

## WESTERN INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHING IN PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITIES\*

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### Introduction

Four centuries of colonization in the Philippines have left a Western imprint on its educational system. It is, therefore, not surprising that even when the Philippines finally obtained her independence from the United States of America in 1946, Philippine social sciences would continue to be influenced by trends in the United States. The resurgence of nationalism in the seventies, however, attenuated this flow of influence. Filipino scholars began to feel the need to reexamine social science concepts and break the umbilical cord that bound them to traditional Western-oriented concepts. They asserted that, despite the so-called Westernization of Philippine society, it retained unique characteristics which could not be appropriately studied with imported tools of analysis. Their impact is being gradually felt in most universities and colleges and is changing the content of social science teaching in the country.

This paper will discuss (1) the extent to which social science instruction in the Philippines has been influenced by the West, and (2) the attempts of some Filipino social scientists to resist the Western influence and

to make social analysis more directly relevant to Philippine realities.

Because of the big volume of materials related to social sciences in the Philippines, this paper limits itself to the fields of history, political science, sociology, anthropology and psychology. A broader study may be undertaken later to include other disciplines which are not covered here.

### Early Forms of Western Influence

Social sciences as we understand them now were introduced during the American colonial period. With the adoption of the American pattern of educational system, the social sciences became part of the core courses of the college curricula. This necessitated the sending of Filipinos to the United States as future replacements of American teachers and retired soldiers who came to teach in the country. (Feliciano, 1977:78).

History courses, which were also taught during the Spanish colonial period, now used American-authored textbooks. The Americans, as did the Spaniards, used history classes to legitimize foreign domination (Alip and Borlaza, 1973).

In the 1920s, psychology was taught as part of the education curriculum at the University of the Philippines (Feliciano, 1977). The first to teach it was an American

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who later became president of the University. It was the University of Sto. Tomas that first offered a curriculum leading to bachelor's and postgraduate degrees in psychology.

Weightman (1970) identifies three universities as main actors in the development of sociology in the Philippines. The University of Sto. Tomas was the first to offer a course in sociology as far back as in 1896. Imbued with a strong Catholic tradition, it stressed social philosophy in its social science courses. The University of the Philippines, established in 1908, was modeled after the University of Michigan by its American-missionary founders. The first sociology courses were on social ethics, social problems and social pathology.

Then there was the Ateneo de Manila, which before the war was supervised by American Jesuits, as the University of the Philippines was becoming more nationalistic and more secular (Weightman, 1975: 44-46).

The early development of anthropology in the Philippines owes much to H. Otley Beyer. Then holder of a chair in anthropology, he was the first to teach it as a subject in 1914 under the History Department of the University of the Philippines. His wave migration theory about the peopling of the Philippines influenced both anthropologists and historians of his time. Marcelo Tongco was the first Filipino anthropologist. Like his later counterparts, he was strongly influenced by Alfred Radcliffe Brown, the father of British structuralism (Bennagen et al., 1980).

Perhaps the discipline whose early development was shaped more by its Filipino practitioners is political science. First offered in 1912 under the U.P. History Department, political science had its own separate department in 1915, with Maximo Kalaw as chairman. George Malcolm, Jose P. Laurel and Bernabe Africa, who were the original lecturers in the department, were lawyers by training and approached the study of politics

from a legalistic, state-focused viewpoint (Interview with Remigio Agpalo and Felipe Miranda, University of the Philippines, June 24, 1980).

As the different academic departments produced more graduates and the demand for their offerings increased, more Filipinos were sent for study abroad. This formation of an Americanized intellectual elite was described by George Weightman (1970) as "too quick, too naive, and too shallow."

Bitter experiences (actual or imagined) among Filipinos studying in American universities often found expression, years later, back in the Philippines. Often, those most American in education, manner, and orientation articulate the most extreme anti-American sentiments (1970:27).

