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Social Fact and Theory: Sociology

Gregory G. Horgan

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philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Social Fact and Theory: Sociology
by **Benicio T. Catapusan, Ph.D. and Flora Diaz-Catapusan, M.A.**

Review Author: Gregory G. Horgan

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BOOK REVIEWS

SOCIAL FACT AND THEORY

SOCIOLOGY. By Benicio T. Catapusan, Ph.D. and Flora Diaz-Catapusan, M.A., 2nd Edit., Manila. 1953. Pp. xxii-567. P6.00

This mimeographed textbook for college students was included, in September, 1953, by the Bureau of Private Schools on the approved library list of reference books for teachers and students in colleges and secondary schools.

The aim of the authors was to supply a long felt and generally recognized need, a *Philippine* sociology, wherein the principles of sociology would be applied to the Philippine scene and the sociological problems investigated would be specifically Philippine problems. The resulting text is very faithful to these aims.

The authors of the book, Dr. Catapusan and Professor Catapusan, his wife, have had the experience which should have equipped them for the task. Dr. Catapusan is the Executive Secretary of the Association of Christian Schools, which includes Silliman, Union Colleges, and other Protestant institutions in the Philippines. After completing his doctorate studies at the University of Southern California, he began teaching sociology and education in the University of the Philippines in 1948. In 1952 he became a consultant for the survey on rural communities conducted by the Philippine Council for United States Aid (Philcusa) and the United States Mutual Security Agency (MSA). Mrs. Catapusan's career includes professorships at Centro Escolar University and later at Philippine Women's University.

Four of the chapters have been written by other authors. Dr. Chester Hunt, Fulbright professor at the University of the Philippines, contributed the chapter entitled "Religion and Society"; Dr. Robert McMillan, of the United States Mutual Security Agency, wrote the chapter on "Major Rural Problems"; Professor Marcelo Tangco is responsible for the chapter entitled, "Cultural History

of the Philippines" and Professor E.S. Bogardus of the University of Southern California for the chapter called, "Race Relations Cycle."

The two authors never lose sight of their principal purpose of producing a text which is specifically about and for the Philippines. Each chapter either is a study of the Philippine situation or applies the sociological principles under discussion to the Philippines. The book is at its best when it is supplying information about Philippine institutions, the Hukbulahap movement, the care of the disabled, of delinquent children, the Edcor and other land settlement projects. Although such discussions are far from definitive, they do supply in one place many facts from scattered government reports and magazine articles.

The book attempts to cover the whole field of sociology, nor are the authors reluctant to delve into most related sciences as well, even supplying a rather irrelevant chapter on the Filipinos in the United States. It is no wonder then that many of their investigations are superficial, especially since in many of the studies on Philippine society they are pioneers, without statistics to guide them. The result is about what the reader might expect — carrying the authority of two intelligent students of sociology, speaking about a society in which they have lived as interested observers, but about which they possess few statistics and have had neither the time nor the resources to make definitive investigation.

A very clear example of the foregoing criticism, although in a minor matter, is the brief account of the history of sociology in the Philippines, which consists almost entirely of an account of the courses that have been offered at the University of the Philippines and the Philippine Women's University. No knowledge is shown of efforts outside the immediate sphere of the two authors.

The book would be improved by judicious editing. The appositeness of a diagrammatic section of the uterus during early pregnancy which accompanies the brief sketch, "What is Man—The Biologist's Point of View" is questionable. In fact the treatment of most questions concerning sex leaves much to be desired in a college students' textbook. The chapter on illegitimate parenthood is based on a few random statistics concerning G.I. babies and discusses at length conditions that would be appropriate only to a more specialized study and for a more specialized audience than a class of college students. Sex education pops up in at least three chapters and, although much of what is said is good, the total effect would be at least as psychologically harmful as helpful. Such nonsense as the following should be eliminated: "Emphasis should also be made on the social aspects of the subject — facts related to normal sex behavior, principles of heredity, marriage, sterilization of the unfit, pathology of venereal diseases, illegitimacy and commercialized prostitution." The chapter on popu-

lation besides being an extremely superficial treatment of a very complex subject, leaves the reader with the impression that the authors approve of sterilization of the unfit and, with a few important distinctions, of artificial birth control. The impression is strengthened by two or three other references to the subject in other parts of the book, as in Dr. Catapusan's chapter on rural living. In fairness to the author it is necessary to add that nowhere does he explicitly advocate these practices.

