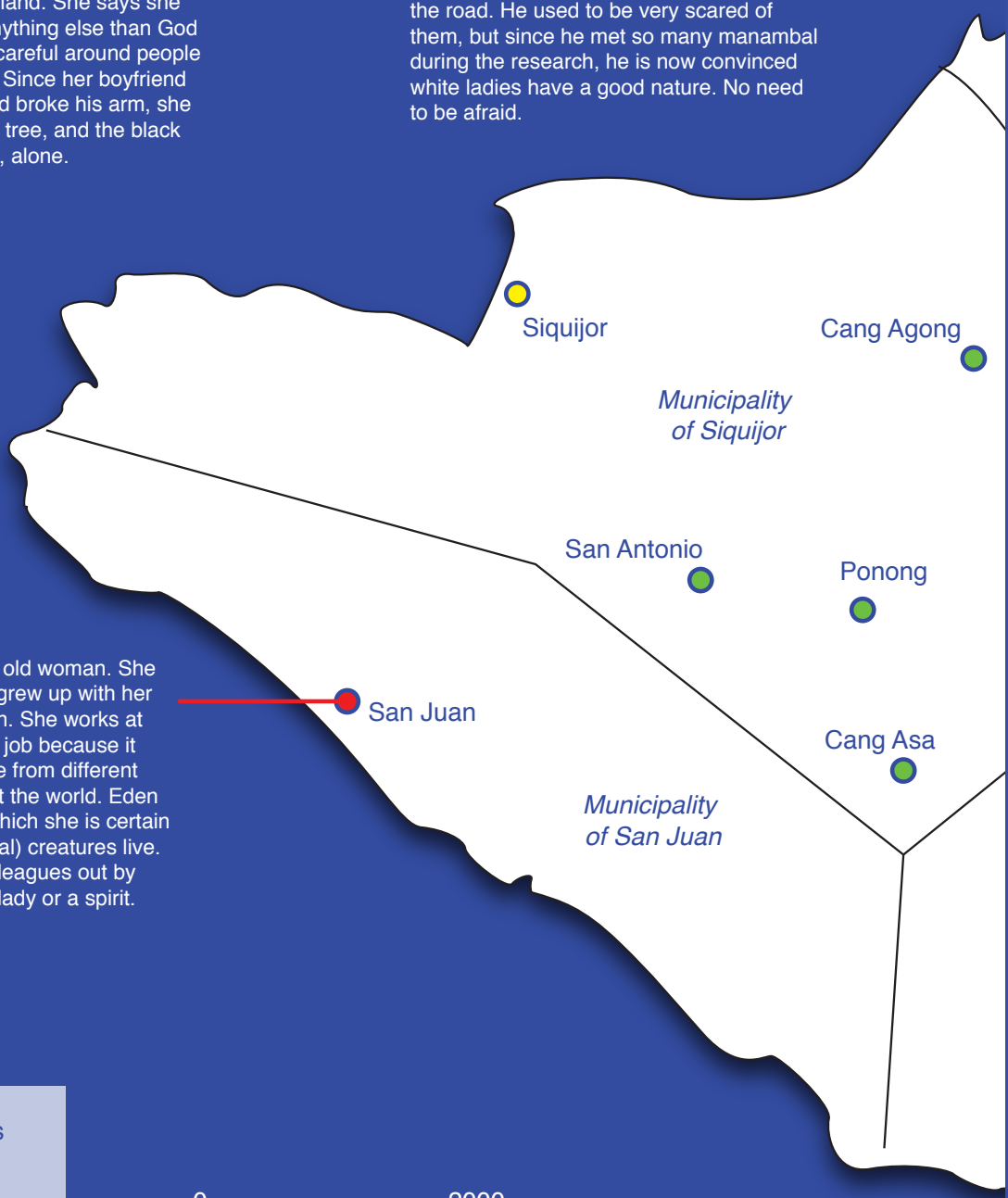
Informants

Towns

Manambal

0   2000

Sandugan

Bitaug

Tulapos

Enrique Villanueva

Helen

Larena

Municipality of E.V.

Municipality of Larena

Maria

Municipality of Lazi

Municipality of Maria

Lazi
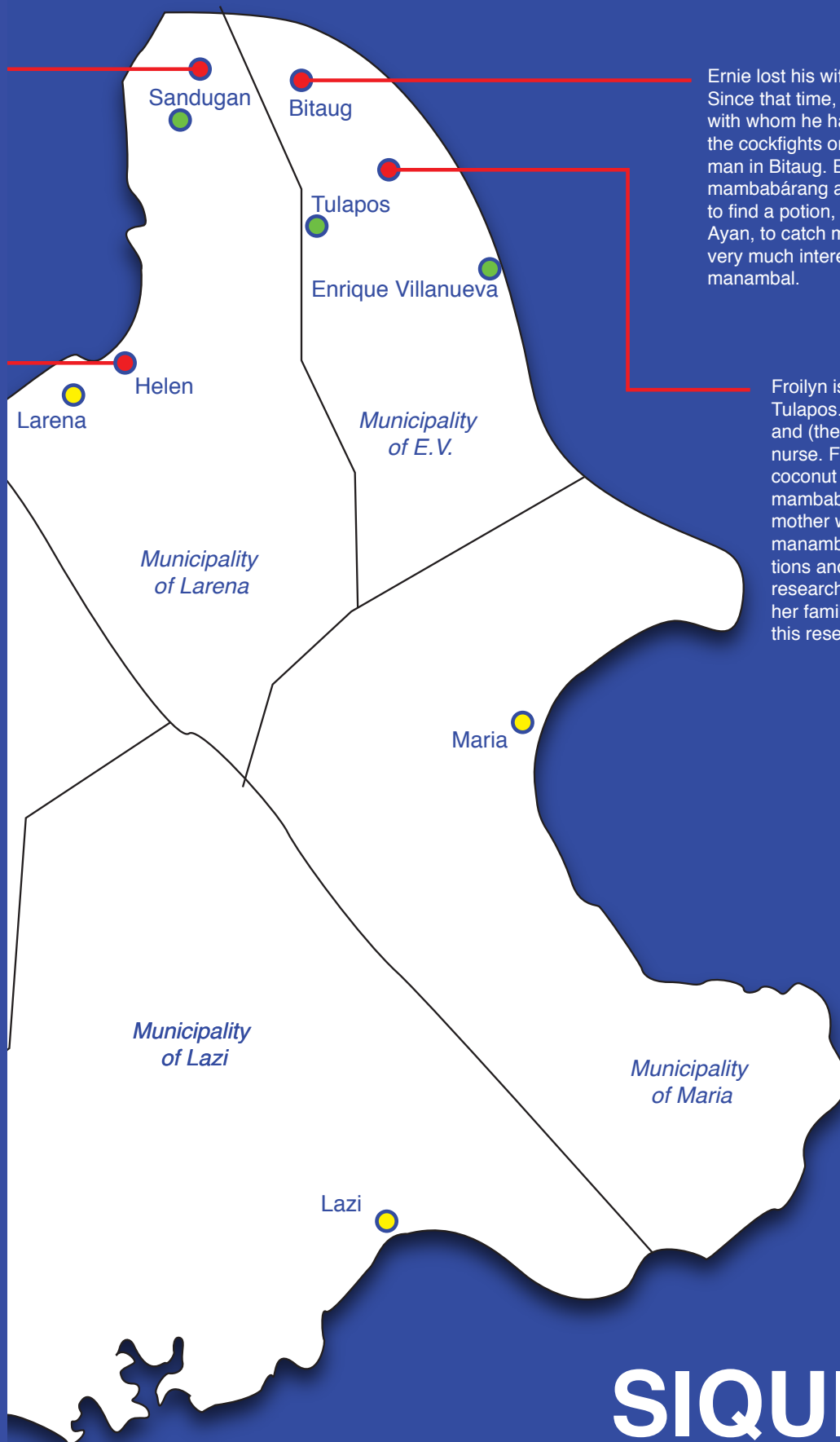
Ernie lost his wife a couple of years ago. Since that time, he has a 'live in' with Ayda with whom he has a daughter. Ernie likes the cockfights on Sundays and is a fisherman in Bitaug. Ernie is always joking about mambabárang and white ladies. He hopes to find a potion, just like the husband of Ayan, to catch more fish in the future. He is very much interested in the 'magic' of the manambal.

Froilyn is sixteen years old, lives in Tulapos. She recently lost her mother and (therefore) wants to become a nurse. Froilyn always carries around coconut oil as protection against mambabárang. Especially when her mother was sick they visited a lot of manambal. Through all the conversations and interviews we had during the research she learnt to protect herself and her family. Froilyn was the translator for this research.

SIQUIJOR

Locations of Manambal and Informants Important to this Thesis

1. SOCIAL IMAGINARIES: SIQUIJOR AND ITS INHABITANTS

"Smoking out bad spirits often helps. Once, when the brother of my wife was sick, I took him up to Juan Ponze [a famous manambal]. You know, he lives in San Antonio. They can feel your pulse and if you're possessed by spirits they can smoke them out with special smoke. Vicinte is also a really good healer. When you're sick he can help you. I heard he helped a girl that had an accident with a stapler but he can also help with snakebites. He can do all sorts of things."

(Robert, 15-02-2009)

Siquijor is a one of the islands of the Philippines which counts a little over 7.000 islands. Siquijor has approximately 80.000 inhabitants and forms one of the 'medium' populated islands within the Philippine archipelago. On January 8, 1972, Siquijor gained independence as a province. Something that, according to Dumont, was of little significance to the 'rural masses', but of great importance to the islands bourgeoisie (1995: 6). The independence put the bourgeoisie in a position in which they would, ideally, be on the same level as other bourgeoisie in the country. Nonetheless, this is not the case, "they were still deprived of any national clout as they controlled so little wealth" (Dumont, 1995: 5). Despite this absence of recognition of the island in economic or political terms, Siquijor is known in the entire nation for its many *manambal* and *mambabárang*. In this chapter, the focus lies with Siquijor island itself, later on, the focus will also be on Siquijor's place within the rest of the nation-state.

Stories about *manambal* and *mambabárang* are told all around Siquijor island. Everybody knows a *manambal* and I haven't met anybody who did not have encounters with *manambal*. This chapter focuses on the social imaginaries regarding the island and its 'special' inhabitants, an imaginary that is often expressed in the form of stories. Taylor (2002) defines the concept of the social imaginary as "the ways in which people imagine their social coexistence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (2002:106). To analyse this social imaginary, this chapter will give an overview of the everyday practices of the healers on the island. In the next chapter, this thesis will continue with the narratives that people on the island share. These two chapters will argue that the practices and beliefs of the manambal – and other things related to this social imaginary – have proved to be able to adjust to new social realities, giving the inhabitants of Siquijor the means to cope with contemporary problems.

1.1 Everyday Practice

"We have two kinds of doctors on this island: the ones in the hospital and the kwakdoctors." This is what Charles said to me, followed by a big smile, during a birthday party[8]. The fact that Charles, and others, sometimes call the *manambal* of Siquijor kwakdoctors reflects the way in which Siquijodnon often make a distinction between that which is perceived to be traditional (kwakdoctors) and what is perceived to be (more) modern, in this case 'real' doctors in a hospital. The modern way of living and modern worldviews (as for example modern science) did not replace the ritual practices and beliefs on Siquijor. As Mascunana and Mascunana shortly mention in their book: "these rituals and beliefs are not an equivalent of pre-Christian times, doomed to eventual displacement by modern Filipino culture" (2004). Modern medicine and contemporary Catholicism on the

one hand, and ritual practices and believes on the other hand, are now best described as complementary to one another, forming a social imaginary that addresses how the inhabitants view themselves and the island they live on.

Manambal and *mambabárang* colour the social environment of Siquijor island. The biggest difference between the *manambal* and the *mambabárang* is that the former is associated with good, occult powers while the latter, the *mambabárang*, inspires fear and distrust because of his malign powers. An elucidation for this distinction can be found in the practices of both, but also in the way they have acquired their powers. But, let's first elaborate on the things they have in common. The *manambal* and the *mambabárang* can both heal, they can both cure 'natural' illnesses and harm caused to a victim by supernatural phenomena. Besides this, both individuals acquired their 'gift' similarly because it has been granted to them by a supernatural power. Mary Douglas (1970) makes a distinction between witchcraft and sorcery. She calls the expression of malign power in someone's body witchcraft, while the knowledge and use of magical craft is called sorcery. On Siquijor, the *manambal* and *mambabárang*, once they acquired their gift, can do both.

