

The Family, Traditional Values and the Sociocultural Transformation of Philippine Society

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As we move through the last remaining years of the twentieth century, questions are increasingly being asked regarding the nature of societies in the next millennium. For the most part, the analyses of the future of societies have been done in economic and/or political terms. This emphasis on the economic and the political owes to the expectation that as societies develop, they move closer economically to a modern industrial state, and politically to a democratic one. Relatively less emphasis has been placed on the social-cultural dimension of societal transformations. In general, cultural values and the social organizational features of societies are seen as eventually adjusting themselves to economic and political changes during the process

of societal development. This paper represents an attempt to look more closely into ongoing socio-cultural transformations in the Philippines and how these are likely to affect Filipinos and Philippine society in the foreseeable future.

Like other countries, the Philippines has moved from being a dominantly agrarian society in earlier periods to one which is increasingly modern in recent times. It began and continued to produce cash crops for the world market during its several centuries of colonization under Spain and the United States. Since gaining independence in 1946, it has continued to grow economically—displaying relatively modest rates of growth except for a period of severe economic crises in the 1980s.

Bolstered by the country's subsequent economic recovery and by positive and increasing GNP growth rates in the 1990s, hopes are high that the Philippine economy will continue to improve, particularly as it anticipates to benefit from the dynamism of neighboring Asian-Pacific economies. Current national policies thus, are oriented towards transforming the Philippines into a newly industrializing country (NIC) and a globally competitive economy by the beginning of the next millennium.

Politically, the Philippines has exhibited positive strides towards the establishment of democratic institutions and the attainment of democratic ideals. It was one of the earlier countries that gained independence from colonial rule. During its years as an independent Republic, it successfully ended a twenty-year authoritarian rule in 1986 through a non-violent revolution that ushered in the restoration of civil rights, elections, and other democratic processes and institutions. Although members of the country's traditional elite remain major actors in national politics, there has been a palpable move towards greater democratization in many areas of national life.

This is not to predict that the future of the Philippines is all well and bright. The large incidence of

poverty in the country and its huge income and regional disparities are well-known, as are its problems of inefficiencies, scandals, and corruption in government. Some fear remains that its ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups will continue to be marginalized in the process of economic development. The Philippines, likewise, has its own share of criminality and violence. But except perhaps for a feeling that the country could have advanced faster in earlier years, the economic progress and political stability attained by the Philippines in the recent period point to a relatively optimistic prognosis of the direction the country is headed for.

Nonetheless, if the assessments of the Philippines' economic and political prospects tend to be positive, assessments regarding transformations that have taken place in its native cultural tradition, values, and other basic social institutions such as the family are less clear. Observations on Philippine values and the Filipino family point to somewhat differing trends and outcomes. On the one hand, some observers see Philippine traditional values and its family system as deterrents to the attainment of a modern industrial state and to national aspirations of NIChood. The strong familistic orientation of Filipinos and their emphasis on personalistic ties are often cited as giving rise to

nepotism, corruption and dependency, and are seen as incompatible with the requirements of progressive modern societies. On the other hand, other analysts see modernization as eroding traditional values and family life and hence, also the country's social fabric. The suggestion that there is a need to recapture national tradition and values has led the Philippine government to initiate a Moral Recovery/Values Formation program in schools, the civil service, the police force and the public at large.

Sociological Perspectives on Sociocultural Transformation

Prior to discussing the changes that have occurred in Philippine values and the family and the roles that these may play in the country's future development, it may be instructive to first briefly review the historical transformation of societies as suggested by broad sociological theories and paradigms. A summary of this is provided by a recent work of Johan Galtung (1995) wherein he outlines the basic sociocultural changes that accompany the transformation of societies from a "primitive" state (hunting-gathering, nomadic, pastoralist stage) to a "traditional" one (sedentary agricultural stage), then on to a "modern" state (with larger-scale organizations of state, capital, media, and other bureau-

cracies), and finally to a "post-modern" phase (or one that follows the modern industrial state and becomes its antithesis).

Following earlier sociological thinkers as Durkheim, Weber, Toennies, and Parsons, Galtung sees the changes in the history of human societies as basically occurring in the nature and structure of human interactive relations and in the cultural orientations of societies. As societies move from a primitive to a modern state, structures of human interactions shift from those congruent with or promotive of primary, personalistic and diffuse relationships to those requiring secondary, universalistic, and specific relationships. Labelling the structures of primary and personalistic relationships as Beta, and those of secondary and universalistic ones as Alpha, Galtung notes that societies display mixes of Beta and Alpha. Beta structures, however, are understandably strongest in primitive societies because their small population sizes allow members to engage in frequent personal (thick) interactions. Beta structures continue to remain strong in the family, kinship, and village systems of traditional societies, although the societal imperative of coordinating human activity in increasingly sedentary agricultural populations creates new Alpha structures consisting of village/city elites which rule the population in

increasingly hierarchical terms. Alpha structures finally emerge dominant in modern industrial societies with their large state and market bureaucracies that require a "well-defined" specificity in social relations" (e.g., as written contracts) and a universalism in the treatment of citizens (to ensure that occupants of positions in the bureaucracy are those with appropriate qualifications). As Alpha structures become the dominant mechanism for production and social organization in modern societies, Beta structures thin out and weaken. The pursuit of personal reproductive human relationships becomes confined to small families which interact only after the time and hours that members spend in their roles within bureaucracies. Hence, primary structures and relations become recessive in modern societies and may, in fact, disintegrate to the point where individuals lose a sense of community or connectedness to the broader society of which they are a part.

