# US Forces Pacific Culture Guide

# PHILIPPINES

U.S. AIR FORCE

# About this Guide

This guide is designed to help prepare you for deployment to culturally complex environments and successfully achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information it contains will help you understand the decisive cultural dimension of your assigned location and gain necessary skills to achieve mission success. The guide consists of two parts:

**Part 1:** Introduces "Culture General," the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment – Southeast Asia in particular.

**Part 2:** Presents "Culture Specific" information on the Philippines, focusing on unique cultural features of Filipino society. This section is designed to complement other pre-deployment training. It applies culture-general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location.

For further information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at https://wwwmil.maxwell.af.mil/afclc or contact AFCLC's Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

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# PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

## What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.

Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing – an image, word, object, idea, or story – represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual symbol of a core American value – freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic, representing the importance Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

## Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and

economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

## Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize these behaviors and systems into categories – what the Air Force refers to as "cultural domains" – in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains – which include kinship, language and communication, and social and political systems among others (see chart on next page) – as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the ways different cultures define family or kinship, a deployed military member can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

## Social Behaviors Across Cultures

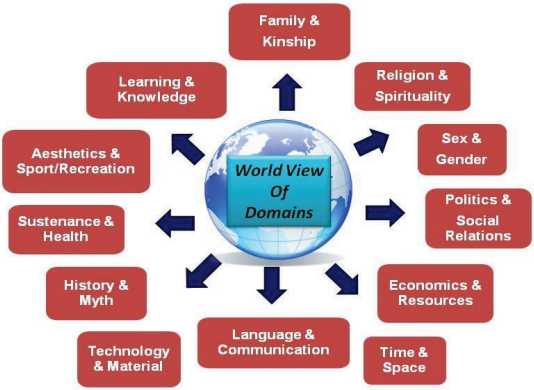
While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even group those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated market economies, producing foodstuffs for universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition,

although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

## Worldview

One of our basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different according to our cultural standard. As depicted in the chart below, we can apply the 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Consequently, we assume that individuals falling into the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

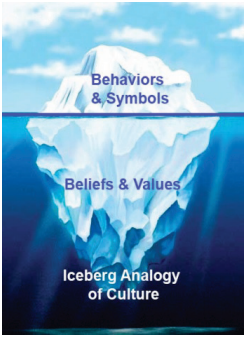


This collective perspective forms our worldview – how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for our actions and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

### Cultural Belief System

An important component of a worldview is our belief system. A community's belief system sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true – regardless of whether there is physical evidence to support these ideas. Beliefs are a central facet of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have help shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.




### Core Beliefs

Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels

of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend judgment in order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout Southeast Asia, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common across the region. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

## CULTURAL DOMAINS

### 1. History and Myth

History and myth are related concepts. History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.

Southeast Asia includes 5 countries on the mainland (Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) and 5 maritime countries in

the North Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei). As early as 150 BC, the scattered communities on the mainland traded with and paid tribute to the dominating kingdoms of China and India. China maintained a presence in Vietnam for over 1000 years, while's India's influence was felt mainly as its inhabitants spread Hinduism, Buddhism, and later Islam across the region. Southeast Asia's most famous ancient empire, the Khmer, ruled for 4 centuries beginning around 800 AD from its center at Angkor in Cambodia. Later, Thai kings expanded across the mainland, while a Hindu kingdom from India united the Indonesian archipelago.

China began to halt its expeditions to the region in mid-15th century, just as European nations began sending theirs. The Portuguese were the first to conquer a Southeast Asian settlement in 1511, although their influence in the region was short-lived. Observing their success, the Dutch and English moved into the area as well. The Europeans sought to acquire trade routes and territories, and from the 17th through the 19th centuries the Dutch worked to consolidate their power in today's Indonesia, the Spanish their control of the Philippines, the English their hold over Burma and Malaysia, and the French their control over Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. By the beginning of the 20th century, virtually all of Southeast Asia was controlled by colonial powers; only Thailand remained independent.

During World War II, Japan invaded and occupied portions of Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, and the Philippines. After the war, independence movements regained traction, and following years of struggle against the occupying Americans, the Philippines became the first country in Southeast Asia to gain its independence in 1946. Other countries endured years of instability and conflict on their way to independence. In Vietnam, communist rebels battled and defeated the French but then engaged the US in a controversial war. A civil war in Cambodia ended in the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge,

during whose reign in the late 1970s almost 2 million people died. A few years after the Dutch ceded power in Indonesia, a dictator took control in a coup and ruled for 32 years before resigning in 1998. Similarly, a military junta wielding absolute power has ruled Burma since 1962. Since the 1990s, Southeast Asia has largely enjoyed renewed stability. Both Thailand and Malaysia now have an affluent, educated middle class; Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are well on the road to recovery from decades of conflict; and even Burma has recently held elections and initiated reform to a civilian democracy.

## 2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community.

Differences in the physical environment affected the social and political structures that historically developed in Southeast Asia. Where people were nomadic or semi-nomadic, systems of government were less permanent and bureaucratic. In areas where populations were more settled, a reliable tax base allowed the development of more elaborate and permanent governing structures. These early states, though, often found it difficult to extend their authority into the remote highlands, where small tribal groups resided, and the islands, where some groups lived permanently in water communities of small boats.

Significant changes occurred in Southeast Asia around 2000 years ago as peoples from China and India began to move into the region (see *History and Myth*). New leaders formed new empires and states, and spiritual beliefs and practices changed as religious leaders introduced new religious traditions (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

Many colonial-era governments, fearing the threat that an educated class might hold, largely denied education and civil liberties to most Southeast Asians and discouraged political

activities. Political participation swelled around the time of independence, although many post-independence political structures in the region were dictatorial and repressive. While most countries are healing from their 20th century conflicts, many governments continue to reflect authoritarian elements. Elites across the region continue to seek to control access to the political system. They are typically from the country's dominant class, which is often comprised of members of a particular ethnic group.

Some countries, such as Vietnam and Cambodia, are somewhat ethnically homogenous, while others, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, are much more diverse. Many countries also have minority communities of ethnic Chinese and Indians. So-called hill tribes, minority groups with distinct ethnic and linguistic identities, are found in Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), formed in 1967, is a regional intergovernmental organization whose goal is to promote economic and political cooperation among its members, including the creation of a free trade community by 2015. ASEAN priorities include fostering economic and diplomatic relations with India and China, which have been strained due to longtime territorial disputes in the region. The European Union has a strong relationship with the organization and has taken steps to deepen trade and business links. The US also has close political, security, and economic relations with most of the member states.

The relationship between Japan and the countries of Southeast Asia has improved significantly since World War II, and Japan is a crucial economic and aid partner today.

## 3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help

preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offer individuals peace of mind, and explain the causes of events in a society.

The earliest populations of Southeast Asia were animists, which means they believed that many different spirits inhabited elements in the natural environment, such as trees and rocks, or were represented in natural phenomena, such as thunder and lightning, or represented deceased ancestors. In many areas today, these traditional beliefs are still very important, and many Southeast Asians incorporate them in their practice of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity.

Indian traders and priests first brought Hinduism to Southeast Asia in the 1st century AD, where it eventually became the dominant religion in several kingdoms. In the 14th century the influence of Hinduism began to wane as people turned to Islam. Today, although there remain only small communities of Hindus in Indonesia, the Hindu principles of absolutism and hierarchy remain significant in politics across the region.

Indian merchants also brought Buddhism to Southeast Asia beginning in the 1st century AD where it became well established in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Later, Chinese immigrants introduced Buddhism to Vietnam and Singapore. Many Southeast Asian mainlanders are Buddhist today, although their beliefs and practices may also include some animist and Hindu traditions.

Chinese people spread the teachings of Confucius primarily in what is today Vietnam and Singapore. These teachings embody a complex belief system emphasizing stability, consensus, hierarchy, and authority that still influences ideas of social harmony across the region.

Islam reached Southeast Asia beginning in the 10th century through Muslim traders from the Middle East, China, and India,

with a large number of Southeast Asians converting to Islam beginning in the 14th century to escape the Hindu caste system. The largest population of Muslims in the world, approximately 234 million, lives in Indonesia today. Muslim minority communities in Thailand and the Philippines have historically suffered economic and political marginalization.

Christianity was introduced to the region by European colonizers beginning in the 16th century. Today, although parts of Indonesia have Christian communities, the Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Southeast Asia.

## 4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin").

Family life is very important to Southeast Asians and relationships among family members are highly valued. As in the US, kinship is generally traced through both parents. Children are generally very respectful of their parents, and parents are devoted to their children, making economic or other sacrifices as a matter of course to ensure their well-being.

Traditionally, close proximity of kin was a valuable resource in Southeast Asia's agriculturally-based villages. Families were large and close-knit as individual members supported each other economically and socially and the rhythms of family and village life mirrored those of the agricultural cycle.

Family life in Southeast Asia has changed in recent decades as societies have become more economically and socially diverse due to industrialization and urbanization. Today, a much wider variety of occupations is open to both men and women, and the middle class is growing in cities across the region. Women have fewer children today than they did 3 decades ago, and

many households in the cities no longer contain 3 or 4 generations of extended family but are mostly nuclear families.

Many Southeast Asian countries that have large rural hinterlands, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, also have large metropolises, such as Jakarta, Manila, and Bangkok. In these sorts of countries, there is a sharp rural-urban divide in economic and educational opportunities that results in stark differences in rural and urban family life. In rural villages, extended families may remain intact whose activities revolve around agricultural production, while in urban centers the household is usually much smaller and family structures are much more diverse.

Although arranged marriages are much less common today, most Southeast Asians depend on their family's input when choosing a marriage partner. The ages of both the bride and groom have increased as young people postpone marriage to pursue economic and educational opportunities, and divorce rates have risen in recent decades. Of note, in Indonesia and Malaysia Muslim men are allowed to practice polygyny, or have more than one wife, if they can afford to support them all. For these Southeast Asians, matrimony and divorce are under the jurisdiction of Islamic law.

## 5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological/reproductive differences between males and females, while gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles.

Southeast Asia's dominant philosophies and religions (Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity) privilege the male's role as provider and stress female subordination. Despite most countries' commitment to gender equality, women across Southeast Asia may find participation in the business and political spheres difficult, and in some countries there is still a marked preference for sons over daughters.

Despite these challenges, there is widespread acceptance of women in the workplace, though women usually receive less pay than men. Industrialization has provided new opportunities for women, and many Southeast Asian women continue to work beyond marriage and children. Hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian women even relocate to other countries to work as nurses and domestic workers.

Within the agricultural sector, women produce about 50% of food in the region and represent a significant share of the agricultural labor force. They are particularly involved in harvesting rice, tea production, and working on rubber and fruit plantations. Women generally have access to education and training, and in Thailand and the Philippines there are actually more post-secondary female graduates than males.

Opinion on sexual orientation and gender identity is most liberal in the Philippines, where homosexuality is legal and there have been attempts to pass anti-discrimination legislation to protect sexual minorities. But in many parts of Southeast Asia homosexuals suffer discrimination and stigmatization. Malaysia criminalizes homosexuality and cross-dressing, and in Indonesia transgender individuals are often the victims of violence and exploitation.

## 6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication is defined as the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally.

Southeast Asia is linguistically very diverse; of the approximately 6000 languages spoken in the world today, about 1000 of them are found in Southeast Asia. Many of the ancient indigenous languages that were present in the region have become extinct as a result of war, cultural and economic domination, and small population size.

The languages of mainland Southeast Asia belong to 3 groups: Austro-Asiatic (such as Cambodian and Vietnamese), Tai (such as Thai and Lao), and Tibeto-Burmese (including highland languages and Burmese). Languages that belong to these 3 groups are also found in India and China. Conversely, most of the languages spoken on the islands of Southeast Asia belong to the Austronesian family, a group of languages originating from southern China and Taiwan.

The colonial powers that controlled Southeast Asia until the 20th century primarily promoted and used their own languages including French, Dutch, English, and Spanish. Since independence, several states have named one local linguistic variety as the “standard,” such as Bahasa Indonesian and Bangkok Thai, and promoted its use over both European and other local languages. Recently, after years of aggressively promoting their national languages, many Southeast Asian countries have re-introduced English as a language of instruction in school and allowed ethnic Chinese and Indians to attend school in their own languages.

Ancient Southeast Asians developed their own writing systems based on scripts from India and China. Today, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Filipino, like English and most western European languages, use the Latin alphabet, while Burmese, Laotian, Thai, and Cambodian use writing systems derived from ancient Indian scripts.

Southeast Asians are rarely confrontational or highly demonstrative and emotional in their communication. They value respect as a key component in maintaining social harmony, and conveying respect is a significant aspect of both verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, proper greetings, such as pressing the palms together and slightly bowing as is common in Thailand, are extremely important across Southeast Asia.

## 7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) and culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems such as schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.

Throughout their history, the cultures of Southeast Asia have willingly borrowed and adapted ideas, practices, and institutions from beyond the region. This willingness is evident in the history of education. Prior to colonization, both Hindu and Muslim traders and migrants from India and beyond brought their own traditions of education to the region, and local Southeast Asian communities adopted these curricula and educational methods to their needs.

Later, during the colonial period, the European powers were largely uninterested in providing education to Southeast Asians because they viewed them principally as agricultural laborers. If the colonial powers did provide educational opportunities, they were largely confined to members of privileged groups.

Still later, as populations across the region began to resist colonization, the lack of educational opportunities became a topic around which to rally. In many countries, local activists adopted western educational methods but also drew on local traditions to devise new educational opportunities through which they articulated their arguments for independence.

Today, education in Southeast Asia is viewed as both a tool for developing the region and as a human right. Consequently, in most countries education is open to every citizen regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or socio-economic background. Rapidly growing populations challenge most national governments in

their goals of providing 12 years of basic education to all, often forcing a sacrifice in the quality of services. Students in both urban and rural areas often suffer from a lack of adequate classrooms, teachers, and good text books, although primary school enrollment averages an excellent 93% in the region.

## 8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In most western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to relationship-building. Conversely, in most Southeast Asian cultures establishing and maintaining relationships within the group can take precedence over accomplishing a task in the most efficient manner.

Southeast Asians' emphasis on the well-being of the group and maintaining social harmony often means people will deliberately avoid embarrassment of themselves and others, a strategy often referred to as "saving face." Many Southeast Asians try to manage their time efficiently while still showing respect to their co-workers and maintaining "face."

Time is maximized by multi-tasking, and engagements usually start when scheduled. Networking is very important in Southeast Asia, and new contacts are often best made through a high status third party who knows both parties well. Only after the establishment of a good rapport can business negotiations proceed.

