

Introduction

(Post)Colonial Philippines: Local Politics, Global Mobilities

IT ALMOST GOES WITHOUT SAYING: colonialism and its legacies have indelibly affected the Philippines in a myriad of ways. And while this impact has already been the subject of much scholarship, this issue of *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia* gathers four new articles on the subject, exploring the effects of (post)colonialism on both local politics and the global mobilities of Filipinos.

On the one hand, colonialism has undoubtedly shaped Philippine local politics, with “local” having a two-fold meaning here: local as the opposite of the global, and local as a synonym of the rural. The former refers to domestic Philippine politics during the American colonial period, while the latter pertains to politics in the greater part of the country.

On the other hand, colonialism has irrevocably added a global dimension, as it were, to Philippine society. Today, thanks to globalization and migration, we study Philippine society as a space not just bound by the geography of the Philippine nation-state but also as a locus that incorporates and transcends national boundaries. Philippine Studies today has cast an eye on Filipinos all over the world, putting particular emphasis on migration and its various implications.

The articles in this issue capture the local/global dynamic of (post)colonialism. The first two capture the “global” dimension of contemporary Philippine society. In the lead article, John Lambino presents a new framework in analyzing Filipino migration to Japan between 1980 and 2010. Departing from the limitations of push-pull theories, Lambino presents an alternative framework—covering political and socioeconomic processes—to explain how and why Filipino migrants in Japan began as entertainers but eventually moved into the manufacturing sector.

Ruby Absuelo and Peter Hancock make the case for Weak Ties as the strongest determinant of employability of Filipinos in the United States.

Their study offers a valuable contribution to the ever-growing field not just of Filipino migration studies but also of Asian-American Studies. Their findings offer a wealth of implications, especially for policy makers in the Philippines, a nation known for its state-backed labor export program.

The third article takes us back to the Philippines, where an American import – Pentecostal Christianity – has figured significantly in rural politics. In his article, Chuan Yean Soon charts how Pentecostal Christians contrast the nonelitist, nonhierarchical, and participatory nature of their religion with the chaos and factionalism of what they call *pulitika*. Soon's article examines Christian Church Music and religious practices, among other things, to probe a field that traditional political science studies overlooks, and to look at political change, not from a national vantage point, but from a local perspective.

The last article on the Cabinet Crisis by Vicente Ybiernas explains that the conflict between Governor-General Leonard Wood and the Filipino politicians is better framed as a clash between the executive and legislative branches of the American colonial government. In so doing, Ybiernas gives us a way to analyze colonial politics beyond a colonizer-colonized framework. And though his work pertains to the Cabinet Crisis, the implications of his framework may be extended to other aspects of politics during the American colonial period.

The local-global dynamic captured in these articles remind us of what might be called the dialectic of globalization: that a global or regional perspective need not precluded the local or domestic, that processes such as imperialism and colonial have global as well as local implications; and, more importantly, that the local is deeply implicated in the global, and vice versa.

Janus Isaac V. NOLASCO
Managing Editor