

Editor's Notes

Underlying the essays in this special double issue are common themes regarding the application in Asian settings of administrative reforms that have their origins in the West. Through case studies, the articles describe the application of administrative technologies in Asian countries, trace their colonial roots, identify the problems encountered in their implementation, and finally, assess their usefulness, given the development requirements of the societies in which they are introduced. A distinct contribution of these case studies is the detailed treatment they give to the changes or modifications made on the diffused or borrowed technologies as they interact with the organizational, socio-economic and political realities obtaining in Asia. Processes that may be referred to as adaptation and indigenization do take place and it is on these that the authors base their recommendations for a useful and relevant public administration.

The research report prepared by the College Research Staff is an appropriate opening for the series of articles on the Asian experience with administrative reforms. Focusing on two critical areas of administration, namely, the civil service and rural development programs, and examining the experience of five Southeast Asian countries, it describes the infusion of indigenous elements into colonial or foreign administrative structures and arrangements, their impetus and their consequences on society and public administration in particular.

The modification of foreign technologies, however, assume various forms. Recognizing this, the article concludes with a conceptual review that compares and contrasts concepts erroneously viewed as synonymous or equivalent: adoption, adaptation, and indigenization. These processes have very crucial differences that must be recognized and appreciated if public administration is to play a meaningful role in development.

The next two articles focus on decentralization, a critical component of administrative reform as it pertains to power and authority relationships. Thongsri Khambu's "Thai Administrative Structure and Reform: Problems in Decentralization" pinpoints to several factors hindering the progress of decentralization in Thailand, but identifies political will as the most crucial factor in the success of decentralization.

Keiso Hanaoka's "Administrative Decentralization for Regional and Local Development in Japan," on the other hand, brings to the fore the importance of local governments in the country's effort of making decentralization work for the *technopolis*.

The fourth article, "Advisory Commissions and Administrative Reform: The Western Model in Japan" by James Elliott is also a case study on Japan, specifically in its use of the Advisory Commission model so popular in the

West. The author describes the adaptation of such an arrangement in response to traditional practices. It was found, however, to be in the interest of the existing elite. This case demonstrates the fact that indeed administrative reforms or their adaptation or indigenization is conditioned by their political contexts.

The fifth article "Monitoring and Evaluation Structures and Mechanisms for Integrated Rural Development in the Southeast Asian Region" by Victoria A. Bautista, analyzes the organizational context in which such evaluation tools are undertaken. Among the factors that limit their usefulness is the nature of such mechanisms themselves.

Darwin C. Sokoken's "Community Participation and Its Role in Rural Development: The Bontoc Case" argues not only the desirability but also the necessity of people participation in the planning and implementation of rural development. In such areas as Bontoc, in the Mountain Province of the Philippines, which are inhabited by tribal communities, people participation must be operationalized by government in terms of respect for the tribes' traditional institutions, e.g., the *ator*. The case study very well illustrates the adverse consequences attending government attempts at mobilizing people participation only as a means of placating a restive population. Real and meaningful participation, this article suggests, must be part of the agenda of administrative reforms.

The last essay by Abdun Noor, a review of Doh Joon-Chien's book entitled *Eastern Intellectuals and Western Solutions: Follower Syndrome in Asia*, calls attention to the dangers of Asian scholars' and administrators' predispositions to adopt foreign solutions for local/domestic problems given their Western education. This has a bearing on the behavioral dimension of administrative reforms which must not be neglected.

This Special Issue of our Journal is also presented as EROPA Series No. 2. The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration was formally established in 1960. To date, its membership includes twelve states, 53 groups and 108 individuals. The organization has also attracted associate members from outside the region. Its objectives are: (1) to promote the adoption of more effective and adequate administrative system and practices in order to advance and implement the economic and social development programs of the region; (2) to develop an increasing appreciation of the value and importance of public administration; (3) to advance the frontiers of the science and art of governmental administration in the region; (4) to develop managerial talent, especially at the executive and middle management levels; (5) to foster the professionalization of public administration in the region; and (6) to foster affiliation and maintain liaison with universally recognized international bodies for public administration. This issue is a humble contribution in that endeavor.