

Editor's notes

This volume tackles the construction of national identity in the context of Southeast Asian nations and their relationships with the West through current global policies and past colonial rule. A review of past and recent literature on global economics, colonial history, colonial administration, and colonial practices in this region as well as new perspectives in identity and nation building in non-Western states, such as those in Southeast Asia, can transform age-old stereotypes, notions, and even misconceptions, thus challenging global economic policies that can be considered a form of imperialism. Revisiting colonial documents provides the rationale behind colonial administration policies, and such information should be used to enable the current government—through the assistance of academics—to create more inclusive programs rather than highlight differences that may lead to conflicts at various levels. At the individual level, the creation and legitimization of a masculine identity set against the background of an organized and institutionalized brotherhood gives rise to hegemonic masculinity, which affects how a nation is governed.

In the article titled, **John Rawls and distributive justice in a globalizing world**, Renante D. Pilapil examines the theory of global justice. Global inequality asserts the identity of the rich nations while also highlighting the negative image of poor countries. In his article, Pilapil reveals the insufficiency of global justice theory and examines how Rawls shifts his view from his theory of domestic justice, which aims to redistribute wealth among others, to not believing in distributive justice. Under the new theory, the transfer of wealth comes in the form of incomes, subsidies, tax credits, and loans, to name a few. In this context, it remains a challenge for global institutions to pressure rich nations to share their wealth with poor nations. According to Pilapil, only a global state can achieve this, but unfortunately, such a state does not exist. Moreover, Pilapil states that the socioeconomic success of a nation is largely determined by its domestic affairs. Thus, the global distributive principle may be considered unfair as the rich nation that has capably addressed its internal affairs is encumbered with the task of transferring some of its wealth to another nation that has essentially failed to solve its domestic concerns. To this, Rawls' solution is what he calls the "duty of assistance", the main goal of which is not to make poor nations wealthy but to empower them so that they can eventually address and fix their own internal policies, thereby creating a decent life for its citizens. However, Pilapil argues that the duty of assistance is still insufficient in

solving the problem of global inequality. Moreover, global inequality generates social injustice, which is another problem that should be resolved. Supranational organizations that seemingly help poor nations to alleviate their current social, political, and economic conditions are ultimately disadvantageous to the latter. Rather, Pilapil underscored that global inequality should be solved to reduce global poverty and avoid “humiliation among the world’s poor”, because inequality is directly tied to the “loss of self-respect and self-esteem”.

In **Nothing unites men like war: Fraternity rumbles, masculinity, and the routes to leadership**, Filomin C. Gutierrez uses cases from the University of the Philippines in Diliman to investigate how fraternity rumbles—essentially organized violence—validate a certain category of masculinity and are seen as aggrandizing activities that elevate individual and fraternity standing at the university and national levels. Similar to gang members, fraternity members also share a bond, which is forged through secret initiation rites and strengthened specifically by rumbles and other sociopolitical activities as students and as alumni after graduation. Through generations, fraternity members valued different masculine qualities mostly influenced by the sociopolitical milieu. Gutierrez describes a specific masculinity (i.e., fraternity masculinity), which is developed among resident fraternity brothers and is believed to enable them to become future leaders of the nation. Analyzing reported fraternity rumble incidents from 1991 to 2013, ranging from petty to violent ones, Gutierrez presents a glimpse into the process by which fraternity men plan and operate during rumbles and how they protect their own, particularly their law school brothers who are expected to become future national leaders. Fraternity alumni and university officials also often intervene to prevent rumbles from escalating. Those interviewed for this article, mostly fraternity alumni, attribute fraternity violence to young age. They further claimed that, even when they were still students, there were efforts by resident brothers and fraternity alumni to convince them to avoid rumbles. According to Gutierrez, fraternities maintain the balance between negative masculinity exhibited in rumbles and their relevance by “upholding the ideals of the university and expectations of the public”. This is because fraternities can “legitimize their claim as a training ground for future leaders of the country” if they can completely reject violence.

