

Left the caciques behind: a commentary about contradictions of migration and development in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT: In this research, I will try to develop a study of the contemporary Philippines through a brief review of the bibliography and statistical data analysis. I aim to gather empirical evidence of the causes of extended poverty and unemployment in the country and the high levels of overseas Filipino workers. These social problems and the surge of authoritarianism in the figure of Rodrigo Duterte cannot be adequately explained without referring to the historical legacy of colonialism in the Philippines, the subordinated position of this country in the global division of labour and the structural changes fuelled by hegemonic globalization since the last decades of 20th century. Based on scientific research and official data, this article will critically analyse the historical, social, and economic causes of poverty and hardships affecting many Filipino citizens.

KEYWORDS: Asia, Philippines, neoliberalism, migration, economic crisis

INTRODUCTION

With more than 100 million inhabitants, the Philippines is one of the most populous countries in Southeast Asia. Migration is a problem that marked the story of the Philippines. Accounting for more than 5 million migrants abroad, this Asian country became one of the leading workforce exporters. These migration fluxes are highly diversified and have different employment outcomes than migration from other countries, thanks to the dominion of the English language by Filipinos (IOM, 2019, p. 71). Data from the UN shows the growth of Filipino migrants from 2 million in 1990

to more than 6 million in 2020 (UN DESA, 2020). The number of people from the Philippines in Spain registered in the official institutions rose from 12.404 people in 1998 to 52.426 people in 2020, of which 33.716 are women (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2020). I will try to contribute to the study of contemporary migration with a brief structural analysis of the history, economy and society of the Philippines, inserting the historical evolution of this country into the dynamics of world development and analyzing the contemporary issues related to the ascent of China in the global economy and what this political evolution represents for the Philippines. With this research, I will try to make “a transgression that attracts the knowledge fields dispersed and isolated by academic circles” (Carrillo, 2020a, p. 134). A brief review of the historical evolution of this country will be addressed in the next section.

A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Philippines was one of the colonies of the Spanish empire since the 16th century. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Philippines was engaged in commerce with imperial China (Anderson, 1988; Cruz, 1990). The economy in the Philippines was based on the export of commodities like abaca (*Musa Textilis*), sugar and tobacco. At the end of the 19th century was created the *Compañía Nacional de Tabacos de Filipinas* (Philippines National Tobacco Company). Production was in the hands of the landowners, a social group composed of the descendants of Spanish colonizers, the Catholic Church and Filipinos (Borras, 2007, p. 83). The Philippines is characterized by significant ethnic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity. Besides the descendants of the Spanish colonizers and the native Filipino population, an influential Chinese community held a great part of the economic and social power in the country. In Southern Philippines, the presence of Islam and Muslim communities is substantial, close to Malaysia's border, in the Mindanao province. These communities exerted tenacious resistance during the three centuries to the expansion of the Spanish empire in the archipelago (Trocki, 1992, p. 115). Spain's influence and hegemony profoundly transformed Filipino society by spreading the Catholic religion and Spanish-inspired political and social organization. The traditional structure and the importance of the family in society were inherited since the pre-colonization days and extended their influence on politics. Leading political parties “were conservative in defence of private property and the existing social system. Both parties tried to win the middle ground, with neither going to the extremes to alienate the mainstream voters” (Cheong, 1992, p. 419). Cheong related the tradition of authoritarianism, family ties and clientelism in the Philippines, a historical legacy persisting in the 21st century on the figure of president Rodrigo Duterte and in the existence of “hierarchically structured families”, with elections being in many cases a “monotonous political struggle between the élites” (Cheong, 1992, p. 420).

