

Ilocano Rice Farmers: A Comparative Study of Two Philippine Barrios, by Henry T. Lewis (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 209 pages, US\$7.50.

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Lewis' study is concerned with similarities and differences between two Ilocano barrios, one in the homeland near Laoag, Ilocos Norte, the other a migrant community in the vicinity of Cauayan, Isabela. He chose to live among and try to understand Ilocanos, rather than some other group, because he was intrigued by the folk view of the "industrious Ilocano" and by the extent of their migration. This was in turn related to his interest in variations in technological and economic arrangements. Thus the "study is concerned primarily with the consideration of two different villages at the same point in time [1962-1963], employing essentially the same social and cultural variables in their respective adaptations" (p. 7).

Aside from an introduction (3-12), the book has four parts. The first (15-46) provides the setting - geographical, historical and local - for what is to follow. Part Two, entitled "Technological Adaptations" (49-77) describes in relatively rich detail the systems of rice cultivation in Barrio Buyon (pop. 543), of the municipality of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, and Barrio Mambabanga (pop. 383) of Luna, Isabela. In Part Three, "Social Adaptations" (81-172), Lewis compares the ways in which institutional arrangements are expressed in the two communities, with emphasis on subsistence and economic activities. Especially illuminating is the chapter on irrigation societies (128-46), and, in particular, on the possible connection between the presence of these so-called *zang-jeras* in Ilocos Norte and the level of political violence there - relatively low compared to that found in Ilocos Sur (138-42). The author closes with his conclusions, Part Four (175-87). Because of the length of time that passed between the end of his fieldwork and this publication (eight years), Lewis had the

opportunity to re-visit his study sites and report on interim developments (183-87). The book closes with several appendices, maps, a glossary of Iloko and other local terms, a bibliography, and an index (189-209).

This volume is unquestionably a solid contribution to the literature on contemporary Filipinos. But it is both more and less than an ethnographic study. As he himself explains, he has selected for presentation here those aspects of the ways of life found in Buyon and Mambabanga that serve to illustrate how basic cultural themes may be reinterpreted in different settings - how, in other words, local adaptation can account for differences observed among peoples who share the same grandparents or great-grandparents. More particularly, Lewis interprets the evidence to indicate that the Ilocano's traditional industry, hard work, and thrift were "developed and maintained by the limitations of the penurious social and natural environment in Ilocos Norte" (175) - he did not study Ilocos Sur - but have fallen into relative disuse in the Cagayan Valley because they "are not especially necessary or important in Isabela" (175). This interpretation, which supposes the workings of some primeval Parkinson's Law - no one works harder than he must - might sound like a truism to the reader of this review, but to one who reads Lewis' book it will be appreciated as a hard-earned conclusion drawn from an abundance of comparative data.

Lewis' book belongs in every college and university library in the Philippines. Unless some special arrangement is made, however, it is likely that the price tag of US\$7.50 will effectively stop most institutions from acquiring it. *Sayang*.