

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



The Political, Economic and Labor Climate in the Philippines,
by Jaime T. Infante, Industrial Research Unit, The Wharton
School, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, Paperback, 147 pp.,

Elias T. Ramos

Volume 37, Number 3, 1982

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/029296ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/029296ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Ramos, E. T. (1982). Review of [*The Political, Economic and Labor Climate in the Philippines*, by Jaime T. Infante, Industrial Research Unit, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, Paperback, 147 pp.,]. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 37(3), 720–722. <https://doi.org/10.7202/029296ar>

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 1982

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

L'expérience japonaise. Relations industrielles du Japon moderne, par Charles J. Connaghan, Ottawa, Travail Canada, 1982, 143 pp., ISBN 0-662-91608-5.

Abordant un thème d'une grande actualité, c'est-à-dire le miracle économique japonais, l'auteur nous décrit le climat et la structure des relations industrielles de ce pays.

Quoique très intéressant dans son préambule, M. Connaghan néglige, dans ses 60 dernières pages, la méthodologie et la clarté qui sont de rigueur pour ce type de recherche.

La description m'apparaît incomplète, spécialement lors des comparaisons entre les différents secteurs d'activités. Il met en relief les faits d'armes des industries de l'automobile et de la sidérurgie mais omet de mentionner la faillite de la plus importante industrie navale au monde.

La vision qu'il a du Japon moderne masque des concepts très «quotidiens» tels, la retraite anticipée, qui, alliée aux travailleurs à contrat, a mis en déroute la combinaison gagnante du salaire à l'ancienneté et de l'emploi à vie pour les travailleurs japonais. L'auteur souligne, et à juste titre, pour les fins de son étude plusieurs comparaisons entre le Japon et les États-Unis. Il cite notamment les salaires, les produits nationaux bruts, les taux de chômage et d'absentéisme. Ces taux favorisent évidemment le Japon si l'on se base sur ces chiffres, mais sous l'éblouissement des résultats japonais, il y a plusieurs ombres au tableau qui ne sont pas mentionnées. Par exemple, au niveau des salaires, le revenu d'un travailleur japonais est comparable à celui du travailleur américain, mais le premier est présent à son usine environ 25 heures de plus par mois. De plus, pour augmenter son salaire de base, l'ouvrier japonais doit compter sur les primes, les heures supplémentaires et le bonus annuel qui peut atteindre jusqu'à six fois son salaire de base et qui fluctue suivant la profit net de son entreprise.

Concernant le taux de chômage extrêmement bas (2.02% en 1980), il est bien sûr le résultat d'une activité industrielle très impor-

tante mais il est intimement lié à la retraite anticipée pratiquée massivement depuis quelques années, et à la diminution des heures de travail hebdomadaire depuis une dizaine d'années. En 1970, en moyenne les travailleurs japonais produisaient pendant 200/h/mois, en 1980, cette moyenne mensuelle est passée à 175.2 h.

Le taux d'absentéisme pour sa part est largement influencé par le mode de compensation en cas de maladie. L'assurance-salaire n'indemnise pas les trois premiers jours, et les jours suivants sont couverts à 80% du salaire de base qui ne comprend ni les primes, ni les heures supplémentaires, ni le bonus annuel. En réalité, ce 80% représente seulement 35% à 40% du salaire. Ce mode de compensation, comme on le voit, oblige les employés malades à prendre une journée de «leur» congé parce qu'ils perdent trop d'argent s'ils prennent un congé de maladie.

Malgré ces quelques imprécisions, l'on ne peut nier le fait que le Japon s'est hissé au premier rang des puissances industrielles occidentales et spécialement en s'appuyant sur les concepts de productivité et du contrôle de la qualité.

C'est d'ailleurs ce qui a amené l'auteur à suggérer certaines solutions pour remédier à la situation conflictuelle des relations industrielles au Canada. Parmi ces quelques moyens d'action proposés figurent la création d'un institut national de la productivité, de la mise sur pied d'un conseil consultatif patronal-syndical pour les secteurs public et privé.

Somme toute, des moyens d'actions très intéressants qui devraient avec de la perspicacité nous faire oublier les méandres à travers lesquels l'auteur nous a conduit.

Raynald BOURASSA

Université Laval

The Political, Economic and Labor Climate in the Philippines, by Jaime T. Infante, Industrial Research Unit, The Wharton

School, University of Pennsylvania, 1980, Paperback, 147 pp.

Serious students of Philippine politics, economics and labor relations will not find this book of any use. Even investors, to whom the volume is addressed, and beginning students of the Philippine scene, could find other valuable sources of information than this volume provides.