The transition from modern to post-modern societies is based on the premise that Beta structures and relationships cater to a basic human need and are indispensable for human beings and societies. Even as Alpha structures produce increasing volumes of goods and services, they cannot substitute for the Beta structures where human

beings are sustained, repaired and reproduced. The crisis, thus, of post-modern societies is often seen to lie in a "dehumanization process" engendered by the loss of Beta relationships and by leaner and meaner Alphas and bureaucracies that are devoid of human content (exemplified, for instance, by "robotization" and modern information technologies that require no human contact or relationships). A feeling of individual alienation and social anomie sets in, as well as a sense of disappointment/disillusionment over the promises of the modern industrial democratic state to satisfy human needs. There thus ensues a new cycle of reconstructing Beta structures and deconstructing the cultural orientational shift towards individualism, secularism, rationalism, and scientism which had accompanied the transformation to modern societies. Since it is difficult to imagine highly developed societies as reverting to primitive or traditional states, it is not clear what forms reconstructed Beta structures would take in post-modern societies, nor whether the search for community and meaning would entail a return to tradition, religion, and a desire for the sacred.

The Filipino Family and Philippine Cultural Tradition and Values

It is against the foregoing background of human sociocultural

transformations that this paper next turns to a depiction of the Filipino family and Philippine cultural tradition and values as gleaned from available studies and research findings. Clearly, the family system and native traditions and values provide the essential Beta structures for sustaining and reproducing human beings and societies. Families provide the space for developing primary ties and meeting the sociopsychological needs of individuals, in addition to being the major transmitter of tradition and values. Because of their close interconnection, discussions on the family and cultural values are often linked and intertwined.

Studies, both earlier and current, have noted the importance of the family in the lives of Filipinos and in Philippine society as a whole. Anthropologists write that the family is the central unit that defines a Filipino's set of personal responsibilities and obligations and his or her network of social relations (Fox 1961). The expectations and relationships obtaining among family members and kin are such that these are clearly distinguishable from one's relationships with non-kin (Jocano 1966). Hence, the identity and social status of Filipinos are defined largely by their families which also serve as their major source of economic, social, emotional and moral support.

One characteristic feature of Filipino families is their size which, by most countries' standards, is large. Because descent is traced bilaterally (on both the father's and mother's side), and since relatives are reckoned in both consanguineal and affinal terms, Filipinos have many relatives. The typical Filipino family consists not only of immediate family members but of relations extended vertically and horizontally (grandparents/children, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces) and various sets of in-laws (Medina 1991).

A second characteristic of Filipino families is that members maintain close (or thick Beta) relationships, leading observers to describe Filipinos as family-centered or clannish. Family members and relatives interact frequently and from early on, Filipinos learn the value of maintaining good interpersonal relationships with their kinsfolk (Ventura 1991). This is further reinforced by a continuous flow of help, assistance, and favors among relatives and by reciprocal exchanges. Reciprocal obligations (and privileges) characterize most, if not all, sets of relations within the family. Parents are expected to strive hard to provide for the material and educational needs of children who, in turn, are expected to reciprocate by respecting and obeying their parents, and by studying hard once they begin

schooling (Medina 1991; Ventura 1991). Elder siblings are expected to assist in caring for and sending younger siblings to school. The latter are then expected to recognize this favor by deferring to their older sisters or brothers. Likewise, to show gratitude to their elders, Filipinos take care not only of their own ageing parents and grandparents but of other elderly relatives as well. Better-off aunts and uncles help needy nephews and nieces by employing them or sending them to school. Grandparents willingly take care of children while their parents are away or at work. When illness or death strikes their families, Filipinos can also count on their relatives for financial and moral support. Moreover, the closeness of family members and their mutual exchange of support are not necessarily conditioned by physical distance or propinquity but by a feeling of identity with one's relatives and family. The common saying that "a Filipino never starves because he/she always has a relative to turn to" attests to the highly supportive and protective role that Filipinos attribute to and expect of the family.

Owing in part to the security and protection provided by families, Filipinos tend to recreate "family-like" or primary types of relationships outside of their family or their own circle of relatives (Bulatao 1972). Among close friends and

neighbors, for example, Filipinos may cement these relationships further through ritual kinship (i.e., as in co-parenthood arrangements in baptisms or marriages) or by extending an appropriate kin term to a non-relative (- or uncle/aunt to the close friends of parents).

The family-centeredness of Filipinos is reflected likewise in broader social structures and institutions as in business firms, government bureaucracies, church activities, and social functions. Because of expectations of mutual support and assistance and simply because family members/relatives are drawn together, it is not uncommon for many businesses to be organized along family lines (i.e., as businesses run by well-off family members and employing poorer relations), or for political contests and activities to be similarly organized. Many of the organized charity, religious, and social activities of cities and local communities also owe to the efforts of families or kinship groupings.

This is not to imply that Alpha structures requiring more impersonal relationships and universal norms have not taken root in the Philippines. Clearly, the thrust towards modernization has given rise to state and market bureaucracies demanding efficiency and the application of universal rules and principles of action. But within the country's Alpha structures are

several Beta groupings consisting not only of colleagues, and peers, (as may also be the case within the Alpha structures of Western countries) but of close friends, family members, relatives and ritual or fictive kin. As mentioned earlier, family/kin groupings within Alpha structures owe to the tendency of better-off relatives or those in position to extend work to their poorer kindred, although it is also the case that ordinary workers/employees would recommend their own family members and relatives to new job openings or vacancies within firms or offices.