He attributed the factions and intrigues of the Metropolitan Manila based academic elite to their intellectual and financial insecurity and to the fact that their social status was in dispute:

Although predominantly Catholic in origin the group tends to be anti-clerical in the old Hispano-Malayan tradition. It is particularly suspicious and hostile to the seemingly growing influence — indeed, "take-over" of American-financed social research by the Ateneo group. (Ibid: 30).

Weightman cited the example of the Philippine Sociological Society which was originally established by those connected with secular schools. When the Catholic group took over, the Society was abandoned by the organizers.

### Post-Independence Influences

In the 1950s, American professors sponsored by Fulbright and other foundations went to the Philippines on short visits. More Filipinos, for their part, went to the United States for graduate studies (Hunt and Dizon, 1978: 102). Sociology was second only to

economics in the choice of majors among the students. This was attributed by Hunt and Dizon (1978: 104) to the growing popularity of sociology in the United States, which provided more opportunities for Filipinos to receive study and research grants from American foundations. American scholars also found the Philippines a fruitful area of research.

It was also at this time that the Catholic schools were changing their attitude about an empirically based sociology. This was reflected by the establishment of the Institute of Population Study at Xavier University by Fr. Francis Madigan, the Institute of Philippine Culture at the Ateneo by Fr. Frank Lynch, and the Population Research Institute at San Carlos University by Fr. Wilhelm Flieger. Sociology was also beginning to be considered as a tool for aiding national development and integration (Ibid: 102, 105).

The return of foreign-trained Filipinos in the late fifties swelled the ranks of qualified social scientists. Initially engaged in research and teaching, they soon assumed administrative posts (Hollnsteiner, 1974: 6). There they provided impetus to the upgrading of the curriculum along the lines of their American alma maters. The impact of foreign researchers however, continued.

In addition to Lynch, Flieger and Madigan, foreign scholars were closely linked with the development of social sciences — to name a few, Otley Beyer, Robert Fox, Charles Martin, John Schumacher, Peter Smith, Chester Hunt, Richard Coller, and John de Young. Many of them were behind the founding of most social sciences associations. In more recent times, there have been few indications that Filipinization has taken root. The national survey done by Loretta Sicat (1980) showed that the majority of universities still rely on foreign-authored textbooks and on foreign assistance for graduate studies and research.

The competence of social science instructors also leaves much to be desired. In her survey, Prof. Mary Hollnsteiner (1974: 10) found that a large percentage of social science teachers were not qualified to teach the subjects assigned them.

Psychology, sociology, history and political science, especially, suffer from the mistaken impression of some college administrators that anyone can set himself up as a teacher in these fields as long as he has a few textbooks to keep him going. Clearly, better training for more professionals at the masters and doctoral level is needed.

It is not uncommon to see lawyers with leisure time and displaced Spanish teachers handling social science courses. This was confirmed by a recent study made by Elsa Jurado (1980) of the teaching competencies of social science instructors throughout the country. The trained social scientists are usually attracted to more lucrative positions in the government and business sectors. With unqualified instructors in charge of social science learning, it is no wonder then that there is little discrimination in the use of learning materials. Under such circumstances, the significant research findings of Filipino scholars hardly find their way into the classrooms.

It is interesting to note that Western orientation as a perceived problem is not unique to the Philippines. After examining the status papers on social sciences presented by representatives from the twelve Asian countries in a UNESCO conference, Yogesh Atal (1974: 20-21) noted the following shared features:

- i. The material for social science teaching is available mostly in foreign languages.
- ii. Books imported from outside carry the illustrative material that is alien to the students.

- iii. Even research on these societies continue to be reported in foreign languages.
- iv. Research carried out in these societies – either by local scholars or by foreign scholars – follow the models and the methodology developed in the West.

But given its historical experiences, these problems seem to carry more weight in the Philippines. Long deprived of a national identity, there is a greater challenge for the Filipino to prove his capability and to assert his uniqueness.

