

Editor's Notes

This edition of the *Journal* contains articles originally presented during the 2nd International Conference on Decentralization where "Federalism: The Future of Decentralizing States?" was tackled on 25-27 July 2002 at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel and on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the National College of Public Administration and Governance where an international conference was conducted with the theme "Public Administration *plus* Governance: Assessing the Past, Addressing the Future" that was held on 21-23 October 2002 at the Manila Hotel. This compendium deals with issues revolving around decentralization, federalism and local governance.

This special issue commences with Robertson Work's "Overview of Decentralization Worldwide: A Stepping Stone to Improved Governance and Human Development" wherein he stresses that while there may be numerous proposals for implementing decentralization policies, not to mention the varying forms and degrees of decentralization globally, it is inherently difficult to compare a single concept of decentralization. It postulates that in order to accurately summarize the degree of decentralization in a given country, one must simultaneously consider the political, fiscal and administrative issues at all levels of government, as well as local council elections, particularly budgeting practices, local government's borrowing capacity, and tax collection powers, the presence and role of nongovernment organizations and other advocacy groups, community organizing, and citizen's freedom of voice.

"Overcoming the Obstacles to Decentralization in Asia" written by Nathaniel von Einsiedel acknowledges that the major problem in decentralization is not so much whether to decentralize or not—but rather how to execute it. Decentralization experiences in Asia illustrate that fundamental impediments are rooted in the difference of viewpoints concerning (a) redistribution of incomes, (b) economic stabilization, and (c) efficiency and resources allocation. Einsiedel reminds us that decentralization is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end—the improvement of people's quality of life.

Developing countries, like Uganda, embark on decentralization as part of their political and administrative reforms. Edward A. Mugabi's treatise "Making Decentralization Work: Uganda Country Paper" specifically focuses on the idiosyncrasies of the decentralization process. Uganda's experience shows that the adoption of decentralization as a policy does not necessarily translate its objectives into reality since its implementation proves to be a complicated process.

It has been traditionally pointed out that Japan is one of the most bureaucratically centralized states in advanced democracies. Japanese local governments has been perceived as faithful agents of central government. In his article, "The Paradox of Centralization and The Paradox of

Decentralization: Institutional Impact of Central-Local Relations on Local Governance in Postwar Japan, Wataru Kitamura explains the impact of decentralization reform in a unitary state. He delves into the politics of central-local relations before and after the passage of the Packaged Act of Decentralization of 2000 together with the problems and issues which might have undermined the local administrative capacity. An analytical framework based on what Kitamura refers to as the “vigorousness and autonomy” model of local democracy is presented, explaining local government development under a centralized unitary system. He offers this model to developing countries in reexamining their respective local government systems.

On the other hand, decentralization in Nepal and Pakistan has been initiated largely as a response to overcentralization. Paul Lundberg’s essay, “Two Cases of Deflected Decentralization: Pakistan and Nepal” relates that the effects of decentralization have been limited by distinct peculiarities in the political, economic, social, and security situation of Nepal and Pakistan. He takes a comparative perspective of the differences between the two countries and how such have contributed to the slow pace of decentralization. Lundberg avers that given the currently unstable political settings in both Nepal and Pakistan, this is not an appropriate time to attempt to differentiate the impact of local governments from that of the overall institutional framework operating in these countries.

As Indonesia is on the fast road to becoming the world’s third largest democracy, “Decentralization in Indonesia: A Measure of Innovation and Change,” by Siti Nurbaya and Christine Fletcher explains why its unitary system is crucial for the success of decentralization. The authors explain why it is misleading to consider federalism as an option for Indonesia in the future. Any system, whether it is decentralized or federal, is only as good as the quality of governments that are elected to govern. In a strong unitary system like Indonesia, it is decentralization, not federalism, which gives the system of government its stability. It needs to make sure that the institutions that are currently being built have the capacity to hear what the different communities and (local) governments want to say. The way to guarantee that it happens is to make sure that the people and the governments that represent them, have a say in the building of these institutions. The authors believe that through decentralization, regional community participation will flourish. Indonesia is large, with diverse peoples, and equally diverse and complex sets of governing institutions. It has emerged out of four centuries of colonial rule and survived its transition to a republic.