Public and private spaces often overlap in a way that is unfamiliar to Americans. Shop owners may also live at their place of business, so entering into a public space can also mean entry into an individual's private space. Consequently, customers and clients should always show proper respect.

## 9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill and style. Most of Southeast Asia's forms of creative expression, such as art, architecture, dance, music, and theater, reflect the diversity of cultures and ethnicities of the region as well as the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. Ancient and elaborate Hindu temples and highly symbolic statues of Buddha are found in many countries. Similarly, across Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, Islamic art and architecture intermingle with examples of Hindu and local animist traditions.

Traditional classical dance and theater are enjoying a revival after some forms came close to extinction during the wars and conflicts of the 20th century. These traditions trace back to the ancient kingdoms of the region and often include dancers dressed in elaborate masks and costumes. Ancient forms of shadow-puppet theater, in which paper puppets are manipulated against a lighted backdrop, are also popular in several countries.

Combat sports of Asian and Western origins are popular in Southeast Asia today. With the end of the colonial-era ban on martial arts, indigenous forms such as *Pentjak Silat* and *Bersilat* combined with other Asian forms to make up *Muay Thai*, *Pencak Silat* and *Kali*, the main components of today's Mixed Martial Art fighting.

The Southeast Asian Games are an important regional sporting event. These biennial games bring together over 4,000 athletes for 11 days of competition in the Olympic sports and promote regional cooperation and understanding.

## 10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures and economics. Theories of disease

and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.

As expected from Southeast Asia's location on the water, more fish is consumed than any other form of animal protein. Rice, a grain that has been cultivated in the region for thousands of years, is the primary food staple. Everyday meals are typically simple, consisting of chopped pieces of meat and vegetables that are fried or steamed and served with rice, often accompanied by spicy chili condiments. Influences from India and China are obvious in popular dishes such as spicy curries and rice noodle soups. Members of Muslim communities in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines typically do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

Malaria, HIV/AIDS, and the lack of clean drinking water are the main health concerns in Southeast Asia. With an estimated 15% of worldwide cases coming from the region, malaria is a major problem. The HIV/AIDS epidemic was delayed in reaching Southeast Asia but turned into a major cause of death throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Since then, due to successful HIV prevention programs including those aimed at sex workers and their clients, transmission rates have steadily declined, and recent HIV/AIDS incidence rates have been similar to those of the US. Access to clean water has increased in most regions but in Cambodia and Laos half of the population still lacks access to clean drinking water.

All countries are faced with the rise of non-communicable diseases among their aging populations, and most face the threat of emerging infectious diseases, such as the avian flu.

The countries of Southeast Asia confront many challenges in providing health care for their growing populations. Rapid but unequal socioeconomic development has resulted in significant disparities in health and access to healthcare. Despite these

challenges, most countries have experienced a continual increase in life expectancy since the 1950s.

## 11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. Most Southeast Asian communities practiced wet-rice and slash-and-burn agriculture for centuries before the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century. In addition, Southeast Asia's geographical location between China and India as well as its position on navigable waterways which connect the West and Middle East with Asia and Australia made the area an important center of trade well before European presence.

With European expansion into the area came the introduction of plantations and the mechanization of agriculture as well as the entry of the region into the global marketplace. Worldwide demand for rice increased dramatically in the 19th century, further changing the agricultural landscape of the region. Today, all 3 agriculture types – wet-rice, slash-and-burn, and plantation – are still practiced in the region and all have caused serious ecological damage such as massive deforestation and an increase in the production of greenhouse gases.

Beginning in the 20th century the region experienced a dramatic industrialization process with growth rates exceeding even those of developed nations. Explosive growth in exports such as textiles, electronics, auto parts, and petroleum lead to double-digit economic growth, greatly increasing local GDPs. Though roughly 1/3 of the population currently lives below the poverty line, regional economies have grown and now supply both skilled and semi-skilled workers to other countries.

The 2008 global financial crisis caused damage to the economies of Southeast Asia. While the financial sector did not engage in high-risk lending practices, there was a severe drop

in exports due to a global reduction in spending from which the countries are still recovering.

## 12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. After the colonial period, the countries of Southeast Asia have expanded at different rates and currently experience varied levels of economic development. Their places in the global market range from Singapore, which has the third-highest GDP world-wide, to Burma and Cambodia which are ranked among the poorest countries in the world.

Prior to colonial rule, the region's inhabitants were expert farmers, having adopted domesticated rice from India and China and developed complex rice-farming techniques, or mariners who traded across the region. European colonists brought additional skills in metalworking, agriculture, sailing, and navigation. The introduction of commercial agriculture, mining, and an export-based economy during the colonial period placed Southeast Asia on its current technological path.

Southeast Asian nations are generally open to trade and investment, having transformed from inward-looking economies dominated by agriculture to outward-looking, market-oriented economies in just a few years. As China's "backyard," Southeast Asia is often seen as the site of economic competition between China and the US and between India and Japan. Despite lingering mistrust of China because of several unresolved maritime territorial disputes, some Southeast Asian nations welcome China's investment in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, and mining. About 15% of Southeast Asia's total trade is conducted with China. By comparison, about 12% of Southeast Asia's trade is conducted with the US.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize Southeast Asian society at large, we will focus on specific features of Filipino society.

# PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

## 1. HISTORY AND MYTH

### Historical Overview

The Philippines is an archipelago comprising over 7000 islands of which only 460 are larger than 1 square mile. Located in Southeast Asia about 100 miles south of Taiwan and to the east of Malaysia and Indonesia, the islands were first settled tens of thousands of years ago. Diverse local cultures and languages developed over many years, and later, migrants and colonizers from Malaysia, China, Spain, and the US settled the islands. Today's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in the archipelago is the result of the dynamic mixture of local and foreign influences.

### Early History

Fossil remains indicate that humans migrated to the Philippines beginning about 50,000 years ago. Popular belief is that most Filipinos are descended from migrants from Indonesia and Malaysia who came to the islands in waves over several centuries. On the contrary, recent archeological, linguistic, and genetic evidence suggests that migrants from Taiwan settled the Philippines before moving on to Indonesia and Malaysia.

Another popular belief is the idea that the ***Negritos***, an indigenous minority group, are descended from these earliest migrants (see *Political and Social Relations*). Consequently, they are sometimes referred to as the "aborigines" of the Philippines, a label that may not be accurate.

Regardless of their origins, early inhabitants of the islands traveled among the islands by boat and formed ***barangays*** (a word that is used today to refer to a unit of political administration like "municipality" or "city" and is derived from

the word for “boat”) led by ***datus*** (chiefs). The ***barangays*** were autonomous and were culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse.

Some of the early ***barangays*** developed into sophisticated networks of settlements that may have been influenced by the Hindu empires of Java and Sumatra. Significant settlements included the Rajahnates of Butuan and Cebu in the central part of the archipelago. Archaeological evidence indicates many communities traded with China and other regions in Asia.

### Islamic Sultanates

A number of Islamic sultanates were also established as trade routes in the region which connected the Philippines with the Arab world. The most notable included the Sultanate of Sulu in Jolo and the Sultanate of Maguidanao, founded by Shariff Mohammed Kabungsuwan of Malaysia in 1475. After the sultanates were established, Islam spread through the archipelago (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

### Spanish Period

Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (pictured) who was in the service of the Spanish Crown, launched from Spain in August 1519 with a fleet of 5 ships in search of a westward route to the “Spice” Islands of Indonesia. He arrived in Brazil in December, then passed through the Strait of Magellan at the tip of South America and entered the Pacific Ocean in November 1520.

On March 16, 1521 Magellan’s crew became the first Europeans to record their sighting of the Philippine islands, landing on the island of Homonhon before continuing on through the archipelago. When the explorers reached the island of Cebu on April 27, armed conflict between the Europeans and local inhabitants led by Lapu-Lapu erupted, resulting in the death of Magellan. His crew retreated and continued their journey westward,

eventually becoming the first to circumnavigate the globe, arriving back in Spain in 1522.

The Spanish sent several other expeditions to the islands between 1522 and 1543. They were determined to colonize the archipelago so that they could participate in the lucrative spice trade, further Spain's commerce and missionary contacts with China and Japan, and convert the Filipinos to Christianity. Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, the commander of the fourth expedition, named the islands *Las Islas Filipinas* in 1543 in honor of Spanish King Phillip II.

**Legazpi:** In 1564 King Phillip II appointed Miguel Lopez de Legazpi the first royal governor of the Philippines and sent him from his post in Mexico to pacify the islands. His fleet landed on Cebu in 1565 where Legazpi and his men defeated the local ruler, forcing him to sign an agreement that made every Filipino answerable to Spanish law. When the agreement proved to be unenforceable, since the archipelago was comprised of autonomous settlements, Legazpi set out to conquer each.

In 1571 Legazpi vanquished the Muslim ruler of a prosperous trade city in Manila Bay and established Manila as the capital of the colony. Due to its excellent harbor and proximity to productive rice fields, Manila quickly became the center of Spanish civil, military, religious, and commercial activity in the islands and a significant port for international trade in the region.

**Galleon Trade:** Because there were no spices or precious metals in the islands, the colony was not initially profitable. Income was derived mainly from Manila's harbor and the islands' location on trade routes. Almost all state, private, and church capital came to be invested in the galleon trade, which was named after the large ships (pictured), owned by Spaniards.

These ships usually were manned by Filipinos that transported Chinese textiles and porcelain and Mexican silver between Manila and

Acapulco, Mexico. The galleon trade opened commerce between East and West and brought many Chinese to Manila to develop commercial enterprises. The Spanish colonial authorities restricted the Chinese to certain areas, and consequently, there were periodic outbursts of violence between the two groups during the 17th and 18th centuries.

**Friarocracy:** Missionary priests and friars accompanied Legazpi's 1565 expedition and in the following years, Augustinian, Dominican, and Franciscan friars established parishes throughout the islands (see *Religion and Spirituality*). To ease their conversion efforts, the friars forced the populace into settlements and became *de facto* representatives of the Spanish colonial government. These friars supervised town affairs and eventually assuming responsibility for the political, economic, and social administrative functions of towns in a system that came to be criticized as a "friarocracy." A similar system of Spanish colonization was instituted in the Americas.

The Catholic clergy retained a strong presence through the following centuries of Spanish rule. Conversion efforts focused on lowland and coastal populations and as a result, many upland tribal peoples and members of Muslim communities (whom the Spanish called ***Moros*** or Moors) retained their religious affiliations (see *Religion and Spirituality*). Upland communities for the most part were exempted from draft labor, taxation, education, and health measures.

DOMINICAN FRIAR

The religious orders became the largest landholders by the 18th century, and the income from these holdings allowed some friars (pictured) to live in palatial estates. But the autonomy of the Spanish friars eventually led to their downfall. They refused to respect the authority of the bishops and ignored church policy to turn over parishes to locally trained priests. By the end of the 19th century, the friars' misuse of authority coupled with their racist contempt for the indigenous people and neglect of their parishioners helped fan anti-Spanish sentiment.

## The Philippine Revolution

A series of revolts occurred in the 19th century in response to these growing frustrations. In 1872, for example, Filipino dockworkers and soldiers rose up and killed their Spanish officers in Cavite. A short time later, three Filipino priests seeking equality with Spanish priests were executed near Manila, generating outrage and fueling the growth of a national consciousness.

European educated Filipinos known as ***ilustrados*** led subsequent independence efforts. Jose Rizal, a physician and scholar, criticized colonial rule and the friars' beliefs concerning Filipino racial inferiority in the widely-read novel *Noli Me Tangere* in 1886. In 1892 he organized a moderate reform movement called *Liga Filipina* that sought self-government through peaceful institutional reform. Although Rizal (pictured) never formally endorsed revolution, the friars feared sedition, banned his books, and convinced the Spanish authorities to arrest and exile him to Mindanao.

Rizal's *Liga Filipina* collapsed after his arrest, although its influence continued when former member Andres Bonifacio established a secret militant society, the *Katipunan*, or KKK which was led by Emilio Aguinaldo. Supported by a network of clandestine provincial councils, 30,000 members of the KKK initiated an armed struggle for independence against the Spanish in August 1896.

Despite his disavowal of violent revolution, Rizal was found guilty of treason before a military court and executed in December 1896. The rebels had few initial successes against the Spanish, although Rizal's death spurred them to continue the fight. After 18 months of intense bloodshed and in-fighting within the KKK, the Spanish and the KKK negotiated an armistice, and rebel leader Aguinaldo retreated into exile in Hong Kong in 1897.

## Philippine-American War

In December 1898, after the Spanish-American War, the US and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris which resulted in Spain ceding Cuba to the US and allowed the US to purchase Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines for $20 million. The US Congress disagreed over whether to grant full independence to the Philippines or retain control of the archipelago in order to promote American economic, territorial, and cultural objectives in the region. Because they had long held the hope that the US would support them in their cause of independence from Spain, the Filipinos were disheartened by this indecision and approved the Malolos Constitution in January 1899, declaring the Philippines an independent republic and ex-rebel leader Aguinaldo its first President.

The American public was deeply divided over the issue, and US President McKinley's subsequent decision to annex the Philippines was very controversial. At the time of annexation, when the country became a formal territory of the US, American soldiers controlled the capital of Manila, while Aguinaldo's forces occupied a stronghold just outside of the capital. When two Filipino soldiers crossed the American lines in February 1899, a shootout followed by skirmishes resulted in the formal declaration of war by the Filipinos on June 2, 1899.

The Philippine-American War (pictured) lasted 3 years and resulted in the death of 4,234 American and over 20,000 Filipino combatants before US President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed a general amnesty and conflict end in July 1902. As many as 200,000 Filipino civilians also died during this period from violence, famine, and disease. Thereafter, minor uprisings and insurrections against American rule continued periodically in the following years.

## American Era

In the war's aftermath, Americans followed a policy of "benevolent assimilation" in the archipelago. To promote

stability, prosperity, and democracy, and further its economic interests in the region, the US introduced reform and development programs for the government, educational system, and infrastructure. Hundreds of American teachers were sent to the Philippines to provide instruction and to spread American ideals and culture (see *Learning and Knowledge*). Bridges, roads, and sewer systems were constructed, sanitation projects improved healthcare in rural areas, and trade with the US increased. (Pictured: Caricature from an 1899 magazine showing Uncle Sam lecturing children wearing sashes identifying them as the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.)

During this time, the desire for independence remained strong in the islands, and the idea of Philippine independence increasingly gained support among the American public. In 1907, the Philippines convened its first elected assembly, and in 1916 the US Congress formally committed the US to Philippine independence. In 1934 the Philippine Independence Act established a Commonwealth government and laid out a 10-year transition plan to full independence.

