

Editor's Introduction

This issue features a lead article by noted historian *Reynaldo C. Ileto* who systematically interrogates what he argues is a colonialist, orientalist discourse in the study of Philippine politics. Examining major representative works of foreign scholars and authors on Philippine politics, Ileto stresses that this orientalist discourse is rooted in studying Philippine politics in the framework of a western liberal model, mediated through American values and practices. Authors using this framework invariably end up constructing Philippine politics as "pale imitations, distortions, or outright contradictions" of this assumed ideal mode of politics. Ileto's article has far reaching implications on the understanding of political and related practices and we hope that it will provoke a robust debate among political scientists engaged in the study of Philippine society and politics.

In the second article on human rights and ASEAN, *Herman S. Kraft* explains why the "Asian values" discourse has survived the economic difficulties in the region in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian crisis. Using a constructivist framework to explain the resiliency of a conservative human rights discourse within ASEAN, Kraft focuses on the role of norms governing ASEAN state-elite practices. In particular, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN member-states continues to constrain severely the possibilities of a more progressive understanding and practice of human rights.

Examining a recurrent feature of Philippine electoral practice, *Julio C. Teehankee* writes about the emerging political clans in the post-Marcos House of Representatives. Documenting the entry of new political players in the lower house of Congress, the author notes that many of them are middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs who have begun to establish their own dynasties. The study includes a profile of four of these emerging political families: the del Mars of Cebu, Fuas of Siquijor, Lagmans of Albay, and Romualdos of Camiguin.

The politics of the Philippine reforestation program particularly during the post-Marcos period serves as the focus of the article by *Yoshiki Seki*. Showing the importance of foreign aid institutions as key players during this period, Seki documents how US and Japanese environmental loans shaped in contrasting ways the major forestry policies of successive administrations. While grants from USAID required participatory forest policies, ODA loans from Japan resulted in government initiated and controlled large-scale monoculture tree plantations. In light of the many problems generated by these policies, the author argues for an alternative policy anchored on small-scale tree planting by upland farmers provided their own land.

In Mindanao, a critical aspect of the continuing Muslim challenge and alternative to the central government lies in the internationalization of the problem. Studying the impact of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on the major non-traditional Moro elites, *Mary Ann Arguillas* argues that the OIC has played a key role in shaping the political fortunes of both the MNLF and the MILF. With its proven clout over the Muslim movements, the OIC has become a key player in any negotiation for settling the conflict in the southern Philippines. Arguillas concludes her article by pointing out that the duly elected officials of the ARMM could serve as more legitimate representatives of Moro interests compared with the MNLF and MILF officials who remain unaccountable both to their direct constituencies and to the wider regional community.

Finally, in a review article, *Takeshi Kawanaka* examines two recent works on Philippine politics that highlight the role of the state and political institutions in shaping political practices and options. According to the reviewer, the approaches seen in the recent books by John T. Sidel and Patricio N. Abinales represent significant departures from earlier frameworks dominated by either cultural or society-centered frameworks that stress the decisive role of cultural values, societal relations and institutions in determining political behavior.

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