This brings us to the distinction between the both. The *manambal* is granted with occult power and the knowledge to heal with the mediation of a saint. I call it here a 'gift' but the *manambal* themselves often refer to it as a sacrifice. This can be explained by the fact that they, from the moment somebody accepts the gift, has a task appointed to them for life. The task to heal the members of the community. Other than for doctors in a hospital, this is not their profession, it is not their job and they do not get paid to do so; it is their duty.

"I was once sitting on the beach. In the distance I saw a light, floating above the sea. I didn't know what it was so I looked closer, when the light came more towards shore I could see that it was saint Lourdes. Back at home I found that my statue of Saint Lourdes was lying on my bed [normally it stands on the altar] so I put it back on the altar. I had a dream about saint Lourdes [that night], the saint wanted me to heal the people. The next day it happened again. I was really scared because I don't know how to heal and I have a job, so I threw the statue of saint Lourdes in the fire outside. When I went back to bed another dream came. I saw the saint in the fire, Lourdes asked me to take the statue out of the fire because it was getting too hot. I didn't want to in the beginning but started to feel really bad that I threw the statue of a saint in the fire. So I took it out of the fire. From that moment on, I can heal. The saint talks to me every night and tells me what to do when I don't know."

(Lisa, 18-02-2009)

The *mambabárang* is granted the gift as well. In this case, however, the malign power and knowledge are not granted by a saint but by a spirit[9]. Spirits are normally beings that are believed to be old inhabitants of Siquijor island, who still dwell on earth, as they either didn't lead a catholic life or that they didn't get a proper catholic funeral. They therefore cannot find the peace to move on to an after-life[10]. Spirits are thus associated with unchristianity. They have the power to grant somebody the knowledge to heal and harm other people. On the island, it is believed that spirits normally choose their own descendants as the ones to do their bidding[11]. For the *mambabárang*, the supernatural connection is less of a sacrifice than their 'good' counterpart the *manambal*. This is for example the case because they are not burdened with the responsibility to take care of the community. They can therefore ask money for their services[11].

Besides this distinction between the *manambal* and the *mambabárang*, other distinctions can be made on the different forms of healing that are practiced by them. Different healers heal in different ways[12], but they all use natural ingredients in their practices and rituals. These ingredients differ between the various purposes and healers that use them, but they are all believed to be of 'special nature'. According to the *manambal* and *mambabárang* who told their stories for this research, a lot of plants and herbs grow on Siquijor that do not grow outside the island. These special plants and herbs are used in the making of potions, pastes and medicines. A shared view between the *manambal* and *mambabárang* on the nature of the island is that it is composed of good and evil qualities. These qualities are in balance and should not be disturbed (cf. Mascunana and Mascunana, 2004). For this reason, for example during holy week[13], *manambal* produce a killing potion before they create a healing potion. In this way they make sure the balance is not disturbed. Natural ingredients that are associated with the evil qualities of nature are used in the killing potion, including vegetable dyes, sea urchins and things gathered from caves[14].

Sometimes, for example in the case of the Bolo-Bolo healing, natural ingredients are used in a different way in healing practices. Bolo-Bolo healing consists of a *manambal* blowing bubbles in a glass of water with a stone in it, through a straw or a tube. It is believed that the cause of the complaint will disappear from the patients body. This is possible because the stone is believed to be of special nature.

"One of the relatives of the family of Jinelau found the stone when she was working on the land[15]. She picked the stone up because it looked different than normal, ordinary stones. She brought the stone home and a boy started playing with it. He shot it away with a catapult. The woman that found the stone on the beach while she was working, started looking for it but couldn't find it anymore. Later, when she came back home, the stone was lying on the altar [in the house][16]. The father of Jinelau then decided to use the stone for healing because it was a special stone."

(Ayan[17], 10-03-2009)

The special natural physics of Siquijor island is also believed to accommodate various supernatural beings. Stories about dwarfs, giants and 'white ladies' are part of the day-to-day talk between people. Some of them will be addressed during the next chapters.

1.2 Manambal, Mambabárang and Contemporary Life

Nothing points to the fact that Siquijodnon want to displace their 'own' culture with a more modern lifestyle. In their eyes, the two can easily go hand-in-hand. This shows for example in the case of sickness. Siquijodnon, like anybody, want to have the best care possible. They believe in modern medicine and often go to other hospitals in the country to get the best care possible. They do, however, complement this with the healing techniques on Siquijor. Ayan told me:

"I have been to Junior Tumapon [a known manambal] with my husband. Because of bárang! You know, my husband was really sick. I was afraid he was going to die. We had been to all the hospitals. First here in Siquijor, then in Dumaguete and after that in Cebu. Nobody could help him, there was no cure. And when we were in Cebu he was so sick I couldn't bring him home any more. You know, it is not safe on the sea if you are so sick. So I had to leave him in Cebu with his parents and came back alone, I was really afraid. I went to my uncle, Madaleno Anhao [another manambal on the island], he said: "Ayan I want to be honest with you". Before he didn't want that but because my husband was so sick he was going to die, he wanted to be honest. He said to me I had to bring him to another healer. He didn't say Junior Tumapon, he just said another healer. So I talked to my cousin and he said I had to go to Junior Tumapon.

The first time I went there, my husband was still in Cebu. Junior Tumapon already started healing when my husband was in Cebu and finally he got a little better and was able to come back home by himself. I didn't need to pick him up. So together we went back to Junior Tumapon and also with my uncle and cousin. And he started healing my husband. He

has a small crystal ball. And because we were all focusing, he could heal and we could see the face of the women doing bárang on my husband in the crystal ball. It was the mother in law of Henry. You know they did it because he was really jealous. My husband is a really good fisherman and other fishing man are really jealous. He can catch the squid. He learned in Cebu and people here don't know how to catch, that is why. I was really angry, I wanted to punch her, kill her. And Junior Tumapon said to me: "Ayan, you are a really good women but not always! Henry is coming to your house within three days and you have to try not to be angry!"

After three days, in the afternoon, he came. I was not home, my husband was there and he was really calm. Henry wanted to know how to catch the squid! My husband got really bad stomach ache again after that. When I came home I was really angry and I went to his mother in law that did the bárang and I told her that if she didn't stop I would kill her. I was really afraid of her so my husband came with me. You know my aunt also once got bárang from her and than her husband came to their house and brought a gun! That's why she knew I wasn't lying about killing her. She stopped and my husband showed Henry how to catch the fish. You know that is why I believe now. Before I didn't know for sure whether to believe, but now I do because I saw the face of the witch."

(Ayan, 10-03-2009)

For Ayan, the choice to go to a *manambal* was made after the hospitals couldn't cure her husband. The *manambal* filled the gap of the unknown. The hospitals embody what modern science can know. The *manambal,* on the other hand, can cure things that modern hospitals do not have an answer to. As Charles said: "We have two kinds of doctors on this island: the ones in the hospital and the kwakdoctors." For Siquijodnon, this is an asset rather than a restraint.

Another aspect of this story is the fact that apparently, *manambal* and *mambabárang* interfere with 'normal' daily routines like catching squid. Various people on the island told me that they believe the husband of Ayan used 'magic' to catch the squid[18]. It is believed that a spell, a curse, or some other kind of magic can improve the ability to do your job. The *manambal* and *mambabárang* therefore do not live and act in some kind of parallel universe but their practices are directly related to daily life. A daily life that is becoming more 'modernised' everyday. Something that is reflected upon by people in various ways. In a lot of cases, these reflections do not include a value judgment. Aunty told me that things are changing rapidly: the roads get better, something that allows people to travel more easily to the other side of the island. In addition she told me that the youth, nowadays, hangs around more on the streets, watch more television and do more karaoke than she ever did[19].

When a value judgment is added to the modernisation processes, they often involve increased opportunities for involvement with the 'outside world' or economic welfare opportunities. Eden explained that the opportunities to get Internet access improved

recently: "I really like it. Now I can keep contact with people [tourists] I meet and I can watch all the new music [videos] on the computer. But I also use it to keep contact with my boss"[20]. Another important factor that changes peoples lives is the increasing amount of tourists that the island yearly attracts. This doesn't only change the social environment of the island, but also influences the career choices and opportunities of people. As Boy reflects: "I am in my second year now [of a hotel and restaurant management education]. I really like it. I hope I can start my own hotel in the future, that makes good money"[21]. In the next chapter, we shall see that sometimes worries about modernisation processes are reflected in the form of urban legends.

In the next chapter the focus will be on myths and urban legends regarding the island. By doing this we will see that, not only do the ritual practices and believes of the *manambal* and *mambabárang* fit perfectly within contemporary times on Siquijor, but besides that, how Siquijodnon appoint and ascribe meaning to this. Later on, I will return to the (perceived) importance of modernisation for Siquijodnon.

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8. Informal conversation with Charles on 04-04-2009. All the information presented here is based on the different interviews and conversations held during the research period. It is important to notice that other authors and researchers gathered somewhat different information on this topic. Other information is, most probably, as true as the information presented here. The inconsistencies can be explained by the fact that the stories and information presented to outsiders are internally inconsistent themselves. Different *manambal* and *mambabárang* hold a different claim over the 'truth'.

9. Semi-structured interview with Magdaleno Anhao (Ayan's uncle) on 10-03-2009.

10. Informal conversation with Juan Ponze on 21-03-2009.

11. Informal conversation with Junior Tumapon on 21-03-2009.

12. Unfortunately, there is not enough space within this thesis to elaborate on all the different forms of healing and different practices that healers apply. For an extensive overview focused on the practices and habits during holy week, see: *Folk Healers and Sorcerers of Siquijor*, Mascunana and Mascunana (2004).

13. Holy week is the time of the year that the *manambal* (and *mambabárang*) refill their potion stock. They believe that making the potions during eastern gives the potions extra strength and power but some of the ingredients only magically appear during this time of the year as well.

14. Informal conversation with Juan Ponze on 21-03-2009 and participant observation during holy week (2009).

15. The area that is now 'Kiwi' resort.

16. The plot of the story was somewhat different in an article written in Filipino newspaper. It said that when the stone was shot away with the catapult, it bounced back straight on the altar in the house.

17. With corrections of Jinelau's mother while Ayan was telling the story.

18. Informal conversation with Mé and Eden in April 2009 and a semi-structured interview with Ernie on 29-03-2009.

19. Informal conversation with 'aunty' (is the name everybody calls her) in February 2009.

20. Informal conversation with Eden in February 2009.

21. Informal conversation with Boy in February 2009.

The daughter of Juan Ponze is preparing the paste, with which they smoke out bad spirits, on holy thursday in San Antonio. The ingredients that are used are, amongst others: candles from the church, earth from the graveyard, insect excrement, virgin coconut oil and extracts from various herbs and plants.

2. NARRATIVES:
MYTH AND URBAN LEGEND

In the first week of my research period I had a motorbike accident. As such, this was nothing special but it made me think about a meeting that I had with a man a couple of minutes before the fall. I was with a friend on an island discovery tour. From different conversations with Siquijodnon I heard that the mountains form the 'home' of many healers on the island so we decided to visit some of the villages that are known for their mysterious inhabitants. The trip went fine in the beginning and we met a lot of nice people. At one point, we met a man who appeared, for us, out of nowhere. He talked a little bit to us, but we couldn't understand what he was saying for it was in Cebuano, while shaking our hands. When we continued our trip, everything went wrong. All of a sudden there was a road construction which blocked our way back home. Normally this wouldn't be a big problem but we didn't have enough gasoline to take the 'safe' road back the way we came. Besides that it was getting late and the sun was already setting. We thus decided to take the 'under construction' road and ended up slipping. Once we were back home safely, I thought back to our meeting with the man in the mountains. On Siquijor it is believed that bad-healers can cause misfortune to a victim via body contact.

(fieldnotes, 06-02-2009)

The above incident showed me, as a new arrival on the island, how powerful narratives can be: they can affect one's worldview and interpretation of things. As happened with me, these stories often fuel fear, for some of them contain a warning. Narratives have to be interpreted as social constructions with a purpose within society. Now we have established what kind of healers exist and what other kind of creatures are believed to dwell on this small island, it is time to look at the ways in which the 'normal' inhabitants of Siquijor feel they relate to them. Therefore, the emphasis of this chapter will shift to the ways in which we can understand the different narratives Siquijodnon share about the supernatural phenomenon on the island, thereby analysing further the social imaginaries that Siquijodnon hold regarding themselves and the island.

