

# philippine studies

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

---

## **The Urban Filipino Worker, by Torres**

Review Author: Henry M. Schwalbenberg

*Philippine Studies* vol. 39, no. 2 (1991): 250

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 27 13:30:20 2008

Southeast Asia, to the entire western Pacific, and therefore to the security of the Philippines as well" (p. 30).

Lecturing Filipinos and reminding them of what is good for them is precisely the kind of colonial mentality that should be avoided as the two nations negotiate the future of the bases. Greene is either unaware of, or insensitive to, the changes that have occurred on the Philippine scene. There is a new generation of Filipinos with a sense of values very different from their elders. They realize that the bases just perpetuate the unequal Philippine-American relationship that has spanned nearly a century. At the same time, they are amenable to a relationship that does not reinforce the advantages of the stronger partner and the exploitation of the weaker one.

Berry's piece, which should have been the lead article, considering it deals with the larger context of Philippine-American relations, is a much better and more sensitive presentation of a delicate issue. First, it correctly notes that as the 1950s ended, "certain changes were evident within the Philippines" increasingly questioning the "special relationship" with the Americans and the Filipinos' subordinate position in that equation. Second, Berry appropriately points out that a new Filipino pride has developed after the 1986 "people power revolution," making Filipinos feel good about themselves for overthrowing an unpopular regime and installing a popular presidency in its stead. This profound national pride must be appreciated, Berry asserts. It will be in the U.S. interest for its negotiators to understand the history of the various issues involved. They must also recognize the differences in "threat perception" and should be "familiar with the expectations the Philippine leaders and public have about the value of the bases to their country, and to the region at this particular time in their history" (p. 152). Berry has a much deeper insight than Greene in analyzing the problem at hand.

Bowen's article is almost totally a factual presentation of the numerous facilities at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay and alternatives to current basing arrangements. It is helpful in exploring the cost and political feasibility considerations of moving the bases elsewhere in the region if this were to be the judgement of US leaders following negotiations with their Filipino counterparts.

Belinda A. Aquino  
Departments of Political Science  
and Public Administration  
University of the Philippines

THE URBAN FILIPINO WORKER IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING SOCIETY. By Amaryllis Tiglaos Torres. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1988. 135 pages.

In *The Urban Filipino Worker in an Industrializing Society*, Dr. Amaryllis Torres analyzes the structural shift from agriculture to manufacturing that most developing economies are experiencing. She does her analysis, however, from a psychological perspective. Her focus is on the individual semiskilled worker

and her laboratory is a garments factory just outside of the Metropolitan Manila area.

Dr. Torres' book consists of nine chapters. Early on she gives a portrait of Filipino culture, with an emphasis on kinship, social expectations, and social acceptance. She next describes the workers in her anonymous garments firm in terms of standard demographics as well as belief and value orientations. Finally she analyzes the relationship between industrial activity and various value orientations. From my reading of the book it would seem that at least in this particular factory Filipino values are still strong despite the effects of industrialization and so called modernization.

In my interpretation of Dr. Torres' work, Filipino values and belief systems have had the effect of humanizing the industrialization process. Throughout the book the author demonstrates quite convincingly from her data that "work in the factory is a means of living [and] is dissociated with what has meaning in life (p. 71)." But she also shows that workers are for the most part satisfied with their situation due in large part to cultural norms governing interpersonal relationships. A person's alienation from his or her work seems to have been widespread in all industrializing societies beginning with England's industrial revolution. But unlike the dismal and destructive alienation of England's working class as depicted by Dickens, the Filipino experience seems to be quite different. Therefore, Torres' analysis can be used to argue that the Filipino psyche has been very resilient in adapting to the contingencies of the modern era.

Although attacks on the Filipino psyche and culture abound, these criticisms ought to be weighed carefully. A culture very much concerned with interpersonal relationships can give rise to all sorts of economic inefficiencies. Nonetheless, I personally would prefer the cost of these inefficiencies, knowing that should economic disaster strike I would be protected by my immersion in a Filipino kinship structure. The alternative, it would appear to me, is the efficient and infamous poor houses of England's industrial revolution.

Henry M. Schwalbenberg  
Economics Department  
Fordham University, New York

FIVE GREAT MISSIONARY EXPERIMENTS AND CULTURAL ISSUES IN ASIA. By Miguel A. Bernad, S.J. Cardinal Bea Studies, XI. Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1991. xii + 181 pages.

From the very beginning the disciples of Jesus have felt impelled to share with others the Good News that Jesus shared with them. They have done this often with great heroism, sometimes in ways that starkly contradict Jesus' message, sometimes with remarkable and painstaking sensitivity to other cultures and religions. In *Five Great Missionary Experiments* Miguel Bernad has chronicled some of the outstanding (and, it might be added, in the best sense jesuitical) examples of sensitive and "inculturated" evangelization.