

PSSR Editor's Notes

Political parties are a core feature of the Philippine electoral landscape since the beginning of the 20th century. In most democratic systems, parties serve as platforms for political representation; they mobilize support for candidates during campaigns; and once elected, they determine the policy directions for government. It is also the case in most democracies that parties are clearly distinct from one another by their platforms and ideological orientations thus providing voters with real choices. In the Philippines, however, political parties are hardly distinguishable from one another and are largely identified entirely by their leaders, not by their platforms.

Ramylle Faith Casido's **Factors that Contribute to Factionalism in Philippine Political Parties: The Case of PDP-Laban** looks at this flawed feature of the Philippine party system by examining the specific case of the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (more popularly known as PDP-Laban) and how it has been racked by factionalism particularly in the last decade or so. From a party that has been partially credited with ousting a dictator back in the 1980s, PDP-Laban has come to be known as a party that has endorsed the son of that same dictator in 2022. This puzzle Casido analyzes by looking at the factions that have emerged within PDP-Laban – a feature that attests to the malady affecting the country's party system as a whole. Hopefully, a continued examination of this affliction can lead to the crafting of ways and mechanisms that would make the country's political parties more robust and platform-oriented and less dominated by personalities.

Not only is the Philippines troubled by such man-made afflictions as weak and personality-oriented parties, but it is also plagued by natural disasters as well. **A Historical Seismology of Luzon Earthquakes in the 20th Century: The Dynamics of State Responses on Four Earthquake Disasters** by Kerby C. Alvarez does not just look into four earthquake disasters that happened in the Philippines in 1937, 1968, 1983, and 1990. More importantly, Alvarez juxtaposes these disasters in relation to government's response to crises and post-disaster situations.

As a country that is perennially prone to natural disasters, it is vital that we also look into how the state is able to respond to such emergencies. The state certainly has a fundamental role to play in managing and mitigating the effects of such disasters. Effective governance, political will, and collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners are essential for ensuring a coordinated and efficient response to natural disasters and reducing the vulnerability of communities in the face of future events. In looking at the country's environmental history (i.e., specific to tracking disastrous earthquakes), Alvarez is able to draw a picture of the shortcomings of the main social and political actors who have the responsibility to respond to such crisis situations. Indeed, identifying these shortcomings should lead to improved governance measures and mechanisms for mitigating the adverse effects of natural disasters such as earthquakes.

There is definitely much work to be done in the areas of making political parties more effective and responsive as well as improving government's response to natural disaster in the Philippines. It is hoped that this issue of the Philippine Social Sciences Review (PSSR) can play a small part in providing a platform for continuing discussions in these and other critical areas surround Philippine politics and society.