The Spanish-American war ended the old colonial power in the Philippines in 1898. By means of paying USD 20 million United States bought the Philippines to Spain (Borras, 2007, p. 84). However, the end of Spanish colonial power did not mean the end of the subordinated position of the archipelago in the world economy. Under the

administration of William Howard Taft, Americans “remake the Filipino society along American lines” (Trocki, 1992, p. 96). Filipino revolutionaries, the Katipunan movement under Andrés Bonifacio (1863-1897), lost the support of part of the landowners when they saw their interests compromised. Changes operated during the period of American colonization, like privileged access granted to exporters to the American market, the creation of the institutions of Enlightenment liberal tradition as the House of Representatives, and the spread of English as a hegemonic language was the origin of determining changes in the culture and society of the Philippines (Kratoska & Batson, 1992, p. 257-258). Borrás wrote, “American-owned sugar, coconut oil, and timber mills had been established, at times in partnership with the Philippines landowning classes” (Borrás, 2007, p. 84). A bloody conflict between the American colonizers and the Moro resistance accompanied the period of American colonization. In the words of Trocki, “the last major engagement was the battle of Bud Bagsak, fought in a volcano crater in Mindanao. It ended only when all 500 Moros defending the fortress had been killed, but campaigns against the Moros continued until 1935” (Trocki, 1992, p. 105).

During the Second World War Philippines was subjected to the Japanese imperial power under a puppet government commanded by José Laurel (1943-1945). During this period, “peasant guerrillas invaded the states of landlords who fled to the cities or abroad” (Borrás, 2007, p. 85). After the Second World War, and with a new president designed by Douglas McArthur, Manuel Roxas (1946-1948) started a new epoch in the country as an independent state. In the year 1947, it was established a “Military Bases Agreement”, led to the building of two military bases of the US Army in the country, Clark Base and Subic Bay Base (Robinson et al., 2016, p. 10). In the words of Renato Constantino, “though now formally independent, the Philippines was forced to undergo a series of adjustments which froze its colonial structure” (Constantino, 1975, p. 393).

These were the years that many countries in the global South experienced growth in the context of national developmentalism and import substitution industrialization (Carrillo, 2018, p. 170). The import substitution sector in the Philippines grew at a rate of 12 per cent yearly during 1950 (Owen, 1992, p. 488). However, as was pointed out before, “entrenched interests resisted” political alternatives (Owen, 1992, p. 476). Since the independence of Spain, the landed oligarchy in the Philippines, with close ties with the Americans, was against any redistribution of land, being this a main cause of social unrest in the country, with political representatives often on the side of the property owners. A land reform proposal suggested in the Hardie report was called a “national insult” (You, 2014, p. 206). This resistance to reform from the landowners tried to be solved by president Ramon Magsaysay (1953-1957) with the Land Reform Bill of 1955, that “intended to change the almost feudal relationship between the Philippine landowner and the peasant” (*The New York Times*, 1954). Magsaysay, “one of the greatest democrats that Asia has yet produced,” in the words of David Wurfel, had to deal with the rebellion of the Hukbalahap. President Elpidio Quirino (1948-1953) suppressed civil rights facing the Huk rebellion (Cheong, 1992, p. 422). The Huk movement was eased with political reforms, and Magsaysay died in a plane

crash in 1957. Turnbull holds that one of the consequences of the American support to anticommunism was “bolstering the ruling oligarchy even further” (Turnbull, 1992, p. 600-601; Wurfel, 1958). Compared with the cases of Taiwan and South Korea, You wrote that “success or failure of land reform was not determined by corruption but exogenous factors such as external communist threat and U.S. pressures” (You, 2014, p. 218). Data shows that the land Gini in Korea was reduced from 0.73 in 1945-50 to 0.39 in the decade 1990. In the Philippines, however, land Gini just decreased from 0.58 in 1945/50 to 0.55 in 1990 (You, 2014, p. 204). According to the research, land Gini in the Philippines was 0.647 in 1988, and 70 per cent of the agricultural population in the country was deprived of land (Borras, 2007, p. 88-90).