In this thesis, I define narratives as orally transmitted stories. According to Abma, narrative is "making, versus finding meaning" (1999: 10). The focus will be on the way we can understand narratives and what role they play within society. Therefore, a distinction is made between myth and urban legend on the one hand, and rumour and gossip on the other. This distinction is of importance because these different forms of narratives very often serve a different purpose on the island. In theory, myth and urban legend are associated with enhancing community cohesion while rumour and gossip are associated with the negative effects they can have on a society or a community (Rozema, 2009). In chapter three the focus will be on different rumour and gossip networks on the island. Here the focus will be on myth and urban legend. It will be argued that by sharing certain stories with each other, the inhabitants of Siquijor not only feel connected, but also feel they share a special identity.

2.1 Myth

In public speech, myth is often understood as something from the past, something our predecessors used to explain things, for example natural events. We nowadays know these stories did not represent reality alone. In common parlance, therefore, the word has a somewhat negative connotation, as an invention or fabrication in the past that was accepted to be true even though we now know it was not. The Oxford dictionary (2000, Advanced Learner's) holds a similar, two-fold, definition of the concept: As "a story from ancient times to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people" and as "something that people may believe in but that does not exist or is false", making it synonymous with a fallacy. Myth, however, did not leave our world to make way for reality alone (van der Pijl, 2009). We need to conceptualise myth in a different way to understand the role it plays on Siquijor, namely in dealing with new social realities that have arisen in contemporary times.

Barthes (1957) is one of the most important thinkers about myth. He was the first scholar to approach myth as a communication system rather than seeing it as a story that is repeated over and over again by a group of people. By focusing on myth as a form of communication, we can see it as a sign that is trying to spread a message. Myth then is not

about reality as such but is about the constructed knowledge people have about reality. The function of the myth is to transform reality in such a way that it serves a purpose, that it can be used and comprehended. Even though myth presents itself as self-evident, it has to be understood as a symbolic story about reality. The function of a myth is to transform (reality), not to hide (reality). To approach myth as being a fallacy is misleading because in most cases, myth is based on reality, even though it is a transformed reality.

With this in mind we can start to interpret the different stories, or as we shall see, myths that Siquijodnon tell each other. One of the often repeated stories involves people that faint because they are possessed by spirits. This is not just a circulating story, repeated over and over again, but is rather a social construction, created and recreated depending on the context. Sometimes the story is about one person, for example a pregnant woman that mysteriously lost her consciousness in a public space[22]. In alternative stories (for example the one presented in the introduction of this thesis) it is about schoolchildren that fall victim to evil or ancient spirits. No matter what the context is, and who the people are that pose as victims in these stories, these expressions can not be understood as simply circulating stories for they contain a message, spread by what Barthes (1957) calls a sign.

According to Barthes, every form of speech or language can contain a myth. A myth, according to him, is a semiological system of the second degree[23]. Semiology of the first degree focuses on linguistic systems, while semology of the second degree is a meta-language that transforms normal language. Meaning is ascribed to the concept of the story, forming the sign, but the human act of ascribing meaning to the concept is forgotten. The myth, in other words, strips the image, the sign, of human influence. It depoliticises the image, thereby giving it the power to present itself as natural and true. The message of the myth therefore seems as a natural derivative of the image of the myth. This causality is artificial but it seems to the 'reader' of the myth as natural. Myth transforms reality, it doesn't try to hide it. This transformation is necessary because myth can never tell the whole truth, to do so would reveal the human influence and undermine the claim it holds over the truth.

The relationship people have with myths is one of usefulness rather than truth. That what seems useful and necessary is depoliticised. The fact that the stories about people fainting always leave a lot of details out, details that might give alternative explanations for the sudden loss of consciousness is an example of this usefulness. The fact that people 'forget' this, and that the story shows no sign of human influence, makes it possible for the myth to present itself as the truth and spread the intended message. The first impression people have when they hear a story like this, is enough to spread the message. The fact that the link between the sign and that which the myth tries to spread, the idea that spirits presently reside on the island and their influence on people's daily lives, is artificial, is of no concern any more. The narrative has done its job: it has convinced people it tells the truth. As will become clear in the third paragraph, this depoliticising is necessary to empower the claim the inhabitants of the island hold over the special self-identity.

2.2 Urban Legend

Different scholars have focussed in a different way on narratives in contemporary times as well. Urban legend is a concept that arose to point at narratives that reflect a clash between traditional and modern lifestyles. Different definitions arose, of which Brunvand formulated the most common one. According to him, "urban legends are contemporary, orally transmitted tales that often depict a clash between modern conditions and some aspects of a traditional-lifestyle" (Brunvand cited in Best and Horiuchi, 1985: 492). Miller later narrowed down the concept of urban legend further. According to him, "urban legends depict a folk method of commenting on or warning people about dangers, inherent in modern urban life, that pose a threat to a more basic, traditional life" (1992: 384). The definition as formulated by Miller is more precise, pinpointing down an important aspect of urban legends on Siquijor. Namely the message that sends a warning on changing behaviour of people, something that people relate to 'modern' life. It does however talk about urban life. With almost the entire population of Siquijor dependent on agriculture and fishing, Siquijor can under no circumstances be regarded as an urban area. I do, however, believe that this does not dismiss these stories from being urban legends, simply because the message of the narrative is the same as described by Miller and Brunvand[24].

The urban legends that can be found on Siquijor are normally related to changing moral behaviour. What is good, responsible and moral behaviour? Froilyn's grandmother once told me: "Things are different now, when my daughters were younger they didn't go out, did not hang around with boys. They stayed home until they were married"[25]. She was talking about the youth on the island that prefers a more 'liberal' lifestyle. Worries about this lifestyle are reflected in narratives or what I will here call urban legends. Eden told me:

> *"You know what they say about it [bad things happening to schoolchildren]? They say that in every school on the island, in the last year, at least one girl has to be pregnant. If this doesn't happen, bad things will happen to the schoolchildren. For example, children can be possessed by evil spirits, but I also heard that sometimes children get really sick or die. Fortunately, when I graduated, one girl was pregnant. I was so lucky!"*

> (Eden, 13-04-2009)

Within this story, not only a warning is spread, it contains a myth as well. The causality between the possessed children and the absence of a pregnant girl, presents itself as the truth. It has been depoliticised. The warning of the narrative is directed to the children: at least one of them should get pregnant in the last year of school. Here, the usefulness of myth and urban legend shows again. The community values big families highly. Charles said: "We love children, that is why you see so many around"[26]. The annual growth rate

of the population of Siquijor in the year 2000 was 2.19 percent[27]. On Siquijor there is a debate going on about whether the many pregnancies of (relatively) young women is desirable. Especially the local governments want to reduce the number of women that dropout of school every year because they are pregnant. The mayor of Siquijor directly relates this phenomena to Catholicism -the mayor is protestant himself-. According to him: "This is really bad for our economy. We need women that study, who know how to read so that they can find a god job in the future. But still, every year, so many girls quit school. They don't know any better but others should warn them of the dangers. It is really difficult to fight this because of the Catholic church and you know, most of the people here are Catholic"[28].

Other similar stories are, for example, about pregnant women. A warning is reflected in urban legends about the moral behaviour of pregnant women, they for example should not walk by themselves after sunset or before sunrise. If they do, they or their baby can be possessed by evil spirits[29]. In another variant of this story, a 'white lady' will come that will block the way of the pregnant women, making sure she will not pass[30].

Of course, these are just a few examples of the many narratives that circulate on Siquijor, many of which are, or contain, a message themselves. I will argue here that even though all these different narratives contain their own myth, their own message or their own warnings, all of these stories together attribute to the formation and sustainment of a social imaginary regarding the island. A social imaginary that is not only expressed by these narratives but is also shaped and formed by it. This is possible because all these narratives are part of an overall discourse, a discourse that I will call *mystique discourse*. With mystique, I mean: attracting attention by being mysterious. This mysteriousness is, amongst other things, created by the depolitication of narratives about supernatural phenomena. The act of depoliticising these phenomena empowers the *mystique discourse*. To get a grip on this discourse, a different framework will be used to deconstruct and analyse the narratives so that the underlying assumptions of the different narratives can be shown.

2.3 Mystique Discourse

Schutte and Hendriks (2007) provide a different, complementary, framework with which you can analyse and interpret narratives. This framework is based on a model developed by Greimas (1966). Greimas developed this framework to understand plot structures in narratives and the underlying relations between different facets of the narrative. He argues that every narrative contains six actants (Greimas, 1966). An actant is a basic, stable factor that forms a fundamental pattern in the narrative. "It is not necessarily a person (e.g. character) that represents an actant; it may also be an abstraction (e.g.

succes) or an institution" (Søderberg, 2003: 12). The six actants are: a subject, an object[31], a patron, a beneficiary, a helper and an opponent. The supposition is that in every story, there is a subject that pursues an object. The patron is the one that makes sure this happens, the beneficiary is the one gaining from the object that is pursued by the subject. In every story, besides these actants, there is always a helper. The helper is someone or something that helps the subject reach its goal, but there's also an opponent that needs to be defeated. It is important to keep in mind that one person or abstract can fulfil multiple actants within one narrative. For example, the subject can as well be the beneficiary if the subject is gaining from the pursuing of the object. In figure 1.1 an actantmodel is given, to elucidate on this framework, for the fairytale *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Subject	Objective
Little Red Riding Hood	Bring cookies and wine to grandmother

Patron	Beneficiary
Little Red Riding Hoods mother	Grandmother

Helper	Opponent
Hunter	Wolf Naivety of Little Red Riding Hood

Figure 1.1 Actantmodel Little Red Riding Hood (cf. Schutte and Hendriks 2007)

If we apply this framework on two of the narratives discussed so far, namely the schoolchildren that were possessed by ancient and/or evil spirits and the discovery of the Bolo-Bolo healing stone, we can see deeper underlying notions that these narratives contain and try to tell (see figures 1.2 and 1.3 for both actantmodels).

The possessed schoolchildren
The actantmodel of the narrative of the possessed schoolchildren (figure 1.2) shows the relation between the patron, the subject and the objective. It is the moral knowledge and the fact that the community wants to be safe (the patron) that drives the community, the subject, to its objective to safe the children. The beneficiary is then clear: the children benefit from the objective. Within this narrative, a dynamic is present between the subject, the patron and the helper. The helper is the Catholic priest and manambal that manages to safe all the children. But the priest, in this case, also represents Catholicism. It is Catholicism that binds all members of the community together and provides them

with a sense of what a community should be like. Moral values and behavior is part of that sense and made the objective possible. That the helper within this narrative is more than just the priest and his actions, becomes even more clear when we take a closer look at the opponent of the narrative.

It is obvious that evil spirits form the opponent that threaten and endanger the children and therefore create the objective to save the children, in the first place. But, as was shown in chapter one, it is believed that these spirits dwell the earth (on Siquijor in particular) because they did not lead a Catholic life and/or did not get a proper Catholic funeral. They thus represent the opposite of Catholicism, the opposite of Christianity. This puts the helper and the opponent in this narrative in a direct binary opposition with one another because they are each others contrary. Catholicism then embodies good, while the spirits embody evil. The catholic priest thus represents Catholicism and 'good' in general.

Subject	Objective
The community (bystanders, school-teachers and the police)	To safe the (innocent) schoolchildren

Patron	Beneficiary
Good moral knowledge Wanting to be a good community	The schoolchildren

Helper	Opponent
Catholic priest and *manambal* (Catholicism)	The (evil/bad) spirits (Unchristianity)

Figure 1.2 Actantmodel The possessed schoolchildren

Finding of the Bolo-Bolo stone

This narrative is completely different from the one about the possessed schoolchildren. First of all there is no obvious opponent that needs to be defeated. Besides that, it is not the community that has a mission here, but one family that has the objective, the mission, to help the community. The subject, the family, represents more people on the island. They represent all people that have been chosen by saints to help the community (that are thus all *manambal* on the island) for you can replace this story with any other story about how people became *manambal* and you will get almost exactly the same actantmodel.