Acknowledged in 2002 as one of the poorest developing countries in the world, Cambodia has made significant headway in restoring and improving her foundations for good governance. Ernesto Bautista, Sak Setha, and Prum Sokha recall in “Decentralizing the State: Key Issues and Challenges for Cambodia” that two complementary landmark laws were passed in 2001, paving the way toward decentralizing the state. These were the Law on the Election of Commune/Sangkat Councils and the Law on the Administration and Management of Commune/Sangkat. The authors note that while there have been several laws and decrees relating to local government, previous edicts,

and efforts have been largely aimed at consolidating central government control and supervision of commune councils' activities. Moreover, there is as yet no comprehensive law defining the relationships, powers and functions between provinces, districts, and communes/sankats. The authors emphasize the need for integrated capacity building and support systems at the national, provincial and commune levels to make decentralization fully functional. More so, there is a necessity to clarify the Royal Government of Cambodia's deconcentration strategy to take into account the role of provinces and districts, on the one hand, and the relationship of the deconcentrated units with the communities, on the other.

Once a poor region of mountain farmers without natural resources, Switzerland has in the last 50 years become one of the richest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Wolf Linder in "Federalism: The Case of Switzerland" demonstrates how federalism remains as one of the most important elements of modern Swiss statehood. Besides political pressure from the outside and the economic advantages of cooperation within a larger territorial state, four institutional points made Swiss nation building successful: (1) a political nation-state for a culturally segmented society; (2) bottom-up nation building respecting regional and local autonomy; (3) strong political participation of the Cantons in federal decisions; and (4) proportional representation of the different political cultures. It is interesting to note that the Swiss federation can be considered as a case of "non-centralization." Federalism has allowed Swiss nation-building as a bottom-up process. As an element of political power-sharing, it protected some minorities, the cultural heritage and diversity of the cantons, and helped to integrate the different segments of Swiss society. Linder alludes to that from the Swiss case, federalism can, indeed, be favorable to peaceful solutions of multicultural conflicts, but only under certain conditions. He, however, cautions us in "exporting" institutional models from one society to another. Swiss democracy, as well as federalism, are not export items, like watches, knives, chocolates or other utilities. Effective and legitimate political institutions must grow on a people's own cultural heritage, and they must combine tradition and modernization in a selective and intelligent manner.

Capacity building in the broader scope of decentralization in the Philippines is the major tenet of Austere Panadero's "Local Capacity Building and Local Development in the Philippines: Appreciating Capacity Building for Decentralization." Moreover, it highlights the effect of the 1991 Local Government Code in the decentralization process. The article also attempts to pinpoint trends, directions and challenges for capacity building ten years beyond the implementation of the Code and offers a glimpse at the innovative strategies being undertaken in response to the new and emerging challenges which the country faces in furthering decentralization.

South Korea renders an excellent paradigm for the investigation of local government leadership in Asia as aptly illustrated by Robert Dickey in "Local Governance Without Local Leadership?: Emerging Lessons From an Ongoing Study." Judging from the title alone, one might require at least four

definitions which can be posed as problem statements: (1) What is governance?; (2) What is local governance?; (3) What is leadership?; and (4) What is local leadership? Prior to the localization reforms of the early 1990s, there had not been an opportunity for local leaders to exhibit much of the "leadership behavior" typically cited in western literature. Furthermore, a Confucian and Buddhist cultural heritage deeply affects the behavior expected of leaders in any type of organization—governments included. It is imperative that devolution of government and decentralization must be distinguished from local autonomy and local governance. The author utilized metaphors to gather information and focused on how leadership in the Oriental perspective differs from that in so-called "western civilizations."