State intervention and the ongoing essential land reforms were fundamental aspects of the development process in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Following Hobsbawm, “land reform could and did, however, demonstrate that peasant farming, especially by larger, modern-minded farmers, could be as efficient as, and more flexible than the traditional landed state” (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 355). Nonetheless, in the Philippines, reforms were not strong enough to break landowners’ economic and political power (Wade, 2017). The result was that the Philippines kept its subordinated place in the division of labour as an exporter of commodities and minerals to the rapidly developing Asian Tigers and Japan (Camba, 2015). In the words of You, “the role of the United States in land reform was important and progressive in South Korea and Taiwan, but largely conservative in the Philippines” (You, 2014, p. 205).

The second half of the 20th century is marked by the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos (1966-1986). Marcos promulgated Martial Law, starting an authoritarian regime that killed more than 3000 people and “closed the era of pluralistic politics that had existed since 1935” (Cheong, 1992, p. 425), allowing a vast enrichment for him and his wife, with her infamously famous collection of shoes. Marcos developed some land reform programs in order to secure a base of support for his regime and to break up the power of the landowners who opposed him (Borras, 2007, p. 86). This dictatorship also benefited prominent Philippines figures such as Eduardo Cojuangco, owner of San Miguel Corporation (Chung, 2020). The corruption of this dictatorship backed by the US (Fontana, 2017, p. 425) reached astronomic levels, as well as deepened the impoverishment that suffered many sectors of the population. According to Mike Davis, 160.000 people were displaced from their homes during events such as the visit of US President Gerard Ford or World Bank meetings (Davis, 2006, p. 104). The researchers noted that:

Marcos’ land reform program and rural infrastructure benefited mostly the medium and large farms, alienating the peasants much more and exacerbating the asymmetric distribution of economic rents. (Camba, 2015, p. 294)

During this period, “rural dissent, which erupted into full-blown peasant based communist-directed revolution from the 1970s onward, was met with violent militarization of the countryside” (Borras, 2007, p. 87). At this time, rebel movements gained strength, like the New People’s Army from the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front, fighting for revolutionary changes and for

the independence of Muslim Filipinos from the Manila-centered Catholic state. One of the causes of the increase of opposition from Muslim people from Mindanao to the central government was the economic hardships caused by the migration of the population from Manila, who reached critical economic positions in Mindanao. The control of the provincial economy by Christians in large part, and the situation of poverty that the Muslim population faced, started to grow a discontent that materialized in the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front (Cheong, 1992, p. 425; Stange, 1992, p. 556; Turnbull, 1992, p. 621). The hardships caused by the dictatorship fueled a necessary migration flux from the Philippines. Many qualified and non-qualified workers were forced to leave their countries. According to official data, in the year 1993, a total of 66.390 Filipinos and Filipinas were registered as migrants, 15.850 people being housewives before emigration, 7.370 without reported occupation and 7.225 professional, technical and related workers (Commission on Filipinos Overseas, 2020). These migrants searched for a job worldwide in the service sector, care, and as sex workers, among other occupations (Anderson, 1998). The dominion of the English language helped them to find positions as English teachers or in foreign companies. However, mainly of these workers, deprived of legal citizenship documents, cannot exert their civil rights in their destination countries and must work in insecure conditions, without labour rights and subject to the requirements and demands of landlords, employers and other agents who benefit from their workforce (Schierup et al., 2018). In the following section, we will study the structural transformations in the Philippines with the advance of neoliberal globalization.