In the chapter on human culture, the discussion of *mores* assumes a philosophy of universal moral positivism, a position, moreover, which is inconsistent with the Christian philosophy advocated in other parts of the book.

The authors are definitely in favor of religion and on this as well as on other subjects they express many noble sentiments. They do show a surprising ignorance of Catholic thought on a few points, confidently assuming positions contrary to much that has been thoroughly and frequently established by Catholic sociologists. Since both authors are engaged in teaching mostly Catholic students, we have a right to expect familiarity with Catholic thought on controversial issues. In treating of birth control and polygenesis, they merely state that there are conflicting opinions. On other points the discussion creates the impression that they do not even know of the existence of a Catholic position.

By far the best part of the book is the splendid article by Dr. McMillan on rural problems and the following detailed description, evidently by Dr. Catapusan, of some of the institutions of rural life in the Philippines. This section is "must" reading for any sociologists who do not have at hand the two Philcusa-MSA reports on the rural Philippines.

Dr. Chester Hunt's article on "Church and Society" requires a more lengthy comment than there is space for in this review. It is an articulate expression of the observations of a competent sociologist with a secularistic philosophical background concerning the sociological value of different religions in the Philippines. Although a slight uneasiness is manifest regarding Catholicism's influence upon the great majority of Filipinos, Dr. Hunt made an earnest and sincere attempt to be fair to the Church. Omitting a very few minor inaccuracies in the statement of Catholic thought, the attempt must be judged successful, if the reader will remember that the norm of sociological value for Dr. Hunt is that of the secularistic liberal.

In another valuable article Professor Tangco traces the cultural background of Filipinos.

The book is desperately in need of proof reading and the English frequently needs competent correction.

It is the opinion of the reviewer that the authors are to be congratulated for their courage in attempting the extremely dif-

difficult task of producing a sociology text for the Philippines. In the accomplishment of the task they have been partially successful and the text would be consulted with some profit by teachers of the subject whose experiential knowledge of the Philippines has not been as wide as the Catapusans'. May its shortcomings encourage the authors and others with greater facilities to complete the task.

GREGORY G. HORGAN

BAGUIO BAEDEKER

THE SKYLAND OF THE PHILIPPINES. By Laurence Lee Wilson. Baguio Printing and Publishing Co., 1953. Pp. 184.

This book, the first of its kind, will be welcome to those who find it "a nice thing to be in the Skyland," "the Baguio Wonderland, the most romantic and exhilarating of all the cities of the Orient..., the lovely pine-clad Cordillera Central mountains..., the world-famous rice terraces..."

It may serve them as a guide, a kind of Baedeker which, though less systematically than the original, will inform the reader about the scenery, the charm-places, and some of the pioneers and so-called Builders of the Mountain Province: miners, prospectors, business men, governors, mayors, other officials, etc. Besides, it will give them some account of the recorded history of the Mountain Province, its geological history, and a description of the various tribes inhabiting these mountains, with some of their customs and religious beliefs, and, last but not least, a number of native stories under the caption, "Folklore".

The many illustrations—although some of them are not quite as clear as one would wish—help to complete the picture as the author sees it. But it is to be feared that he sees with his eyes somewhat closed, for he does not see, except in the dim distance, what everybody else sees so clearly, namely, Baguio's Cathedral, which dominates the city. And he ignores the missionary who built it and who is rightfully acknowledged to be the foremost pioneer and builder of Baguio. It is to be wondered at that the author has so little to say about the Catholic missionaries, though he cannot but have seen the evidence of them and their efforts in every town and village, almost in every barrio. He condenses into one single paragraph all that is Catholic. But then he takes hold of a magnifying glass and mentions everything and everybody Episcopal or Evangelical. One would never suspect—to hear Mr. Wilson tell it—that the missionary efforts of the Episcopal