

Preface

Dissecting Discourses

Beyond interaction and exchange, discourse connotes values and beliefs that inform our choices and predilections as individuals and as a collective. As a mode of social cognition, discourse is ideological and intricately tied to the dynamics and politics of everyday life. If discourses are embodiments of a collective voice, how do they influence our actions as individuals? How do they influence society at large?

The second issue of the Philippine Social Sciences Review for 2016 reflects on these questions from the perspectives of anthropology, philosophy, and political science.

Tamos-Cabazares and Cabazares take stock of Western conceptualization of culture to describe the “other” and argues that culture can also evolve as an appropriated concept in the context of the colonized. Using corpus analysis to gauge how the word *kultura* is used in contemporary Filipino, Tamos-Cabazares and Cabazares unravel contrasting usage between the academic and non-academic settings. In casual, non-academic exchange, Filipinos use culture typically in reference to their own social cohesion and unity. The terms *Pilipino* or Filipino and *atin* or *natin* (our), they observe, appear frequently together with *kultura* in spite of Western influence on contemporary academic discourses. In academic situations, on the other hand, culture is primarily a framework through which social phenomena are viewed even though occasionally it is used to denote otherness. Tamos Cabazares and Cabazares believes culture merits further attention and reminds that the framing process employed by Western anthropologists to describe a group is the same process non-Westerners use to view those from outside.

De Vera’s rumination focuses on the seeming debate between the pursuit of the greater common good and the promotion of individual liberties as educational philosophies. The tension between the pursuit of freedom and that of the common good, of course, is nothing new and has been engrained deeply in philosophical discourses. Many educational theories regard these ends as irreconcilable and suggest a switching game where instructional praxis is driven by specific philosophical

objectives. Building on Amartya Sen's capability approach, De Vera believes it is possible to reconcile the two perspectives and recommends approaches by which such compromise may be concretized into actual educational practice. The philosophical view of education as capability not only recognizes the primacy of students' individual liberties but promotes a holistic view of human beings beyond intellectual development.

Reyes' empirical probe of Iglesia ni Cristo support in the 2004 and 2010 senatorial elections invite both circumspection and reexamination of the role religious endorsement plays in democratic exercise. The Iglesia ni Cristo – an indigenous Christian denomination founded by Felix Manalo in 1914 – accounts for just around two million followers. However, its endorsement is widely sought by candidates in both local and national positions because the church is believed to command solid votes from its followers. Reyes subjects this perception to empirical scrutiny and finds that despite its strong enforcement of edicts the church rarely commands monolithically solid votes from its own flock. No doubt INC endorsement and candidate popularity are both significant determinants of electoral support. However, the weight of an INC endorsement appears to depend ultimately on how well an endorsed candidate has been performing in the campaigns even prior to the fabled anointment. Put simply, Reyes' findings suggest the Iglesia ni Cristo leadership is likely to endorse candidates who are already topping the surveys due to their high name recall and popularity. Moreover, the church appears to make endorsements based largely on candidate popularity and not because of salient factors such as candidate experience, incumbency, policy platforms, or party affiliation.

Yasol-Naval's musing on the ethics and aesthetics of rice and farming in Nueva Ecija is not only a personal reflection but a critique of economic utility as a means to appraise the value of land. Land, of course, is not an ordinary constant capital utilized in the production of commodities. Although labor does not create land, land acquires value only when it is titled or when labor is applied to it. Taking off from a prior research examining the ethos of rice and the environmental ethics behind traditional rice production in the Philippines, Yasol-Naval revisits the never ending debate between the commercial and ecological implications of rice farming and argues for the need to integrate land ethic into the overall economic equation. Using a framework inspired by American conservationist Aldo Leopold's ideas on land ethic and aesthetic, Yasol-Naval calls for ecological conscience and a more sensible approach toward land health.

The *Philippine Social Sciences Review* publishes original work from various fields in the social sciences and encourages contributions from young academics and budding social scientists from various institutions. We hope readers will find this issue informative and useful as a reference in their own individual projects.

- Rogelio Alicor L. Panao, PhD

Editor