#### Reactions to Western Influence

Textbooks were an area that became the initial concern of Filipino social scientists in their search for identity. *A Short History of the Filipino People* by Agoncillo and Alfonso (1960) can be considered a milestone in the writing of Philippine history textbooks. Devoting only a chapter each to the Spanish and American periods, it presented the Filipino not as a mere passive casualty and beneficiary of colonial policies but more as one who had continuously worked for his freedom.

More recently, Renato Constantino (1975, 1978) published two books that portrayed national history as a dialectical process in which the Filipino people have struggled for their liberation.

Indigenization in textbook production is beginning among psychologists and anthropologists in the University of the Philippines (Bennagen et al., 1980; Jocano, 1975; Enriquez, 1977). Sociologists in Ateneo seem to be at the forefront with their three-volume, multidisciplinary textbook, *Society, Culture and the Filipino* (Hollnsteiner et al., 1975). Political scientists seem to be slow in producing textbooks in introductory political science, although there has been a

proliferation of books on the Philippine constitution and the New Society.

Reactions to heavy Western influence have taken the form of calls for decolonizing Philippine social sciences. Of the more serious scholars who have been actively working for such a process, two schools of thought seem to be crystallizing:

#### i. "Indigenization from within"

This term which was used by Virgilio Enriquez (1970) refers to the use of concepts native to one's immediate social milieu. He cites an example in psychological testing:

In the first printed English language book on psychological testing in the Philippine setting (Carreon, 1923) it can be seen that Filipino educational psychologists insisted on modifying items found in psychological tests as a first step towards the full indigenization of Philippine mental testing. This was because the tests and their underlying conception were borrowed. This is precisely the type of "indigenization" which is generally appreciated and understood outside the confines of the native culture. What is ignored is the fact that the native culture has time-tested ways of mental and behavioral assessment which need not be "indigenized" for they are already indigenous to the culture. It is the main argument of this paper that indigenous psychology focuses on such elements in the culture. (Enriquez, 1977: 20-21)

Most of the social scientists in the Enriquez school call for the full use of Filipino (Enriquez, 1977: 69):

The problems with the token use of Filipino psychological concepts in the context of a western analysis that relies on the English language and English categories of analysis are many. It no doubt can lead to the distortion of Philippine social reality and the furtherance of the mis-education of the Filipinos . . . Instead of a token use of Filipino, full use of the language would

easily and naturally avoid the preoccupation with words and bound morphemes and the fear that such words cannot be translated to English. Presumably because of this fear pseudotranslations become associated with the Filipino word as if it is an accurate equivalent (e.g. *hiya* as "shame" and not as "propriety").

We may include Remigio Agpalo (1980) and Felipe Jocano (1975) among those who are aspiring to draw from the actual Philippine experience their analytical concepts and tools.

## ii. Dependence Theory

Randolf David (1979a), who heads the U.P. Third World Studies Center, is the main proponent of this school of thought. Basically, this perspective examines the relationship of domination and dependency between the advanced capitalist countries and the Third World countries. Assuming a neo-Marxist approach, it analyzes Philippine society in the light of the following focal points:

- a. our economy is massively shaped, distorted, and deformed by even the mildest twist or turn of the global capitalist order;
- b. that precisely because of this incorporation into the world capitalist circuit, our economy remains preponderantly dependent on a few agricultural export crops like coconuts and bananas, metallic minerals like copper, and labour intensive sweatshops like garment and electronic semi-conductor factories to generate foreign exchange;
- c. that our local elite becomes subordinated to international capital, fulfilling a basically comprador and supervisory role, and raking in huge profits from being simply the bridgehead or extension of neocolonialism in our country;

d. that as a logical precondition for sustaining a pattern of dependent and unequal development, a strong authoritarian and repressive regime is increasingly favored by international capital, and is locally justified as the only effective antidote against perpetual underdevelopment;

e. that while the local collaborating elites share in the gains of this dependent development, the peasants and the workers are permanently marginalized by the entire process.

f. that as a society caught in the frenzy of the international market, controlled by powerful transnational conglomerates, we are experiencing the rapid erosion of our national culture as a direct result of the invasion by aggressive consumerist cultures from the advanced capitalist countries. (David, 1979a)

Both the "indigenization from within" and the dependence theory proponents took issue with studies conducted by the Institute of Philippine Culture of the Ateneo de Manila University.