### World War II

Before the transition plan to independence could be completed, World War II began. Japanese bombers struck Cavite and Clark US military bases in the Philippines on December 8, 1941, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 22, Japanese forces landed at the Lingayen Gulf and advanced across central Luzon, occupying Manila by January 2, 1942. This invasion drove the allied Filipino and US soldiers to the Bataan peninsula located opposite Manila. General Douglas MacArthur, the American general in charge of US forces, was forced to retreat to Australia but vowed to return.

Following MacArthur's retreat, 76,000 soldiers (66,000 of them Filipino) surrendered to the Japanese on the Bataan peninsula. The Japanese then forced the soldiers to march 75 miles to

prison camps located at San Fernando. During this Bataan Death March (pictured), about 10,000 Filipino and 650 American men died, and an additional 25,000 died after they reached prison camps.

**Japanese Occupation:** From 1942 to 1945, the Japanese occupied the Philippines. Although many of the Philippine's political elite served under the Japanese during the occupation, several anti-Japanese underground and guerrilla organizations controlled parts of the islands despite brutal repression by the Japanese.

MacArthur's allied forces returned to the Philippines in October 1944 and engaged the Japanese in the bloodiest campaign of the Pacific war. In February 1945, American forces drove the Japanese across Luzon and recaptured Manila. By July 1945, MacArthur declared victory but the Japanese did not formally surrender until September 1945. Over one million Filipinos died during the war, and Manila sustained extensive damage.

### Independence

At the end of the war, tensions between Filipino elites, who had collaborated in large numbers with the Japanese, and non-elites, who had primarily supported the guerilla resistance, continued. The wartime roles of politicians in supporting either the Japanese or the Americans became of central concern, especially as the Philippines moved toward full independence.

Although controversial to many, Manuel Roxas, a pre-war politician who had maintained contact with the Allies during the war, was elected the independent country's first President in 1946. The US continued to maintain a strong presence after the war, operating a naval base at Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base outside Manila.

During this period, a Communist-inspired insurgency known as the ***Hukbalahap*** or "Huk" rebellion began to mount a large offensive. Capitalizing upon unrest among the peasant population, the rebellion had begun initially as a political

movement in Luzon in the 1930s and had resisted the Japanese during World War II. Roxas and his successors, assisted by US military advisors, devoted significant resources to putting down the insurrection and finally crushed the movement in 1953.

### The Marcos Era

Ferdinand Marcos (pictured), then a widely popular politician, was elected President in 1965 and became the first Philippine President to serve multiple terms. During his first term, Marcos instituted public works projects that improved the country's roads, bridges, schools, and health centers. His charismatic wife, Imelda, initiated popular social welfare and cultural projects, and this period was marked by widespread optimism.

When Marcos was elected to a second term in 1969, economic growth had slowed, resulting in rising poverty and inflation. Furthermore, to defeat his rival; Marcos used violence, vote-buying, and other illegal practices. Reported on by a vocal free press, these conditions caused unrest and sparked protests which Marcos answered with violence and military force. The US continued to support Marcos despite his dictatorial practices because he helped to repress the New People's Army (NPA), an armed wing of the Philippine Communist Party that is still active today (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Marcos declared martial law in 1972 citing threats posed by the NPA and leftist student groups. Under martial law, Marcos imposed a curfew, suspended Congress, banned international travel, and assumed control of the media. Thousands of anti-government agitators and political rivals were imprisoned in military camps, including opposition leader Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. As the economy continued to weaken, Marcos lifted martial law in 1981 in a move intended to silence protest. He was re-elected President in 1981 in an election that was devoid of real competition, and his next term was similarly marked by wastefulness and corruption.

**Assassination of Aquino:** By 1980, opposition leader Benigno Aquino had been imprisoned for 7 years when he was released so that he could seek medical treatment in the US. Upon attempting to return to the Philippines in 1983, Aquino was assassinated at the Manila International Airport. This event would spur the rapid growth of the first Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA I) or People Power Revolution, a movement which included millions of Filipinos of diverse socioeconomic and professional backgrounds opposed to the Marcos regime (Photo: Monument to Senator Benigno Aquino in Manila).

Widespread political unrest forced Marcos to call for a special election in 1986, a year before his term was to end. Corazon "Cory" Aquino, the widow of Benigno Aquino, ran as an opposition candidate backed by the Archbishop of Manila. Her participation inspired a record number of citizens to vote, and while the official election count declared Marcos the winner, poll watchers and ballot box guards protested that the count was fraudulent and declared Aquino the victor.

When Marcos still refused to admit defeat, hundreds of thousands of protestors heeding the call from opposition leaders and the Archbishop filled Manila, surrounding and threatening to storm the presidential palace. The Filipino military withdrew its support of Marcos, and US President Reagan offered Marcos safe haven, which he accepted, and Corazon Aquino became the Philippines' new President.

## The Return of Democracy

**President Aquino:** There was great optimism for her presidency, but Aquino was largely unable to improve the economy, initiate land reform, or bring the military fully under her control.

During her tenure, the US removed its forces from its bases on the islands, abandoning Clark Air Base after the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 and then withdrawing from Subic Bay Naval

Base when the Philippine government declined to renew its lease in 1992.

**President Ramos:** Fidel Ramos was elected President in 1992. His government focused on improving the electrical infrastructure and the industrial sector, and he also liberalized the banking system and traveled extensively to improve the image of the Philippines abroad. When Ramos left office in 1998 high poverty and crime rates plagued the nation.

**President Estrada:** Joseph "Erap" Estrada was elected in 1998 in a landslide victory on a platform that emphasized food security, housing, jobs, and education. However, within a year his popularity had sharply declined due to allegations of cronyism and corruption. The economy floundered as a result of his mismanagement and rampant favoritism.

In 2000, an investigation revealed that Estrada had earned $500 million in illegal gambling. These and other findings compelled Congress to impeach Estrada on charges of bribery, graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust, and violation of the Constitution. Outrage over these events spurred over half a million people to protest in a second successful People Power or EDSA II protest (see *Political and Social Relations*). Cabinet members and the military withdrew their support, and Estrada was escorted out of the presidential palace by the Armed Forces Chief of Staff in January 2001.

**President Macapagal-Arroyo:** Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Estrada's Vice President and daughter of a former less prominent President, was then sworn in to finish Estrada's term. She was elected to a full term in 2004 but was also later accused of cronyism, extrajudicial killings, torture, illegal arrests, and corruption.

**President Benigno Aquino III:** In 2010 Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (pictured with Adm. Patrick Walsh) was elected President with 42% of the popular vote, defeating former President Estrada. The son of beloved former President Aquino, he was encouraged to run after his

mother's death in 2009. Aquino's presidency has been marked by his efforts to fight corruption and by his support of liberal social programs (see *Sex and Gender*). This information was current as of May 2012.



### The Origin of Man

According to Tagalog lore, when the world began it contained only sea and sky. One day a bird, tired of having no place to rest, agitated the sea until it threw its waters into the sky. In order to restrain the sea, the sky showered islands upon the sea until its waters could only run back and forth between the islands and could not rise.

The sea then ordered the bird to rest on a rock and to stop tormenting the sea. As the bird was resting, a bamboo shoot struck its legs. The bird angrily pecked the bamboo and the first man (*Malakas*, meaning powerful) sprung from one node of the shoot and the first woman (*Maganda*, meaning beautiful) sprung from another node. The gods granted permission to the first couple to have offspring, and they soon had many children of various races. All of humanity is said to have descended from this first family.

This and other myths, legends, folktales, riddles and proverbs are examples of an extensive oral tradition found throughout the archipelago. Some of this oral folklore includes themes and topics similar to the Hindu epics of South Asia, demonstrating the historical connections among and between ethnic groups across the region. Oftentimes told to entertain, oral literature also reinforces values and perpetuates traditions.

# 2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

## Official Name

Republic of the Philippines
*Republika ng Pilipinas*

## Political Borders

The Philippine archipelago has a coastline of about 14,000 miles along the South China Sea to the west, the Philippine Sea in the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Celebes Sea and Sulu Sea to the south, and the Luzon Strait and Bashi Channel to the north. Note: In the Philippines, the South China Sea is often referred to as the West Philippine Sea.

## Capital

Manila

## Demographics

The Philippines' population of 93 million, which makes it the 12th most populous country in the world, is growing by about 1.9%-per-year. Of the almost 2000 inhabited islands, the Philippines' 11 major islands are divided into 3 main groups: Luzon in the North, the central Visayas, and Mindanao in the South. Luzon is the largest island and is home to half the country's population and to the nation's capital and largest metropolis, Manila, with about 12 million inhabitants.

## Flag

The Philippine flag consists of a white triangle with a sun and stars on the hoist side and two equal horizontal bands of blue and red on the fly side. The eight rays emitting from the sun represent the provinces that fought for independence from Spain, while the stars represent the country's three main regions: Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. White represents equality, the blue field symbolizes peace and justice, and the red field stands for courage.

## Geography

The Republic of the Philippines consists of 7,107 islands that cover about 780,000 sq mi in the South China Sea (or West Philippine Sea) and Pacific Ocean, stretching about 1100 mi north-to-south and 650 mi east-to-west. The islands' total land area is about 115,000 sq mi or about the area of Arizona.

Although some islands were formed from coral reefs, most were formed as the result of volcanic activity. Topographical features include forested mountainous interiors surrounded by flat lowlands and expansive coastal plains. Elevations range from sea level on the coasts to 9,698 ft at Mount Apo on Mindanao Island.

## Climate

Due to its proximity to the the equator, temperatures are fairly constant, ranging between 85°F and 100°F. There are two monsoon seasons: the northeast monsoon (***amihan***) occurs from November to April and the southwest monsoon (***habagat***) occurs from May to October, delivering between 38 and 160 inches of rain annually, depending on location. Manila's average annual rainfall is 80 inches.

## Environmental Challenges

Because of its unprotected location in the open ocean, the Philippines experiences significant severe weather. Typically, 5 to 9 Asian cyclonic storms or typhoons hit the islands each year and the effects of wind, and rain can be devastating. For example, 1200 people died in flooding and mudslides after a storm in 2011.

Another environmental challenge comes from the archipelago's placement across three major tectonic plates. Although most do not cause significant damage, earthquakes are frequent in the region and accompanying tsunamis are also threatening. The archipelago is also home to approximately 20 active volcanos that occasionally erupt, destroying villages and farmland and displacing entire populations.

## Government

Asia's first democracy, the Philippines is a constitutionally established republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. There are 5 levels of administrative divisions: regions, provinces, chartered cities, municipalities, and political units known as ***barangays*** (see *History and Myth*). As of 2012, metropolitan Manila is itself a region containing 16 cities, 1 municipality, and 1705 ***barangays***. Created in 1990, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), composed of the predominantly Muslim provinces on the island of Mindanao, has its own single-body legislature and is in some respects self-governing (Photo: Manila City Hall).

## Executive Branch

The Filipino President is elected by popular vote to serve one 6-year term. The President is head-of-government, chief-of-state, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He selects cabinet and public ministers and is responsible for appointing field grade and higher military officers, ambassadors, and members of the Supreme Court.

## Legislative Branch

The Philippines has a two-body legislature or ***Kongreso*** composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives. Senators may serve no more than two 6-year terms, while representatives may serve no more than three 3-year terms. The current Congress includes:

- 23 directly-elected senators
- 249 district-elected representatives
- 36 presidentially-appointed minority representatives

No single political party holds a majority. Instead, parties form coalitions to create majority and minority blocs. Party loyalty is rare and switching between parties is common. Major political parties include the Liberal Party (LP), of which former President Aquino was a member, and the Lakas-Kampi Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD) led by former President Macapagal-Arroyo. Ten other parties, coalitions, and interest groups are represented as well.

## Judicial Branch

The Filipino legal system is based on the US judicial system but also incorporates common, Islamic, and customary law. Different levels of courts include a 15-member Supreme Court (pictured), 12 regional courts, circuit courts and local metropolitan courts. A nation-wide district court system based on Islamic customary law (***adat***) has also been established which tries cases involving family matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance (see *Religion and Myth*).

## Political Climate

The political landscape of the Philippines is constantly changing. Voter-participation rates are high, and close elections are common as there are usually numerous candidates for each office. Regardless of party, the country's political leaders have often changed laws and regulations to give themselves, their families, and their business associates an advantage. There have been frequent coup attempts, sometimes led from within the military.

Mass political movements have also been influential in recent decades. EDSA I (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue), the first People Power nonviolent movement, helped to end the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, and a second successful People Power march, EDSA II, helped to remove corrupt Estrada midway through his presidency (see *History and Myth*). The Filipino Catholic church played a large role in both EDSA I and II and continues to influence politics (see *History and Myth* and *Religion and Spirituality*).

Despite this history of peaceful populist movements, there has been a recent increase in media attention to politically motivated murders, intimidation and violence, including acts committed by local officials and police. These acts, plus the rampant corruption throughout the government, have resulted in general distrust among the Philippine people of their political leaders and government representatives.

## Defense

The National Defense Act of 1935 officially established the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and its status as an all-volunteer force was confirmed by the 1987 constitution. Begun as an internal security force, the AFP's primary mission shifted to national defense with the end of US basing rights in 1992.

Government and military leaders have frequently been at odds through the country's history, and there have been numerous attempts at military coups over the years. In order to prevent the President from developing regional militias for his own goals, the AFP presently follows a recruitment policy that dictates the number of military posts for each province. The AFP currently has a total of 125,000 active duty personnel across all branches with approximately 130,000 reservists. The current focus is peacekeeping and counterterrorism on Mindanao and neighboring islands (see "Security Issues" below). The AFP began an arms modernization project in the mid-1990s, although lack of funding and antiquated equipment still plagues all branches.

**Army:** The Army has 80,000 soldiers organized in 10 light infantry divisions, a special operations command, 5 engineering battalions, 1 artillery regiment, 1 presidential security group, and 3 light-reaction companies. Light armor includes several small tanks and personnel carriers.

**Navy:** There are currently over 21,000 naval personnel including approximately 7,000 Marines in the Marine Corps, an elite field combatant command of the Navy. Naval operations as recently as 2012 have been focused on the disputed territory of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, in addition to counterterrorism missions in the South.

**Air Force:** The Air Force was created concurrently with the Army and is a primarily transport and training-based Air Force with few attack aircraft. The almost 16,000 airmen are divided between 5 major commands.

**National Police:** Although previously part of the Army, the Philippine National Police (PNP) with its 115,000 personnel is currently administered by the Department of Interior and local government. The PNP's primary responsibility is internal security; however the army contests the PNP's role in counterterrorism efforts. The PNP has been accused of human rights violations, extortion, kidnapping, and dereliction of duties; therefore, the PNP enjoys little public support.