Subject	Object
The family	To help/heal the community

Patron	Beneficiary
The Saint of the altar (Catholicism)	The community

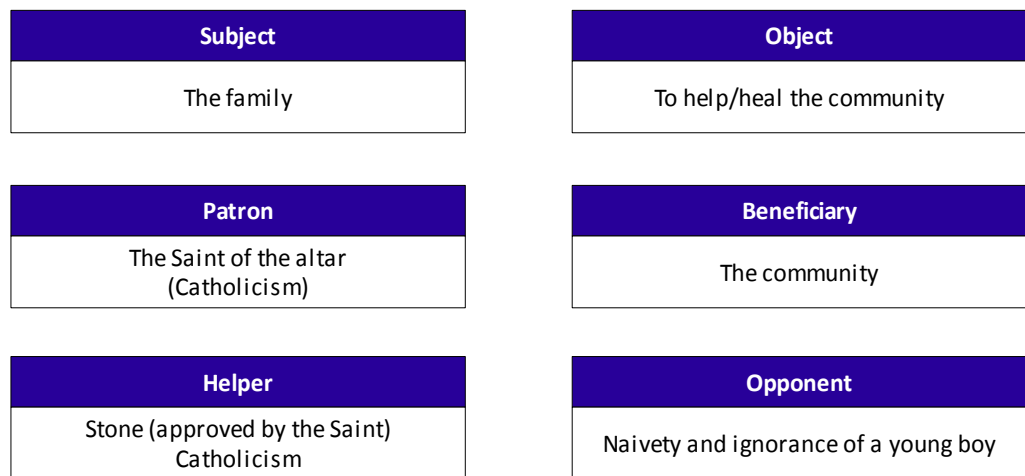| Helper	Opponent
Stone (approved by the Saint) Catholicism	Naivety and ignorance of a young boy

Figure 1.3 Actantmodel Finding of the Bolo-Bolo stone

In this narrative, the patron is Catholicism and the Saint of the altar in particular. Catholicism again plays an important role in this narrative, everything that happens does so because it is the saint's will. The saint created the objective of this narrative which is healing the community. The saint's work on earth, on Siquijor, needs to be done and therefore some of the members of the community get the responsibility, by making them *manambal*, to take care of the community. The saint needs the family to achieve this objective and therefore gives them (some members of the family) the power to heal.

Another important factor in this narrative that has not been named yet is the stone that is used for the healing. The Bolo-Bolo stone in this narrative forms the helper. It symbolises the physical island of Siquijor with its unusual natural resources and occult powers[32]. Therefore, we can conclude here that the island can be regarded as (one of the) helper(s). In this story however, it is clear that the stone only showed its powers once it magically reappeared on the altar, after it had been lost. The stone is therefore closely related to the saint of the altar and to Catholicism in general. Again the central role of Catholicism and the saint becomes clear here, all the necessities are now in place to be able to achieve the object: to heal the community.

As was briefly mentioned before, the opponent is less clear in this narrative. You could question however, whether it is coincidence that a young boy shot the stone away. His naivety, playfulness and ignorance of the possible importance of the stone are not held against him. These characteristics are, however, the opposite of the man that starts healing with the stone, his grandfather, who is known as wise and patient within the community: all characteristics of someone with good, moral behaviour, an example to all the inhabitants of Siquijor.

A notion of self

In both actantmodels it becomes clear that the community, or a part of the community, plays an important part in the narratives. In the case of the possessed schoolchildren, it is the community -bystanders, schoolteachers, and police- that are trying to keep the innocent children safe from the spirits. In the narrative about the Bolo-Bolo stone, it is the community that forms the beneficiary. It is one family that, from the moment the stone is defined as 'special', has the obligation to help the community. Therefore, it can be argued that the community forms an important aspect of the different narratives. Both stories show that the relationship between the community and the individual or the family is of great importance on Siquijor. You could say their relationship is built on reciprocity: it is the community that helps the inhabitants of Siquijor and it is the inhabitants, in the form of *manambal*, that help the community.

Another important facet of both narratives is the central role of Catholicism. The Catholic priest with the knowledge and the occult power of a *manambal* forms the helper of the community to save the schoolchildren. Catholicism embodied by the Saint of the altar forms the patron of the family to assist in healing the community. However, in the narrative about the schoolchildren, Catholicism stands in direct contrast with the evil spirits, evil spirits that dwell on Siquijor because they either didn't lead a Catholic life or they didn't get a proper Catholic funeral; spirits who, thus, embody the opposite of Catholicism. In the first story, therefore, Catholicism is projected as the direct equivalent of good while the spirits form the evil that needs to be battled and defeated. In the second story, Catholicism forms an intermediate between the physics of the island and the healing powers of its inhabitants.

As was mentioned in the first paragraph of chapter one, the physical environment of Siquijor island plays an important role in the healing traditions of many *manambal*. This is reflected in the narrative about the finding of the Bolo-Bolo stone. In itself the story doesn't say anything about the healing powers of the stone. It was used for healing only after the stone miraculously appeared on the altar after it was lost. The stone is thus the means the island provides for healing, but it is believed to come from the Catholic saint. Catholicism thus plays an active role in the well-being of the Siquijor community, but it is the inhabitants, some members of the community, that hold the responsibility to actually do the job Catholicism ascribes to them[33].

The *mystique discourse* thus provides the inhabitants of Siquijor with a special self-identity; one that ascribes meaning to the physical environment of the island, an environment that, in a lot of cases, is believed to have a direct influence on the well-being of the Siquijor community. This is not only because the environment forms the home for many undefined creatures, but also because the environment provides the *manambal* -and therefore also the community- with the means to cure, to heal and to rescue. Besides these physical aspects, Catholicism contributes to the special self-identity of the Siquijor community. In most stories about *manambal*, a saint is not only the guide, but also an

intermediate between heaven and earth. The saint personifies the good and gives this power to *manambal* so that they can take care of the community.

The *mystique discourse* has two sides: a good side and a bad side. Even though most of the time only one of these sides is highlighted within one narrative, the existence of the other side is always present, always felt. As was shown earlier, the good side is often associated with Catholicism, while the dark side, on the other hand, is often associated with either a lack of Christianity or a complete abandonment of it. The perceived balance between good and evil in the spiritual world is embodied on Siquijor by some members of the community: the *manambal* and the *mambabárang*. There is a similarity here with the way Meyer noted the pentecostalist church in Ghana deals with the spiritual battle between 'God' and the 'Devil' on earth. The battle is not to be fought to destroy the Devil, or all evil, but is there to neutralise it (1998). The same happens on Siquijor, the objective is not to destroy the dark side, but to keep the community safe from the dark side. Baumann argues that this way of essentialising a social reality, the good and the bad that is 'present' on the island, has to be understood as a way to understand this constructed reality. The dichotomy gives the inhabitants, besides the transparency it provides, the means to use the discourse when necessary (1999: 81-90).

The two sides thus appear to clash with one another: where the dark side creates fear, the bright side gives a feeling of safety. In spite of this ambiguity, both sides are applied situational. Depending on the context and what message or warning is attempted to be spread, stories relate to one of these sides. Because of this ambiguity in the use and application of the discourse, the characters of the stories can play an ambiguous part. Take, for example, the spirits. In the story about the possessed schoolchildren, but also in the overall notion people hold about spirits, they are associated with evil and unchristianity. When you look at the reasons that are given for the possession of people by spirits, for example in the quote of Eden in paragraph two, you can see that spirits can possess people because they behave immorally. The spirits then function as a medium to keep people on the 'right track', they are the so called keepers of morality. The apparent clash between a good and bad side is thus not as self-evident as it would appear at first sight. The duality of this discourse, as we shall see later, helps the community to cope with problems. Even though both sides are applied situationally, they co-operate to apply the community with a sense of identity, and a way to differentiate between themselves and others.

These examples show that narratives, myths and urban legends, are social constructions, created and recreated according to the needs and the messages that are intended to be spread. By depoliticising the images of the myth, the narratives become more powerful for they can present themselves as the truth. By depoliticising the images of the myth makes it easier and more believeble to essentialise the constructed dichotomy between good and bad. By sharing these stories, the inhabitants of Siquijor are able to form a common mind about things and situations. A common mind about their special identity as

a community, but also, as was shown by the different narratives, a common mind about what kind of community they want to be: a safe and moral community. The mystique discourse thereby not only serves as a reflection of the social imaginary regarding the island, but also creates, forms and influences this imaginary. In the next two chapters, it will be shown how this imaginary and this discourse help the inhabitants maintain an identity and a sense of importance within a globalising world.

22. Interview with Ayan on 10-03-2009.

23. See appendix A for a more extensive overview on the semiological system of the second degree.

24. It can be argued that in the time Miller wrote on urban legends, these forms of narratives did not yet reach the peripheral areas. These days however, more modern ways of living also reach agricultural areas. The perceived threat is therefore the same.

25. Informal conversation with Froilyn's grandmother in February 2009.

26. Informal conversation with Charles on 04-04-2009.

27. The most recent data published on this topic: http://www.census.gov.ph/data/quickstat/region7/qs07040810. pdf visited on 26-09-2009.

28. Semi-structured Interview with the mayor of Siquijor on 19-02-2009.

29. Informal conversation with Froilyn in March 2009, interview with Juan Ponze (*manambal*) on 24-02-2009.

30. Semi-structured interview with Ifi on 11-02-09, informal conversation with Robert in February 2009, informal conversation with Ernie in February 2009.

31. In the academic debate about narratives and the actantmodel, developed by Greimas, authors chose to use the word 'object' for one of the six actants. I will, in this thesis, sometimes choose to change this to the word 'objective'. The main reason to do so is that I find it better suitable in the given context.

32. In paragraph 1.1 the meaning ascribed to the physical characteristics of the island are more extensively discussed.

33. See also the story how Lisa became a *manambal* (paragraph 1.1).

Bolo-bolo healing: Jinelau is healing a patient that suffers from a headache. She is blowing bubbles in a glass jar that contains the special stone with healing powers. By moving the jar over the parts of the body that suffer while blowing the bubbles, it is believed the injury or illness will disappear from the body and will re-appear in the glass jar.

3. NARRATIVES:
RUMOUR AND GOSSIP

Robert, Froilyn and I went up to San Antonio today. Today is black Saturday which means that the Juan Ponze family is going to make the healing potion. We had to wait a long time before they actually started doing something. In the meantime, more and more people, tourists and Siquijodnon alike, came up to witness the event. Once the chopping of the herbs started, a man came up to Froilyn and me. He warned us about a women dressed in black sitting on the other side of the garden. According to him, she was a mambabárang, possibly looking for a new victim. He advised us to stay away from her and have as little contact with her as possible. This was a new experience for me, I didn't know you could 'bump into' mambabárang like that. Normally they stay under the radar, hiding their 'true nature'.

(fieldnotes, 11-04-2009)

As was shown in chapter one and two, the different narratives on the island create and reflect a social imaginary regarding the island. Because the inhabitants, by sharing these narratives, are able to form a common mind about the island, these imaginaries form a big step in creating a community or, as Appadurai calls it, a *community of sentiment*; a community that imagines and feels things in the same way (1996: 8). Locality and a common idea about this locality is however not enough to form a community (cf. O'Rourke, 2006). Anderson's (1983) concept *imagined community*, originally referring to the imagination of a nation, reminds us of the fact that these forms of community are created and sustained by the imagination of the people involved. Even though the extent of the community is too big to be able to know or meet all people in it, they all feel they belong to a single community. This is of course not only true for the nation but also for smaller groups that feel affinity, solidarity and a common sense of belonging. O'Rourke (2006) emphasizes the fact that the importance of the imagination (that produces the feeling that people belong to each other) in forming a community is not only true for social situations in which people are unable to know or meet all people concerned, but is also true for communities where people do have face-to-face relations with each other, or at least to most of them.

This chapter will focus on the way the inhabitants of Siquijor imagine themselves as a community. To do so, this chapter is built around the theory of O'Rourke. O'Rourke holds the idea that a group of people attached to a locality must be defined in at least four senses to be able to consider it as a community: 1) its existence as a group of mutually-obligated people linked with that locale; 2) as belonging to a place bounded from other places; 3) its identity, what type of community it is; 4) the basis for membership, the inclusion and exclusion from the group (2006: 3). In the following paragraphs each of these requirements will be discussed. This chapter focuses, in addition, on the way they naturalise or depoliticise this claim. They do this by overcommunicating sameness and undercommunicating difference (Eriksen, 1993). I will argue here that the mystique discourse does help to support that claim, but that it creates social distance as well because of the supposed threats to people's safety. The above mentioned incident is an example of the way people cope with these perceived threats. Narratives, in this case rumour and gossip, play a big role in the way people 'map' the safe and unsafe zones of the island, as we shall see in this chapter.

