

# philippine studies

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

---

## **PACD in the Barrio: Focus on the Barrio**

Review Author: Juan E. Montenegro

*Philippine Studies* vol. 8, no. 3 (1960): 644—648

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](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

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

# Book Reviews

## PACD IN THE BARRIO

**FOCUS ON THE BARRIO.** By Jose V. Abueva. Manila, Institute of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1959. xxviii, 527p.

This is an extended case study of the formulation of the Philippine community development program during the first two years of the Magsaysay administration. Its author, Professor Jose V. Abueva, heads the Research Division of the Institute of Public Administration of the University of the Philippines. He sets a high standard of scholarly research for the seven subsequent studies which the Institute faculty is preparing under the aegis of the Rockefeller Foundation.

In the opening chapter, "Conspectus", the author states the purpose of his study in these words: "We shall attempt to reconstruct as vividly and realistically as we can, the details of our story of how individuals and groups (agencies or institutions) interacted so as to influence the form and substance of the Philippine Community Development Program. We shall try to recapture the actual setting of their activities and to provide insight into their motivations." At the outset of his study the author does well to carefully define and point out the similarities as well as the differences of the principal terms he uses, thus avoiding a common source of confusion and irritation not only among professional practitioners and field workers, but also among the barrio people to whom such technical term as "community development", "rural reconstruction", "barrio improvement" and the like, have become ordinary household expressions, often connoting some benevolent movement sponsored by the government that will eventually extend to them some of the services and amenities of the "better life" that the bigger towns and cities enjoy. The author accepts the "official definition" of community development as "a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with the active partici-

pation and largely upon the initiative of the community." This is a very abstract definition and it will hardly mean anything to barrio people accustomed to think and express themselves in very concrete terms. The author improves somewhat upon the so-called "official definition" when he spells out the precise and restricted meaning of community development as he employs it in his analysis: "Community development designates the efforts that are consciously and rationally aimed at effecting change in the values, attitudes, and behavior of the people so as to make them self-reliant, resourceful, civic-and-community-conscious, and democratic in outlook." He uses the terms "barrio reconstruction" and "rural development" in a generic sense, i.e., "they refer to programs, projects or activities designed to improve the social and economic and cultural conditions in the rural areas, regardless of whether or not the distinctive objectives of community development, as defined above, are being sought."

The case study follows a chronological order according to a four-stage conception of the evolutionary process of the government's community development program, namely: (1) the recognition of the economic and social problems of the rural areas right to the point where it leads to action; (2) the formulation of various proposals for their solution by competing administrators and the agencies they represented; (3) the establishment of an administrative agency to devote full time to administration of the policy and program, i.e., the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD), which refers both to the administrator and the coordinating agency he heads; and (4) the initial implementation of the PACD program. These stages are not always followed in their time sequence, but the author manages to give a fairly coherent and readable account of the leading personalities and the crucial events that ultimately led to the appointment of the first Presidential Assistant on Community Development on January 6, 1956, in the person of the competent young administrator, Attorney Ramon Binamira.

We wish to comment briefly on the relative merits and limitations of the case-study approach used by Mr. Abueva. The case study is a useful tool in social science research and a necessary preliminary to the formulation of types and generalizations. It is a systematic way of ordering relevant data with a view to preserving the unitary character of the subject or problem under study. It merely picks out and treats some defined object or process as a *whole*. This whole constitutes the case unit which may involve any level or base of abstraction. The case may be any aspect of empirical reality reacted to as a unit; it may be a person, a group, a concrete set of relationships, or, as in Mr. Abueva's study, a specific process: the crystallization of the Philippine community development program. The wholeness or unitary character ascribed to this concrete case is a *construct*. There are no concrete limits to the process

under observation. The only limits imposed reflect the perspective and special scientific interest of the reporting researcher. The limits defining an individual may be "dissolved" when the researcher is observing from the perspective of the group. In turn the limits defining the group may be dissolved when he is conceptualizing in terms of a social or political framework. All the limits are thus constructs delimited for pragmatic purposes. Whatever unit has been abstracted out may be examined and described in its uniqueness. This, we submit, is what the author of FOCUS has done in his case study, and the descriptive work he has produced contains a wealth of well-documented data and makes a valuable contribution to the scanty literature on Philippine political and public administration as a science. It will also be of considerable interest to the practitioner and student of social service programs who may be looking for a good background to the PACD story. We would merely caution the unwary reader, in the interest of generally accepted social-science methodology, that the collection of the facts and the interpretation given them in this case study merely describe; they do not have (and doubtless the author does not intend them to have) probatory value in the scientific sense.

