

## Segregation and Exclusion

The United Nations defines social inclusion as the “process by which efforts are made to ensure equality of opportunity—that everyone regardless of their origin can reach their full potential in life” (UN DESA, n.d.). Social inclusion is intertwined with social protection policies that promote equal access to vital services by individuals or groups and allow them to participate in activities so that they can make meaningful decisions for themselves (Babajanian and Hagen-Zanker 2012). Yet, in every society, certain groups encounter barriers that prevent them from taking part in activities salient to their economic, political, and social lives. They may be excluded because of structural constraints as well as discriminatory and stigmatizing elements in their environments. They are socially disadvantaged because of age, race or ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. They are excluded from participating fully in society because of religion, location, disability, or sexual orientation.

State policies and programs play a crucial role in ensuring social inclusion by addressing specific needs of population sectors especially the marginalized sectors of society, reducing barriers that contribute to economic inequality, impediments to access to vital services as well as eliminating discrimination, thus, contributing to sustainable development. Gupta, Pouw, and Ros-Tonen (2015) emphasized the importance of social inclusion for sustainable development. The literature has shown how sustainable development and inclusive development have become synonymous with each other (Pouw and Gupta 2017; Arts, 2017; Dörffel and Schuhmann 2022). Yet, state policies and programs may, at times, lead to segregation and social

exclusion whereby groups find themselves marginalized and deprived of the benefits that these policies and programs aimed to offer. This issue of *Kasarinlan* delves into the specific manifestations of social inclusion/exclusion from state policies and programs as gleaned from history and more recent events in the Philippines and in the broader Asian regional context.

Both Maria Lourdes Rebullida and Naoki Fujiwara investigated housing policies in the Philippines. Rebullida's "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism to Democratic Governance: Philippine Bureaucracy's Governance Mechanisms for Engaging Civil Society in Urban Poor Social Housing" underscores the critical role played by civil society participation along with bureaucratic leadership in the development of democratic governance in the Philippines particularly in the context of social housing policies under different heads of state. She argues for a more inclusive policy design, possibly one that involves civil society to keep watch over the inclusion/exclusion of people's participation in political processes.

Naoki Fujiwara's "Gentrification and Segregation in the Process of Neoliberal Urbanization in Malabon City, Metro Manila," on the other hand, provides a more micro perspective by focusing on an urban poor resettlement project in Malabon. He contends that in the context of neoliberal urbanization, urban poor resettlement in Malabon resulted in the "segregation" of settlers along the riverbanks who were moved out of the supposed "danger zones" or hazard areas to off-city sites in the guise of "benevolent eviction." Resettlement also involved the offer of "slum gentrification" through the promise of improved living conditions in the resettlement site. The article, however, shows that new risks were present in the resettlement site, thereby negating the claim that they were being moved to safer areas.

Two articles exhibit how social groups are excluded from participating in political processes that impact their daily lives in other countries in Southeast Asia. Alexandre Veilleux and Anne-Marie Van Broeck's "The Political Economy of LGBTQ Tourism in Thailand" explores the making of Thailand as an "LGBTQ paradise" and Bangkok as the "gay capital of Asia" and in the process, the marginalization of the voices of Thai LGBTQ in this state project. The authors state that LGBTQ well-being was not incorporated as a vital element of LGBTQ tourism in Thailand and that the tourism promotions benefited only the elite to the "detriment of the small-scale locally owned LGBTQ businesses."

Louis Tanguay did his research work in Central Java, Indonesia on small-scale land grabbing wherein sawah or rice fields were forcibly sold to the state-owned electricity company. His article, “How Preserving Biodiversity Mitigates the Impacts of Small-scale Land Grab on Livelihoods and Agricultural Production in Central Java,” discusses a case wherein rice field owners were displaced to give way to an electrification project. He provides a positive note by pointing out how local conservation practices can help build resilience of communities in the face of disturbances in socio-ecological systems such as land grabbing.

Frances Anthea Redison’s contribution, “Survival and Atrocity: Remembering the Japanese Occupation of the Province of Aklan, Philippines, 1942–45,” underscores this issue’s theme of segregation and exclusion not only in its content but also in the research methods she employed, albeit not within the context of state policies or programs. The article examines the atrocities experienced by Filipinos in Aklan province during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. The author mentions how she specifically chose Aklan province as her study site, veering away from “imperial Manila” and focusing on the subaltern non-Luzon provinces which she contends are hardly covered in the national narrative. She also specifically utilized multiple methods of data gathering to “make Philippine history more inclusive.” Moreover, she investigated the experiences of Filipino women whom she mentioned are part of the marginalized groups who have been “hidden” from most historical accounts.

This issue of *Kasarinlan* also contains book reviews by John Edison Ubaldo and Angela Asuncion.

Social exclusion, especially in state policies and programs, is a serious matter that erodes the principles of equity, fairness, and justice. It is the duty of the state to ensure that its citizens, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, or religion can freely exercise their rights, fully and equitably participate in the activities of society, and build their capacities for self-improvement. This *Kasarinlan* issue provides vignettes where some of the drivers of social exclusion are identified. It is hoped that lessons can be derived therein which may be useful in informing the design and implementation of social protection policies and programs so that no one is left behind. ❁

## REFERENCES

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Starting with this combined volume of *Kasarinlan* for 2020 and 2021, the journal will now be an annual publication.