3.1 One big happy family

As the different myths and urban legends discussed so far have shown the community forms an important component in the different stories that the inhabitants of Siquijor share. Siquijodnon often refer to their own community as being 'one big (happy) family'. No matter where you are situated on the island, this is an often repeated statement. They mean, of course, metaphorical kinship ties as the island is too big to know or meet all people in it, let alone that they would all belong to the same extended family.

This statement, repeated by farmers[34], fisherman[35] and mayors[36] alike, brought me to a question concerning the so-called public sphere of the island. The public sphere is a concept introduced by Habermas that refers to a common space in which the members of a community meet through a variety of media and in face-to-face relations. They discuss matters of common interests and are therefore able to form a common mind about these things (Habermas 1987, Taylor 2002). Forming a big happy family is an example of a common mind of the Siquijodnon.

As was established by the different narratives that circulate, stories of interest are repeated and reconstructed on the entire island. But how can this statement regarding the community as a family be understood on an island where it is no exception that people only once in their lives travel to the opposite side of the island? A lack of money often ties people to their own municipality. Froilyn proudly told me: "I have been in San Juan once. It was a school trip". I argue that the public sphere can give the answer to this question. Without any doubt a public sphere is present on Siquijor, even though the influence of the media can almost be neglected in this case. Siquijor has one newspaper, the 'Siquijor mirror', that often tries to stimulate debate. This debate focusses, however, on the bourgeoisie if the island for most of the articles are written in English. Habermas (1987) also defines a common space; a place where people of the public sphere come together with a common purpose. This is thus a deliberate coming-together of people. Besides the fact that not a lot of people travel to all the 'corners' of the island, there are a few common spaces on the island where a lot of different people from all over the island join together.

The market is a good example of such a place. On Sundays people from the mountains come down to Larena to sell their vegetables and Sunday is, for this reason, the big market day. This does not sound particularly special but I argue that it is, for it is not very often that people from the coastal area and the mountains come together. Other common spaces that can be defined are the cockpit arena, where the Sunday afternoons are spent watching (and gambling on) the different cock-fights, and the church, where people join on Sundays as well.

"I really like going to the market on sunday. I do not see my sister very often because she now lives with her husband in Cang-Asa [mountain village]. You know, we don't have money to visit her very often. It is nice to speak to her and she tells me all the things that happen there and then I tell her all the things that happen here."

(Joyce, 10-04-2009)

The market and other common spaces, provide the opportunity to meet people 'that you do not meet during normal day routines. The direct contact in social situations like this, together with the exchange of information, make the formation of a common notion about the community being one big family, possible.

The public transport also forms a common space on the island. Even though this is not a deliberate coming together of people, the transport does serve as a place where people from different areas of the island come together and exchange information.

I was sitting in the jeepney[37] with Robert and Froilyn today. An unusual situation because normally we travel by tricycle. Even though Robert and Froilyn haven't known each other for very long, it is interesting to see how many people they both know. With every barangay we pass, they start to name the people they know there. They exchange the 'normal' information about those people: family name, age and work. Sometimes, this information is complemented by other people in the jeepney. After a while, the situation of a certain family in Enrique Villa Nueva is discussed. The father of the family committed suicide earlier that week. Both Robert and Froilyn feel sorry for the children of the family. When Robert asks Froilyn how the family is going to get money to buy food, Froilyn answers that a lot of the people from Enrique Villa Nueva, Tulapos and Bitaug brought food to the family. Somebody else in the jeepney confirms that by saying that she brought food as well.

(Fieldnotes, 25-04-2009)

Because the public transport reaches the entire outline of the island, transportation not only serves the purpose of a common space in which social information is exchanged, but in addition, supports the impression, the idea, of the Siquijor community being small and involved with one another.

The public sphere with the help of the common spaces, provides Siquijodnon with a common mind about the importance of the family. It is therefore not surprising that on the entire island, family ties are very often expressed. Most of the times, this is in a direct way when you get introduced to somebody or meet people: "This is the brother of my sister in law"[38] -I already met the sister in law- or, "that woman is the god-mother of my niece"[39]. Families are very big and close to each other in Siquijor. This is first of all because families tend to stay together, new husbands move to the *barangay*[40] where the family of the wife lives (or vice versa). In the *barangay* Tulapos, all sisters, except for one, stayed in the place they were born. Besides that, families are extended by the multiple godparents each newborn is given. Eden told me that she has three grand mothers and one grand father[41]. The families of the godparents, are referred to as being part of their own family as well. The result of this is that the social environment of the island gives the impression of being very familiar. Dumont remarked something alike in both articles he wrote about Siquijor (1984 and 1995).

The idea about the family on Siquijor, however, goes further than the mere existence of (expressed) family ties. The meaning behind being 'part of the family' is the idea that the community helps you if you help the community. These moral principles

are not only symbolically reflected in stories (as we saw in chapter two), but are often referred to in a direct way as well. The governor of Siquijor often accentuates this in speeches and articles in the newspaper. According to him, the public interest serves every individual equally. He therefore requests people to help each other in hard and difficult times; for example the food crisis[42] that has affected everybody on the island. At the moment it is believed to have a relatively weak effect on the Siquijodnon because together they stand strong.

> *"For us it is not so much change. We never had a lot and now everybody has a little bit less. But I am not afraid, there is always the family if you are in trouble. They will help you."*

(Joyce, 10-04-2009)

> *"Siquijor is ready to face the crisis, declared VP Noli de Castro citing Siquijor's lead in terms of agri and aqua culture plus the Siquijodnon's simple way of life and solidarity amidst global crisis, said de Castro. Adding that food and energy crisis is not a problem for people who live simple lives like Siquijodnons"*

(The Siquijor Mirror, 28-03-2009)

The 'togetherness' of Siquijodnon interestingly exceeds the geographical borders of the island. The mayor of Siquijor often addresses the externally located members of the community for donations to the island. According to him, Siquijodnon that move abroad still feel connected and obligated to help their family[43]. Here, the real geographical distance between members of the community is of no influence on the social distance, they are still regarded Siquijodnon with the same accountability and commitment towards the other members.

The understanding of what it takes to be a Siquijodnon, the obligations they share equally, is a clear illustration of 'its existence as a group of mutually-obligated people linked with that locale', as well as it shows what Siquijodnon understand as to what their own community involves. Both are requirements O'Rourke describes in her article (2006). The link with the locale is obvious, even for Siquijodnon not living 'within' the boundaries of the island, the connection is present. My claim here, however, goes further than this because it is not just the humans that have equal obligations but also the other inhabitants of the island. As was shown in chapter one and two, the natural forces of the island as well as the 'white ladies' and the spirits fulfil a purpose, a task on the island. All of these inhabitants of the island together, make sure the family is strong and safe.

Keeping the family strong and safe

In the previous chapter it was established that the mystique discourse provides the inhabitants of Siquijor, with a sense of identity. The inhabitants formed a common mind about an identity that other people don't have because this identity is inspired by supernatural phenomena that bring the inhabitants closer to a good, catholic moral life. It is, therefore, not surprising that Siquijodnon often refer to their own community as being safe, peaceful and quiet. Even though the mystique discourse also has a dark side which inspires fear, the two sides go hand in hand in creating a feeling of safety. This is possible because the bad side is kept in balance by the interference of Catholicism and the *manambal*. An often repeated comment on Siquijor is that there is hardly any crime on the island, something that people explain by saying that nobody dares to do something criminal because you never know whom will be your enemy next[44]. A police officer told me: "I don't know why. When I was working in Negros there was a lot of crime we were very busy all the time. Here, it is a little bit boring. Maybe it is because of the *bárang*[45]... ". When I asked him whether there were official complaints about *bárang* he replied: "No, that is not possible. You can never prove that with science"[46]. Here, the dark side of the discourse is used to prevent crimes; you want to avoid making a *mambabárang* your enemy. Besides that, Siquijodnon often state that they feel very safe on the island because there are so many *manambal* that live in Siquijor and that can heal almost every complaint.

The mystique discourse also supports the safety claim of the community in a different way. To expose this, we have to return to the different narratives that circulate on Siquijor, in particular the rumour and gossip networks. Theories of the intellectual approach towards rumour and gossip are often associated with a negative effect on community cohesion. Douglas, for example, emphasizes the fact that fraction boundaries can either be created or redefined within in a community by using rumour and gossip (Douglas, 1970). This can be created because people try to forward their own personal interests. Stewart and Strathern, therefore state that rumour and gossip can serve as a catalyst for social change (2004: 4, 30-38). The functional approach towards rumour and gossip, on the other hand, stresses the positive effect rumour and gossip can have on community cohesion. I will argue here that rumour and gossip indeed have a positive effect on community cohesion in Siquijor, This is the case because they can support the claim on safety.

Gossip concerning the mystique discourse is often about who is a *mambabárang* and who is not. The actions of *mambabárang* are widely discussed and condemned; nobody likes to have a neighbour that every once in a while looks for a new victim[47]. Before we can truly understand how this process works, it is important to differentiate between gossip and rumour. Gossip normally takes place between people that belong to a group or network. Rumour normally covers a wider area which transgresses groups and/or networks. Both can, depending on the scope it covers as well as on the time it survives within the network, become urban legend. Alport and Postman even state that legend in general 'may be regarded as a solidified rumour' (in Stewart and Strathern, 2004: 42). Rumour nd gossip can therefore be understood as narratives circulating within a group of people that do not

(yet) have the structural basis to claim the truth. They can however change people's social imaginaries and their understanding of social change. We have to understand them as an 'action' that transforms personal and interpersonal ideas into widespread belief. Therefore, rumours make a shared orientation towards social situations possible (Oude Breuil and Rozema, 2009).

Gossip normally takes place between people who know each other. In this case gossip is, most of the time, about someone they know and an action that is, or might be, associated with 'black magic' and malign powers. By sharing these stories, people are able to form a common mind about things which, in the case of Siquijor, results in publicly condemning these acts. Gossip can very easily turn into rumour when the area in which the gossip circulates transgresses one group or network. An example of the way gossip can turn into widespread belief that eventually triggers an action is the story of Bushia.

"Bushia was a mambabárang living in San Antonio. Everyone knew she was doing bárang and other bad things to people. Everybody ignored her because nobody wanted to have anything to do with her. People were of course afraid but were also afraid that people would think they would be mambabárang as well. So she had two nephews that were still in high school and nobody wanted to play with them. After a while they [the nephews] hated their aunt so bad that they killed her. They made it look like a robbery but everybody knew they did it. I think they spent a little while in jail but they are out now. I think they moved to a different island."

(Raul, 06-03-2009)

This story shows that the shared orientation of people about Bushia triggered a social isolation, not only for her but also for her family. The condemnation of Bushia and her acts by the community influenced the lives of her nephews so much that they finally decided to take her life.

Even though this example is rather extreme, it shows how rumour and gossip can work within a community as a 'courtroom'. Within this courtroom, gossip's and rumour's function is to shape and reshape acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Boehm in Stewart and Strathern 2004: 40). The bárang that Bushia did to other people was considered unacceptable behaviour. The essentialised dichotomy between good and bad, as was shown in chapter two, shows its functionality here. By publicly condemning the mambabárang -something considered 'bad'-, makes it possible to neutralise the threat the mambabárang poses to the community. The shared orientation of the community makes it possible to stand strong against rare situations like the one reflected here. By using rumour and gossip, Siquijodnon make sure that the special self-identity, the good side of the mystique discourse, prevails over the dark and scary side of the same discourse; a discourse reflected and created by myth and urban legend.

3.2 The black sheep of the family

Another of O'Rourke's conditions for a group of people to be denominated a community, is the basis upon which they form membership, a way to include and exclude people. A group which in Siquijor is thus typified as a big happy family. Dumont already wrote, in 1984, that the big happy family statement forms a local ideology on Siquijor. Something that, according to my findings during the fieldwork period, did not change over the last two decades. The question is, thus, how the big family decides who is part of this family and who is not. Besides that, it is important to look on which grounds they differentiate between the both. It is very notable that Siquijodnon overcommunicate similarities between themselves, and undercommunicate the differences that do exist.

The social environment of Siquijor is, for the above mentioned reasons and the public spaces, perceived to be very familiar by the inhabitants of the island. So called 'newcomers' are very quickly included within the community. No distinctions are made between people born on the island and residents born elsewhere, as soon as a family tie is found (and proven). Within the research period that preceded the writing of this thesis, no exceptions have occurred, everybody was included in the family because a family tie was considered present. For example in the case of Judy and her husband who moved to Siquijor to take care of the house of their aunt. Even though the aunt was at the time not present in Siquijor, the fact that they were family was enough to enter the Siquijor community and be regarded as part of the family[48]. The fact that all new arrivals on the island are included in the community means that there is no defined 'other' within the geographical boundaries of the island[49].