Issued under the Multinational Industrial Relations Series of the Wharton School, this volume covers a broad (and unfortunately very sketchy) overview of Philippine political history, economy and labor relations. After a brief introduction in Chapter I, the book quickly traces (in Chapter II) the political history of the Philippines from the Spanish and American colonial periods to the martial law period of the 1970s. In Chapter III, the Philippine economic profile is described; Chapter IV deals with the Labor Code of 1974; and Chapter V covers labor unions. A brief concluding statement is reflected in Chapter VI.

Three major comments are in order. First, a misreading of Philippine history immediately surfaces with the author's mistaken reference to Filipino nationalism. He states that "The achievement of Philippine sovereignty (in 1946)... marked the beginning of a growing nationalism, which continued until Philippine political history took a sharp turn in the early seventies" (p. 5). Well-known facts and reliable historical accounts indicate that Filipino nationalism started from the time the natives of Cebu, led by chieftain Lapulapu, resisted the Spanish colonial ventures of Ferdinand Magellan in the 16th century. This resistance continued, although in bits and pieces, for more than 300 years against Spanish colonial rule culminating in the Revolution against Spain in 1896.

Then, throughout the American colonial period which ended in 1946, evident manifestations of Filipino nationalism hastened the establishment of an all-Filipino hierarchy of government in 1935 within a Commonwealth framework. As early as the turn of the cen-

tury, the burgeoning Philippine labor movement, led by Isabelo de los Reyes, became a major exponent of nationalism. This was followed in the 1920s and 1930s with outbursts of anti-Americanism!

Economic nationalism emerged on the scene soon after Philippine independence from the U.S. colonial administration was achieved essentially because a parity rights arrangement for U.S. citizens became a component of the war rehabilitation program. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the major political debate was how to get out of the economic shackles of U.S. business in the Philippines. Among these developments was the formation of the **Lapiang Manggagawa** (Workers Party) in 1963 to dramatize the working class' stand with respect to economic justice and economic nationalism.

The same theme became prominent again in the early 1970s when the parity rights arrangement was to have expired on July 3, 1974, precipitating, among others, the declaration of martial law in 1972, and the incarceration of nationalists and critics of parity rights. To argue as the author does, that President Ferdinand Marcos' consolidation of power for the purpose of checking the Muslim rebellion in the South as the major reason for the declaration of martial law is, in any judgment, a serious flaw of the book.

Secondly, although essentially descriptive, the section on the Philippine economy contains a fair amount of materials. It discusses the physical infrastructure, the major industries and their respective growth, employment generation by sectors and the importance of agriculture in absorbing the majority of the labor force.

A noticeable shortcoming of this section relates to the statistics on unemployment, which the author suggests to be only 5 percent. Estimates other than official government reports, e.g. Rosa Linda Tidalgo, "Labor Absorption in the Philippines, 1956-73", (**Philippine Economic Journal**, Nos. 1 & 2, 1976) indicate that unemployment in the Philippines averaged 7.4 percent

annually. Moreover, if the full-time equivalent of the visibly underemployed is included, total unemployment would be 17 percent annually.

Of particular interest in this chapter is the listing of investment incentives, which as the author admits, has been significantly broadened since the declaration of martial law in 1972.

Thirdly, the last section (Chapters IV and V) does not add anything new to existing literature on the subjects of labor legislation and the Philippine labor movement respectively. Quite frankly, Chapter V of this volume ought to be deleted largely because it represents nothing but a rehash of materials in the field, and the reader might be better off referring to the original sources. As it stands, this work has more ideas and phrases the author could lay claim on. It only shows how difficult it is to publish on a subject matter in which the author has had no previous work history.

The author's conclusion that "The trade union movement..." is "... relatively docile compared with those of other Asian nations..." (p. 141) is to be challenged. While the Japanese and Australian trade unions may be ahead in strength and militancy, trade unions in the Philippines are not too far away. In comparison with other Asian developing countries' labor movement, that of the Philippines is far more independent and mili-

tant. In particular, rank and file unionists and their second line blue-collar leadership have stood up to the government as evidenced by mounting industrial disputes and the break-away of numerous local unions from established labor federations. In fact, the government's scheme to unite all the existing labor unions and federations into one single national confederation has failed. Not only has several federations refused to join in the government-sponsored unity plan, but they also challenged in the Supreme Court the activities of the Ministry of Labor in this area. Thus, today there are no less than four labor centers in the Philippines, and only one of these centers fosters an alliance with the government. In addition, a variety of local unions and independent national unions have remained outside these centers. How could the government control a highly segmented labor movement?

Overall, the volume offers very little value, and it is not going to be the pleasure of this reviewer to recommend it. Let it not be said, though, that this reviewer has nothing positive to say about the book. At least, the volume brings in a cautious note about the future of the Philippines. While the short term economic development gains, thus far, have been recognized, the author adds that the long term future is uncertain, something that investors might take note.

Elias T. RAMOS

University of Hawaii - Manoa