Charter change or "cha-cha" is the term coined by proponents of constitutional amendment(s) changing the form of the Philippine government from a presidential unitary system into a federal parliamentary form. Jose V. Abueva presents his "Response to the Usual Objections to Federalization and Parliamentary Government." His think piece enlightens us on this issue by responding to the reservations and objections poised by some quarters vehemently opposed to charter change. His article is very timely indeed because moves to amend the constitution first started during the term of President Fidel Ramos. It seems that it is a never ending issue with every president expressing the desire for constitutional reform in order to correct supposed inadequacies of the present system of government. Abueva provides readers with a more digestible explanation of some of the basic principles of the "better system."

Does good governance redound to local development? More so, will a citizen feedback mechanism designed to improve the quality of local governance further the general welfare? "The Development Payoffs of Good Governance: Emerging Results of a Social Experiment in Bulacan and Davao del Norte" by Joseph J. Capuno, Ma. Melody S. Garcia, Janette S. Sardalla, and Lorna G. Villamil describes some preliminary evidence based on the first year of the pilot test of the Governance for Local Development (GOFORDEV) Index in twelve cities and municipalities located in the provinces of Bulacan and Davao del Norte. As a measure of good governance, the GOFORDEV Index is essentially a score based on household survey, local government fiscal data, and other documents. The survey is designed to gauge the overall assessment of the constituency regarding the delivery of basic public services and the extent of its participation and consultation in local affairs. The Index designed for local adoption could help build the technical capability of local government units and civil society organizations engaged as partners in the pilot areas. Public discussions of the Index in the pilot areas resulted in local officials being made accountable to the electorate or for local budget planning to become more participatory or consultative. The authors indicate that while the Index has yet to directly bear on budget outcomes, it is starting to positively influence the procedures, methods, and bases for budget planning and reporting. With heightened involvement in public affairs, the populace should be able to push for further improvements in public service delivery and in the performance of local leaders.

During the last quarter of the previous century, initiatives were focused on the global and state levels to help protect, improve or save the environment. For its part, the Philippines recognized the public issue of solid waste management in the mid-1980s. Ma. Lourdes G. Rebullida's "Local Governance for the Environment: Policy Directions in Solid Waste Management" examines the challenges to public administration and governance posed by the urban environmental dilemma of continuously utilizing ancient post-World War II solid waste management disposal techniques and the change processes toward viable alternative ecological solutions. It concentrates on the Philippines as a case in point to describe the evolving governance mode that underscores relationships of the national and local levels of government, the civil society, and the private business sector to resolve environmental issues on solid wastes through solid waste management.

In order to survive decently, people must be free from hunger, have decent clothing/shelter, and good education vis-à-vis employment opportunities. People's quality of life could best be improved if the basic needs for survival, security from harm, and the enabling needs of the individual, family and community are met and given priority. Rodolfo P. del Rosario in "The Minimum Basic Needs Approach to Development: The Davao del Norte Innovation" narrates that the adoption of the Minimum Basic Needs strategy has been the centerpiece program of the Davao del Norte provincial government in order for development concerns to be immediately addressed. He underscores the need to reinvent service delivery mechanisms in order to make them more attuned to the people's basic needs.

The Philippines has the distinction of being the only country with two women presidents assuming office within a generation. The two have common denominators besides gender. Their ascent(s) to power was the offshoot of (separate) people's power revolutions which deposed two male presidents widely perceived to be corrupt. Also, both belong to prominent political families—either by consanguinity or affinity. Proserpina D. Tapales in "Engendering Local Governance" offers us three fundamental cornerstones of engendering women participation in local governance: (1) national policies which serve as impetus for implementation in the grassroots; (2) active and committed advocates at the local level; and (3) local chief executives who are committed to gender concerns. She posits that there is a gradual increase in the participation of women in electoral politics and increasing intensity in the activities of women's groups. This is readily manifested by the continual rise in the number of women governors, mayors, representatives, and senators. Gender alone cannot engender governance. Both male and female local officials must be aware of the need to redress inequalities among the genders through policy and action.

For further dissemination, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are included in this Journal. Adopted during the Millennium Summit at the United Nations in 2000, the MDGs provide a benchmark for the Philippines and other countries in setting goals and targets to reduce poverty and enhance human development by the year 2015.