The personalism and familism that pervade much of a Filipino's social relationships appear also to underlie the cultural themes or values observed in Philippine society as a whole. One such theme is that of social acceptance initially propounded by Lynch in the 1960s based on his observations of the intercultural differences in Filipino and American behavior patterns, and which he further developed using findings from several studies including those of other noted Filipino social scientists as Jocano, David, and Bulatao (Lynch, 1972). According to Lynch, the goal of social acceptance—enjoyed when one is accepted for what one is and when one is not rejected by one's fellows—underlies much of Filipino behavior patterns even when Filipinos do not consciously direct their actions towards becoming

socially acceptable. Rather, Filipinos are more conscious of exhibiting qualities and/or behavior patterns which tend to assist in the attainment of social acceptance. One such desirable quality is smooth interpersonal relations or the ability to be pleasant and to get along well with others so as to avoid confrontations or outward signs of conflict in a relationship. Hence, Filipinos put value on "*pakikisama*" (getting along well with others) and tend to make use of soothing and euphemistic words in their speech as well as third-party mediators or go-betweens in dealing with difficult situations/relationships. Filipinos, too, are taught to be sensitive to the feelings of others and not to openly criticize or insult others lest they offend someone else's self-esteem ("*amor propio*") and incur another's ire or retaliatory action. Relatedly, the concept of "*hiya*" (propriety) demands that one acts circumspectly so as not to shame/embarass ("*pahiyain*") others nor bring this ("*kahihayan*") upon one's self.

The goal of social acceptance and the value of smooth interpersonal relations are generally congruent with the values inculcated in the family where members are taught to recognize (or accept) one another and to maintain good relations within the kindred. Using results of a Thematic Apperception Test administered to Filipino students, Bulatao (1972)

uncovered emotional closeness and security of the family as a major Filipino value. To Filipinos, the family "provides understanding, acceptance, a place where, no matter how far or wrongly one has wandered, he can always return." Bulatao also uncovered a related authority value among his subjects defined as "approval by the authority figure and by society, authority's surrogate." Following authority patterns within the family where children and younger members are expected to obey, respect, and defer to parents and elders, Filipinos display a concern over what important people (and society, more generally) think of themselves. They thus avoid "stirring up conflict with people who count", maintaining as much as possible smooth interpersonal relations with people they come in contact with.

Still a third value mentioned by Bulatao is that of economic and social betterment expressed "as a desire to raise the standard of living of one's family or of one's hometown, often as repayment for one's gratitude to parents and relatives." Bulatao further mentions that more rarely is the value of economic and social betterment "expressed as a desire for individual success [or] to make good in one's career", underscoring somewhat the "other orientation" of Filipinos.

Finally, the fourth value emerging from Bulatao's study is that of patience, suffering and endurance. When presented with a frustrating situation as poverty, injustice, sickness, or some overwhelming force, Filipinos find value in being patient and enduring suffering. According to Bulatao, it is this value which appears "fused with a religious value" (calling on or leaving all to God when confronted with a force too powerful to overcome) and imbued "with a certain magical quality...as if...one render[s] oneself worthy of divine blessing simply by being patient and long-suffering". Since then, other studies have shown religious experience to be equally central to the Filipino's worldview (Sevilla 1978). Such religious expression pervades much of traditional health and healing practices in the Philippines and is readily seen in the persistence and variety of popular devotions in the country.

Extended to the broader community, the reciprocity that characterizes family/kin relationships is also noted in the value of "*utang-na-loob*" crudely translated as an internal debt of gratitude. Based on her study of reciprocity exchanges and power relations in a Philippine community, Hollnsteiner (1963 and 1972) notes that "*utang-na-loob*"

reciprocity serves to cement social relationships either among co-equals or between the otherwise markedly different upper and lower classes in Philippine society. The elements of an "*utang-na-loob*" relationship include not only a recognition of one's "*utang*" or debt and the material repayment of this. More importantly, it entails an appreciation for a favor received through other gift-giving exchanges or by rendering other forms of favors and services even after a debt has been repaid. This gift-giving in a relationship can continue indefinitely or as long as the parties remain in touch with each other. Among unequals (e.g., as between landlords and tenants), "*utang-na-loob*" has the effect of not only cementing relationships but affirming the status of superiors and subordinates. Superiors are expected to share their surplus or bounty with the less fortunate and hence respond to requests for assistance in a manner befitting their (superior) means; whereas subordinates are expected to repay favors received in kind or services and by appreciating these and being loyal to their superiors/benefactors.

In brief, earlier studies on Philippine values show the modal Filipino to be family-centric, displaying a strong identity and attachment to family members and kin. He/she tries to extend this familism and personalism to

broader community or institutional settings by remaining pleasant, maintaining good relations with people he/she comes in contact with, and by avoiding confrontations, conflicts, and signs of aggressiveness. Filipinos, too, are respectful of authority and seek the approval and acceptance of people they consider important, and by extension, that of the group or of society more generally. Filipinos also show a desire to improve their own and their family's economic and social conditions. Filipinos moreover are generally a religious people and this religiosity finds expression in many forms including the value they place on patience, endurance and suffering when confronted with problems. Within and outside the family, social relationships are maintained by mutual flows of aid and assistance and by "*utang-na-loob*" reciprocity or gift exchanges that can sustain close ties and relationships indefinitely.

Modernization, Filipino Traditional Values and the Family

Because modernization theories posit a dissonance or an incompatibility between modernization processes and traditional values and family forms, studies also tend to treat modernization as a threat to native traditions and values. Corollarily, the persistence of the latter is often viewed as hindering the future development

or transition of societies into modern states. An attempt is thus made in this section to examine some recent research findings in the Philippines bearing on this topic/relationship.

