

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

A Study of A Filipino Community: The Dynamics of Power in a Philippine Municipality

Review Author: F. Landa Jocano

Philippine Studies vol. 12, no. 2 (1964): 371–374

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

truthful advertising, Fr. Garrett shows, on the one hand, why there will always be room for legitimate disagreement as to what is truthful or deceptive as long as human communication remains dynamic, while, on the other hand, how an analysis of the advertisers' and public's viewpoints paves the way towards a desirable meeting of minds as well as towards practical reform measures. Fr. Garrett rightly highlights the need for a serious consideration of the moral responsibility of business, both individual and social, in what he calls this "age of the buck-passer." But since the businessman stands at the center of a network of relationships, the author's necessary clarification of the nature of man, business, and society throws light on the difficult question of assigning responsibility to the various agents in society. Fr. Garrett devotes a whole chapter on the value and meaningfulness of work because he believes that today "a man's ideas about work are decisive in creating that ethos which will penetrate, modify and color all his business decisions."

In the second and major portion of the book, the author adopts a many-sided reflective approach depending on the specific major problem under consideration. In his interesting treatment of expense accounts and the obligation to pay taxes, he argues to general moral principles that can be applied to typical moral cases. In the illuminating chapters on the morality of business power to influence public opinion and create wasteful human needs, Fr. Garrett tries to explore and clarify key problems and attempts to formulate intermediate principles of solution. He invites further study and research by calling attention to the limitations of mechanical business techniques and to the new moral problems arising in the field of personality testing and of executive decision-making by computers. Finally he points out the ethical usefulness of professional business associations and codes of ethics. When all is said and done, Christian charity in business has still the last word in Fr. Garrett's scholarly but very readable book. By way of a quick summary, two questionnaires to check one's moral sincerity and integrity in business are appended to the book. *Ethics in Business* is a "must" for every well-intentioned businessman who prizes moral values above mere profits and sincerely believes that in the long run good ethics is good business.

VITALIANO R. GOROSPE

A STUDY OF A FILIPINO COMMUNITY

THE DYNAMICS OF POWER IN A PHILIPPINE MUNICIPALITY. By Mary R. Hollnsteiner. Diliman, Q.C.: Community Development Research Council, University of the Philippines, 1963. xv, 227 pp.

This slim volume has lived up to its title and has competently met its expressed aim. It is indeed a welcome contribution to community studies in the Philippines. Sociologists, anthropologists, extension workers, and laymen can learn much from Prof. Hollnsteiner's penetrating analysis of the dynamics of power in the municipality of Hulo.

The first part of this book spells out the author's conceptual frame of what constitutes peasant society, how it is structured, and at which end of Robert Redfield's folk-urban continuum shall the community studied be properly placed. The second chapter describes the setting of the study. This is followed by chapters on the political background of Hulo, social structure and power, political interaction, power and community associations, cooperation in community, and search for the power elite. The last chapter, which forms the conclusion, discusses the implications of power structure for community development. A note on methodology is appended.

It is exhilarating to note that at last Philippine community studies have come up with a noteworthy monograph which combines an excellent presentation and analysis of the data. In the past, most sociological writings on Filipino community are either submerged in statistical tables which make the materials unreadable to a non-statistician or they are plainly descriptive to the point that the monographs are boring. Hollnsteiner's Hulo study is a fresh breath!

In attempting to put Hulo on a solid theoretical footing, however, Prof. Hollnsteiner seems to have succumbed, as many other social scientists do, to the temptation of looking for "nice" models against which her materials have to be analyzed. Thus, she has preoccupied herself (and apparently struggled) with the question of what is a peasant society, with Redfield's folk-urban continuum and with the meaning of the term "community," without which the monograph would still be very good. This striving towards universal applicability of Hulo materials makes one feel that the data is being forced into some kind of theoretical straight-jacket.

First, folk-urban dichotomy represents an "either-or" type of proposition. In this respect, it is rather too inadequate a conceptual apparatus with which to deal with problems involving spatial dimensions. While it is convenient to define a society as either folk (peasant) or urban society, it is not being realistic to assume that all societies are found at either end of this continuum. There are societies which do not qualify in either category but which are marginal to both. How would one account for these societies? An uncritical acceptance of this model, therefore, leads one to duplicate its shortcomings in the interpretation of the data.