**Paramilitary Groups:** Ongoing internal violence has stretched the already undersupplied military, prompting the government to provide some support to citizen paramilitaries. There are an estimated 40,000–82,000 members in over 100 private armed groups which include Civilian Volunteer Organizations (CVOs), police auxiliary units, and the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU).

## Security Issues

The Philippines remains a long-term center for global human trafficking and sex trade despite attempts to eradicate these illicit activities. The exportation of marijuana and hashish as well as the domestic use of amphetamines has challenged the government in recent years.

The larger threat to country's safety and security is the ongoing violence among government forces, paramilitary organizations, terrorist and insurgent groups, and vigilantes. Terrorist and insurgent activity has become increasingly frequent in the Philippines since 2000, and recent attacks, kidnappings, and killings have been attributed to groups such as the New People's Army (NPA) and two Muslim separatist movements: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). The AFP has recently put in place its Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) which emphasizes the protection of human rights and civil liberties in fulfilling the government's national security agenda.

**NPA:** The NPA is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines and was established in 1969 with the primary goal of creating a communist state (see *History and Myth*). There are active branches in rural areas in Luzon, the Visayas,

and Mindanao. The NPA has weakened since the 1980s yet it continues to instigate violence across the country, sometimes launching guerilla attacks on the AFP and PNP and kidnapping for ransom. The government retaliates through its military and police forces as well as citizen paramilitary and vigilante groups (Photo: Philippine Marines during a training exercise).

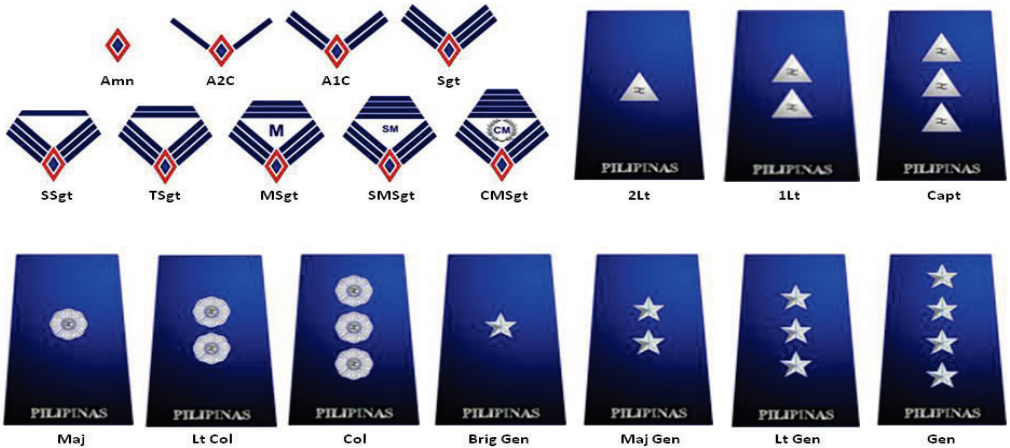
### Muslim Separatist Movements

**MILF:** Muslim separatist groups have been active since the 1960s. Groups such as the MILF have their roots in the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), an organization formed to seek full independence for Mindanao and its Muslim population (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

The MILF separated from the MNLF in 1987 following the latter's acceptance of an autonomy agreement for Mindanao. The MILF officially disavows terrorism, however connections to international terrorist groups are suspected. After peace talks between the MILF and the government failed, violence has increased especially since 2007. Tensions mounted and in late 2011, the AFP launched a major air strike on MILF-controlled areas after several years without a major offensive. Despite this violence, both sides claim to be strongly committed to peace, and the government is actively striving for a negotiated political settlement in its IPSP.

**ASG:** Founded by several ex-MNLF members, ASG is a loosely affiliated network of smaller groups with charismatic leaders. With an estimated 200 to 500 members, the ASG aims to establish an Islamic state using kidnapping, extortion, and bombings to collect and raise funds. ASG is based in the islands south of Mindanao including Basilan and Tawi-Tawi but is particularly active in Sulu. The ASG has partnered with regional and global terrorist groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda to obtain training and weaponry. The ASG is a major target of US intervention as it is considered responsible for much of the violence in the Philippines. The IPSP calls for the defeat of the ASG and all other terrorist groups.

# Filipino Air Force Rank Insignia



**Diplomatic Relations:** The Philippines conducts diplomatic relations with nearby countries primarily within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which facilitates military and economic cooperation among the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Philippines has been a member of the United Nations (UN) since 1945 and has participated in a variety of UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions.

The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency oversees the work of international volunteer agencies from many nations including the US, Australia, Japan, several ASEAN countries, China, the UK, the EU, and several Persian Gulf and Middle Eastern countries.

**US-Philippines Relations:** Although some Filipinos resent the US's long history of control and influence in the islands (see *History and Myth*), the US remains the Philippines' most important ally, providing essential military and counterterrorism support.

During President Cory Aquino's administration, the Filipino legislature rescinded the US's basing rights in 1992 (see *History and Myth*), but in 1998 the two countries put in place a Visiting Forces Agreement under the Mutual Defense Treaty. Since then, the US has conducted ship visits to Philippine ports, maintained an advisory presence, and the two nations presently hold yearly joint military exercises (Photo: Former President Macapagal-Arroyo with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009).

The US is one of the Philippines' most significant donors, providing aid through several channels (see *Economics and Resources*). The US also participates in a variety of cultural exchange programs with the Philippines, such as sponsoring American Fulbright scholars and sending Peace Corps volunteers.

## Ethnic Relations

Almost 90% of the residents of the Philippines are so-called "lowland" Filipinos of Malay descent, and to differentiate themselves, these Filipinos may choose to emphasize their geographic origin, the language they speak, or their religious affiliation. In addition to this majority population, there are also approximately 100 indigenous minority groups, some Muslim and some Christian, whose members have historically suffered discrimination and in recent decades have clashed with the government over human rights abuses and land rights.

Due to the country's location on important trade routes and its history of colonization (see *History and Myth*), many Filipinos have Chinese, South Asians, Japanese, Spanish, Pacific islanders, and Americans in their family trees. Today, Chinese-Filipinos make up the most significant minority group, although there are also large migrant communities of Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Indians, Japanese, Koreans, Europeans, and Americans in the islands.

**Malay/Lowland Culture:** The so-called "lowland" Filipinos contains between 80 and 175 ethnolinguistic divisions (see *Language and Communication*). The most numerous ethnicities are Tagalog (28% of the population), Cebuano (13%), Ilocano (9%), Bisaya (8%), Hiligaynon Ilonggo (7.5%), Bikol (6%), and Waray (3.4%). Despite linguistic differences, these groups are bound together by similar cultural and social values.

Although the majority are Christian, about 4% of this population identify themselves as Muslim and live primarily on the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Basilan. Muslim Filipinos share many cultural and religious features with neighboring Malaysians and Indonesians. Demographically, they were the majority in Mindanao prior to the resettlement of land-poor Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas after independence in 1946 (see *History and Myth*). This demographic shift has caused ongoing interethnic strife in certain parts of Mindanao.

**Indigenous Minority Groups:** The Philippines' ethnic minority groups make up between 6 - 10% of the population and are usually divided into following main groupings: the Mangyan peoples of the Visayas, the Negrito and the Igorot of Luzon, and the Lumad and so-called ***Moro*** (moor) populations of Mindanao. Often referred to, perhaps incorrectly, as the aborigines of the Philippines, the Negrito include the Aeta, Ati, Agta, and Dumagat peoples. The Igorot include several mountain-dwelling groups such as the Apayao, Kalinga, Benguet, Bontoc, and Tingguian or Itneg groups. One group, the Ifugao, are famously recognized as the creators of the rice terraces in Banaue. Finally, the term Lumad is used to describe the non-Muslim groups of Mindanao, such as the Bukidnon, Bagobo, Mandaya, and Mansaka. The Muslim groups of Mindanao include the Badjao, Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, and the Samal (see *Religion and Spirituality)* (Photo: Woman at the 2000-year-old Banaue rice terraces located in Ifugao province).

These highland groups, often referred to as mountain tribes, generally resisted western influence during centuries of colonization and have retained many of their traditional practices and beliefs (see *Religion and Spirituality* and *Aesthetics and Recreation*). Historically, colonial authorities and the majority population considered these people to be racially and culturally inferior and therefore subjected them to injustice and abuse. Today these groups benefit from laws that mandate governmental protection of their lands and cultural support programs.

**Chinese:** Since they began arriving to the islands in large numbers around the era of the galleon trade in the 17th and 18th centuries (see *History and Myth*), Chinese and Chinese-Filipino ***mestizos*** (people who trace both heritages) have dominated commerce and, to a lesser extent, politics in the islands. Some Chinese-Filipino communities have their own schools to maintain Chinese language proficiency and culture.

## Social Relations

Because the Philippines has a long history of contact with other cultures, the country tends to appeal to a variety of foreign nationals. Many Filipinos speak English, and the dominant religion, dress, architecture, music, and sport preferences (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*) may seem just like home to some foreign visitors. Yet, there are certain Filipino social values such as ***hiya*** (shame), ***amor propio*** (self-esteem), and ***paggalang*** (respect for authority and one's elders) which may result in unusual Filipino behavior as perceived by foreign nationals (see *Language and Communication*).

Generally, these shared values help to define what is socially acceptable and are meant to ensure broad conformity to norms of behavior to which all community members are expected to strictly adhere (see *Language and Communication* for a description of Filipino communication style). These norms center on supporting social cohesion and avoiding disagreement and conflict. For most Filipinos, the maintenance of smooth, reciprocal, and conflict-free relationships is paramount. Similarly, socializing is central to life and often takes precedence over work obligations. Isolation from others is seen as asocial, and those who do segregate themselves are often the brunt of social gossip.

Filipinos consider hospitality to guests an important social obligation and seek to actively incorporate them into the work or social group. Foreign nationals should attempt to conform to social norms, particularly subtlety, self-control, and moderation thereby avoiding any tendencies to stare, become angry, or short-tempered. Similarly, they should not expect to receive direct answers to their questions (see *Language and Communication*). Conforming to norms that uphold Filipinos sense of civility and self-worth can result in long and loyal friendships.

### Social Stratification

The gap between rich and poor in the Philippines remains wide and has even grown since independence. Although many poor people live in rural areas,

there are also large concentrations of them in the cities. Whether rural or urban, poverty disproportionally impacts women, children, and members of indigenous minority groups.

In addition to his financial situation, a Filipino's social status is defined by a complex combination of several different factors including age, skin color (with lighter being more desirable), his family's social position, and his associations with government officials, wealthy friends, and community leaders. Most Filipinos view education as their best opportunity for bettering their economic and social standing (see *Learning and Knowledge*).

**Indicators of Social Status:** Community members with high social status will seek to affiliate with still higher-status individuals by requesting their sponsorship for family weddings and baptisms (see "***Kumpadre-Kumadre***" in *Family and Kinship*). Other indicators of social status include the purchase and conspicuous use of consumer goods, including a family car and travel abroad. Darker-skinned people may experience discrimination and abuse and may be seen as inferior to lighter-skinned people. Additionally, women, children, members of indigenous minorities and non-Christian groups may also face discrimination and marginalization.

### Visiting

The art of hosting visitors is a significant aspect of Filipino culture. Upon receiving an invitation, it is customary to refuse twice before accepting the offer in order to verify that it was extended as a sincere gesture rather than a perceived obligation. Although an arrival time usually is set, it is considered polite for the guest to arrive 15 to 30 minutes late. Guests of status may arrive even later. Generally, arriving on time suggests an overeager or greedy visitor. Upon arriving, visitors should knock and say "***Tao po***" or "a person is here, sir/madam." Guests may be asked to remove their shoes within the home and are typically entertained in the living room. When departing, guests should always take formal leave of their host.

# 3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

### Overview

Since the Filipino constitution guarantees religious freedom, consequently, the government observes both Christian and Muslim religious days as national holidays. The Philippines is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia where 90% of the population identifies themselves as Christian. Of those, about 83% self- identify as Catholic. Islam is the largest minority religion, with 5-7% of the population identifying themselves as Muslim (Photo: San Agustin, the oldest church in Manila, built in 1607).

Despite being predominantly Catholic, the Philippines remain religiously diverse: home-grown Catholic and Protestant churches enjoy increasing membership, and some people are known to incorporate aspects of Christianity or Islam with elements of their traditional belief systems.

The influence of religion and religious leaders on political processes has been strong since the arrival of the Spanish friars in the 16th century (see *History and Myth*). Filipino clergy actively supported the independence movement in the 19th century, and the Catholic leadership openly criticized the Marcos regime in the 1980s. Despite official separation of church and state, political leaders today continue to seek the support of religious leaders.

## Traditional Beliefs

Traditional religious beliefs and practices in the archipelago varied by ethnic group, but most involved animism, or the belief that spirits inhabit the natural world in the sky, water, rocks, and forests and provide humans with required resources such

as food, rain, and sunshine. Some groups constructed figurines to represent these or other spirits, such as the spirits of deceased ancestors. Additionally, many groups believed in the dominion of one powerful deity who was remote and inaccessible but was surrounded by lesser gods.

Generally, people believed that these spirits and gods could affect the events of daily life and required appeasement in the form of offerings. There were both benevolent spirits who could provide good luck and malevolent spirits who could cause sickness or misfortune.

Among many indigenous groups, healers or shamans used rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and herbal preparations to heal the sick, to assist those suffering misfortune, and to relieve those plagued by bothersome spirits (see *Sustenance and Health*).

Many aspects of traditional beliefs continue to be important for many Filipinos today, even those who identify as Christian or Muslim. They perceive a close relationship between the supernatural and daily life that affects their view of the world around them and shapes their personal relationships.

### *Aswang*

Some Filipinos trace the cause of unfortunate events such as illness, miscarriages, and even death to a special class of malevolent sprits known as ***aswang***. Usually a nocturnal creature, an ***aswang*** is believed to appear as a vampire or ghoul and attack the sick, pregnant women, and people outdoors alone at night.

### *Albulario*

Among some of the indigenous mountain tribes (see *Political and Social Relations*), a shaman or healer known as an ***albulario*** may be consulted to perform the required ceremony of appeasement to a spirit who has caused misfortune. Urban, educated Filipinos may also speak of evil spirits and carry an amulet or talisman for protection.

# Christianity

## Introduction of Christianity to the Philippines

The Spanish considered conversion to Christianity a symbol of allegiance to their authority, and Catholic clergy were regular members of expeditions to Asia and the New World during the 16th and 17th centuries (see *History and Myth*). When explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines in 1521, most Philippine communities were small and decentralized, which facilitated the successful Spanish conversion efforts among the lowland groups. Only the communities in the isolated highlands (see "Indigenous Minority Groups" in *Political and Social Relations*) and the Muslim sultanates in the Sulu archipelago and Mindanao (see *History and Myth*) largely withstood the Spanish efforts and successfully avoided conversion and colonization.