THE IMPACT OF NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

People's power revolution in Manila put an end to the corrupt dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos with strong protests by the citizenship (Therborn, 2020, p. 231). After the assassination of Benigno Ninoy Aquino in 1983, his wife Corazón -famously known as the daughter of José Cojuangco, owner of the Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac- (Anderson, 1988) reached state power. According to You, "of the 200 representatives elected in 1987, 169 (nearly 85%) were classified as belonging to "traditional clans" (You, 2014, p. 210). The opening of a democratic period did not mean the end of the traditional "cacique democracy" (Anderson, 1998). Despite the hopes for the country's independence that represented the Congress' approval of the closure of the military basis in the year 1991, the Philippines rapidly became one of the outstanding pupils of the International Monetary Fund following the Structural Adjustment Programs (Wallace, 1991; Robinson et al., 2016, p. 10). Under Corazón Aquino's (1986-1992) administration were implemented structural adjustment programs in line with the International Monetary Fund's demands for privatization and suppression of capital controls. The reduction of state presence, unlike the rest of the countries in Southeast Asia, had profound effects on the economy and society. Capital expenditure as a percentage of the national budget fell from 26 to 16 per cent during the Aquino administration (Bello, 2009, p. 12). Davis reminds us that 600.000 squatters lost their homes without any housing alternative during the presidency of Aquino (Davis, 2006, p. 104).

Structural adjustment programs had one of the main consequences of the privatization of public companies and the opening of the society to foreign investment, re-orienting the economy to the more profitable sectors of tourism and finances, forging a new transnational capitalist class (Robinson, 2014). The liberalization policies for mining extractivism and privatizations of public monopolies carried out during the administration of Fidel Ramos (1992-1998) translated into an important growth of financial capital and foreign investment in the country (OECD, 2016, p. 57). A tariff reform inspired by Chilean neoliberalism under Pinochet (1974-1990) was addressed by Cielito Habito (Bello, 2009, p. 14). Reflecting retrospectively on the path followed by the Philippines and the historical trajectory of other Southeast Asian countries with more state presence and political regulation, such as Taiwan, Malaysia and Indonesia, we can confirm the words of professor Anwar Shaikh, who wrote that “almost all the successful experiences of export-oriented growth had been the result of a selective trade and industrialization policies” (Shaikh, as cited in Carrillo, 2018, p. 169).

At the end of the 20th century, the Philippines was a country deeply hit by the Asian crisis of 1997. According to Fontana, “in 1996 South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines received 93.000 million of foreign funds; in 1997 the scales reversed, and 12.000 million of dollars get out of the economies, a sum that equalled the 11 per cent of the GNP of these five countries” (Fontana, 2013, p. 883). One of the consequences of this financial crisis was the disappearing of almost the entire textile industry. A sum of 4,6 billion USD in “speculative funds” abandoned the country and Philippines turned into a “net food importing country” (Bello, 2009, p. 15). The discontent of the population with this situation of impoverishment and increase of inequalities translated into the election of the populist Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), with an “anti-oligarch rhetoric” (Petras, 2006). However, despite the discourses, this government destroyed 22,000 shanties “in the first half of 1999 alone” (Davis, 2006, p. 104). Checking the World Inequality Database shows that by 1997, the Philippines had a considerably high level of income inequality. Its Palma ratio, which reflects the unequal distribution of national income between the 10% of the more privileged population and the bottom 40%, was around 4, far after Malaysia and Indonesia with a Palma ratio of 2, and to a long distance to a country like Taiwan with a Palma ratio of 1 (about methodology, see Green, 2013).

The Philippines started to rapidly modernize with these inflows of speculative capital thanks to “eliminating barriers to capital entry and exit” (Bello, 2009, p. 14). Skyscrapers were built in business areas like Bonifacio Global City, and land prices grew in urban centres, skyrocketing in places like Makati, Diliman and Escolta (Davis, 2006, p. 92). Manila’s population grew from 1,5 million in 1950 to 14,3 million in 2004 (Davis, 2006, p. 4). The number of university students in the country also grew astounding, with 2,7 students for every 100 people in the 1980s, a number higher than Switzerland, with 1,5 for every 100 people (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 295). Agriculture’s share in GDP declined from 29.5% in 1970 to 14.2% in 2000 (Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2009, p. 5). In the decade of 1970, “agro-based products” accounted for 60,76 per cent of exports. This number declined to 9,33% in 2007, coming to be “electronic and electrical” 48,16% of the total exports in the country (Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2009, p. 9). This industry com-

prises electronic components and parts production, taking the most of the wage differentials that allow lower production costs for multinational companies in the Philippines. Animation and outsourcing of call centres and business process operations (BPO) also became an integral part of the Philippines economy in the 21st century, with 10.000 workers employed in the animation industry (Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2009, p. 7). Raúl Delgado Wise defined these processes as an *indirect* labour export, together with the *direct* export of workers via migration (Delgado Wise & Márquez Covarrubias, 2007; Delgado Wise, 2021).

