

Editors' Notes

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The design and configurative facets of policies render them analogous to scaffoldings that provide support to structures. This issue showcases an investigation of policies that have scaffolded the service delivery, facilitating, and regulatory functions of the government. Employing various analytical approaches, five articles examined five different policy areas: plastic waste management, fiscal performance management, lake management, COVID-19 mitigation, and education.

Julia Crowley's study on local-level policies regulating plastic bag consumption in Tarlac, Philippines, sought to investigate the influence of these policies on individual consumption and reuse behaviors. Findings indicated that, aside from the ban on the use of single-use plastics, more affirmative policies, such as encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags, may likely influence plastic bag consumption. While the results are not generalizable to other local governments, they may nonetheless help policymakers develop and improve waste management policies that encourage reuse and recycling.

The time-series research by Marl Jinno S. Gooc investigated the impact of the recalibration of financial monitoring and benchmarking indicators on the fiscal performance of Philippine local governments. Results revealed that adjustments generally helped alleviate the dependence on intergovernmental fiscal transfers, but that allocation and spending in certain development areas appear homogenous across local governments. Gooc argues that, if left unaddressed, this convergence may lead to negative isomorphism. The research offers an insight on how performance management policies affect local governments in developing countries.

Rosalina B. Yokomori employed a historical review of regulatory policies improving water quality in Laguna Lake to determine trends, characteristics, and developments, as well as challenges and lessons for policymakers and regulators. Her study identified barriers that undermine regulation, such as conflicts in policy frameworks, policy limitations, and a lack of resources on the part of regulators. These barriers might be compounded by a regulatory landscape with a multitude of regulators and stakeholders. Yokomori's study recommends a more collaborative approach to policymaking and regulation, and greater resource allocation for effective implementation of policies.

Maria Elissa J. Lao and Pilar Preciousa P. Berse described the conflicts between local and national COVID-19 mitigation policies, and their impact on the quality of life of Filipinos. They argued that, owing to the national-local dissonance in the implementation of COVID-19 policies, particularly those imposing community quarantines and aiding locally-stranded individuals,

certain groups and communities have become more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study may inform future policy responses to public health emergencies.

In an extensive historical review of Philippine education policies implemented in the past century (1920-2020), using path constitution analysis, Alex B. Brillantes, Herisadel P. Flores, and Melanie G. Riva evaluated the changes in the Philippine education sector under different regimes implementing education policies and programs. Zooming in on the comprehensive assessment of the education sector by the Congressional Commission on Education in 1991, the study hopes to shape the Department of Education's futures program and its current and proposed reforms.

Whereas policies mount the workings of any government or organization, the special section papers reiterate that the lifeblood of public administration is collaboration and active participation. These are further ruminated on and illuminated in this issue, as they are argued to undergird successful reform idea, policy, or program.

Vinod Thomas, author of the book *Risk and Resilience in the Era of Climate Change* (2023), shares his reflections on current climate change adaptation efforts in Southeast Asia. In this essay, Thomas laments that, despite the high risks of climate change-induced natural hazards and disasters in the region, governments still grapple with the disconnect between adaptation and mitigation initiatives, the continued reliance on fossil fuels as energy resources, and the lack of climate funding. To address these challenges, Thomas urged the need for public support for adaptation and mitigation policies.

Rizal Buendia, in his essay on holistic governance, highlights the problems of corruption and inefficiency in the Philippine public sector. He offers institutional, administrative, and cultural reforms that take on whole-of-government and whole-of-society solutions to mitigate corruption and improve public sector efficiency. Buendia insists that elected officials, policymakers, and bureaucrats may need to set aside political and organizational interests, and to participate more actively in the policymaking and governance processes if holistic governance is to be attained.

Honey Tabiola gives an insightful commentary on Mariana Mazzucato's book, *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism* (2021), which recommends tapping into the public sector's institutional capacities, such as its potential to promote stakeholder collaboration, to transform capitalism. Though supporting Mazzucato's "mission-oriented" approach to promoting sustainable development, Tabiola points out various limitations of the book, such as the need to look at the dynamics and interests of multinational corporations, and the applicability of Mazzucato's proposals to developing countries and emerging democracies.

In this issue, we also celebrate the scholarly life of Mila Reforma (1943-2023). Professor Reforma was the journal's former editorial board member (1978-1982), issue editor (1981; 1994), and a prolific contributor to the journal, especially during the period 1977-1981, publishing articles on rural health, poverty, and housing.

We thank our guest editors, Dr. Helen K. Liu (National Taiwan University) and Professor Akio Kamiko (Ritsumeikan University, Japan) for the time, effort, and guidance they have devoted to this project.

Lastly, we are delighted to announce the new members of the editorial board: Dr. Rizalino B. Cruz (University of the Philippines Diliman), Dr. Ronald U. Mendoza (Ateneo School of Government), and Dr. Eduardo Araral (National University of Singapore). We express our thanks to the outgoing members for their invaluable contribution: Dr. Ma. Oliva Z. Domingo (Kalayaan College) and Dr. Danilo Dela Rosa Reyes (Philippine Society for Public Administration).