On the Persistence of Family Ties. Results from available studies in the country do not consistently show that modernization processes (defined broadly to include increasing urbanization and exposure to Western influences and lifestyles) have weakened family ties nor eroded traditional values. Studies on household structures and living arrangements in the Philippines, for example, reveal that while most Filipinos live in nuclear households, extended households which comprised 29.5 percent of all households in 1990 are more prevalent in urban than rural areas (Raymundo 1994; Medina and de Guzman 1994). This is quite contrary to propositions derived from modernization theory, and researchers attribute this state of affairs to the mutual aid and assistance obtaining among families and their kindred. Given greater housing difficulties and the higher cost of living in the cities, Filipino rural migrants would predictably and understandably live with their relatives in the cities. The same explanation underlies still another finding of Medina and de Guzman (1994) showing a higher incidence of extended households among the upper than lower classes as poorer

relatives seek shelter among their richer kin. Analyzing the life cycle stages of Filipino families from a sub-sample of the 1990 Census moreover, Arce (1994) further notes that the typical Filipino family today does not live as an independent nuclear household for very long. At the early stages of family formation, married couples tend to live with one or the other's set of relatives. They begin to establish an independent nuclear household only when the household head (husband) is in his late 30s. By the time the household head reaches his early 50s, his household becomes extended once more, with the accretion of other relations who replace children who have grown and left the household. Because the norm is for Filipinos to live with family members or relatives, the incidence too, of single-person households (or of individuals living alone) in the Philippines is negligible. Whereas single-person households account for as high as 20 percent of all households in the United States and Western countries, these comprised no more than a fraction of a percent in the 1990 Census of Philippine Households.

Studies on the family impact of the country's long-term increases in overseas employment also tend to highlight the strength of family ties and the resilience of Filipino families. In her study of migrant households and communities, Asis

(1994) notes that work migration decisions are basically household decisions, justified on the part of the migrant worker and his/her family as being beneficial for the household. Children or other family members left behind are appreciative of the sacrifices and efforts of their migrant-worker parent[s] or relative[s] and try to reciprocate by doing their own duties for the family. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, or cousins act as surrogates in caring for the children of overseas contract workers and in looking after their families. The level of migrant-worker support to families and households is, of course, well-known from the sheer volume of worker-remittances that enter the Philippine economy annually. Even long-term Filipino immigrants who have settled in other countries or have assumed foreign citizenship are known to maintain their ties with family members/relatives left in the Philippines. Noting this among Filipino settlers in Hawaii, Caces (cited in Asis, 1994) developed the concept of "shadow households" to refer to the maintenance of family linkages and networks across countries. Foreign visitors to the Philippines are also not likely to miss a common scene in Philippine airports—that of returning Filipino migrant-workers or residents with several luggages laden with goods and gifts for families, relatives, neighbors, friends, and townmates.

The strength of Filipino families is further seen in the findings of studies on the Filipino elderly. In an extensive review of the status of elderly Filipinos, Costello (1994) presents relatively favorable prospects for the country's senior citizens. Using the results of comparative studies on the elderly population of ASEAN and selected Western-Pacific countries, Costello reports that consistent with the value placed on parental respect and deference, the Philippines exhibits the highest incidence (80%) of elderly Filipinos continuing to live with at least one of their children while around 15 percent live with their own spouses but with a child nearby, leaving only three percent who live by themselves. Since a substantial proportion (66%) of them remain economically active or have their own sources of income even after reaching 60 years of age, some continue to extend financial assistance to their children and other relatives. Others, however, are the recipients of such assistance and both the inter- and intra-generational flow of wealth and aid among Filipino families help ensure the extension of assistance to the neediest of elderly Filipinos. Elderly Filipinos, moreover, maintain regular interactions/contacts with family members and relatives and although they are not prone to join organizations, many nonetheless are active in local church groups or parish-based activities. Owing largely to the

support lent by family members and relatives and their small groups of friends and church associates, the Filipino elderly score highest in terms of other indices of physical, mental, and emotional health when compared to their counterparts in richer Asian countries. Based on these research results, Costello concludes that modernization does not appear to have weakened traditional family support to the elderly and that traditional family values have, in fact, eased the Filipinos' transition to old age in an otherwise modernizing environment.

Other Changes in the Filipino Family. There are, of course, other aspects of Filipino family life and organization that have been affected by modernization. One such aspect is family size or the number of children born to married couples which, as in other countries, has been declining over time. Even here, however, demographers have noted the slower pace of decline in actual and desired fertility levels among Filipinos when compared to couples in Asian countries of roughly similar or lower levels of development (Hirschman and Guest 1988). In 1993, Filipino couples averaged some four children or some two children less than in 1970 (NDS 1993). Desired family size, on the other hand, stood between three to four children (Raymundo 1994) whereas the fertility of

neighboring Thailand and Indonesia had dropped closer to replacement levels by that time.

Another manifestation of the impact of modernization on family life is the increased mobility of family members arising from increased rural to urban and international migration streams. Migration streams are noted to have become more female and to consist of younger family members who leave their hometowns in order to work—altering somewhat the traditional notion that the family is sustained primarily by just the earnings of a father or a husband. The increased volume of migration (large numbers of Filipinos migrate to the cities yearly and over 700,000 leave to work in other countries each year) suggests that more Filipinos today are living apart from their families or are spending substantial periods of time away from home. As mentioned earlier, however, rarely does migration sever a Filipino's family ties or his/her attachment to kindred and home.