The Spanish enacted resettlement policies that concentrated the population in particular areas and then conducted mass baptisms. They systematically destroyed indigenous holy places and statues and other representations of indigenous sprits and gods. Initially, the indigenous people had difficulty reconciling their own belief systems with those introduced by the Spanish missionaries. Eventually, they agreeably blended the two practices to formulate a modified approach (Photo: Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish in Marikina City).

## "Folk"Catholicism

Catholicism in contemporary Philippine society is marked by diversity. There are some congregations that strictly follow doctrine from Rome, while others incorporate aspects of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism into their worship.

Most Filipinos tend to practice a form of "folk" Catholicism – a hybrid of Roman Catholic and indigenous beliefs and practices. For example, many Filipinos believe in the miraculous power of statues and images, a belief that is connected to the traditional belief in the spirits of ancestors and the power of ritualistic

offerings. Other traditions, such as the re-enactments of the crucifixion of Christ in San Fernando are very popular although frowned upon by church leadership.

**El Shaddai**: In 1984 Brother "Mike" Velarde founded the lay Catholic group El Shaddai, a charismatic populist movement whose services include speaking in tongues and sermons that teach the "prosperity gospel." This doctrinal approach promotes the idea that God wants individuals to prosper, and therefore, upward economic mobility is God's reward to the faithful. The group currently has about 8 million members primarily from the Philippines' poorest communities.

### Protestantism

American missionaries first introduced Protestant denominations to the islands when the Philippines was under US administration (see *History and Myth*). Currently, less than 5% of the population are members of Protestant denominations such as Seventh-Day Adventists, United Church of Christ, United Methodist, the Episcopal Church, Assemblies of God, the Mormons, and Philippine Baptists. The two most significant indigenous Christian churches are the Philippine Independent Church and the Iglesia ni Christo.

**Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI):** The IFI or Philippine Independent Church, was founded by a former Catholic priest, Father Aglipay, during the Philippine independence movement in the late 19th century in response to Spanish prejudice against Filipino priests (see *History and Myth*). Today, the church is associated with the American Episcopal Church and has 7 to 10 million members.

**Iglesia ni Cristo (INC)**: The INC or Church of Christ has about 2 million members. This Bible-based, anti-Catholic church was founded in 1914 by Felix Manalo who rejected the worship of images and veneration of saints which he oserved in Philippine Catholic services. The church's elaborate buildings and distinctive spires are seen throughout the country (Photo: INC church in Manila).

# Islam

## Introduction of Islam to the Philippines

Islam spread north to the Philippines from Indonesia and Malaysia beginning in the 14th century, when the Sultanate of Sulu introduced the religion to the islands (see *History and Myth*). By the time the Spanish arrived in 1521, Islam was firmly established on the islands of Mindanao and Sulu and had spread to Cebu and Luzon. The Muslim population largely resisted the colonization and conversion efforts of the Spanish and through the following years, Islam in the archipelago changed as its practitioners adapted it to traditional beliefs and practices.

## Islam Today

### Residence Patterns

Most Muslim Filipinos continue to reside on Mindanao and nearby islands as part of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM, see *Political and Social Relations*). Additionally, substantial numbers have resettled in the urban centers of Manila and Cebu in recent years. Most Filipino Muslims are members of the Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, Badjao, and the Samal indigenous minority groups (see *Political and Social Relations*). Muslim Filipinos inhabit some of the islands' most impoverished areas, and there are ongoing charges of cultural and economic discrimination against Muslim Filipinos (Photo: The Islamic Center in Marawi City on Mindanao).

**Muslim Practices:** Muslim Filipinos follow the basic tenets of Islam, although like many Catholics, their religion has also incorporated aspects of indigenous beliefs and practices. For example, some Muslims may present offerings to spirits known as ***diwata***, and many of them wear amulets to dispel ill fortune.

Most Muslim Filipinos belong to the Sunni branch of Islam, although there are also a small number of Shi'a Muslims. Sunni, which is the world's largest grouping, are distinguished by their belief that the leader (*Caliph*) of the Muslim community

(*Ummah*) should be elected. Conversely, members of the Shi'a sect believe the Muslim leader should be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Code of Muslim Personal Law recognizes Shari'a (Islamic) law as part of Philippine national law, although it only pertains in civil, not criminal matters and only to Muslims. Due to a lack of qualified applicants, many judgeships in Shari'a courts remain vacant.

**Human Rights Initiatives:** In 2010, the government established a cabinet-level commission to promote the rights of Muslim Filipinos and support the implementation of economic, educational, cultural, and infrastructure programs for their communities. Recently, the Filipino government has provided financial support to ***madaris*** or Islamic schools which provides for a unified curriculum and integration into the national education system (see *Learning and Knowledge*).

### Religion and Politics

Most politicians seek the endorsement of religious leaders when they are running for office. For example, President "Noynoy" Aquino has sought the support of televangelist Apollo Quiboloy of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ Church.

Because religious leaders are highly regarded in Filipino society, politicians often make decisions which align with the local religious community so as to maintain its support. Because of their overt power in the political process, outspoken clergy have become targets for extrajudicial killings committed for political ends (Photo: Magellan's Cross in a Cebu city chapel).

Muslims and Christians inhabiting Mindanao continue to disagree over who should rightfully control the island (see *Political and Social Relations*). Some Christian inhabitants resent the government's support of Muslim governance of parts of the island, while some Muslim inhabitants dislike the Christian encroachment on their historical territory.

# 4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

## Overview

Serving as the basic unit of social organization in the Philippines, the extended family consists of parents, their children, grandparents, unmarried or widowed aunts and uncles, and cousins. Filipino families play a central role in the lives of their members and serve as the individual's primary source of identity, social status, political affiliation, and financial success. Both Christian and Muslim Filipinos trace their descent bilaterally through both their parents. Traditionally, families unite around the mother, who is expected to take responsibility for most decisions and everyday matters in the domestic sphere, but respect the father as ultimate household authority.

## Family Structure and Residence

The extended family unit ideally lives together in one home, contributing to the family's integral role in Filipino social life. As a reflection of the close relationships between extended family members, adults often refer to their sibling's children as their own and distant relatives as cousins. In addition, it is common for single women past marrying age to support a brother's or sister's child as though they were their own.

Grandmothers, mothers, and daughters work together to serve as the key decision-makers on issues that affect family or home life, and it is common for women to maintain their closest relationships with other women in their extended family. Unemployed relatives often assume greater portions of domestic responsibilities in the home, and it is common for young adults in urban areas to reside at home while in college.

Relationships with neighbors are also important, and Filipinos willingly help each other when asked. Filipinos will assist their neighbors on a range of issues, such as providing financial

loans, paying poor children for assistance in the home, and offering food during times of need.

**Rural Areas:** In rural areas, one family residence typically includes several members of an extended family. Consequently, housing frequently consists of a cluster of closely built huts or houses on one plot of land. Filipinos typically use locally available materials such as bamboo and ***nipa*** palm to construct houses having raised floors on wooden piles, high-pitched metal or palm frond roofs, and walls made of bamboo or other wood. These rural houses are often divided into one communal room that contains a wood-burning stove for cooking and one or two multi-purpose rooms for sleeping, eating, and visiting.

**Urban Areas**: Family units are often smaller in urban areas, and although members of an extended family may live in one home, typically fewer members reside together than in rural areas. Residences in urban areas often have concrete foundations and wooden or brick walls and several rooms including a living room, kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms. In some instances, the structures may be constructed of less durable materials such as plywood or cardboard.

## Dating

Many features of traditional Filipino dating continue to be practiced today. Although the family's influence in choosing marriage partners has lessened over the years, older female relatives still encourage courtship between partners they deem suitable. Because of close familial bonds, Filipino couples tend to continue to seek their family's approval of potential mates.

Young Filipino women are strongly encouraged to display modesty and disinterest in male suitors. Although boys and girls are permitted to mix during their adolescent years, adults often are exceptionally mindful of their interactions. These traditional dating practices are changing with the rapid spread of mobile phones having texting and instant messaging

capabilities, which allow for communication between couples that is beyond their families' oversight.

Still widely practiced in the Philippines, the engagement tradition ***pamanhikan*** dictates that a man and his family must bring gifts to the home of his potential bride in order to persuade her family to support the union. Long engagements of five years or more remain common practice, and it remains rare for an unmarried couple to live together prior to marriage.

## Marriage

Marriage in the Philippines is considered an important step in the maturation process, and most Filipinos marry before age 30. Because men are expected to produce children as a sign of manhood, newly married couples often have children quickly. Of note, it is not considered abnormal or shameful for a woman to remain unmarried (see "Family Structure and Residence").

Filipinos traditionally tended to exhibit a strong preference to marry within their social groups, preferring mates from their home towns and from their faith. Among Muslim Filipinos, parents sometimes arrange their children's marriages and may opt to marry under Filipino or Islamic law (see *Political and Social Relations*). Inter-faith couples must marry under Filipino law.

**Weddings:** Most Christian weddings occur in a church. The bridegroom's family typically pays for the wedding, although it is becoming more common for the bride's family to share the cost. After marrying, the couple may move in with either set of parents in order to save money for their own living quarters.

**Divorce:** Largely due to the significant influence of the Roman Catholic Church, the Philippines is one of only two countries that outlaws divorce – the other is Vatican City. Once legal, divorce was banned in the 1949 Civil Code, but in recent years, support has rallied around a bill to legalize divorce again. This legislation has been staunchly opposed by the Catholic Church

as “anti-family.” Church-based annulments are possible only in extreme cases such as physical abuse or forced religious conversion. Of note, Muslim Filipinos who have married under Islamic law may also divorce under that law.

### Children

Parents and daughters all take part in raising children, although the grandparents often assume significant responsibility for childcare within the extended family unit. When the grandparents do not live with the extended family, parents who work outside of the home often send their younger children to live with their grandparents.

### Rites-of-Passage

The following rites-of-passage ceremonies mark life’s various stages.

**Birth:** The birth of a baby is viewed as cause for celebration, and a couple’s first child is considered a hallmark occasion. While some families prefer to have male offspring, females are also appreciated for their expected contributions to the household, which typically begin at an early age.

Having several offspring is a great source of pride for the parents. This norm along with the Catholic Church’s disapproval of birth control (see *Sex and Gender*), has resulted in the country having one of the world’s highest birth rates.

To deescalate the Philippines’ rapid population growth (see *Political and Social Relations*), in 1985 the government issued a recommendation that families have no more than 2 children at least 3 years apart. Governmental and social measures have helped to lower the fertility rate from 4.3 children-per-woman in 1990 to approximately 3 children-per-woman in 2009. Recently, efforts by Congress to pass controversial family-planning legislation have been largely opposed by the Catholic Church.

**Puberty:** At puberty, many young Filipino boys and girls join cliques known as ***barkada*** which serve as their primary social bonds outside of the family. Youth in ***barkada*** are expected to

forgo personal aspirations for the collective betterment of the group, and the relationships formed between members often last throughout adulthood. Wealthier families may mark their daughters' transition to adulthood when she turns 18 with a large, formal celebration.

**Death and Funerals:** Funerals for Christian Filipinos usually begin with a 24-hour wake in the home of the deceased that may last for several days. During the wake, friends and family mourn the loss of their loved one, participate in prayer services, and share food and drink. In addition to expressing their condolences, friends and family members may contribute a monetary gift to help defray the costs of the funeral.

After the wake, the casketed body is transported in a procession to the cemetery for burial. Mourners' clothing is usually black, although some may choose to wear white and signify their mourning with a black pin which some mourners wear for 6 or more weeks after the funeral. On anniversaries of the death, the family usually visits the cemetery, often leaving the deceased's favorite dish or drink at the gravesite.

Muslim Filipinos typically follow Islamic tradition in bathing and shrouding the body, then burying the body without a casket facing easterly towards the Ka'aba (Islam's most sacred site) in Mecca. Customary rituals vary by locale and ethnic group.

### *Kumpadre-Kumadre System*

There are three major rites-of-passage that occur regularly in most Christian Filipino families: baptism, confirmation, and marriage. All three rituals involve the ***Kumpadre-Kumadre System***, loosely translated as godparenthood or sponsorship. Adults from outside the family sponsor an individual being baptized, confirmed in the church, or married. The number of sponsors for a couple's marriage is often regarded as a sign of status and correlates to the future success of the union. Similarly, sponsors typically provide religious instruction and some economic support to the members. Sponsorship is considered useful in establishing multiple extended-family connections.

# 5. SEX AND GENDER



## Overview

The Philippines is one of only a few countries having an explicit gender equality provision in its Constitution, and women have achieved significant professional, political, and academic positions since its independence in 1946. Despite these advances, patriarchal views remain common in the workplace (see *Family and Kinship*) and many Filipino women continue to be the victims of domestic violence.

## Gender Roles and Work

While women comprise about 38% of the total Filipino workforce, in recent years a large number of them have moved abroad to work as laborers or domestic assistants. Filipino women are traditionally responsible for childcare and managing the home and family finances (see *Family and Kinship*). As an indication of the woman's role as financial manager, a groom typically will give his bride a symbolic coin during the wedding ceremony as s symbol of that role.

**Rural:** In rural areas, a woman's duties to her husband, children, and home are usually viewed as her most important responsibilities. While men control most agricultural work, women often work together with men to cultivate rice and harvest crops.

**Urban:** Employment opportunities for women tend to be more favorable in urban than rural areas and many women migrate to urban areas looking for work. Urban women are engaged in a variety of professions such as teachers, clerks, storekeepers, lawyers, doctors, and nurses. In contemporary Filipino society, women commonly rise to top-level positions. In fact, a recent United Nations survey indicates that the Philippines is one of few countries where women hold a nearly equal number of senior management positions as men.

## Education

Filipino men and women generally enjoy equal access to education. Coeducational public schooling has become increasingly available since World War II, contributing to greater interaction between the genders. On the whole, the dropout rate is higher for boys than girls, and girls have outperformed boys in national achievement tests. Approximately 67% of girls, compared to 52% of boys, complete secondary school, and women outnumber men in post-graduate programs.

## Gender and Politics

The Philippines granted women the right to vote in 1937 and since then, women have been relatively well represented in government. Two women have served as the country's President, and today women hold 3 of 12 elected positions in the Senate, approximately 15% of seats in Congress, and 25% of governmental ministerial positions. Women also hold just over 25% of judiciary positions. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women serves as a permanent women's advisory committee to the President.

