

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Public Policy* fills a vacuum in Philippine academic literature. It provides a forum for the examination of key contemporary public policy issues in the Philippines to help Filipinos and their neighbors understand the determinants of policy from the political, economic and social perspectives.

Not that there is a dearth of academic journals. There are a number of excellent journals – albeit illuminating issues in a more specialized context. All are useful. *Public Policy*, however, throws its focus not only on the Philippine scene but also on the regional landscape, believing that many of the policy issues affecting the Philippines are resonating from broader regional, if not international, issues.

So, for this inaugural issue, we have put the spotlight on what the editorial board and the editors consider to be the current critical issues affecting the Philippines, some of which have regional dimensions. The lead essay, on the crisis of succession, examines the Philippine constitutional crisis, discussing the problems of democratic consolidation. The role of the military in the restored Philippine democracy continues to be in a state of flux, and one of the foremost Filipino scholars on the military, Dr. Carolina Hernandez, examines the ubiquitous presence of military officers in the civil bureaucracy.

We thought that it was not too early to explain how and why the Southeast Asian currency and financial markets crisis forced the depreciation of the Philippine peso. Fortunately, a team of scholars of the University of the Philippines School of Economics, led by Dr. Emmanuel de Dios, deployed their intellectual resources to write what now appears to be an unofficial “white paper” on the financial market crisis’ impact on the Philippines. With the El Niño phenomenon foreshadowing shortfall in grain production in Asia, Dr. Walden Bello’s and Dr. Onofre Corpuz’ historical studies on food security and rice are not only timely but also offer valuable perspectives for the reassessment of food security policy in the Philippines.

In the search for political stability and law and order as a foundation for economic take-off, Caroline Hau’s piece on the rampant kidnapping of ethnic Chinese in the Philippines offers insights into the issues of citizenship and Chinese identification with capitalism. Dr. Paul Hutchcroft, a Filipinist scholar, examines the fragility of political institutions in the Philippines as an obstacle to the success of its economic liberalization policies.

We have commissioned, as well, a number of scholars to review recent books on the Philippines, including those with historical and developmental significance. We hope we have covered ample ground and look forward to provoking informed responses from our readers.

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