Lifestyle and value changes wrought by modernization are also commonly believed to be behind emerging family problems including those of marital separations. Psychologists, counselors, and small-scale studies indicate these to be on the rise (Carandang 1987; Medina 1991) and attribute these variously to the

Table I which summarizes the data of what Filipinos in 1996 consider to be of importance in their lives reaffirms the value they place on the family, work and religion. An overwhelming 98.86 percent, 98.04 percent and 98.14 percent respectively rate family, work and religion as very/rather important in their lives, leaving fewer than three percent who feel that these are of little/no importance in their lives. It should be recalled that to Filipinos, the importance of work refers to one's own economic security and that of his/her family, and rarely is this interpreted as simply a measure of individual success in one's career or trade. Since friendships offer opportunities for interpersonal contact and closeness (Beta relationships), friends are also important to Filipinos, with a large 88.99 percent saying that friends are very/rather important in their lives. Leisure elicits a much lower importance rating of 55.9 percent perhaps because to some, this may sound as the opposite of work or too oriented to the self. On the other hand, because politics may refer to a socially distant (Alpha) organization as the State or to the ever-changing alliances and ways of politicians, it elicits the lowest importance rating among Filipinos. Even as Filipinos are known for their high election voter turn-out and are active in electoral/political campaigns, fewer than half (47.86%)

consider politics as very/rather important in their lives, while a 51.02 percent majority finds this comparatively of little importance.

The other SWS survey data on the family likewise re-echo the salience of parental respect and family unity among Filipinos. As high as 95.98 percent are of the opinion that one must always love and respect one's parents whatever their qualities or faults may be. Underlying this high respect for parents is also the expectation, expressed by 91.04 percent of the respondents, that it is the duty of parents to do their best for their children even at the expense of their own well-being. Equally important to Filipinos is the preservation of traditional family forms (i.e., of married couples with both mother and father present at home). Ninety-five percent agree that a child needs a home with both father and mother in order to grow up happily; 87.58 percent disagree that marriage is an out-dated institution; and 80.64 percent disapprove of a woman having a child as a single parent without having a stable relationship with a man. Finally, on the values that are to be taught to children, respondents feel that the five most important qualities that children should learn at home are good manners (79.74 %), religious faith (62.46%), hard work (58.69%), feeling of responsibility (56.12%),

and independence (49.94%). One notes religion and work as recurring themes, whereas "good manners" to Filipinos is likely to include the ability to relate well with others and to be pleasant, and to stay away from trouble and fights.

Responses to the SWS survey questions on religion are also consistent in showing the religiosity of Filipinos. A high 85.58 percent report being brought up in a home that is religious and 81.64 percent consider themselves as being "a religious person". Over a two-thirds majority (67.08%) attend religious services at least once a week and another 21.33 percent do so at least once a month. Whether at home or abroad, Filipinos are known to be devotional and churchgoing and can turn various places (parks, school-houses, community halls, basketball courts, offices, and shopping malls) into a place of worship.

Table 2 further shows that nearly all Filipinos believe in God (99.60%) and in the concept of sin (99.85%). They also believe in heaven (97.15%), that people have a soul (94.82%), and that there is life after death (90.68%). Large proportions, too, believe in the existence of the devil (90.46%) and of hell (88.68%) (see Table 2). Comparing these results with those of other countries, Arroyo (1995) notes that Filipinos are today's most religious people in the world. Given their strong faith in religion and in religious matters therefore, it is not surprising that 91.30 percent of survey respondents report finding comfort or strength in religion, or that on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is lowest and 10 is highest, the degree of God's importance in the lives of Filipinos should rate a high 9.7. This does not translate, however, to a feeling that one has little control over his/her life. On a similar ascending scale of 1 to 10, Filipinos

Table 2. Percentage Expressing Belief in Various Aspects of Religion

	God	Sin	Heaven	People Have a Soul	Life After Death	Devil Exists	Hell
Yes	99.60	99.85	97.15	94.82	90.68	90.46	88.68
No	0.27	0.10	1.85	3.31	5.77	7.52	7.58
DK	0.13	0.05	1.00	1.87	3.55	2.03	3.73
Base Total Interviews (WTD)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SWS 1996 Philippine Values Survey

rate a 7 (closer to more rather than less control) when responding to a question on the degree of control that they have over their actions and lives.

The reactions of Filipinos to survey questions on likely changes that may occur in people's way of life in the future (Table 3) may prove interesting when compared to those of their Western counterparts. Having reached a high level of material and technological development, post-modern Western societies are probably more concerned with de-emphasizing further economic and technological progress, and with attaining some balance in their lives. Table 3 does not show this to be the case with Filipinos who feel that putting less emphasis in the future on money or material possessions is a "a bad thing" (54.92%) and that making work less important in our lives will not also be a good development (71.69%). Likewise, most Filipinos consider an increased emphasis on

the development of technology in the future as "a good thing" (81.13%). The importance that Filipinos attach to the pursuit of work and material and technological improvement may be traced in part to the Philippines' lower level of economic development, and in part to the fact that the pursuit of these in the past have not alienated Filipinos from their families and close relationships. As noted earlier, work and seeking material improvement are justified on the basis that these are being done for the well-being of families. That Filipinos should view positively the remaining items in Table 3—future life changes towards a greater respect for authority (76.85%) and more emphasis on family life (94.52%)—is also not surprising. Filipinos are brought up respecting authority, while the importance of family life like that of religion, emerges almost like a historical constant in the lives of Filipinos.