The complex and intricate relationships between "politics" and "administration", between those to whom the author refers as the "men of knowledge", whose principal role was to draw up proposals based on objective criteria, and those whom he calls the "men of power", that is, those who actually exercised authority to make final decisions on the various proposals submitted, are revealed in this study in a way which shows the unreality of drawing too sharp a distinction between their mutually complementary functions. The author, however, goes on further to suggest that "it is necessary for us to put aside the artificial separation of 'politics' (as policy making) and 'administration' (as policy execution) which is suggested by the traditional tripartite division of governmental functions." The reviewer cannot bring himself to accept the author's assertion that "in a most telling way, the whole administrative process described in our study supports the theory cited in modern public administration literature that bureaucrats (non-elective administrators and specialists) are directly engaged, not only in policy execution, but often also in policy making and policy control" (p. 442). Frankly we do not see, and the author has not shown us in his study, just how, while preserving our democratic institutions and procedures, we can adopt the theory he advocates without coming perilously close to an autocratic or totalitarian form of either absolute state control or something approaching bureaucratic anarchy. We do not want to create the impression that the author so much as indirectly suggests some kind of totalitarian system to handle both the political and administrative affairs of our country. Nothing

could possibly be more foreign to his thought and purpose in this book. We had hoped, however, that he would back up the rather tempting theory he advocates with sufficient convincing evidence to show us that it stands a good chance of working out and solving the all-too-frequently fruitless squabbles between the legislative and the executive officials of our democratic system.

A "fascinating sidelight of this case study", as Prof. Ferrel Heady points out in his foreword to the book, "is the information it contains concerning the political personality and administrative work habits of President Magsaysay.... His performance as a chief administrator was a reflection of his personality and his preference for methods of direct action. Unorthodox and somewhat unpredictable in administrative activities, his talents in this area have been of considerable debate." Indeed, the behind-the-scenes description provided by the writer's vivid style gives the reader an authentic picture of the late President's dynamic leadership and his intimate involvement in community development issues. This study also offers abundant and impartial data for an evaluation of President Magsaysay's performance as an administrative leader and his lasting contributions to the Filipino nation.

Another value of the study is its objective treatment of the delicate question of the involvement of technical assistance agencies of both the United Nations and the United States in developing an integrated program of rural improvement in the Philippines. Some public officials are often too vocal in their expressions of resentment of what they regard as undue meddling by "outsiders" in the purely internal affairs and problems of the Philippine government. The author presents a commendably balanced view of the significant yet secondary roles played by these organizations in program-planning and operational decision-making as the community development program evolved.

As the PACD program moves into the final phase of its five-year plan we eagerly look forward to a follow-up study by the author or one of his colleagues. In the last analysis the test of the PACD Program will be its effectiveness in achieving its many worthwhile objectives. Of equal, if not greater, significance and far-reaching value than the present study would be a thorough and honest evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the PACD structural organization, as well as its operational methods in the light of reliable research findings based on the actual performance of the policies and projects designed and adopted by PACD to realize the ultimate ends of its program. We have good reason to expect that the spotlight and focus of this coming study will indeed be on the Filipino barrio and its people (for the focus of attention of this first study is not really on the barrio but rather the PACD). We may then

come to know to what extent and how well the main emphasis of the PACD Program — “the promotion of the organized efforts of the people in the barrios, villages, and municipalities, to help themselves in discovering and acting upon their common interests, needs, and problems” — has actually been realized.

JUAN E. MONTENEGRO

## CEBUANO BISAYA

ANALYSIS OF THE SYNTAX AND THE SYSTEM OF AFFIXES IN THE BISAYA' LANGUAGE FROM CEBU. By J. D. v. d. Berg, M. S. C. Translated by G. Trienekens, M. S. C. [Mimeographed for private circulation by the Sacred Heart Fathers, Surigao]. 1958. 174p.

The author in his introduction indicates that this monograph is the result of the analysis of some 4000 lines of Bisaya' text which were taken from issues of the magazine BISAYA in 1953. The purpose of the monograph is “to help our young priests, giving them a *first introduction* into a foreign language so utterly strange to them.” The author has added other examples given by fellow missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The Reverend G. Trienekens, M. S. C. translated the Dutch text. We owe a debt of gratitude to the author, his translator and their fellow missionaries for a much needed analysis of Cebuano.

Primarily the reviewer would like to commend the author for his careful analysis in terms of the Cebuano itself rather than in the traditional terms of European language structure so often used by those describing Philippine languages. The analysis clearly demonstrates the Cebuano to have a structure quite different from Indo-European languages. Hence in order to describe it, one must at times use “terms made *ad hoc*”. However, “modern linguistic terms and symbols...have been avoided as much as possible.” Perhaps a few modern linguistic terms would have been helpful in clearing up difficult points.

Basically the material is divided into two parts; syntax and morphology. A thirteen-page introduction gives a general definition of terms, outlines and illustrates the phonemes of the language, and indicates something of the syllable structure of word bases. A three-vowel system of *a*, *i*, and *u* is indicated with the suggestion that each of the vowels is composed of various allophones. An indication of what these allophones are and their distribution would be helpful.