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010), an economist educated in the United States and daughter of former president Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965), followed the neoliberal political agenda of liberalization and privatization of public companies. Research shows that 44,1% of the urban population were living in slums by 2003 (Davis, 2006, p. 24). Nevertheless, a minority of the population thrived in this period. A report by the OECD stated that in 2011, a considerable 76 per cent of GDP growth was in the hands of the 40 richest families in the country (OECD, 2016, p. 42). Most of the citizens, impoverished by these antisocial policies of governments and the structural adjustment programs by supranational institutions, were pushed to different ways of forced migration. According to Bello, “neoliberal discourse ties in very neatly with corruption discourse, with its minimization of the role of the state in economic life” (Bello, 2009, p. 16-17). But neoliberalism is not going to solve the severe problems of income inequality in the country and the widespread poverty, or in the words of Bretch, “it won’t improve relations among men” (Bretch, 1978, p. 60-61).

In the 21st century, the archipelago increased its dependence on the labour export model and from the investments from global corporations, as can be seen in the growing presence of transnational companies such as IBM and Maersk that outsourced customer service departments in the Philippines (De Dios & Williamson, 2014, p. 63). According to World Bank data, foreign direct investment in the Philippines rose from 1 billion in 2010 to 10 billion in 2017. Between 1999-2015 foreign direct investment increased by 30,5% in manufacturing and 11,8% in the finance and insurance sectors (OECD, 2016, p. 56).

From a total of 220.000 workers employed by US corporations based in the Philippines, those engaged in the information sector accounted for 48.000 people in 2013 (OECD, 2016, p. 56). Many women work in these multinational companies, which made the Philippines 16th place in the global gender gap (WEF, 2019, p. 32). However, this sector does not represent most of the population but “just 2% of the total labour force” (OECD, 2016, p. 40). It is important to observe, with Palma, the low levels of private investment in the country: “their capitalist elites are similar to their Latin America counterparts—especially in their preference for having their (rather large) cake and eating it” (Palma, 2016, pp. 38-39). Services and tourism are sectors that employ a great part of Filipino workers, not to forget those who get their subsistence means from informal jobs. These citizens were deeply affected by the strict lockdowns and curfews consequence of the 2020 pandemic.

Remittances increased the dependence of the Philippines on migrant work and external income sources. In 2018 Philippines received almost 34.000 million USD from

overseas Filipino workers (IOM, 2019, p. 36). Filipinas abroad cover many tasks of social reproduction for middle-class families in countries like Spain, the United States, Hong Kong, and the Middle East, carrying out difficult jobs with seldom any capacity to negotiate with landlords, employers and other agents and in some cases facing abuse. During the 2010 decade, remittances decreased, representing around 8-10 per cent of the GDP in the Philippines, from 13,3% in 2005 (St. Louis Fed., 2019).

The Philippines is the third country in the world, after China and India, that received more remittances in 2015, 29,80 billion USD (IOM, 2019, p. 36). The profits for many agents benefited from these high migration flows caused the surge of an important migration industry in the country. However, contrary to some theories of development that overstate the importance of remittances, the development of the Philippines faces structural constraints such as “the dominance of rentierist elites over the commanding heights of government and the economy” (Tuaño & Cruz, 2019, p. 323). These migration fluxes also resulted from natural disasters caused by climate change. A report from International Organization for Migration states that “volcanic eruptions and flooding caused by monsoons and landslides” were the causes that originated 3,8 million forced displacements in 2018 (IOM, 2019, p. 74).