## Gender and the Law

The 1987 Constitution contains an equal rights clause specifically protecting the rights of women. Since the 1990s, the government has made substantial effort to promote gender equality, including an initiative mandating all government agencies to allocate at least 5% of their budgets to the advancement of woman's issues. Women also enjoy equal rights of inheritance with their husbands and male siblings. Despite these positive legal protections, women remain restricted by the prohibition on legal divorce (see *Family and Kinship*).

## Gender-Based Violence

Domestic violence and rape are the most common forms of sexual and gender-based violence. Because sexual relations in the home are considered a private matter, it is difficult to estimate the exact prevalence of abuse. While annually

thousands of Filipino women do report physical or verbal abuse from their husbands, a notable 15% of young adults agree that a husband is justified in thrashing his wife. Several major articles of legislation have been passed to protect women and children from sexual and gender-based violence, including the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998, which required the establishment of rape crisis centers in every city, and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004.

### Procreation

Procreation is highly valued in Filipino communities (see *Family and Kinship*). Particularly in rural areas, masculinity is closely tied to the number of children a man fathers. Similarly, among poorer families the average woman has 6 children, as opposed to the wealthier woman who produces an average of 2 children.

Because of the continuing influence of the Catholic Church in policy debates (see *Family and Kinship*), abortion continues to be outlawed, forcing about 500,000 women to undergo illegal abortions each year. Additionally, contraceptive use continues to be a relatively low 50%, with rates among uneducated women as low as 18%.

### Homosexuality

Traditionally, most Filipinos disapprove of homosexuality, and homosexuals are not permitted in the Filipino military. In recent years, however, homosexuality has become more accepted as a gay movement has been gaining some political traction. Consequently, non-stereotypical homosexual characters have become a regular part of television and movie entertainment.

In 2009, the Philippines Electoral Commission refused a group of homosexuals the right to register as a political party, quoting verses from the Bible and the Qur'an as grounds for classifying them as immoral. Because there is an official separation of church and state in the country's Constitution (see *Religion and Spirituality*), this denial was widely condemned.

# 6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

## Language Overview

The Philippines is linguistically diverse, with approximately 170 languages spoken throughout the islands. Most Filipinos use their native language as their primary means of communication, and speak one or both of the country's two official languages, English and Filipino, as a second or third language for business or educational purposes.

## Ethnic Languages

The indigenous languages found in the Philippines belong to the Malayo-Polynesian language family. They are related to Indonesian and Malay by having similar grammar and linguistic roots, although few are mutually intelligible. Since there is a wide geographical distribution of languages in the Philippines, it is common for a language to be spoken in more than one area. Most of the islands' 93 million inhabitants speak dialects that belong to 8 groups: Tagalog (23% of the population), Cebuano (or Visayan) (17%), Ilocano (7.5%), Hiligaynon (6%), Bicolano (5%), Waray-Waray (2.7%), Pampangan (2%), and Pangasinan (1%).

## Filipino

After Manila became the capital in the 16th century (see *History and Myth*), its regional language, Tagalog, gained importance as a *lingua franca* and in 1939 was chosen as the official language. Eventually, it became the most widely spoken language in the country. The language was renamed "Pilipino" 20 years later in the attempt to differentiate the official language from its native source and avoid the appearance of favoring one indigenous language over another. In 1987 it was renamed again as "Filipino." Today, Filipino is still sometimes referred to as "Tagalog" and shares much of the grammar and pronunciation of the Tagalog language, although it is more flexible in its grammar and syntax. It also contains vocabulary from other indigenous languages as well as Spanish and English, and it reflects some Chinese and Hindi influences.

## English

American settlers brought English to the Philippines in 1898 (see *History and Myth*), which is used as a second or third language by almost half of the population. Since 1974, government policy has favored Filipino over English in schools, business, and government; although English continues to be used/ in all arenas and is widely viewed as a means to achieve social and economic advancement.

Despite its American roots, Filipino English is a distinct dialect which clearly reveals the influences of the islands' indigenous languages. Filipinos are proud of their distinctive accent and speech patterns. Many Filipinos switch between English and Filipino within conversations or even within sentences, resulting in a mixture known as ***Taglish***. This habit, combined with pronunciation and vocabulary differences to American English, may make understanding Filipino English difficult.

### Filipino English Pronunciation

The "f" sound is difficult to pronounce for some native Tagalog speakers so they often substitute a "p" sound, for example pronouncing "Pilipino" for "Filipino." Filipinos also typically pronounce their vowels differently than Americans. Short "i" and long "e" sounds are indistinguishable for many so "big" will sound like "beeg." Many Filipinos emphasize what American speakers would regard as the "wrong" syllable, saying for example, ca-TE-go-ry instead of CA-te-go-ry.

## Communication Overview

The seeming ease of most interaction and false sense of similarity to American culture can cause foreign nationals to overlook significantly unique dimensions of Filipino culture. Communicating competently in the Philippines requires not only knowledge of English, Filipino, or any of the other major languages, but also the ability to interact effectively using those languages. This broad notion of competence includes paralanguage (rate of speech, volume, intonation), nonverbal

communication (personal space, touch, gestures), and interaction management (conversation initiation, turn-taking, and termination). When used properly, these forms of communication ensure that statements are interpreted as the speaker intends (Photo: President Aquino with US Navy captain.)

## Communication Style

Filipinos strive to make all communication pleasant, harmonious, and polite. The term ***pakikisama*** implies compliance for the benefit of harmony and describes a typical Filipino social inclination to avoid conflict, promote agreement, and place the needs of the group before individual needs. To preserve this ideal, Filipinos rarely voice disagreement or refuse requests in public. As a result, the simple word "yes" becomes not so simple: it can imply "yes," "maybe," "not sure," "perhaps," or even "no."

This type of behavior should not be interpreted as insincerity. Indeed, Filipinos consider themselves sincere when they fulfill obligations and are true to societal expectations to conform to certain social standards. Consequently, it is acceptable in their society to say "yes" even when they do not agree in order to be respectful and non-confrontational. Attentiveness to tone of voice and nonverbal cues like facial expressions and gestures is key to determining the true intention behind the words.

In addition, Filipinos often use humor, teasing, and nonverbal cues to communicate their message while still preserving harmony. Generally, speaking loudly communicates arrogance, selfishness, lack of concern for the relationship and impatience. Conversely, speaking in gentle tones makes one appear refined, confident, and capable. If foreign nationals find it difficult to understand a Filipino, they should tactfully reframe their request for information in a non-offensive manner.

**Conflict Avoidance:** Filipinos have such a strong aversion to conflict that they prefer to circumvent it in all situations. The concept of constructive criticism is not viewed positively. If it is necessary to approach an issue critically, it is best to do so

privately. Individual criticism in the presence of a person's peers could result in a loss of face, which is a serious insult. If embarrassing or contentious topics need to be discussed, or if a person feels he must refuse a request or contradict another, a Filipino may choose to use an intermediary to communicate the message so as to avoid a socially awkward situation.

## Greetings

Filipino culture values social pleasantries, and it is important to greet everyone. Younger Filipinos in urban areas may greet older adult strangers as ***mama*** (for men) or ***ale*** (for women), adult acquaintances as ***tita*** (aunt) or ***tito*** (uncle), and the elderly as ***lola*** (grandmother) or ***lolo*** (grandfather). Many rural Filipinos communicate respect to elders by taking the elder's hand or fist and placing it on their own forehead while saying the appropriate greeting and asking for their hand, ***mano po***.

Filipino men may greet one another with a brief handshake, sometimes placing the free hand on top of the handshake for emphasis, although verbal greetings are also acceptable. Because some members of the opposite sex may prefer not to touch or shake hands in public (see *Time and Space*), male foreign nationals should wait for females to initiate a handshake. Some Filipino women, especially Muslim women, may decline a handshake and simply greet others with a smile and nod.

**Titles:** Filipinos are respectful of status and typically use both personal ("sir" or "ma'am") and professional ("Professor" or "Major") titles to convey respect. Generally, Filipinos consider it a social imperative to acknowledge other people's needs for self-esteem. Consequently, a wife may be addressed using her husband's title (such as "Mrs. Mayor"), while people without titles are often respectfully addressed as "boss" or "manager," and even a beggar is spoken to as ***po*** ("sir/madam"). Within the military, title inflation is common and members wanting to elevate status may address a colleague with a higher rank than his actual one. Foreign nationals are advised to neither correct nor participate in this sort of ritual.

**First Names and Nicknames:** Among people of equal status, first names are commonly used although peers in professional settings oftentimes address each other by titles. Childhood nicknames commonly persist into adulthood as terms of endearment and expressions of social intimacy.

## Gestures

As is common in most societies, Filipinos use nonverbal gestures and hand movements to enhance communication. Filipinos indicate direction by pointing with their lips or moving their eyes, rather than pointing with their hands. To beckon someone, a Filipino faces his palm down and scoops his fingers in. Raising an eyebrow can mean agreement or it can be a friendly greeting.

Filipinos tend to use less eye contact than Americans, and staring is considered rude or a direct challenge. A wide open mouth or nodding once can communicate misunderstanding or uncertainty. Foreign nationals should never stand with hands on hips as it is a stance of aggression. Similarly, waving an index finger, pointing at someone, and raising the middle finger are all considered rude. Generally, a smile is always appreciated and can help reinforce praise or to soften criticism.

## Conversational Topics

Some conversational topics may seem intrusive or personal to foreign nationals, although Filipinos believe such topics help build rapport and maintain relationships. Almost everyone discusses basketball (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*) and politics. Although foreign nationals are encouraged to take part in these discussions, they should avoid critical comments about the Philippines or its people. Outsiders should withhold judgment on sensitive topics, particularly as they pertain to Philippine society. In all situations, a foreign national should avoid debating contentious subjects with a host national.

## Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at http://culture.af.mil/resources/index.aspx for language training resources.

## Useful Translations

| English | Filipino |
|---|---|
| Do you speak English? | Marunong ba kayong Mag-Ingles? |
| How are you? (formal) | Kumusta po kayo? |
| I am fine | Mabuti po naman. |
| What's up?/Where are you going? | Saan po kayo pupunta ? |
| Nothing much | Wala naman. |
| Please come in | Tuloy po kayo |
| Good morning (formal) | Magandang umaga po |
| Good afternoon (formal) | Magandang hapon po |
| Good evening (formal) | Magandang gabi po |
| See you/"we are going home" | Sige po, uuwi na po kami |
| Please | Pakiusap lang po |
| Thank you/Thank you very much | Salamat po/Maraming salamat po |
| You're welcome | Wala pong anuman |
| Yes/no (formal) | Opo/hindi po |
| OK | OK |
| Sorry | Sori po |
| What is your name? | Ano po ang pangalan nila? |
| My name is ___ | Ako po si (name)/Si (name) po ako |
| Goodbye | Sige po |
| Let's meet later | Magkita tayo mamaya |
| Just a minute | Sandali lang po |
| Who? | Sino po |
| What? | Ano po? |
| When? | Kelan po? |
| Where? | Saan po? |
| Why? | Bakit po? |
| How much? | Magkano? |
| Where is the …? | Saan ang…? |
| I don't know | Hindi ko po alam |
| left | Kaliwa po |
| right | Kanan po |
| straight ahead | deretso |
| delicious | Masarap po |

# 7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

## Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 92.6%
- Male: 92.5%
- Female: 92.7% (2000 census)

## Traditional Education

Although traditional educational methods varied across groups, the universal purpose of education was to help young people adapt to their physical and social contexts by perpetuating values, beliefs, and skills. Parents and community elders modeled cultural values as they taught children about practical life skills, focusing on community well-being and respect for the natural world. Traditionally, family histories, general knowledge, and technical expertise were transmitted through the generations via epic stories, parables, and songs. Tagalog speakers had been using a writing system called ***Baybayin*** to record information on palm fronds, bamboo, and tree bark for at least a century when the Spanish arrived in the 16th century and continued to use the script up through the 19th century (Photo: Ifugao sculpture).

## Introduction of Formal Education

Formal education began as traders and missionaries spread Islam to the Philippines from Indonesia and Malaysia beginning in the 14th century (see *Religion and Spirituality*). By the time the Spanish arrived in 1521, Islam was firmly established on Mindanao and Sulu and had spread to the northern island of Luzon. In Muslim communities, clerics provided instruction in Arabic and the Qur'an for small groups of male students.

## Education in the Spanish Colony

An important aspect of the Spanish colonizers' attempts at large-scale conversion of the populace to Catholicism (see *Religion and Spirituality*) was religious education. In general, the friars substituted the peoples' own myths, rituals, and songs with Catholic stories of the saints, the story of Christ's crucifixion, baptism and other rituals, and liturgical music. For

most of the Spanish colonial period, the clergy did not attempt to teach the indigenous people to speak Spanish. Instead, the friars learned the local languages so they could speak with the people, but continued to perform Mass in Latin. In 1593, the first book published in the Philippines, the *Doctrina Christiana* (pictured), contained a Catholic catechism printed in both Spanish Gothic letters and Tagalog characters.

Doctrina Christiana en
lengua chaniola ytagala. cor
regida por los Religiosos de las
ordenes. Y impressa con licencia. en
la gloria de la orden de S. Domingo
En Manila. 1593.

In 1863 an educational decree called for the establishment of schools in every parish, officially introducing compulsory primary education. However, shortages in funds and teachers resulted in urban areas being resourced ahead of rural areas.

Consequently, in Manila several educational institutions were established early, including many secondary schools. Attendance at institutions of learning beyond primary school was largely restricted to the offspring of Spanish colonists and a few elite ***mestizos*** (people of mixed Chinese and Filipino descent, see *History and Myth*).

By the late 19th century, the growing class of ***mestizos*** and elite Filipinos who had prospered from the galleon trade (see *History and Myth*) could afford to send their sons to seek further education in Manila and even in Europe. Additionally, middle-class Filipino families began to engage private tutors or send both their sons and daughters to the growing number of private schools. In this way, an educated, non-Spanish class emerged whose members had access to new ideas and came to be instrumental in the 19th-century Philippine rebellion against Spain (see *History and Myth*).

### Education under US Administration

Formal education in the Philippines became more accessible to the general population after the Philippines came under US administration in 1898 (see *History and Myth*). The 1901 Philippine Commission established a centralized Department of Public Instruction that launched a secular and free public

school system modeled after the American system. Still, full enrollment and regular attendance at the primary level remained difficult for students from rural areas, particularly poorer families who often kept children home as an additional source of labor (Photo: Filipino schoolgirls with their teacher).

