

BOOK REVIEW

Sociology in the New Philippine Setting, by Socorro C. Espiritu, Chester L. Hunt, Luis Q. Lacar, Lourdes R. Quisumbing, and Mary R. Hollnsteiner (Quezon City, Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, Inc., 1977), 309 pages, ₱16.50.

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One of the greatest obstacles to teaching sociology in the Philippines is the lack of adequate source material. For this reason alone, the new edition of *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* will be a welcome addition to any sociology teacher's library and an *a priori* candidate for use as a student text. Luckily, however, the work of Espiritu, Hunt, Lacar, Quisumbing, and Hollnsteiner has more to recommend it than merely a lack of competition for the market. *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* is a well written book which, though it has its flaws, represents a clear improvement over the 1963 edition (Hunt *et al.*, 1963).

The need for a new edition of the text was clear. The Philippines has changed significantly since 1963 (hence the new title), as has the state of Philippine sociology. A glance at the author indexes of the two editions is instructive — the new edition lists such names as Amoyot, Arce, J. Bulatao, R. Bulatao, Carroll, Castillo, and dela Costa, (and that is only as far as the letter "C"), all of whom were ignored or given only a single citation in the earlier edition. Similarly, such diverse topics as Martial Law, ecumenicalism, facilitation of the naturalization of persons of Chinese origin, and the family planning movement are treated only in the 1976 edition (because, of course, these

social changes had yet to happen in 1963). Thus the authors have clearly made an effort to bring the materials from the earlier edition up to date.

A second advantage of the present edition lies in the fact that the book appears to be less general and wordy than the earlier one. More specific examples of concepts and theories are used and this edition seems to offer more in the way of scholarly content than the 1963 edition. There are, for example, more footnotes in the present volume than in the earlier one, despite the fact that *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* has 60 fewer pages.¹ Chapter topics have changed somewhat — probably for the better. The new edition combines two chapters ("Education" and "Politics") from the 1963 book into a new chapter on "Institutions," while dropping the chapters on "Industrialization" and "Social Work" altogether. A series of clever and insightful line drawings by Edgar Soller are also of help in making the visual format of the book more attractive. The style is generally clear and, avoiding as it does the pitfall of "Sociologese," should be understood by most students.

Given so many "pluses," *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* is definitely to be recommended for both class and personal use. This is not to say, however, that the book is devoid of shortcomings. Three criticisms, in particular, can be mentioned. First of all, a more imaginative format could have been employed. In particular, the use of "boxed inserts" of relevant research materials, class

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exercises, or simulation games and the like might have heightened student interest in the subject. Teachers interested in using the book as a sociology text should consider using Hollnsteiner *et al.*'s (1975) new set of introductory readings as a companion volume to the present one. Secondly, *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* can be faulted for ignoring, or for passing too lightly over, some of the core ideas of sociology. The section on social stratification, for example, makes little or no mention of such concepts as "poverty," "ideology," or "caste," while also ignoring Weber on the three dimensions of stratification and the functionalist-conflict debate on the cause of inequality. Similarly, the chapter on religion mentions neither Durkheim nor Marx, much less Berger or Bellah. Most of the central notions of sociology are dealt with competently, but the professional reader should expect to find some gaps and irregularities of emphasis in the material presented. Finally, the book appears to have a somewhat conservative bias. The conflict perspective in sociology is never introduced and Marx is treated quite briefly, only to be dismissed because his "predictions" were wrong. The politically conser-

vative functions of religion are ignored while the "social Gospel" receives a page. Land reform is taken up in the chapter on the rural community, only to have a number of "objections" raised against it. The word "exploitation" appears never to have been used in the book. In short, the text has not gone as far as it might have in exploring the realities of poverty and inequality in the modern-day Philippines (Hollnsteiner's excellent chapter on the urban community represents an exception to this generalization, however).²

These criticisms aside, it should again be stressed that the book represents a useful contribution to Philippine sociology. Many of the chapters (e.g., The Rural Community, The Urban Community, Population) are quite well done and the prolific use of Philippine material in the text should add considerably to student interest and enthusiasm. The art of textbook writing is an intricate one. If the authors of *Sociology in the New Philippine Setting* have occasionally fallen short of perfection, this must be attributed to the difficulties inherent in their task — not to a lack of ability, or of effort, on their part.

Notes

¹This, however, may be due largely to the fact that the 1976 edition uses smaller typeface.

²As a correlate to this conservative bias is a certain tendency to gloss over the problem of interpersonal stress and conflict. The entire topic of deviance, for example, is given less than four pages in the text. Similarly, Lynch's SIR Model is advanced without reference to the trenchant criticism of this work by Jocano who, unlike Lynch, found his study areas to be "fraught with internal conflicts." (Jocano, 1966: 286).

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