The *Four Readings on Philippine Values* (1966) presented the findings of leading Ateneo scholars: Frank Lynch, Jaime Bulatao and Mary Hollnsteiner. Jocano (1966a) criticized the comparison made by Lynch of Americans and Filipinos as too simplistic and not based on a differentiation of basic social structures.

Of the IPC works, David (1979c) commented that excessive attention was assigned by them to values, drawing attention away from basic economic and political structures. He found them to be lacking in historical perspective and global dimension, "treating the national society as if it were an isolated oasis that has been spared from the

pillage of colonialism and the vicious plunder of contemporary imperialism."

Even among those social scientists who do not actively participate in this debate, there is a growing recognition of the social purpose of research. This was reflected, for instance, during the 1977 conference sponsored by the Division of Social Sciences of the University's College of Arts and Sciences. Identified as the tasks of a concerned social scientist were: "to criticize, expose and clarify the fundamental pattern of social structure (Bautista et al., paper on Sociology, 1977), "to use an understanding of the past to understand the present and perhaps speculate intelligently about the future" (Diokno, paper on History, 1977), "to help fashion and work towards that operationalizable vision of Philippine society's good life" (Miranda, paper on Political Science, 1977), "to assert their moral and intellectual leadership in the resolution of social issues which, by virtue of their training, they are capable of examining most thoroughly and thoughtfully" (Bennagen, paper on Anthropology, 1977).

The position paper of the U.P. Psychological Society likewise articulates the need for social responsibility in research and teaching:

Theoretical knowledge is inadequate. There is need to test the results of experiments against the objective conditions of reality. Research concerns must be selected on the basis of their contribution not only to knowledge but to the practical benefits they will bring to society. Our knowledge and research must always lead to the service of the people (Translated from Enriquez, 1977).

### Conclusion

It is perhaps the magnitude of the human problem in his society that has made the Filipino social scientist conscious of his social

responsibility. He now finds secondary importance in the strict requirements of scientific investigation that were imparted by his Western mentors. More compelling is the social utility of his investigation. Cariño (1978) warns against the danger of treating the human subject of research as an objectified entity and ignoring his essential quality "as a choosing and responsible actor."

The Filipino social scientist has long been alienated from his own people, alienated from himself. Benito Lim (1979) expresses this in uncompromising terms:

The blinding effect of Western propaganda in social science is matched by the self-inflicted blindness of our own social scientists. The views they receive from their Western associates permit them to perceive what they tell them as the current problem, the on-going reality is non-existing or is at best a non-scientific nuisance. For them the colonial past is far away and the present is what the westerners present in their line of vision.

This reminds us of Syed Hussein Alatas (1977), a Singaporean who described the making of a captive mind. To quote him,

1. A captive mind is the product of higher institutions of learning, either at home or abroad, whose way of thinking is dominated by Western thought and an uncritical manner.
2. A captive mind is uncreative and incapable of raising original problems.
3. It is incapable of devising an analytical method independent of current stereotypes.
4. It is incapable of separating the particular from the universal in science and thereby properly adapting the universally valid corpus of scientific knowledge to the particular local situations.
5. It is fragmented in outlook.
6. It is alienated from the major issues of society.

7. It is alienated from its own national tradition, if it exists, in the field of its intellectual pursuit.
8. It is unconscious of its own captivity and the conditioning factors making it what it is.
9. It is amenable to an adequate quantitative analysis but it can be studied by empirical observation.
10. It is a result of the Western dominance over the rest of the world.

What is now happening in the Philippines is a process in which social scientists are trying to expurgate their captive mind in order to acquire a clearer view of their society and closer rapport with their own people whom they should serve.

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