Thomas Ward | Research Interests

Dr. Ward has worked and lived in the United States, Europe, Latin America and in East Asia. His life experiences as well as his work in the field of banking and in civic education led him to a special interest in the areas of development, culture and education. After conducting his initial doctoral preparation and research (programme d'habilitation) as a student at the Catholic Institute of Paris’ Institute of Social Studies, Dr. Ward completed his doctoral studies and thesis while working in Manila at De La Salle University, a major Catholic university in the Philippines. He developed his thesis proposal under the supervision of Brother Andrew Gonzalez, a beloved educator, a national figure in the Filipino democratic reform movement, and a Christian Brother of the La Sallian tradition. Brother Andrew Gonzalez later served as the Philippines’ Minister of Education and then as President of the Manila Bulletin, the Philippines’ largest daily newspaper.

Based on the work that Dr. Ward had done in France, Dr. Gonzalez advised Dr. Ward to consider expanding that research to include four possible frameworks for Filipino development and to weigh the pros and cons of each of those models on the Philippine political economy and assess each model’s compatibility with the educational and cultural institutions of the Philippines. Dr. Ward’s thesis was entitled “Models of Socioeconomic Development and their Educational Implications—Towards a Filipino Synthesis.” The thesis gained attention in the Philippines and parts of it were later published by the LaSallian Forum. At a time when the Philippines’ future was seen as betwixt Western democratic capitalism, Marxism-Leninism or Islamic separatism, Ward’s focus was unique in emphasizing that the Philippines stood to benefit from developing a greater appreciation of the cultural underpinnings that the Philippines shared with its East Asian neighbors and noting that, beneath its 400 year overlay of European, North American and Moro influence, the Confucian-like dimensions of the Filipino bayanihan social fabric ran deep. That research and the experience of those years continue to inform his thought and approach to development.

In addition to his administrative responsibilities as Dean of the International College, Dr. Ward continues to teach, conduct research and write. Areas of special teaching and research interest to him include Peace and Conflict Studies, Culture and Development, Religion and Development, the idiosyncrasies of Regional Political Economy (Latin America and East Asia), and International Education.