The new educational program established schools and teacher training colleges across the country. English became the language of instruction and vocational trades such as printing and telegraphy the focus of instruction which required teachers with specialized knowledge. Thus, the Philippine Commission also authorized the appointment of American teachers to schools across the provinces. The initial group of 540 teachers, who came to be known as the "Thomasites" for the transport ship that brought them, arrived in 1901.

The curriculum's emphasis on the English language and American values aligned with the broader American policy of "benevolent assimilation" (see *History and Myth*). This policy was meant to erase Spanish colonial influence and firmly establish US authority. Moreover, with over 170 different languages in the islands (see *Language and Communication*), instruction in a foreign language was intended to ease competition among ethnic groups. After 24 years under this system, a study revealed low student achievement, inadequate textbooks, untrained teachers, and high failure rates.

### From Commonwealth to Independence

As the US was preparing the country for independence in the 1930s (see *History and Myth*), the government again turned to educational reform, creating the National Council on Education, designating Filipino as an official language (see *Language and Communication*), and emphasizing adult education. World War II interrupted these efforts, and during the Japanese occupation (see *History and Myth*), the curriculum was adjusted again to include the study of Filipino culture. This action was part of a broader effort to foster pan-Asian identity and improve cultural and political relations between Japan and the Philippines.

## Education Today

Filipinos consider education as an avenue to social and economic improvement. Since tuition often accounts for large portions of a family's budget, parents often make severe sacrifices to provide educational opportunities for their children. Generally, the public education system continues to suffer from insufficient funding, ill-equipped classrooms, and a lack of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas.

Today, 6 years of primary and 4 years of secondary education are free, while only primary education is compulsory. About 85% of eligible children attend primary school, although only 62% attend secondary school. This drop is due to a lack of public secondary schools and the tendency for poor students in both urban and rural areas to drop out so they that can work to augment family income. Attendance numbers at all levels are even lower in some conflict-prone provinces on Mindanao.

As the only Asian country with a 10-year basic education program, the Philippines launched its "K-12" program in 2012, proposing the addition of 2 years of "senior high school" and 1 year of kindergarten.

**Primary:** Public schools offer a curriculum that includes English, Filipino, science and health, math (taught in English), ***Makabayan*** ("Values Education"), and civics (taught in Filipino). Indigenous languages are used as supplementary languages, primarily in the lower grades.

**Secondary:** Students typically enter secondary school, widely referred to as "high school," after 6 years of primary school and when they are around 12 or 13 years old. They graduate after 4 years at the age of 16 or 17.

**Tertiary:** About 1/5 of the 16-21 year-old population enrolls in education beyond secondary school. There is a wide variety of vocational schools, colleges, and universities; and for many the primary language of instruction is English.

Many of these institutions have prestigious histories. Manila's oldest university, the University of Santo Tomas founded in 1610, is older than Harvard, the US's oldest university.

**Religious Instruction:** Although the national curriculum does not include religious instruction, there is a tradition of promoting moral education in the Philippines, and in that spirit, the government has allowed religious groups to provide voluntary moral values lessons during school hours. Additionally, the government permits some religious instruction in public schools with parents' consent as long as there is no cost to the government.

About 14% of the student population on Mindanao attends ***madaris*** or Islamic schools (singular: ***madrasah***). There are 3 types of ***madaris***: the traditional or weekend ***madrasah*** in which instruction is basically religious; the developmental or formal ***madrasah*** which provides instruction in non-religious subjects but does not use the national curriculum; and the standard private ***madrasah*** which is accredited by the government and uses the national curriculum. Additionally, there are over 400 public elementary schools nationwide which implement some ***madrasah*** lessons in, for example, Arabic language instruction and Islamic values.

**Indigenous Schools:** Over the last decades, some tribal leaders have attempted to address the loss of traditional knowledge and culture through indigenous schools that provide culturally responsive education. Alongside the formal curriculum, indigenous schools teach cultural history, traditional songs, dances, legends, and rituals in both English and indigenous languages. The Department of Education's Response to Indigenous Peoples and Muslim Education (PRIME) Program also seeks to bring indigenous learning topics and methods into the classroom (Photo: High school classroom in Mangingisda).

# 8. TIME AND SPACE

## Overview

Filipino society is relationship-oriented, valuing ***pakikisama*** or harmonious interpersonal interactions (see *Language and Communication*) over time efficiency. Business transactions tend to move at a leisurely pace, prompting some to say that the country runs on "Filipino time." In business and social interactions, Filipinos tend to be gregarious and polite.

## Time and Work

The work week for office employees in the Philippines extends from Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm, with an hour break for lunch. Employees of manufacturing companies may also work on Saturday mornings. Commercial banking hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00am-3:00pm, and shopping malls are usually open from 10:00am-9:30pm daily. Philippine time is 8 hours ahead of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and 12 hours ahead of the US Eastern Standard Time (EST).

**Punctuality:** Filipinos have a more relaxed sense of punctuality than Americans. While it is expected that business meetings and medical appointments will begin on time, traffic jams and inclement weather frequently delay these by 15-30 minutes. Punctuality is even more relaxed in social contexts, where gatherings typically begin an hour late and arriving on time can be considered rude. However, expectations for foreign nationals are more rigid, as they should be consistently punctual and demonstrate patience if Filipinos are tardy.

**Efficiency:** Filipinos typically place less emphasis on efficiency than Americans. Service at restaurants tends to be slower than in the US, and work deadlines are frequently missed. Asking someone to accomplish a task within a few days can be perceived as aggressive, especially in rural areas.

**Negotiations:** Filipinos prefer to build relationships through a series of informal meetings during meals or entertainment

before conducting formal business. Once formal negotiations begin, they are usually slow and low-key. Communication is indirect, facts are diplomatically presented, and Filipinos try to remain calm and courteous at all times (see *Language and Communication*).



### Personal Space

Filipinos are physically reserved when interacting with those of higher social status, requiring about 3 feet of interpersonal space. This is more than most Americans are accustomed to, although this space decreases with familiarity so that family and friends tend to stand closer together.

**Touching:** Filipinos use a considerable amount of social touching while interacting. In professional settings, the individual with the higher social status will initiate the contact. Physical contact between people of the opposite sex may be unacceptable for some Filipinos, especially among Muslims. Consequently, some women may choose not to shake hands with men (see *Language and Communication*).

**National Public Holidays in 2012**

- January 1: New Year's Day
- January 23: Chinese New Year
- February 25: EDSA (People Power) Day
- April 5: Holy Thursday
- April 6: Good Friday
- April 9: Day of Valor
- May 1: Labor Day
- June 12: Independence Day
- August 19: End of Ramadan (*Eid'l Fitr*)
- August 21: Aquino Day
- August 27: National Heroes' Day
- October 26: Festival of Sacrifice (*Eid'l Adha*)
- November 1: All Saints' Day
- November 30: Bonifacio Day
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 30: Rizal Day
- December 31: New Year's Eve

# 9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

## Overview

The clothing, games, music, and artwork of the Philippines reflect the combined influences of the region's indigenous cultures as well as those of the islands' occupiers including Spain, Japan, and the US (see *History and Myth*).

## Dress

Filipinos commonly wear Western clothing, although traditional attire is still donned for ceremonies, festivals, and important meetings. While dress is generally casual, Filipinos place great value on a clean and neat appearance.

**Men:** The traditional formal garment for men is the ***barong tagalong***, a very thin and transparent shirt often made from ***pina*** (pineapple fibers) in the past, but more often made from banana or synthetic fibers today. Typically long and worn untucked with a plain white undershirt, the ***barong*** is often decorated with intricate embroidery (pictured, courtesy of Wikimedia).

The most common informal outfit for men is a polo or similar lightweight cotton shirt paired with pants or shorts. This type of casual attire is usually acceptable even in the workplace since the temperature and humidity are high year-round. When more formal dress is appropriate, full business suits usually are required only in air conditioned offices.

**Women:** The traditional formal female garment is the ***terno***, although in modern times, it is rarely worn other than for cultural events. It consists of a blouse and skirt that are joined at the waist to form a single garment. The fitted bodice has stiffened and flared sleeves at the shoulders known as butterfly sleeves. Modern Filipino women tend to dress casually but relatively conservatively. Close-fitting shorts, low necklines, and short skirts are uncommon.

## Recreation

Filipinos are family-oriented and enjoy spending their free time socializing with relatives and friends. They also enjoy shopping and going to the movies and sporting events.

**Basketball:** American professional basketball is very popular, as is the Philippine Basketball Association, which is Asia's first basketball league founded in 1975. Most every ***barangay*** (village) and school has a basketball court.

***Sabong*** **(Cockfighting):** Although some Filipinos and even the Catholic Church disapprove, cockfights are a national pastime and have been a popular spectator sport since Spanish colonial times. Fights are usually held on Sunday afternoons, although 3-day tournaments are often performed during village fiestas. The owner of the fighting rooster, the ***sabungero***, or his handler attaches metal spurs to his bird's legs just above the foot and places the bird in a special arena or cock-pit to fight another. The contest continues until one of the cocks is unable to continue fighting or due to injury runs away.

**Other Sports:** Boxing has regained tremendous popularity as a spectator sport and has earned the Philippines most of its Olympic medals. Other popular sports include billiards, baseball, volleyball, soccer, swimming, and track and field.

**Games:** Conceptually similar to the card game rummy, ***Mahjong***, an ancient Chinese game played with decorative tiles, is very popular especially among women.

## Music and Dance

Music and dance are integral parts of Filipino culture and incorporate Asian, Spanish, and American genres. Music education and performance begin at an early age.

**Traditional Music:** Indigenous Philippine music is closely tied to the musical traditions of Southeast Asia. Most of the forms are performed in connection with significant events such as rites-of-passage, key agricultural activities, healing, and

combat. When performed in public, the music is often accompanied by dance.

Philippine folk music developed from several roots: music from Spain introduced by colonists, Catholic liturgical music, and older pre-colonial indigenous music as mentioned above. Examples of folk music can most often be heard at religious ceremonies and festivals during Lent and Christmas.

**Modern Music:** Since the 19th century, Filipino composers have written works in traditional Western forms such as chamber music and opera. In the 20th century, composers and performers immersed themselves in contemporary styles such as jazz, country, rock, and rap. Choral music continues to be very popular and can be found in many contexts including church, government, and business.

In the 1970's, ***Pinoy*** or Filipino rock, served as a means of expression in the tumultuous political climate (see *History and Myth*). Its blues-influenced music created awareness of the socio-political condition of Filipinos and re-awakened national pride. While American and British pop music influenced the sound, musicians developed a distinctly Filipino style, often writing lyrics in Tagalog (see *Language and Communication*). Like the other genres, Filipino rock continues to evolve and is very popular today.

**Dance:** Philippine dance also shows the influence of indigenous, traditional European, and more modern styles. Many different professional dance troupes perform ballet, modern dance, and folk dance. The most popular indigenous dance, and considered the national dance of the Philippines, is the ***tinikling*** (pictured). Inspired by a bird called the "tinikling," the steps of this dance are an imitation of the movements of the tinikling as it hops among grass stems and tries to escape the traps set by farmers. In the tinikling, dancers exhibit grace and skill by stepping effortlessly between bamboo poles that are knocked against each other with increasing speed.

### Theater

Theater has long served as a medium of expression of political, social, and religious themes. During the colonial period, the Spanish used the performance arts to introduce the Catholic religion and support their conversion efforts (see *Religion and Spirituality* and *Learning and Knowledge*). During the independence movement in the late 19th century, theatrical works included distinctly Filipino themes that critiqued Spanish, and later American, political domination. Today, themes are both nationalistic and reflective of daily life.

### Literature

Because the Spanish did not force the Filipinos to learn and speak Spanish, the islands' oral literary traditions, especially poetry, remained largely unaffected by Spanish influence. As more middle-class Filipinos acquired education and learned Spanish in the 19th century (see *Learning and Knowledge)*, they began to produce literary works that were instrumental in the country's independence movement (see *History and Myth*). Considered a national hero, José Rizal wrote novels critical of the ruling Spaniards that had strong nationalistic and revolutionary messages. Later, as the effects of American control of the educational system were felt (see *Learning and Knowledge*), Filipinos began to write in English, although publications in several local languages were still popular in several regions. Recently, there has been continued interest in all types of writing – literature, newspapers, magazines, and comic books – in Filipino and other indigenous languages.

### Arts and Crafts

Indigenous groups produce a variety of arts and crafts. These include intricate textiles made of homegrown cotton, banana, or pineapple thread for wear or display; massive wooden religious statues, furniture pieces; basketry and mats of rattan, nito, and pandan fiber; and artisanal metalwork ornaments, ceremonial objects, and weaponry (Photo: Kalinga boys in traditional textiles perform a dance).

# 10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

## Dining Customs

Food plays a central role in the maintenance of relationships in the Philippines. While dining customs vary by region, families commonly share meals, often bowing their heads in thanks and saying ***Kain na tayo,*** "Let's eat." When present, guests are served first and are expected to eat heartily to show their appreciation. Since food is central to Filipino hospitality, it is considered rude not to accept food when it is offered.

Filipinos eat three meals-per-day and may consume two or more ***merienda***, or snacks, between meals. While many Filipinos eat holding a fork in their left hand and spoon in their right, in some rural areas and traditional restaurants especially in Muslim areas, Filipinos use their right hand to consume food that may be served on a banana leaf.

**Typical Meals:** The typical Filipino breakfast consists of garlic rice and fried egg, sausage, cured pork, fried milkfish, and juice or coffee. Lunch and dinner cuisine is varied and reflects Spanish, Chinese, Malay, and American influences.

**Staples:** The Filipino diet is carbohydrate rich, and Filipinos usually eat rice at every meal. They also use it to make porridge, various desserts, and wine. ***Pansit,*** or stir-fried noodles (pictured), may be served in addition to rice. Other popular noodle varieties include the thicker, ribbon-like ***canton*** as well as the translucent bean-based vermicelli, ***sotanghon***. Vegetables are an integral part of the diet, often mixed with meat or offered as a side dish. Soy, vinegar, coconut, chili, ginger, onion, garlic, and tamarind are the primary spices that form the basis of many types of dipping sauces.

**Fish:** Fish serves as the primary source of protein in the Filipino diet and is readily available in this island country. Popular fish dishes include

***bangus*** (milkfish), often served fried accompanied by a dipping sauce of vinegar and garlic. ***Tilapia*** and ***lapu-lapu*** (grouper) are common in many fish dishes as is ***galunggong*** (round scad or jackfish) in provincial areas. Shrimp, prawns, and clams are also common in the Filipino diet, as are various types of dried and pickled fish.

**Red Meat:** Pork, chicken, and beef are the main red meats in the Filipino diet and tend to be salted or marinated then stewed, fried, grilled, or roasted. In rural areas water buffalo, duck, deer, and wild boar are other common forms of protein, and field rats, dogs, bats, snakes, and insects such as beetles, locusts, woodworms, and ant eggs may also be eaten.