Table 3. Respondent's Reaction to Various Changes in the Way of Life that May Happen in the Future

	A Good Thing	Don't Mind	A Bad Thing
Less Emphasis on Money/Material Possession	34.48	10.60	54.92
Less Importance Placed on Work in our Lives	22.82	5.49	71.69
More Emphasis on the Development of			
Technology	81.13	6.31	12.56
Greater Respect for Authority	76.86	9.82	13.32
More Emphasis on Family Life	94.52	1.54	3.94
Base - Total Interviews (WTD)	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SWS 1996 Philippine Values Survey

Table 4. Degree of Confidence that Respondent Has in Specific Organizations

	Churches	Press	Legal System	Major Companies	National Government	Labor Union
A great deal	65.11	25.57	24.35	18.59	14.21	16.18
Quite a lot	28.88	46.40	43.28	45.67	44.56	39.23
Not very much	5.36	23.72	25.35	29.10	32.19	34.27
None at all	0.56	3.04	5.66	4.91	16.03	6.67
Don't know	0.09	1.27	1.36	1.72	3.01	3.64
Base						
Total Interviews						
(WTD)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SWS 1996 Philippine Values Survey.

Another interesting set of questions in the SWS Values Survey pertains to the degree of confidence that respondents have on various social institutions including the national government, the legal system, the press, major companies, labor unions, and churches (see Table 4). With the exception of churches, all the other institutions represent Alpha structures while churches are more like "nurturant" organizations in addition to being associated with a higher moral good. Predictably, churches garner a far higher confidence rating (with 93.99% saying they have a great deal/quite a lot of confidence in churches) than the press (71.97%), the legal system (67.63%), major companies (64.26%), the national government (58.77%), and labor unions (55.41%). Others may attribute the high confidence rating of churches to the influence/power of the Roman Catholic Church in

the Philippines or to the predominance of Roman Catholicism in the country rather than to the Filipinos' abiding faith in God or religion as such. But ethnohistorical accounts trace the Filipinos' religiosity to a pre-colonial belief in a soul ("*kaluluwa*") and a spirit world, and findings cited earlier suggest that church life and religious activities fulfill the Filipino's need for personal closeness and emotional security.

Finally, consistent with Costello's findings on the Filipino elderly and other accounts showing Filipinos to be generally happy (Talisayon 1995), respondents in the SWS survey score high on questions bearing on happiness, satisfaction with one's health and optimism about the future. Close to 92 percent of respondents say they are very happy or quite happy with their lives. Some 52.15 percent rate

failure of couples to adjust to changing gender roles and norms, the greater emphasis placed on individual rights and freedom, and the increased pressures of modern-day existence. It has been argued that the number of separated/divorced men and women in the Philippines (comprising less than a percent each of ever-married men and women in 1990) would be far larger if one were to include marital separations that have not been formalized, and if Philippine laws on marital dissolutions were not too restrictive. There are indications, however, that a further liberalization of marital dissolution laws would go against the value placed by Filipinos on family unity and harmony. National survey results show that a large 80 to 85 percent of Filipinos oppose the legalization of divorce (PSSC 1985; SWS 1988). Likewise, the incidence of solo-mothers, other than widows, remains minimal in the Philippines when compared to other countries. In 1993, female heads of households comprised 14 percent of all household heads (vs over 20 percent in developed countries), and of these, only six percent are separated or divorced women (FIES 1993). In general, even with rising separations and divorces, the phenomenon of solo-parenting will likely remain uncommon in the Philippines since like the widows, separated couples and their children usually find refuge and support from family and kin.

Of the processes and forces associated with modernization, analysts agree that poverty represents the single most important threat to the unity, harmony, and traditional values of the Filipino family (Costello 1994). Characterizing family life in a Metro Manila slum, Jocano (1970) notes that quarrels between spouses and family members "are brought about by almost every conceivable reason", including the neglect of children and household duties, drunkenness, cruelty, vagrancy, infidelity, jealousy, the provocation of neighbors, the interference of inlaws, and sometimes, the imprisonment of husbands. As elsewhere, slum communities in the Philippines are shown to foster an environment of family disorganization that is also disruptive of socialization processes. The pressure for physical and economic survival in slum areas spawns toughened dispositions, aggressive behavior and delinquency among children and the youth (Decaesstecker 1978), many of whom also leave their homes to escape family problems and difficulties. In extreme conditions, poverty robs families of their physical dwellings and the privacy of a home; and renders fathers, mothers, and children simply incapable of meeting their role expectations and obligations within the family (Porio 1994). Porio's account of the life-stories of streetchildren in Metro Manila's and

Cebu's urban poor communities detail the pathetic attempts of homeless children and their parents and siblings to recreate an abode in public spaces and to restore some "normalcy" in their family life and relationships.

The Changing Discourse on Philippine Values. Except for studies of agrarian communities showing the patronage and "utang-na-loob" ties between landlords and peasants to have weakened with mechanization and capitalist development on farms (Kerkvliet 1983; Aguilar 1992), there are not too many studies that can be used for assessing the impact of modernization on Philippine societal values. The discourse on Philippine values in the late 1970s and 1980s seems to have shifted towards questioning the colonial basis or interpretation of earlier identified Philippine values and the usefulness of these for furthering national pride and progress. The value placed on smooth interpersonal relationships and harmony and the Filipino's tendency to avoid conflict and to please authority seemed to fit only too well the country's long history of subjugation by colonial rule. Similarly, "utang-na-loob" reciprocity tended to affirm and contribute to unequal socioeconomic structures, whereas the Filipinos' concept of "hiya" and "other-orientedness" (i.e., of going along with the group) made them appear non-assertive and unable or

unwilling to rise on their own individual efforts and initiative. The values of patience, suffering, endurance and religiousity on the other hand, suggested some kind of resignation and fatalism in dealing with life's woes and problems. In brief, the analysis and interpretation of Philippine values was seen as far too keyed to a "foreign perspective" which viewed modernization as the end goal of societies and Philippine traditional values as opposed to this. Such an interpretation made Filipinos not only appear hopelessly feudal, rural and agricultural but as the helpless victims of a colonial past and a colonial mentality that seeped through the national consciousness. Coming at a time when the country was laboring under the Marcos dictatorship and its aftermath, the colonial interpretation of Philippine values led observers and analysts to denigrate the state of Philippine values, with one foreign journalist attributing the then poor state of Philippine economy and politics to the country's "damaged culture."