Difference between members is however, even though only rarely, expressed. The 'family' of Siquijor can be divided into people living in the coastal area and people living in the mountains, promoting different lifestyles of the inhabitants. Even though this difference in lifestyles is often undercommunicated, it does play a substantial role in the way people perceive their social environment. The mountainous area is associated with 'peace and quiet' by people from the coastal *barangay's*. This can be explained by the less populated area, smaller sizes of the *barangay's* and therefore an even more familiar environment. As discussed earlier, peace and quiet are perceived to be a good quality of life, nevertheless, some people refer to the mountains as being too peaceful and quiet, they see it as a synonym for boring[50]. Eden even named a more important difference. She argues that the people living near the coast have a lot more contact with the outside world, something people from the mountains lack[51]. This difference, as we shall see in the next chapter, is based upon a perception of modernity.

Besides this binary classification between the members of the family, an additional one can be made. Every family has a black sheep, including the big, happy family of Siquijor. As the rumour about Bushia, and the story in the beginning of the chapter showed, the black sheep are identified and condemned. I will argue here that the presence of the *mambabárang* creates ideas about safe places and unsafe places on the island. Depending on where people

are situated, and what gossip and rumor networks they are involved in, they perceive and define these places. This results in social distance on the island, a distance that exists despite the overcommunicated similarities of the members of the community. Perceived social distance between inhabitants is not the same for all people on the island. Therefore, I argue that despite the positive effects that rumour and gossip can have on the community, here they redefine fraction boundaries on the island (cf. Douglas, 1970).

For people that live in the coastal area, the mountains are often perceived to be more dangerous than the coast. As Ifi told me: "Sometimes I catch myself being really careful around people form the hills. By only talking to you or looking at you they can toy[52] with you"[53]. This quote shows us an imaginary border between safety, the coast, and a feeling of vulnerability and danger in the mountains. Another narrative that circulates in the coastal area confirms this imaginary border that separates the coastal area from the mountains. The rumour concerns a school for *bárang* in San Antonio (a mountain village)[54]. People fear *bárang* and this rumour inspires fear of the region the school is believed to be situated in. The imaginary border between safety and insecurity shifts for people from the mountainous parts of the island. As was shown in the introduction to this chapter, the *mambábarang* just walked around people without anybody taking any action to protect themselves. The imaginary border here has shifted, not the mountains in general but the direct contact with the *mambabárang* was perceived to be dangerous. That the gossip about this woman being a *mambabárang* did not turn into rumour, reaching the entire island, reflects that this imaginary border exists despite the public sphere and common spaces discussed in paragraph 3.1.

We have established two different ways in which people differentiate between the various members of the community: The geographical placement of people and therefore the different lifestyles of the community members, and the 'black sheep' of the family, the *mambabárang*. It is important to note that these two ways do not exist separately from each other but have to be seen as complementary to one another. Most *mambabárang* are believed to practice and/or live in the mountains. Rumour and gossip reflect this social distance between members of the community. In the same time they create a social reality as well. A reality of social distance. This distance is reflected by the precuations people take while in perceived danger. Froilyn always carries around coconut oil when she goes to the mountains. Rumour and gossip thus also create and redefine fraction boundaries within the community (cf. Douglas, 1970).

3.3 A family with boundaries

Living on an island is, according to Ritchie, different from living on the continent. Ritchie argues that the limit of the horizon of islanders makes their view "particular, local and proud". The limit of this horizon therefore forms an emotional boundary, a boundary that

is less abstract for islanders than it is for people on the continent. The environment, the island, is more definite and local. The island forms, potentially, a whole. For Siquijodnon this means that they are very dependent on the physical environment of the island. Most of the products that people consume are produced locally. All there is to know, one can possibly know[55], thanks to this definite character of the environment. According to Ritchie, therefore, the islanders mind is "in the best sense, conservative". People tend to perpetuate the continuities of their social and physical environment. They have to be made sacred or at least paid due respect (Ritchie, 1977: 187-188). Something that in Siquijor is reflected in the way they see their community as a family, and the physical environment as a patron of the well-being of the family (see the example of the Bolo-Bolo healing in chapter two).

That Siquijor island is a place 'bounded from other places', the last requirement O'Rourke describes, thus seems self-evident. The community feels that the island forms the place they belong to. I do, however, think there is more that needs to be considered here. The geographical distance, the ocean, that separates Siquijor from other islands in the Philippines not only separates them literally but, in this case, also socially from others. Siquijodnon feel a social distance exists between themselves and the rest of the Philippines[56]. All the features that Siquijodnon ascribe to their own community, like safety and peacefulness, are referred to as 'the simple life' as soon as they compare their own lifestyle and identity with that of others. In the next chapter the emphasis will shift more extensively on this topic: the felt relationship between Siquijodnon and others will be addressed. For now, it is important to note that this relationship, the felt othering of Filipino's towards them, does influence the self-definition of the community, something that O'Rourke (2006) neglected in her research. With 'othering', I mean here, "the experience of being excluded, of being made 'the other'." (Ghorashi, 2005: 192). Even though, as was established in the previous paragraph, everybody on the island belongs to the same community, no others are defined and no people are excluded from the family. Siquijodnon do, however, differentiate between themselves and people elsewhere in the Philippines.

3.4 An imagined community

As the above paragraphs have shown, Siquijor may be regarded as consisting of a single community. One which fulfils all the requirements that O'Rourke feels are necessary to form a community. This is first of all the case because the inhabitants want to be a community. A community that on Siquijor can be regarded as a family, writ large, for the 'sense of community' is highly valued by its members. Secondly, the community has a common idea about what kind of community they are. The peacefulness, quietness and safety are statements about themselves that are repeated over and over again. These characteristics form part of the social imaginary about their island and community that are directly linked to the good, catholic moral life they want to lead.

It is interesting to see how the *mystique discourse* plays its part within the community. A presence that is often communicated in the form of rumour and gossip. Because rumour and gossip play such a dual part within the community, I argue that a combination of the intellectual and functional approach towards rumour and gossip is needed in order to be able to understand the influence they have on community cohesion (cf. Stewart and Strathern, 2004). On the one hand they have a positive effect on community cohesion, on the other hand, they redefine fraction boundaries. These boundaries reflect and create social distance between members of the community. By overcommunicating similarities, and undercommunicating differences between the inhabitants, Siquijodnon naturalise the claim of being one big family. Therefore, they are able to imagine themselves as being one community. In the next chapter we will see that Siquijodnon hold the 'big happy family' mask for a reason. A reason that O'Rourke (2006) does not mention in her studies but that is of importance on the way Siquijodnon identify themselves: the identification of them by Others.

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34. Informal conversation with Ernie in February 2009.
35. Informal conversation with the husband of Ayan in March 2009 and an informal conversation with the father of Froilyn in April 2009.
36. Semi-structured interview with the mayor of Siquijor town on 19-02-2009.
37. A jeepney is a Jeep, used as a bus that serves as public transportation.
38. Informal conversation with Raoul in March 2009.
39. Informal conversation with Celia in March 2009.
40. See the glossary for an extensive description on the various Cebuano words that are used in this thesis.
41. Informal conversation with Eden in April 2009.
42. The shortage of food around the world in general and the Philippines and Siquijor in particular is referred to as the 'food crisis' or the 'economic crisis'.
43. Semi-structured interview with the mayor of Siquijor on 19-02-2009.
44. Informal conversations with Ifi and Celia in March 2009.
45. Here, the word bárang is used to cover all activities of the mambabárang. This is also the meaning of bárang in other Visayan islands.
46. Informal conversation with police officer on 16-02-2009.
47. It is believed that spirits, in return for the malign powers they grant to their mambabárang, want a human victim at least once a year as a proof of loyalty towards them. Semi-structured interview with Magdaleno Anhao on 10-03-2009.
48. Informal conversation with Judy on 23-02-2009.
49. You could argue that tourists are defined others on the island. I deliberately do not choose to do so because they are always temporary visitors rather than inhabitants of, or residents on the island.
50. Informal conversation with Robert and Froilyn in March 2009. Informal conversation with Tessie in April 2009.
51. Informal conversation with Eden in April 2009.
52. 'Toy' is a word that is often used for the actions of a mambabárang in which he or she is trying to harm another person.
53. Informal conversation with Ifi on 11-02-2009.
54. I heard this story several times in the barangay's: Tulapos, Bitaug and Sandugan. I did not find evidence that the school exists.
55. As opposed to the infinity of opportunities and challenges on the continent.
56. Siquijodnon often refer to the distance they feel that exist between them and the rest of the Philippines. This feeling, of course, also applies to the felt relationship with the rest of the world.

Joyce and some of the children of barangay Bitaug.

4. A CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY: SIQUIJOR

"When I first arrived in Siquijor, I was scared. I was scared the whole time. My whole life [in Cebu] people told me stories about Siquijor. About how children get possessed by bad spirits in school, about mambabárang that poison people or do bárang. You can understand that I didn't want to move here. But with my husbands accident he couldn't work anymore and we have two small children so we didn't really have a choice when my husbands aunt offered us the chance to live in Siquijor and take care of their house when they are away [they live in the United States]. Now, I've been here for almost a year. The people here are my family now and I am not scared anymore. In the beginning I didn't eat for one whole weak because I was too scared. Still when I talk to old friends in Cebu they warn me not to eat stuff and they tell me to be really careful but they just don't know. Just like I didn't know."

(Judy, 21-02-2009)

I came to Siquijor to focus on narratives about the manambal, mambabárang and other supernatural beings living on the island. Even before my trip started, the social imaginaries Filipino's hold regarding the island reached me, just like they reached Judy; I was warned by Filipino friends who were concerned about my safety once I would set foot on the island. The warnings did not stop when I arrived in the Philippines. They were, however, supplemented with stories that always stress the same message: Siquijor is a place where unexplainable things happen that, more often than not, will harm you. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) state that the difference between space and place is that the latter is appointed meaning to. In this sense, Siquijor is a place that, for Filipino's, is defined by supernatural phenomena that they do not posses themselves. This makes the island a place synonymous with danger for supernatural harm is harm that can only be undone by supernatural forces.

The question how this imaginary about the island arose, what the consequences are for the way Siquijodnon perceive their own island, and how Siquijodnon try to cope with this 'contemporary problem', is the central point of this chapter. Therefore, globalisation and imagination are two of the main concepts discussed here. Globalising forces create a new tension, or boost the already existing tension, between Siquijodnon and the rest of their fellow country-men. Imagination, in the way Appadurai (1996) defines it, is a key concept because it shapes the social imaginaries regarding Siquijor which not only reflect a perceived social reality, but also construct a social reality. A social reality of exclusion. Exclusion despite the processes of globalisation that are supposed and believed to bring people closer together.

4.1 Disconnectedness as a consequence of globalisation

Siquijodnon call their own island "the virgin island"[57], untouched by outsiders. Of course this is not entirely true, tourists come to Siquijor, boats leave for Dumaguete and Mindanao several times a day, and other boats arrive. The idea behind it is that Siquijor is 'less' touched by outsiders and influences from outside than other parts of the Philippines. Siquijor does not have, for example, an airport, something that a lot of other small islands do have. People from other parts of the country don't come here to work or settle down. Tessie explained: "Nobody wants to come here. There is no work here, no opportunities. If you work in Mindanao or Luzon you can earn much more money, that is why. Only when people marry [with somebody on the island] they come here. That is why I go to Cebu sometimes, to sell some of my stuff"[58].

Dumont noted that: "... from the outside Siquijor tends to be perceived either as insignificant or as quaint" (1984: 141). An island of little significance, apart from the threatening atmosphere surrounding it, caused by the supposed backwardness of its life-style. The question why other Filipino's perceive Siquijor to be 'backwards' and 'traditional' has to

be addressed in order to understand the way social imaginaries regarding the island influences Siquijodnon's ways to cope with the threat of being deemed unimportant in a modern world. Anna Tsing (2008) argues that there is something awkward about modernisation theories, and recently also about globalisation theories. The idea of modernisation and globalisation evokes a feeling of progress, of leaving a past behind and replacing it with a better, more profitable present and future. By doing this, it creates a sense that everything in the past is of less meaning and value. Even though Tsing's article focuses on the way scientists approach this topic, I think it can shed light on the perception of Filipino's on Siquijor as well.