Dayana Ariffin’s article, **The censuses of the Philippine islands: From ethnological inquiry to the formalization of racial categories in the American-occupied Philippines from 1903 to 1939**, reflects the changing views on the classification of Philippine cultural groups during the American colonial period as recorded in the censuses. The American colonial government wanted to make sense, from their own perspective, of the different cultural groups inhabiting the Philippines. Thus, for example, the major categories used in the 1903 Census were based on whether or not the groups were Christianized. “Proper colonization” entailed full conversion to Christianity, hence denoting that these groups

were “civilized”. The continued use of the word “tribe” further emphasized the non-Christians’ “primitiveness”, which justified American presence and rule. Meanwhile, the 1918 Census created the Special Provinces of Sulu, Mindanao, and Mountain Province, viewing them as “culturally anomalous regions”. Independent administration only applied to Christianized populations, whereas the “non-Christian tribes” of these Special Provinces were regulated from Manila. Unfortunately, the perception that these provinces are somehow different from the rest of the country has persisted until today. In fact, this belief is reinforced in different media platforms and school textbooks. H.O. Beyer, a professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of the Philippines, during that time, defined “non-Christian tribes” as “really primitive peoples”, which likewise justified direct action from Manila in these Special Provinces. The 1918 classification was mainly based on Beyer’s own research. Three races were proposed: the Pygmies, Malays, and Indonesians, and Beyer considered each group more advanced than the previous ones in terms of culture and physical features. The color-based categorization used in the 1918 Census (i.e., Brown, Yellow, White, Mixed, and Negrito) was modified in the 1939 Census. This Census viewed the inhabitants as belonging to the Malayan race and abandoned previous classifications based on ethnicity, religion, and tribe. Focusing on similarities instead of differences was an attempt to unite the Philippines during the Commonwealth Government of the mid-1930s. The data presented in Ariffin’s article display how political rulers create and legitimize the identities of their subjects based on the former’s perspectives, which may or may not be central to how the groups see and identify themselves. To date, the more neutral, academic, and non-offensive term “ethnolinguistic group” is used to distinguish groups in the Philippines. This is a straightforward classification based on language—one that shifts the focus away from religious affiliations and colonial history.

Taking back what it means to be Filipino and creating a new narrative of who and what is a Filipino are addressed in Kathleen D. Tantuico’s review of **The Filipino primitive: Accumulation and resistance in the American museum**, written by Sarita Echavez-See. This work mainly argues that the specific ways by which exhibits are spatially arranged and the artefacts are displayed in museums may promote stereotypes that contribute little to a thoughtful understanding of the so-called “Filipino identity”. The proposed solution is to be critical of the materials’ acquisition and presentation. Employing new display tactics to demonstrate the Filipino identity forces the audience to question long-held misconceptions of the image of the Filipino primitive. Thus, a “second look” at museum exhibits can bring forward a Filipino identity that has been ignored in the past and continues to be ignored in the present. Actively resisting previous portrayals of Filipinos also ensures that new perspectives for the Filipinos are created.

Meanwhile, indigenous health practices and medicine comprise another avenue for asserting identity. In particular, differences in opinion exist between the colonizers and the colonized in terms of the many ways by which diseases can be controlled. As discussed in Wan Faizah Wan Yusoff's review of **Nurturing Indonesia: Medicine and decolonisation in the Dutch East Indies**, written by Hans Pols, health and medicine were used by the Indies physicians to resist colonial rule. Armed with Western training and degrees as well as indigenous knowledge, physicians from the Indies realized the link between the practice of colonial medicine and the state of their nation. At first, these physicians advocated for embracing fully Western forms of medicine. In the next generation, indigenous practices were equally recognized as important ones as well. Despite obtaining European degrees, the Indies physicians were not held in the same esteem as their European counterparts, and this sentiment—along with the poor health conditions of the local population—further ignited anticolonial movements among the latter. Through medical research, the Indies physicians rejected Dutch colonial theories, which stressed the inferiority of the Indies natives, thereby demonstrating their determination to create an identity that is free from Dutch rule. After World War II, local physicians became health administrators in the government and educators in medical schools, eventually building an Indonesian health system that later became the foundation of the current one.

Finally, labor migration patterns in an Ilocos town in Northern Philippines demonstrate how the identities of the wives of Filipino seafarers are constructed via their social relations and constant interactions with the outside world through their husbands. Clement C. Camposano's review of **Women who stay: Seafaring and subjectification in an Ilocos town**, written by Roderick G. Galam, underlines how this identity is shaped paradoxically by both structure and agency.

As the new editor of *SSD*, I am grateful to Dr. Ma. Mercedes G. Planta, the previous *SSD* editor, who was responsible for its current policies, style, and design. Likewise, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Manuel Victor J. Sapitula, who ended his term as Associate Editor in 2019. I would also like to welcome Ms. January U. Bautista, the new copy editor for English articles, as she joins the *SSD* team.

In this age of globalization, we should aspire to assert our identities so that they are free from past colonial rule, current global organizations that replicate colonial policies, and entities that restrict the individual identity in favor of a group identity. Indeed, we should actively oppose identities that restrain us due to stereotypes and socioeconomic class. *Live free.*

Grace Barretto-Tesoro

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