Prompted by the growing self-criticism among Filipinos evoked by the colonial and negative interpretations of native cultural traditions, subsequent writings and studies on Philippine values focused on re-examining these and recapturing their meanings apart from colonial interpretations and nuances. Pioneered by *Sikolohiyang*

Pilipino, the results of these efforts have been put together in a major work by Enriquez (1994) which is influencing current-day writing and thinking on Philippine values (see Quisumbing and Sta. Maria 1996).

Pursuing linguistic analyses of such Filipino concepts as "*pakikisama*", "*utang-na-loob*", "*hiya*" and others and analyzing these from a Filipino standpoint, Enriquez' work yields a linguistically more accurate and fresh interpretation of indigenous Philippine values. Enriquez argues that "*pakikisama*", "*utang-na-loob*" and "*hiya*" are not "freestanding values" and are but the "surface values" related to the more pivotal value of "*pakiramdam*" (heightened awareness and sensitivity) and to the deeper core value of "*kapwa*" (a shared identity/solidarity with humanity). One therefore cannot exhibit "*pakikisama*", "*utang-na-loob*" or "*hiya*" without "*pakiramdam*" or a sensitivity to the feelings that one shares with fellow human beings. If "*pakikisama*", "*utang-na-loob*" and "*hiya*" are the surface accommodative values attached to the inner core values of "*pakiramdam*" and "*kapwa*", the latter also elicit confrontational values expected of Filipinos under certain circumstances. Among these confrontational values are "*babalana*" (commonly but mistakenly interpreted as fatalism or recklessness) which

demands that a Filipino acts bravely/courageously in the face of uncertainties; "*lakas ng loob*" which prompts one to draw from his/her inner strength when wronged; and "*pakikibaka*", a cooperative resistance for a cause or against injustice and oppression.

The central Philippine values are thus to be found in an inner "*loob*" complex of "*damdam*" (feelings/sensing) relating "*kapwa*" (a shared identity with fellow human beings). But failing to recognize these roots of Philippine values, earlier studies tended to highlight only their social-interactional manifestations (e.g., as in "*pakikisama*", etc.) and missed their deeper meanings and moral underpinnings. Earlier interpretations of the concept of "*utang-na-loob*" for example, focused more on the "*utang*" (debt) aspect of a relationship and its repayment, whereas the concept's "*loob*" (inner) dimension suggests a request or a plea being asked by one of another in the name of a shared inner self or a common humanity. Because the "*loob*" concept points to an inherent goodness/graciousness in humanity, Philippine cultural values can be interpreted more positively for the development of a new national consciousness and pride. Just as importantly however, the re-examination and clarification of Philippine values have surfaced the role of indigenous values in equipping one with a sense of right

and wrong and in weaving the country's social and moral fabric.

**PHILIPPINE VALUES:
Results from a 1996 Survey**

The latest available survey data that may be used for validating earlier findings on Philippine values are from the 1996 World Values Survey undertaken by the Institute of Social Research of the University of Michigan and conducted in the Philippines by Social Weather Stations (SWS). The 1996 World Values Survey covered some 70 Western and non-Western societies, the joint and comparative results of which should contribute to the understanding of global socio-cultural change. Data collection in the Philippines was undertaken from March to April 1996 among a

nationwide multi-stage probability sample of 1,200 respondents. The survey questionnaire covered several topics designed to provide a fuller insight into mass attitudes/opinions on various aspects of life, the state of social institutions, national/world issues and ongoing social processes and changes. The full report of the 1996 Philippine Values Survey is still to be released by SWS, although it has allowed the author to use some of the survey data related to this paper's topic.

The SWS Values Survey contains several questions bearing on family life, religion and related values and outlooks. Interestingly, the results reveal a striking consistency with earlier findings and suggest a persistence in the beliefs and worldviews of Filipinos.

Table 1. Degree of Importance of Specific Values in Respondent's Life

	Family	Religion	Work	Friends	Leisure	Politics
Very Important/Rather Important	99.86	98.14	98.04	88.99	55.9	47.86
Very important	96.23	49.50	84.18	40.15	13.26	13.54
Rather important	3.63	18.64	13.86	48.84	42.64	34.32
Not Very Important/Not at						
All important	0.14	1.68	1.86	10.96	43.82	51.02
Not Very Important	0.05	1.41	1.34	9.73	35.03	31.39
Not at All Important	0.09	0.27	0.52	1.23	8.79	19.63
Don't Know	0.00	0.18	0.10	0.05	0.28	1.11
Base Total Interviews (WTD)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: SWS 1996 Philippine Values Survey

their state of health as very good or good while another 42.50 percent rate this as fair, leaving fewer than five percent who consider their health status as poor or very poor. And quite contrary to or despite the grim sufferings and confusing state of affairs depicted by various media accounts on the Philippines, the large majority of Filipinos (89.40%) feel that humanity has a bright future as against 11.60 percent who foresee a bleak future for humanity. Arguably again, this optimism of Filipinos may be related to the country's recent economic and political progress, although the tendency of Filipinos to score higher on happiness/optimism indices than might be warranted by the state of their material conditions may owe to an underlying happy disposition and faith in humanity.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Comparative results from the 1996 World Values Survey may indicate that the Philippines may be one of the few countries where the traditional family and related values have remained relatively intact in a world that is rapidly changing. One may therefore ask what factors account for this and what functions the family and traditional values play in the lives of Filipinos.