Besides the fact that folk-healers and sorcerers live on other islands of the Philippines as well -they come to Siquijor every holy week to prepare herbal medicine together- they do not seem to have the same effect on the other islands as they do for Siquijor. Except for the healers that came to Siquijor during holy week, I heard no accounts of healers on other islands. As a man from Luzon told me: "They [Siquijodnon] ask for stigmatisation because they keep telling stories about *bárang* and keep doing all the healing. Maybe they started doing it to keep the Spaniards out but now they keep doing it. They shouldn't be surprised that normal Filipino's are scared and want nothing to do with it"[59]. Here, a clear distinction is made between the practices on Siquijor and in other parts of the Philippines. Siquijor is directly linked to the practices and believes of the *manambal* and *mambabárang*, while other area's are not.

As was shown in chapter one, the ritual practices and beliefs on Siquijor are not about to be replaced by a more modern Filipino culture. The ritual practices and beliefs have been shown to be able to adjust to new social realities and contemporary problems, one of which is the perceived disconnection to the rest of the Philippines. The disconnection appears to be a self-fulfilling prophecy because the geographical, economical, political and social disconnectedness seem to enhance each other and finally succeed in placing Siquijor as an island, a place, in a social quarantine. With the geographical disconnectedness I focus here mainly on the sea that separates Siquijor from other islands: it is a place bounded from other places (cf. O'Rourke 2006). The perceived economical disconnectedness is, for example, fueled by the fact that Filipino's do not move to Siquijor (unless for family business). Besides the lack of people, Siquijodnon feel there exists a lack of foreign investments. Paragraphs one and two of chapter three further highlight some of the aspects that inspire the feeling of economical disconnectedness. The political disconnectedness is hardly discussed in this thesis. Dumont (1995) further elaborates on this in his article: 'Far from Manila: Political Identities on a Philippine Island'. The social disconnectedness is in itself an outcome of the geographical and economical disconnectedness. The absence of people born elsewhere in the Philippines on the island not only makes Siquijodnon's social environment familiar, but also makes it isolated.

Siquijor, as a place with appointed meaning to it, became a place isolated from other places. To understand how this happened, within a globalising context, we need to take a closer look at globalisation theories in general and theories about the imagination in particular.

One of the most important thinkers about globalisation and the influence that would have on the way people perceive their world is Arjun Appadurai. according to him, imagination has been appointed a new role in social life. He argues that with the contemporary state of technology regarding mass media and other communication technologies, for example the Internet, people are more easily able to spread and share their imaginations (Appadurai 1996). This can be put in direct contrast with Ritchie's line of argumentation about the islander's mind (see chapter three). In a globalising world, to know all is impossible, your chances and opportunities appear to be endless, something that fuels the imagination. While Ritchie argues that the islander's mind is in essence conservative, people are able to know all there is to know. Ritchie wrote his essay on the islander's mind in 1977, and islands have since then become much more attached to the outside world than they were before, thereby enlarging the horizons of islanders and creating a new role for the imagination. How globalisation affects Siquijor and its inhabitants is therefore still unexplored territory.

Appadurai further argues that the imagination has become "an organized field of social practice ... The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, it is itself a social fact...". Imagination became something that people share and therefore has the ability to unite people for they can form a common mind about things. This is what Siquijodnon feel happened with the understanding of Filipino's regarding Siquijor and its cultural traits. When I asked Ifi about Filipino tourists on Siquijor, she said:

"Never, they never come. They are too scared. Once, not so long ago, a small group of students from Manila came here. They stayed for the weekend but they never left the resort. They kept asking me whether it was safe to go and do stuff so I said it was, but they still did not go out. We had to pick them up from the harbor and we brought them back as well [laughing]. They were so scared!".

(Ifi, 04-02-2009)

The common response of Filipino's is a social isolation regarding Siquijor. Only a few Filipino tourists dare to come to Siquijor, but even then they prefer to stay in resorts.

As I briefly mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the imaginaries are often expressed in the form of warnings about Siquijor. Siquijor is believed to be a place that is not safe thanks to the *mambabárang* and other 'scary' creatures that live on the island. Many stories about the 'special nature of the island' have been published in newspapers and on the Internet[60]. Besides that, tv-shows have been made, and recently also a horror movie[61] reflects the imaginaries Filipino's hold regarding Siquijor. As became clear from Judy's story in the introduction to this chapter as well, people tend to be afraid and therefore try to avoid Siquijor. We can then say that imagination is not only able to unite people, but is also able to divide and disconnect people.

When the imaginaries of Filipino's regarding Siquijor reach Siquijodnon, they serve as a confirmation of the felt social disconnectedness. Siquijodnon's recollections of times in which they felt this disconnectedness and isolation while in direct contact with other Filipino's serves as proof to them that the social quarantine exists. Ayan recalled the isolation she felt while she was living in Manila for a year to earn an income:

> *"My aunt told me that I wasn't allowed to tell anybody that I was from Siquijor. I was young so I didn't understand and after a while I told some of my colleagues. From that time, nobody at work wanted to talk to me anymore. When we had a break I was alone and that is how I learned my lesson. Now I stay in Siquijor and if I have to go to another island, I tell nobody where I am from."*

<div align="right">(Ayan, 22-02-2009)</div>

Eden mentioned that she would practice her accent before going to visit Negros (another neighbouring island). She considered this necessary since her previous experiences on the islands showed her that any hints that might suggest she was from Siquijor resulted in people ignoring and avoiding her[62]. The experiences of Ayan and Eden reflect a way in which Filipino's hold a static image of Siquijodnon. By neglecting differences between Siquijodnon, they are able to be seen and treated as 'the other' (cf. Ghorashi, 2003: 177).

The above mentioned recollections of incidents and the story of Judy in the introduction of this chapter show how an imaginary border between safety and unsafety exists for people that are not from Siquijor, just like they exist for Siquijodnon themselves. In the Philippines, until recently, every island was 'bounded from other places/islands. With the rapid changes of technology and the processes of globalisation, however, the contact between islands has increased. This means that the horizons of Siquijodnon are expanding and that they are now more aware of the social stigmatisation by other Filipino's. As was shown here, they are reminded of this stigmatisation in direct contact with Filipino's, but also by the increased flows of information via the Internet and the television.

4.2 Reaction of the Siquijodnon

The social quarantine that rests on Siquijor asks for a reaction from its inhabitants. In chapter three it was established that the way the community defines itself can be narrowed down to two often repeated statements: 'the one big happy family' statement and, in addition, the 'peace and quiet' that they see as a characteristic of this family. In this paragraph we will see the importance of these statements for their position within the

world in general and the nation-state in particular. Barth (1969) argues that we need to approach identity as relational and processual phenomena. This means that identity can have variable importance within different social contexts. Siquijodnon feel that they are 'othered' by their fellow countrymen. With 'othered', I refer to the notion of Siquijodnon that they feel -when in contact to other Filipino's- stigmatised. This feeling is generated because Filipino's hold a homogeneous and mono-cultural idea about Siquijodnon that generates fear. These images are acted upon by social-exclusion, as was shown by the statements of Ayan and Eden. Filipino's, therefore, act like Siquijodnon do not belong to them (the wider nation) (Ghorashi, 2003: 24, 170). The statement 'we live the simple life' is a reaction to this othering. It is a statement of what Siquijodnon are not. They are not modern like (some of) the other parts of the Philippines and thereby they are able to position themselves within the nation without loosing there own identity.

During the research period, this statement was normally followed by one of the two following comments. One of them concerned the fact that Siquijodnon want to be connected to the outside world as well. This is not because they miss the social connection but because they feel this connection is the only way towards a better, more profitable (in economic terms) future. They want to have a 'more modern[63]' life themselves[64]. The other possible statement that often followed from 'we live the simple life' is the fact that their lifestyle is better than the modern lifestyle of other regions in the Philippines[65]. In this case, all the negative effects of a modern lifestyle were considered. Ayan said that there is more crime in big cities, that children play with guns and that people don't have friends anymore because everybody only thinks about himself[66]. In other words, the modern cities form the exact opposite of the 'peace and quiet' that Siquijodnon ascribe to themselves and the family that ties them all together (see chapter three).

Here it becomes clear that Siquijodnon are not only 'othered' themselves, but they themselves 'other' people that do not belong to the island. In the same way, the big happy family and 'peace and quiet' statements form a reaction to the 'othering'. The 'big happy family', obviously, forms a statement regarding something essential that a more modern region does not have (anymore). The 'peace and quiet' is, in its own turn, regarded as an important asset within a society. There is, however, a difference between those two statements and the 'simple life' statement. The 'big happy family' and the 'peace and quiet' do more than just defining 'themselves' and 'others'. They form a mask. This mask needs to hide, or at least change, the dangers other Filipino's associate with Siquijor and its inhabitants.

By differentiating between themselves and other Filipinos, boundaries are created. Many scholars over the last decades focused on boundary maintenance and stereotyping of people and cultures (a.o. Eriksen 1993). These boundaries present themselves as natural and rigid. You either belong on this side or you belong on the other. In reality, however, this is not the way it works. Boundaries are fluid and flexible. Depending on the context, the situation people find themselves in, they identify themselves and others differently.

The boundaries can therefore be more rigid and differentiating in a particular situation than in others. This shows us that it is not the 'cultural stuff' inside that matters, but the relational aspect of identity (cf. Barth 1969). Even though Siquijodnon sometimes essentialise their own cultural 'traits', they do this, as was shown before, with clear intentions.

Because of this reason, Siquijodnon sometimes differentiate between themselves and 'Filipino's'. Just as often, however, they identify themselves as being Filipino's. They do feel to belong to the Filipino nation but they only actively identify with them when they feel the stereotypes related to 'Filipino's' is positive. They do this, for example, by saying: "That is how, we, Filipino's are[67]". When they don't feel the stereotype is a positive characteristic, they actively state that they are Siquijodnon, different from Filipino's. In these cases, the characteristics that are perceived negatively, more often than not, are associated with big cities and a 'modern' lifestyle. Something they want, without a doubt, but something that they would 'do' differently, better. In the same way, we need to bring Eden's statement in the previous chapter back to our attention. She differentiated on Siquijor itself a more modern region, with more contact to the outside world: the coastal region. In contrast she defines the mountains, a less developed and less modern region. Complementary to the fact that identity is a relational phenomenon, we have to acknowledge the fact that people hold multiple identities (cf. Ghorashi 2003).

The fact that Siquijodnon often feel they are stigmatised is, overall, seen by themselves as negative. It holds them back from the economic progress that they would so love to make. It is, however, sometimes used to their own advantage as well. Ifi recalled a situation in which she and her friends used the fear other Filipino's hold towards Siquijor to reach a goal. The intention was to make a man stop calling and harassing one of Ifi's friends. This man came from Cebu island. Ifi and her friends made use of the stereotypes and fear that Filipino's overall have with anybody that has a relation with Siquijor. They threatened this man with the use of *bárang* on him if he did not stop harassing the woman. They did this with the help of a text message in which they explicitly mentioned that they came from Siquijor. "We never heard from this man again! And we don't even know how to use *bárang*, they are just so scared!" Ifi told me in between a lot of laughter that this memory clearly triggered[68].

The discourse mystique is thus situationally applied in certain situations in order to achieve a goal. More often than this example, the discourse is used in a different way. Siquijodnon commodify the essentialised cultural traits ascribed to them by others. They try to take away the fear that comes along with it, without loosing the special self identity that is related to the discourse (see chapter two). They do this, for example, to attract tourists (Filipino's and foreigners alike). They use the discourse to show the special identity of the island and its inhabitants with quotes like 'heal your senses' and 'the mystical island'. So far, these attempts don't seem to influence the way Filipino's think about Siquijor. It does, however, seem to work on foreign tourists.

4.3 Modernity versus Tradition

In this chapter, I tried to show how the relational aspect of identity construction plays a role in the way Siquijodnon see themselves and place themselves within a larger region (the Philippine nation-state). The four conditions O'Rourke describes, which are addressed in chapter three, are therefore not enough to analyse a community. Siquijodnon identify themselves and include and exclude people from the community in relation to others. Others that, due to processes of globalisation, come 'closer' to Siquijor and Siquijodnon. This is the case because Siquijodnon start to travel more, which brings them literally closer to others, but also for example via the Internet.