One of the most popular meat dishes is ***adobo***, which is considered by some to be the unofficial national dish. It is made by stewing chicken or pork in vinegar and garlic. Another popular dish is ***sinigang***, made by boiling meat or seafood in a sour tamarind-flavored soup. ***Kinilaw*** is a popular finger food made by marinating raw meat or fish in vinegar and lime juice.

**Beverages:** Carbonated soft drinks, fresh ***buko*** (coconut juice), iced tea, and pineapple juice are commonly consumed with meals. Filipinos drink alcoholic beverages such as locally brewed San Miguel beer or rum in social settings. ***Tuba,*** a young wine, and ***lambanog***, a clear and potent distilled liquor, are both made from nipa palm or coconut. Other popular alcoholic drinks include ***tappuy***, a rice beer fermented by mountain peoples in hefty Chinese heirloom jars, and ***basi*** made from boiling and fermenting sugar cane juice.

**Special occasions:** Every community celebrates a fiesta on the feast day of its patron saint. During these festivals, ***lechon*** (roast pig, pictured), is often served with goat-meat stew, stir-fried pork liver, and a variety of sweet rice cakes such as sticky ***biko***, broiled ***bibingka,*** and steamed ***puto***. Other specialty deserts include ***halo-halo*** *(*crushed ice served with sweetened milk, fruit, beans, and

treacle which is an uncrystallized syrup produced in refining sugar), cassava or yucca cake, and flan.

**Balút**

A uniquely Filipino dish is ***balút*,** a half formed duck embryo complete with beak and feathers that is considered to have health-inducing properties. Balút is typically served hard boiled. The proper way to eat balút is to tap the broad base of the egg with a spoon, break the delicate membrane, then sip the liquid. One should then continue to break the shell to expose the yolk and embryo. These pieces are either swallowed whole or separated on a plate and salted before they are consumed.

## Health Overview

The Philippines' infant mortality rate has dropped significantly in the last decades, from 42 per 1000 births in 1990 to an estimated 19 in 2012, better than many countries but still worse than the Southeast Asian regional average. Life expectancy is 67 years for men and 73 years for women, also lower than the respective averages of 72 and 77 years for the region. While improvements in healthcare have been achieved in recent years, the country is still challenged by vast regional and socioeconomic disparities.

**Modern Healthcare System:** The modern healthcare system in the Philippines is a dual system consisting of a decentralized public sector that provides free care and a private sector. Severe budget deficits have caused the government to decrease public expenditures allocated to healthcare since the 1990s. In 2008, public health expenditures equaled 3.8% of GDP, which is less than the 5% recommended by the World Health Organization. The reduction in public funding is generating an increased reliance on the private sector. Out-of-pocket spending currently accounts for half of all healthcare spending and is on the rise.

The Philippine healthcare system is also challenged by the inequitable distribution of providers. Currently, 70% of providers are employed in the private sector, which serves 30% of the population. The country is also experiencing a provider shortage. Although the Philippines has excellent medical training institutions, most professionals do not remain in-country to work. The country is instead the world's leading exporter of nurses and the second leading exporter of physicians (Photo: Village clinic).

**Traditional Medicine:** Traditional medicine is defined as the knowledge, skill, and practice of holistic healthcare based on indigenous theories, beliefs, and experiences that have been passed through generations. Generally, it is a type of non-standard health care that involves varied levels of training and effectiveness. Filipino traditional healers usually instruct their patients on preparations of herbal concentrations, poultices, and other preparations. An estimated 57% of Filipinos seek care from traditional practitioners. In 2001, there were 250,000 such practitioners or 1 for every 300 people. Many Filipinos use a combination of traditional and modern medicine, relying on traditional medicine when there is no other immediate cure.

Many of these traditional medical beliefs and practices are rooted in traditional animistic beliefs according to which malevolent spirits can be the cause of illness (see *Religion and* Spirituality). The Filipino government is seeking to establish a regulatory body for traditional medicine and has already established specific regulations on herbal medicine.

### Health challenges

Similar to other developing countries, the Philippines is facing the double burden of high rates of both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

**Communicable diseases:** Communicable diseases such as acute respiratory infection, pneumonia, and diarrhea are

prevalent in the Philippines. In fact, communicable diseases constitute 7 of the top 10 most prevalent diseases. Of these, tuberculosis presents the greatest challenges. While prevention and management of tuberculosis has improved, it is a leading cause of death, and the country has the 9th highest incidence of the disease in the world. Parasitic communicable diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and filariasis are also common, especially in rural areas.

The Philippines has suffered from a number of communicable disease outbreaks in recent years. In 2009, an influenza outbreak resulted in 32 deaths. In the same year, over 5,300 cases of leptospirosis (an infection that occurs when water has been contaminated with animal urine) were reported after two typhoons struck near Manila. In January 2010, the country experienced a national measles outbreak resulting in over 10,000 cases. These outbreaks demonstrate that the Philippine population is very susceptible to the rapid transmission of communicable diseases.

**Non-Communicable Diseases:** Mortality and morbidity rates for non-communicable diseases have been increasing steadily since the 1970s. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes remain within the top 10 causes of death. Diseases of the heart and vascular system are the leading causes of mortality, accounting for nearly 31% of all deaths. Factors contributing to high rates of non-communicable disease include tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and alcohol use.

**Accidents:** Traffic accidents also serve as a public health concern and are the leading cause of injury or death. In 2006, the World Health Organization reported that there were 1,185 traffic-related deaths and 5,870 traffic related injuries. President Aquino joined a UN-sponsored initiative and declared 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety, setting as a national priority the reduction of accident-related fatalities in the country.

# 11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

## Overview

A newly industrialized nation, the Philippines' emerging economy has sustained steady growth since 2003 and is predicted to become the world's 16th largest economy by 2050. Unlike many countries in the region, the Philippines withstood the recession in 2009 due to high rates of domestic consumption. Since that time, the economy has grown steadily – its gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 7.3% in 2010 and by 4% in 2011 (Photo: Cebu City).

Despite its recent growth, the Philippines still faces a number of economic challenges. At nearly 27%, the country's poverty rate is much higher than neighboring Indonesia's 13% and Malaysia's 4% rates, and its per capita GDP of $4,100 places the Philippines in the bottom third of all countries worldwide. Income distribution is inequitable, with the wealthiest 10% of the population claiming 31% of the annual income while the poorest 10% claim just 2.4%. These challenges, as well as high unemployment and emigration rates, have hampered more rapid economic growth.

## Services

Services – including community, social, financial, business, domestic, trade, and transportation activities – accounted for 54% of GDP in 2011, making it the largest sector of the Filipino economy. This sector has expanded rapidly since the 1990s especially in the areas of telecommunications, business outsourcing, and financial services. Over 52% of the workforce is currently employed in this sector.

**Tourism:** In 2011, nearly 4 million tourists visited the Philippines, an 11% increase over the previous year. Popular sites include its beaches and National Marine Park, the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, the Banaue rice terraces in Ifugao (see picture in *Political and Social Relations*), and its many Spanish colonial churches and other buildings.

Most tourists come from South Korea, the US, and Japan and just over 10% of the labor force is employed in the tourism industry. The Philippines receives far fewer tourists than its Southeast Asian neighbors due to the higher costs of tourism services and insufficient air access.

### Industry

Industry which includes construction, manufacturing, mining, and utilities accounts for 33% of GDP in 2011 and employed 15% of the labor force. Unlike other Southeast Asian economies whose industrial sectors expanded before their service sectors, the recent growth of the Philippine service sector was not preceded by a process of industrialization.

**Manufacturing:** The Philippines' most important manufactured products include electronics, garments, footwear, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and processed foods.

**Mining:** The Philippines has an estimated 58 billion tons of mineral reserves worth $840 billion including deposits of chromite, copper, gold, nickel, coal, cobalt, gypsum, iron, and sulfur. While production of minerals declined from 30% of GDP in the 1970s to 1% in 2003, a Supreme Court ruling allowing for foreign ownership of mining operations in 2004 has generated over $700 million in foreign investment since then. It is projected that this sector will continue to grow in order to meet the rising mineral demands of China, Japan, and India.

### Agriculture

Agriculture which includes crops, livestock, fishing, and timber contributed 12% of GDP in 2011, making it the country's smallest economic sector even though it accounts for 33% of Filipino jobs. Major products include sugarcane, coconuts, rice (pictured), corn, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, pork, eggs, beef, and fish. In recent years, the agricultural sector has been affected by typhoons and drought. Rapid deforestation has significantly disrupted the timber industry and has caused the Philippines to transition from being the world's leading exporter of tropical hardwoods in the 1970s to a net importer of forest products in the 1990s.

## Money

The Filipino currency is the peso (PHP) (pictured), which is subdivided into 100 centavos or cents. The peso is issued in 8 banknotes (PHP 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1000) and in 7 coins (1, 5, 10, and 25 centavos and PHP 1, 5, and 10). While the exchange rate of the peso fluctuates, it has been relatively stable in recent years, dipping to 40 pesos per US$ in 2008 and rising to 53 pesos per US$ in 2005. As of mid-2012, the rate had hovered around 43 pesos per US$ for over a year.

## Foreign Trade

External trade in goods has experienced a rapid growth in recent years, increasing by over 30% from 2009 to 2010. This growth includes a 27% increase in the total number of imports, which were worth $69 billion by 2011. These goods primarily included electronic products, mineral fuels, machinery and transport equipment, iron and steel, textile fabrics, grains, chemicals, and plastics purchased from Japan (14%), China (14%), the US (10%), Singapore (9%), Thailand (7%), South Korea (6%), and Indonesia (4%).

Exports increased by 34% between 2009 and 2010 and were worth $54 billion in 2011. Exported goods included semiconductors, electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruit sold to China (19%), the US (13%), Singapore (13%), Japan (13%), Hong Kong (8%), Germany (4%), and South Korea (4%).

## Remittances

The country has experienced a large inflow of money in the form of remittances in recent years from the 9 million Filipinos living in 180 countries throughout the world. Total remittance inflows in 2011 reached over $21 billion, a 7% increase over 2010, and accounted for nearly 12% of GDP. In 2011, the Philippines was the fourth largest recipient of remittances in the world and as of 2010 had the largest number of remittances as a percentage of GDP in Asia.

# 12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

## Overview

Although the Philippines' physical infrastructure is in need of improvements, transportation services for both people and goods remain both affordable and widely available. Similarly, the telecommunications system continues to grow and improve.

## Transportation

**Vehicles:** Although many middle-class Filipinos own cars, others rely upon public transportation to navigate the Philippines' busy roadways. Buses and taxis are widely available, and ***jeepneys*** (a cross between a jeep and a bus) are particularly popular for both local and long-distance trips. ***Tricycles*** (motorcycles with sidecars) and ***pedicabs*** (bicycles with sidecars) are the preferred mode of transportation in areas where narrow streets and routes make it difficult or illegal for buses and jeepneys to operate.

**Roadways:** The Philippines has about 132,500 miles of roadways, of which approximately 25% are paved. The primary hub of the road system is Metro Manila, an urban area that spans Manila and 16 adjacent municipalities. Large parts of the road system are generally in poor condition due to underinvestment and mismanagement of resources.

**Railways:** The Philippine National Railways (PNR) is a state-owned corporation which controls close to 620 miles of railways. The PNR includes two commuter rail systems on Luzon and the "Bicol Express," a long-distance route between Metro Manila and the city of Naga in southeast Luzon. The Bicol Express runs a limited schedule, operating once in the early morning and once in the late afternoon. Although the Philippine rail system is in poor condition due to underfunding and neglect, the government is currently formulating plans to revitalize the rail network by privatizing the PNR.

**Waterways and Ports:** Waterways and ports are heavily utilized in the Philippines for both commercial transport and personal travel. There are over 2,450 ports in the country, and most are small. The state-owned Philippine Ports Authority both regulates private ports and operates the largest public ports. Manila is home to the two largest ports in the Philippines: the South Harbor (used for international cargo) and the North harbor (used for domestic traffic). Ferries and "fastcrafts" (fuel-efficient, passenger-carrying catamarans) are widely available and are commonly used for travel between islands.

**Airways:** The Philippines has over 250 airports, of which 85 have paved runways. The busiest airport is Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Domestic air travel is available, affordable, and widely used to travel quickly over the vast distances that separate the many islands which form the archipelago.

Philippine Airlines (PAL), the country's national airline, is the country's oldest airline. PAL provides service to over 20 domestic and 30 international cities. A variety of other domestic airlines compete with PAL in the local market, including South East Asian Airlines (SEAir) and Cebu Pacific Air, both of which service remote parts of the archipelago. Many international airlines including British Airways, Emirates, and Lufthansa also provide service to destinations around the world from Manila.

## Energy

Slightly less than 90% of Filipinos had access to electricity in 2009, with greater access among urban dwellers than rural dwellers. Many of the millions of Filipinos without access to electricity rely heavily on propane gas and wood fuel to meet their energy needs. Although access to electricity increased rapidly in the first decade of the 21st century, the Philippines currently has the most expensive electricity in Asia. This may be partly due to the fact that the state does not subsidize the private firms supplying the electricity.

## Media and Telecommunications

**Radio and TV:** In 2008 there were close to 300 television broadcast stations and nearly 875 cable networks in the Philippines. Although 13.5 million households have televisions, there are only about 1.6 million cable and satellite subscribers. Comprising over 50% of total programming, entertainment shows are typically broadcast in Filipino. Public affairs programs, talk shows, and documentaries are sometimes also broadcast in English.

The Philippines is also home to over 1,000 radio stations, which broadcast many types of music as well as educational and community development programming. Since radio continues to serve as a primary means of obtaining news for the average Filipino, the penetration rate for radio remains higher than that for television.

**Print Media:** Print media growth has been relatively stagnant in recent years. There are currently 8 national newspapers, down from a high of 22 in 1986. There are about 410 local newspapers, of which most are English weeklies and monthlies in tabloid format. All newspapers are limited in circulation.

**Telephones:** Although only about half of Filipino towns and cities have fixed-line telephone service, the country's mobile telephone market has expanded rapidly in recent years. Mobile penetration has increased from 6 million subscribers in 2000 to nearly 75 million subscribers in early 2009. Similarly, the Philippines has one of the world's highest rates of text messaging.

**Internet:** The Philippines has a low rate (10%) of personal computer ownership making internet cafés popular. The Internet sector is well-positioned for growth as the market is deregulated and the government continues to support IT development (Photo: US Navy officer assembles satellite for Internet and telephone service at Philippine medical center).

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