It would seem that to most Filipinos, the family has performed those basic functions ascribed to it

by sociologists and psychologists. Socially constructed as a wellspring of support and a refuge which members can always turn to, the family meets the Filipino's need for personal warmth and emotional closeness and for social acceptance and identity. In turn, Filipinos generally abide with prevailing familial expectations and related cultural traditions which serve as their guideposts for living.

But the salience of the family to Filipinos must also be understood in terms of the material and economic support that families give to their members and which in the Philippine setting is far beyond what is expected of the family in more modern countries and cultures. Whereas family expectations of financial/economic support in other countries are usually limited to the period when children are growing up and only among immediate family members, such expectations in the Philippines are extended through the lifecourse and involve several other kins and relatives. To the extent that their own resources will allow, families will sustain members who lose their jobs and their ailing, disabled, elderly and other needy members. This may account for the low development of social services and welfare institutions in the Philippines since families serve as people's sources of economic and social insurance. In more developed societies, such functions

or social services are taken over by the State or other institutions which account for increasing proportions of national budgets. In the Philippines, however, it would be misleading to assess the state of social services from allocations in the national budget since much of the bill and costs for these are really absorbed by families. If Filipinos, therefore, continue to exhibit a strong loyalty and attachment to their family or kin group, it is partly because they identify their own welfare with their family's welfare and less so with the viability and operations of broader institutions and structures as those of state agencies.

The seeming inability of Filipinos to transcend localized family/kin loyalties and to identify with a nation-state and its instrumentalities has been identified as one of the downsides of traditional values and family loyalty. But many of these "downsides" actually represent a clash between tradition and modernity where universal modern standards are then used to judge the continuing usefulness of traditional family structures and values. Many thus continue to blame Philippine values for the nepotism that exists in government or the personalism that pervades formal official transactions and for the ills in Philippine society in general (see *Solidarity*, Nos. 133-134, 1992). But one can point to several private corporations and

offices in the Philippines that are successfully run and managed as family establishments. Since family relations are the closest and the strongest social ties in the Philippines, many managers/employers also do not mind having sets of relatives/close friends in their firms as long as they perform and deliver on their jobs. Moreover, placing due emphasis on "*pakikisama*" in the workplace is not altogether unwise considering that this makes for warmer, more pleasant and easier working relationships.

Likewise, other observers note that the Filipino's expression of religiosity (which includes beginning official government meetings with prayers or holding religious services in offices) runs counter to the separation of Church and State upheld in all Philippine Constitutions since 1935. Commenting on this, journalist Manny Benitez (*Today*, August 15, 1996) suggests the removal of the inviolable principle of the separation of Church and State in the country's organic law on the grounds that, having been copied from Western democracies, this is foreign to Filipinos. He notes that "...religion makes up such a vital part of our psyche and is so intimately linked with Filipino culture and tradition, it can never be truly separated from the national consciousness—or for that matter, the body politic." One might add

that state religions in neighboring Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand have not worked against the modernization of these countries. In the Philippines, neither has religiousity nor familism/personalism for that matter, deterred Filipinos from fighting for and furthering democratic ideals, attaining higher levels of education, moving to other places and countries in search of betterment and working hard to attain economic sufficiency.

The real downsides of traditional families and values are to be found more in their abuse, manipulation and exploitation. Here, many Filipinos can readily cite instances from their own experience of family members who are not only dependent but who become demanding on those members who have the means. Relying on expectations of mutual obligations, there are some parents/relatives who push even young children and family members to work and support families, just as there are children who abuse the generosity of parents, and relatives who exploit other kins. Knowing that Filipinos are generally pleasant and respectful of authority, there are those in leadership positions who abuse their authority to intimidate others into submission; just as there are those from the lower rungs of the social hierarchy who expect to be accorded preference on the basis of family

relationships and personal connections and loyalties. Politicians and public figures are, of course, known as the worst manipulators and exploiters of traditional values. To increase their popularity, some politicians make it a point to personalize their functions and official projects by making it appear that these come from their own largesse and generosity. Still others make it a point to grace or join large religious gatherings or court the blessings of religious leaders and churches.

These instances, however, do not necessarily make for a despairing situation but neither do these suggest an easy path to further progress and modernization. Several challenges face Filipinos in the future, one of which is not to degrade their native cultural traditions and traits and not to look at these as radically opposed to national advancement. Another challenge lies in recognizing that the family, religion, and the traditional values associated with these serve societal functions not readily met by the State and other large Alpha structures and organizations. Indeed, current assessments show that because of the strength of Beta structures embedded in tradition and the family, Filipinos are unlikely to become alienated or to emerge as a lonely people in the future. A third challenge lies in recognizing

that state instrumentalities and other national bureaucracies serve other necessary purposes for nation-building. And here, the Philippines does not have to follow the ethos of modern organizations in Western countries. Increasingly, Filipinos are showing albeit in smaller private sector and local community settings, that it is possible to attain prosperity and well-organized and -managed systems without sacrificing warmth and pleasantness in human relationships. If trends continue and these initiatives spread, the Philippines may well be charting its own unique course to progress and development.

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