Paradoxically, rather than bringing Siquijodnon closer to their fellow countrymen, these globalisation processes seem to have enlarged a gap and the differences that separate them. The imagination that Appadurai (1996) defines can indeed bring people closer together. It unites people because they can share their imaginations. It can, however, also enlarge a gap between people. The increase of information made it easier for Filipino's to share their imaginaries towards Siquijor. This does indeed bring other Filipino's closer together but in turn increases the social distance between them and the Siquijodnon. This increase of social distance is besides the imaginaries, reflected and created by the increasing awareness of Siquijodnon about the stigmatisation of other Filipino's towards them.

As we saw in chapter one, urban legends can be defined by the warning they contain. According to Miller: "urban legends depicts a folk method of commenting on or warning people about dangers, inherent in modern urban life, that pose a threat to a more a basic, traditional life" (1992: 384). Seeing urban legend in this way, it appears the stories Filipino's share with each other cannot be urban legends for it is the more modern -more connected to the outside world- areas of the country that perceive the more 'traditional' island of Siquijor as a threat and not the other way around. The definition of Best and Horiuchi[69] (1985) appears better to fit the social reality regarding Siquijor and the way it is perceived by the rest of the Philippines: it is a clash of a modern versus a traditional life-style, but in this case, other than on Siquijor, it is the modern lifestyle that feels threatened by the traditional one.

Siquijodnon perceive the distance created by narratives (that are now more easily spread), as a threat to their (economic) development. They want to modernise. They see (on television, newspapers, Internet *etcetera*) that other area's of the country evolve, attract tourists and have more money to spend. They are, therefore, aware of their own economic lag. In order to do something about the economic lag but, in the same time about the social distance, they use the 'big happy family' and the 'peace and quiet' that they ascribe to themselves as characteristics, as a mask for the bad, dark side of the mystique discourse. At the same time, they try to evolve the stigma's Filipino's have and give the island a more friendly character. The constructed but essentialised dichotomy between good and bad, as was mentioned in chapter two, shows its relevance

and importance for Siquijodnon here. By applying the discourse situationally, they cope with the perceived stigma's of other Filipino's and other people that reach the island in a globalising world. Rather than replacing their old believes and practices regarding *manambal* and *mambabárang*, they use them to cope with contemporary challenges (cf. Junker in Mascunana and Mascunana 2004).

57. The first person that referred to Siquijor as "the virgin island" was Pipes in february 2009. After that time, I heard this statement everywhere around the island as soon as the topic of conversation involved tourism.
58. Informal conversation with Tessie in April 2009.
59. I met this man on a trip to Luzon in May 2009.
60. www.mysiquijor.com
    www.ShamansOfSiquijor.blogspot.com
61. Siquijor: Mystic island (2007). Directed by Mark Philipp Espina.
62. Informal conversation with Eden in April 2009.
63. With modern, the inhabitants of Siquijodnon mean more economic activity and, therefore, more money to spend.
64. This statement was expressed in multiple conversations during the research period. Ernie, Ayda, Ifi, Pipes and Charles are amongst the people that mentioned this.
65. This statement was expressed in multiple conversations during the research period. Charles, the grandmother of Froilyn and Judy are amongst the people that mentioned this.
66. Informal conversation with Ayan in April 2009.
67. Informal conversation with Tessie on 18-02-2009.
68. Semi-structured interview with Ifi on 11-02-2009.
69. See page 27.

Harbour of Cebu, where the boats leave for Siquijor.

THE INFLUENCE OF NARRATIVES

Siquijor, over the last decades, changed from a relatively small isolated island, to an island that is well known within the Philippine nation-state. Siquijor became more closely linked with other islands of the archipelago thanks to processes of globalisation. Especially the Internet plays a substantial role in this connection. The well known and widely discussed time-space compression would suggest that the 'distance' between Siquijor and other islands would therefore shrink. Obviously, the real distance did not shrink, but the expected social distance that existed between Siquijodnon and other Filipino's did not shrink either. The contrary is true, it grew to the extent that we can now talk of an imaginary boundary between Siquijodnon and their fellow countrymen. The social distance might have existed before as well, the difference is created by the fact that Siquijodnon are now more aware of this distance, this boundary, because they have more contact with other Filipino's.

Other Filipino's ascribe a special identity to the community of Siquijor. They mainly define Siquijodnon as being of little significance accept for the cultural traits related to the *manambal* and *mambabárang* (Dumont, 1995). These cultural traits inspire fear of the island and its inhabitants that leads to the 'othering' of Siquijodnon. In Siquijor itself, the inhabitants ascribe a special identity to themselves as well. Besides the fact that the special identity creates fear on the island, Siquijodnon see the the special identity besides that as an asset. The special identity is created and reflected by the mystique discourse. A discourse that proved to be able to unite the dichotomy that appears to exist between the 'bad' and the 'good' side of the special identity. Rather than trying to defeat the 'bad' side, the link the discourse has with Catholicism makes it possible to neutralise the 'bad' side (cf. Meyer, 1998).

The discourse mystique is reflected and created by different kind of narratives, each of which adds to the discourse in its own way. This happens, as this thesis showed, by either spreading a warning or by making a shared orientation about things possible. Narratives, therefore, need to be understood as 'useful' rather than 'truth'. Narratives can be divided between myth and urban legend on the one hand, and rumor and gossip on the other. Normally this division is made because myth and urban legend are in theory associated with a positive influence on community cohesion while rumor and gossip are seen as enhancing 'fractures' within a society (Rozema, 2009). Within this thesis, it was established that myth and urban legend help Siquijodnon to create and reflect a social imaginary about themselves, it gives them a sense of self, a sense of special identity. In this case, myth and urban legend can indeed be regarded as sustaining community cohesion. Besides myth and urban legend, rumor and gossip showed their importance within the community. Rumour and gossip can support community cohesion, for example by triggering social action, but they can also redefine fraction boundaries for they reflect and create differences between Siquijodnon.

The 'usefulness' of the mystique discourse thus becomes clear. First of all, the discourse is 'useful' on the island itself by creating a sense of community. A community that is seen as a 'big happy family' that is special, 'peaceful', and 'quiet'. Besides that, however, the discourse is 'useful' to Siquijodnon for it helps them to cope with the

challenges that contemporary life presents them: social disconnectedness and a feeling of exclusion from the rest of the Philippines. Siquijodnon apply the mystique discourse situationally when they feel this is helpful. Sometimes they essentialise and commodify the mysterious characters of the discourse in order to attract, for example, tourists. In other times, they apply it to keep people 'out' of their social lives. Besides that, the mystique discourse also provides the inhabitants with a sense of a 'big happy family' that is peaceful and quiet. Two characteristics that are often used in the battle against the stigmatisation by other Filipino's for they provide Siquijodnon with a 'better' identity than their fellow countrymen.

The mystique discourse, however, also has some negative influences on the Siquijor community. As was mentioned above, the discourse also contains a 'bad' side that can create fear. By the use of rumour and gossip, this fear is expressed by Siquijodnon. Because not all the inhabitants of Siquijor participate in the same rumour and gossip networks, these expressions of fear create social distance on the island itself as well. Even though Siquijodnon themselves undercommunicate this social distance, it thus influence the way they perceive their own social environment. With relation to the rest of the Philippines, Siquijodnon feel the discourse creates stigma which Siquijodnon link to the island as being 'virgin'. They feel the mono-cultural notion that other Filipino's hold about them forms an obstacle for their island to modernise.

This shows that, to understand the complete influence that narratives have on community cohesion and social imaginaries, a combination of myth, urban legends and the intellectual and functional approach towards rumour and gossip needs to be used (cf. Stewart and Strathern, 2004). A combination of these different narratives is of importance for each have their own influence on community cohesion. Besides this, this thesis showed the importance of looking at identity as a relational phenomenon (Barth, 1969). The four preconditions that O'Rourke described for a group of people to be regarded as a community were very useful during this research. In addition, I agree with O'Rourke that we cannot just assume that locality automatically implies a community. This thesis, however, also showed the importance of others within the process of identity formation. Something that lacks in O'Rourke's theory (2004). Another theoretical aspect that needs to be complemented is the concept 'imagination'. To conclude this thesis, I would like to point at the concept of imagination. As Appadurai (1996) showed, imagination became a social practice that can unite people because they can form a common mind. I would like to stress that because the imagination unites people, it therefore has also the ability to enlarge distances between people when the common mind focuses on 'othering' of people.

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GLOSSARY

Bárang	Bárang is one of the things that mambabárang do with the intention to harm a victim. The mambabárang has the power over insects that he instructs to enter the victims body with the intention to eat its intestines. If bárang is not treated within a certain amount of time, the victim will die from the injuries.
Barangay	A Barangay is the smallest political subdivision in the country (Dumont 1984). On Siquijor, the barangay often consists of one or a few extended families.
Bolo-Bolo	Bolo-Bolo is a healing technique used by some manambal. A glass jar is used which the manambal fills with clear water and a healing stone. A straw (sometimes brass, sometimes wood) is used to blow bubbles into the water. This is done while moving the jar over the injured/sick parts of the patients body. It is believed that the patients complaint leaves the body and appears in the water. When the water becomes turbid, the healing works. The actions need to be repeated with fresh water until the water stays clear.
Manambal	A manambal is a person with occult powers. More often than not, these powers are received from a Catholic saint, but sometimes people are believed to be born with their powers. In that case, the occult powers are inherited from a mother or a father. The occult powers are used to heal people. Different manambal heal in different ways. In order to heal people, the manambal uses spiritual guidance (the ones that inherited their powers as well) and extensive knowledge of the healing powers of natural phenomenon. Manambal often provide their services for free. It is believed that payments for their healing reverses the healing effect.
mambabárang	A mambabárang is a person with malign powers. These powers are granted to them by a spirit. Other than the manambal, the mambabárang uses its powers for bad intentions (hurting or killing people) as well as healing. In return for the granted malign powers, the mambabárang is believed to have to make a deadly victim at least every once a year. People can request the service of a mambabárang in return for payments.

APPENDIX

In paragraph 2.1 it was established that myth can be understood as a social construction. It is the purpose of this appendix to elaborate on the way myth is the bearer of meaning. This function of the myth makes it possible to serve as a communication system or as a message within society. Myth is a way of signifying and in the same time it is a shape. Therefore, myth is part of the study of semiology and according to Barthes, myth is a second-order semiological system. Where semiology of the first-order focuses on a linguistic system, the everyday language or language-object, semiology of the second-order focuses on another language, the metalanguage. Metalanguage is the language of the myth. It speaks about the language-object and transforms this language to serve the purpose of the myth.

Both, the first- and the second-order of the semiological system, focus on the relation between the signifier and the signified. Once the signifier has been ascribed meaning to, it becomes a sign. The difference between the signifier and the sign is that the latter is full where the first one, the signifier, is empty. These systems overlap once the sign of the first-order becomes signifier of the second-order. On the one hand the sign/signifier is a shape in the sense that it is empty and waiting to be signified (in the second-order), on the other hand, it is full and therefore a sign in the language-object. By becoming a shape, the sign empties and impoverishes. The story the sign used to tell within the language-object is now forgotten and makes way for the shape of the metalanguage.
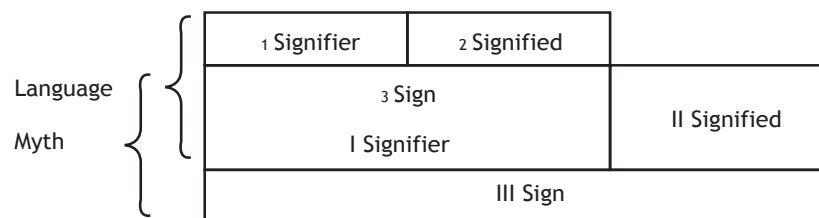
Source: Barthes, Mythologieën, 1957

This ambiguity that the linguistic system of the myth represents, has two consequences for the significance the myth holds. The first consequence is its representation as a notification. The second is its determination. The ambiguity of the sign, that in the metalanguage only represents a signifier, gives it the ability to present itself as a notification. The relation between the signifier and the signified in the language-object is completely forgotten. The sign is stripped of human influence and is therefore naturalized; it is now just 'true' and it is confident and determined of this fact. Because of this ambiguity, the myth can never give the total image of what it represents. To do so would destroy the myth. It therefore prefers to give incomplete and impoverished images. As was mentioned in paragraph 2.1, the main function of the myth is to strip itself of any human influence or history; to naturalize the image. Only then it can claim the ability to represent a truth. It is however a misconception if you blame the myth of hiding information. It doesn't hide the history or the human influence, it transforms it into Nature.