

Trade Unions in the Philippines: Struggle for Relevance Amidst Globalization and Technology

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Abstract

Philippine unionism and organized labor have been at the forefront of validating the cause of workers and advancing their rights and welfare. In addition to legitimizing the cause of labor, it has also led in the struggle for justice, equity and the improvement of working conditions for its members for more than a century now. But recently, a sharp weakening of unionism has been observed in the Philippines and in many parts of the world. This weakening is engendered by the integration of markets for globalization and the rapid advance of technology. These factors have irreversibly altered the work environment where unions operate and have threatened their relevance. This paper, therefore, examines how globalization and the advance of modernity and technology have further weakened trade unions and shaped its politics. Moreover, it examines an actual example of how pressures brought about by globalization and modernity manifesting in the establishment of labor control regimes in economic and

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export processing zones in the country, have weakened labor unions and undercut the bargaining power of organized labor.

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