An important turn took place in 2016 with the popular election that pushed Rodrigo Duterte to Malacañang Palace as president of the Philippines. Following Carrillo, “from Europe’s heart in Hungry to PiS’ Poland (Law and Justice) to Bolsonaro’s Brazil, or Duterte’s Philippines, we can observe the accumulation of dreadful consequences that left in its path the neoliberal tsunami and the free market dogma” (Carrillo, 2020b, p. 76; see also Baranowski, 2022). As a consequence of the astonishing rise of the Chinese economy in the 21st century, the Filipino government changed the traditional approach to the US Embassy in favour of China. Increasing conflicts with China concerning the South China Sea were one of the causes of a new military agreement signed under the administration of Barack Obama (2009-2017) between the US and the Philippines (Robinson et al., 2016, p. 123). Many protesters criticized the growing presence of China and the appropriation of resources by Filipino fishermen (*The Guardian*, 2014). The Chinese presence came accompanied by an important investment flux from the Chinese capital. Jonina Fernando wrote, “in October 2016, Manila and Beijing sealed \$24 billion worth of deals and 13 government-to-government agreements” (Fernando, 2020). The data shows that in 2019, foreign investment in the Philippines came mainly from China and South Korea. 88.674,5 million pesos of FDI coming from China was approved this year, with 176.362,3 million pesos from Singapore and 11.728,9 million pesos from the US (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). This turn to China is together with increased authoritarianism and state violence. Duterte, former mayor of the city of Davao, started a brutal policy of “war on drugs”—a “war on the poor”, according to scholar Anna Romina Guevarra— that led to numerous killings of people by the police (Amnesty, 2019; Guevarra, 2021). In the Mindanao area, violence increased, and bombing attacks in the province were aggravated by the presence of Abu Sayyaf and the connections of fundamentalist Muslims in the Philippines with the Islamic State (Mangahas & Lischin, 2016). A researcher noted that in Basilan, “today Muslims constitute 71 per cent of the population, but

Christians own 75 per cent of the land, with ethnic Chinese controlling 75 per cent of local trade” (Bello, 2002). Rodrigo Duterte also received strong criticism from many citizens for his decision to bury former dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the national heroes’ cemetery (*Reuters*, 2021).

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted an economy like the Philippines, which relies on services, tourism and exports. Curfews and lockdowns increased unemployment for most workers, a great part of them in the informal sector (Sajor, 2020). Data shows that youth employment increased from 12,9% in 2019 to 31,6% in 2020 (ILO, 2020, p. 74). Without a doubt, Covid-19 increased problems of widespread poverty, reflected by facts such as that “only 14 per cent of Filipinos were in possession of bank accounts” (Tuaño & Cruz, 2019, p. 321). Dependence on the service sector and the export of the labour force are together with the “attempts to erode what liberal-democratic institutions have been consolidated in the country” (Tuaño & Cruz, 2019, p. 324). Human rights groups reported the assassination of drug dealers and street children during the period of Duterte as mayor of Davao (Marshall & Moga-to, 2016). The implications of this inequality for Philippine politics are important: “under high levels of inequality, the wealthy elite will not want programmatic politics to develop because programmatic competition is likely to strengthen leftist parties that will jeopardize their interests. The rich have incentives to develop clientelistic politics as an alternative” (You, 2014, p. 195). Something that is not only related to the elite but to some workers too: “it makes perfect sense for poor individuals to engage in the clientelistic exchange of their votes with particularistic benefits such as cash, gifts, and patronage jobs in the public sector even if it is collectively irrational” (You, 2014, p. 195). These structural constraints pose important setbacks to achieving an integrated development that helps to improve the material situation of the popular classes in the Philippines. A prosecutor from International Criminal Court admits “reasonable basis to believe that Crime Against Humanity was committed” under the Duterte administration (*Al Jazeera*, 2021), a disgraced reality unfortunately not new for the Filipinos and Filipinas, who know about their recent past of violence of the *vigilantes*, suffered in the poorest communities and directed in many cases to the groups, leftists and those who are not, who opposed to the successive *cacique* governments in the country (Petras, 2006).