Second, from the descriptive data, Hulo appears to have certain qualities of a peasant society different from Redfield's sense of the

word, and yet from the dynamics of its power-structure and other relational features it is more urban than anything else. In defining Hulo's position in this regard, the author admits that the community "is probably much closer to urban end of the continuum than most Philippine communities" (p. 7). Where does Hulo's "peasant-ness" end and where does its "urban-ness" begin? This is not explicitly revealed. Apparently the author is aware of this problem. For to escape the "choice-dilemma" she argues, making reference to Eric Wolf's Latin American studies (1955), that "peasant societies retain many characteristics of a traditional subsistence economy while actively taking part in a commercial, market economy" (p. 5). But this hardly clarifies the position of Hulo in the continuum.

On the other hand, the analysis of the interaction process among the members of the community, the relationship between the elite and the masses, the *modus operandi* of politicians and the relevance of social system in explaining the dynamics of power in Hulo is competently handled.

The reviewer agrees with the author that if proponents of directed change are to be successful, they must be aware of the "dynamics of community action so they can gear their programs to existing patterns of behavior as well as those patterns likely to arise with the introduction of various innovations" (p. 2). Hollnsteiner's study has provided the reader with critical insights into Hulo's power structure and how this structure dovetails with the existing socio-cultural system. Among the many constructs which she used as background in analyzing the nature of "political interaction" in Hulo are: kinship (consanguineal and affinal), ritual kinship, alliance system, *utang na loob* (reciprocity) and *hiya* (self-esteem). All of these function in an overlapping manner that any action occurring in one area tends to generate a series of reactions in others. For example, a person who shamed another is construed to have shamed the entire kin-group of the latter. He therefore has to "square accounts" with more than one individual. Similarly, a man who incurs an *utang na loob* "builds up a continuous series of *utang na loob* relationship" (p. 79). Against this background, the voter "is thus required to weigh all the relevant circumstances and place all claimants for this vote in an hierarchy of *utang na loob* creditors. The values of his society dictate that the one highest on the list should gain his support. Behaviorally, however, expediency often supplants *utang na loob* as the decisive factor" (p. 80).

One point is in order in this connection. Throughout the volume the integrative functions of *utang na loob* and *hiya* have been emphasized. Their dysfunctional aspects are only hinted. Clifford Geertz (1955:33) has questioned the adequacy of functional approach, especially in dealing with social change. He argued that the "inability of functional theory to cope with change lies in its failure to

treat sociological and cultural processes on equal terms; almost inevitably one of the two is either ignored or is sacrificed to become but a simple reflex, a 'mirror image,' of the other."

The dysfunctional aspect of such cultural processes as *utang na loob* and *hiya*, as correlates to the dynamics of power in Hulo, has apparently been sacrificed in favor of their functional aspects, thus creating a bias in favor of "well-integrated" society in a stable equilibrium (is Hulo really?) and an impression similar to what Geertz calls "timeless structural pictures." On the basis of our own field-work, the reviewer hesitates to affirm the "positive" role of *utang na loob* and *hiya* as moral regulators of behavior. They also function as disruptive, disintegrative, and "transformative" mechanisms that allow change to take place in the existing behavior pattern in society.

On the whole, however, this book is an important contribution to knowledge of a segment of our culture (power-structure) and it will undoubtedly be very useful in broadening the perspective of community workers. The section on research methodology is excellent.

F. LANDA JOCANO

A PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

SHADOWS ON THE LAND: An Economic Geography of the Philippines. By Robert E. Huke *et. al.* Manila: Bookmark, 1963. xi, 428 pp.

This is a college textbook in the economic geography of the Philippines. There has been a nagging hunger for this kind of work and Professor Huke's manual goes a good way towards relieving it. Apart from Hugo Miller's high school text of the thirties and Spencer's book *Land and Peoples in the Philippines of the Early Fifties*, students have had little to dip into except sources of uneven quality on single topics.

Several chapters are the work of contributors aptly chosen for their expertise in special fields: Florencio Tamesis on forests, Jose Barcelon on minerals and mining, Claro Martin on fisheries, Alfredo Barrera on soils, Professors Luna, Reed and Salina on manufacturing, tobacco and corn, and agricultural problems respectively. The topical structure of the book lends itself readily to this kind of conjoint effort; the chapters are reasonably well integrated. Incidentally, it surprises the reader that Dean Tamesis, whose appreciation of the value of Philippine woods matches his rare knowledge of them, has not fumed and erupted over the irresponsible,