

WORKING CLASS STUDIES: THE IMPORTANCE AND CONCEPTS OF WORK

by

Dean Jonathan P. Sale, DPA

University of the Philippines

School of Labor and Industrial Relations

In *The Thought of Work* (2011), John W. Budd explains –

- The importance of work
 - Historical development of work
 - “Fully human activity”
- The types or varieties of work
 - Paid or unpaid
 - Outside or within the home

In *The Thought of Work* (2011), John W.

Budd explains –

- The concepts of work
 - A curse
 - Freedom
 - A commodity
 - Occupational citizenship
 - Disutility
 - Personal fulfilment
 - A social relation
 - Caring for others
 - Identity
 - Service

- The importance and concepts of work are fairly captured in the following research and extension activities of the U.P. School of Labor and Industrial Relations.

International Research Conference

- This year is the 150th birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio.
- In honor of Bonifacio and other heroes and heroines in the struggle for national and social emancipation in the Philippines and other Asian countries, the School, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, is organizing an international research conference with the theme:

International Research Conference

- “From anti-colonialism to anti-neoliberalism: The working class struggle for social and national emancipation in Asia and the Pacific” to be held on 23 to 25 October 2013. There will be six track themes:

International Research Conference

- **Track 1.** Revisiting national liberation movements in Asia and the Pacific: Lessons and insights for labor's continuing struggles for social justice, equity and democracy
- **Track 2.** The working class and working class organizations in the 21st century

International Research Conference

- **Track 3.** Globalization, regional integration and the emergence of precarious Asia: Challenges for governance and organized labor
- **Track 4.** The role of women and women's organizations in emancipatory struggles

International Research Conference

- **Track 5.** Transnational labor migration in Asia and the Pacific: The construction and deconstruction of worker identities and solidarities
- **Track 6.** Labor's role in building an inclusive and sustainable Asia and the Pacific

International Research Conference

- Scholars, trade unionists, labor activists, students, practitioners, and those interested in working class studies, from across Asia and the Pacific and beyond are invited to **submit abstracts of paper proposals** under any of the six track themes or the general theme **on or before 31 August 2013** via email at **solair@upd.edu.ph** (Attn. Eileen Pupos).
- **Proposals for special interest symposia** that tackle other important topics related to the general theme of the conference are also welcome and may be submitted **on or before 31 August 2013, too.**

Lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers

- The lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers, perhaps the first of a series of capability building activities, was conducted in May 2013 in Nakar, Quezon.
- The objective is to strengthen capability for entrepreneurship and cooperative development of poor and marginalized workers.

Lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers

- The team from the School's Centers for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives and Labor Justice, and members of the Philippine Coconut Society, travelled on May 26.
- May 27 began with an initial meeting with staff from the Department of Agriculture who provided information on current problems besetting coconut farms and farmers, and about logistics for the activity which was held from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the compound of the Department of Agriculture in **Barangay Pamplona**.

Lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers

- Municipal Agricultural Office personnel and community civic organizations assisted in the dissemination of information.
- More than a hundred participants from coastal, river-side and central communities attended.
- Most were self-reliant coconut farmers owning about a hectare of land, with a few owning two to four hectares.

Lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers

- The need for a “value chain” in coconut production was discussed.
- The farmers were taught backyard techniques on extracting marketable products from coconut.
- There was a cooking demonstration on decocting coconut water.

Lecture-workshop on technological upgrading of the coconut industry and organizing of coconut farmers

- A crucial outcome was the organization of coconut farmers into a collective association. This could lead to more researches, e.g., factors influencing worker individualization/collectivization and the resulting work relations.

Work Decency/Prearity Continuum (Sale 2013)



Precarious Work

Decent Work

(according to ILO)

Work without
freedom, equity,
security, human dignity

Work with
freedom, equity,
security, human dignity

In conclusion

- These sample research and extension activities explore and capture not only the importance and concepts of work, but also delve into the School's mandates – labor empowerment, social justice and enlightened industrial relations.

References

- Budd, John W. 2011. *The Thought of Work*. U.S.A.: Cornell University Press.
- Ghai, Dharam (Ed.). 2006. *Decent Work: Objectives and Strategies*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- Sale, Jonathan P. 2013. IT – BPO: Sustaining the Boom, Addressing Employee Concerns. Unpublished research. UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations. June.