CONCLUSION

“The history of the Philippines is a history of fighting against external imperial powers,” said Bayan member EJ de la Cruz (Arcilla, 2021). Significant changes are taking place in the Philippines related to global economic developments in the 21st century. The popular election of president Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022) opened a new epoch in Philippine politics with growing contradictions between the Chinese presence in the country, the problems that this relationship poses for US-Philippines historical ties, and the claim of resources of China against the needs of fishermen and other workers, a subject that lead to demonstrations by Filipino citizens. Economic opportunities opened by the investment of the projects of Belt and Road Initiative are together with

the regressive pathway of liberal and democratic rights that followed the Duterte administration, as well as the war on drugs, whose effects are suffered by the poorest, considering the conditions of informal employment and lack of labour rights in formal jobs. This situation translated into forced migration movements that expelled many Filipino citizens from their native country and represented a loss of an educated and necessary workforce, posing additional obstacles to the country's future development. The study of social problems like migration cannot be ascribed only to reductionist explanations and require a structural analysis that encompasses all the aspects that marked the historical evolution and the social causes of this economic backwardness. The consequences of the Spanish colonial legacy in social, cultural, economic, and political aspects and the social outcomes of structural adjustment programs at the end of the 20th century are aspects shared by the Philippines and states in Latin America. In the words of Durkheim: "the determining cause of a social fact must be sought among antecedent social facts and not among the states of the individual consciousness" (Durkheim, 1982, p. 134). Analysis of these aspects will shed light on the powerful forces that originated the present situation of underdevelopment and dependence that must be overcome. In this case study of the Philippines, we can observe that "political elites have incentives to develop clientelism rather than programmatic competition that could encourage the development of leftist parties, and the largely poor population is vulnerable to clientelism because of the collective action problem" (You, 2014, p. 219).

Wolfgang Streeck emphasizes the need for "a socioeconomy that returns to subordinate the economic to the social, and not in the opposite way" (Streeck, 2017, p. 291). According to Delgado Wise, "the goal is to build a comprehensive view of the phenomenon in order to address its root causes, show the contributions made by migrants to destination countries, and reveal the costs and impacts of migration on countries of origin, migrants, and their families" (Delgado Wise, 2014, p. 650). The poverty, violence and unemployment that many Filipinos and Filipinas face requires political responses that help secure a safe living and reputable sources of employment for the population. But, according to Neil Davidson, "because neoliberalism has moved official politics so far to the right, many issues which in the era of the Long Boom would have been considered reformist demands, or even elementary issues of human decency, are now resisted by the dominant institutions of capitalist society" (Davidson, 2016, p. 17). The end of the Duterte administration sets out an uncertain future with the democracy at a cliff's edge, with the candidacies for president of Bongbong Marcos, son of the dictator and Duterte's ally against democratic adversaries such as Leni Robredo or Leody de Guzman, a working-class candidate almost unknown by the general public due to the important power of private-owned media companies in "agenda-setting" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The country has become one of the deadliest countries for environmental activists, and the army confronts the communist rebels of the New People's Army in the southern Philippines (Global Witness, 2019; *Dpa*, 2021). Natural disasters caused by climate change are another example of these deep social shocks that lead to different forms of forced migration. Further research about the Philippines is required to find alternatives to this hegemonic globalization, working to overcome these struc-

tural obstacles and achieve fundamental changes in society in the direction of less authoritarianism and more economical and social democratization that reach every citizen in the country. Citizens from the Philippines have the power to overcome their destiny and challenge the established social order to find a better society and leave behind a past of corruption, inequality and impunity.

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