

Introduction

MAPPING THE PHILIPPINES in the context of a rising Asia has been the subject of multidisciplinary inquiries that seek to problematize the implications of such an emergence on Philippine culture, development, and politics. However, the phenomenon of emerging Asian communities in contemporary Philippine society has not been given the scholarly scrutiny it deserves.

In particular, Filipino out-migration has traditionally received substantial attention in research while foreign in-migration and its analytical texture need more exploration. To fill this gap, the Asian Center embarked on an institutional project funded by the Asian Center Research Grant. One outcome of the research activities between 2012 and 2014, under the general coordination of Dr. Tina Clemente, is this special issue of *Asian Studies*. While the communities featured in the research represent the major areas of Asian Studies specializations at the Asian Center, the approaches and themes are by no means exhaustive.

Guided by the bold notion of “Asia in the Philippines” vis-à-vis the “Philippines in Asia,” the articles in this issue look into case studies on Japanese, Chinese, Indian, West Asian, and Indonesian communities in the Philippines. The representation of these varied communities and the range of research questions seek to contribute to a nuanced study of foreign migration and diaspora in the Philippines for academic and policy utility.

Employing qualitative research methodology and fieldwork conducted in 2013, the research sheds light on the important issues in each community. Yoneno-Reyes’s piece on language acquisition and multiculturalism among Japanese-Filipino children underscores the importance of having a good grasp of a mother-tongue on multilanguage proficiency. Clemente and Lagman consider evolving social and institutional dynamics in looking at the utilization of informal contracting in the Chinese community. Santarita focuses on the contributions of the Indian diaspora

in Philippine development through various Indian enterprises and new waves of Indian professionals. Sevilla brings to light the patterns of Iranian, Arab, Jewish, and Turkish migration, and glimpses into the profiles of these little-known groups. Talampas investigates issues of identity and community building among members of the Indonesian diaspora in southern Mindanao.

The articles interrogate the state of Asian communities in the Philippines in terms of migration and labor, human capital development, and community mobilization. It is hoped that the study enriches the understanding of interconnectedness between Filipinos with fellow Asians within the dynamics of Philippine society. It also provides a fresh perspective on how the peoples and cultures of Asian regional powers are represented in the localized setting of the Philippines, which is lately also considered one of the rising countries to watch in Southeast Asia.

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