

## Editor's notes

The concept of rights and responsibilities is a common theme as a topic and as a matter of scholarship in the three articles and two book reviews included in this issue such as the responsibilities of foreign workers to the government, responsibilities of humans to care for natural objects, right to reproductive health and the responsibility of the government to provide access, responsible scholarship, and the right to our sovereignty and the responsibility of the government to uphold it.

We have been accustomed to reading about the struggles of Chinese merchants, their socio-economic success in Spanish-controlled government, and intermarriages between them and the Spanish and local elites. Therefore, reading Jely A. Galang's "Flight and freedom: Chinese fugitives and the Spanish colonial state in the nineteenth-century Philippines" is informative because it explores other Chinese lives in the country such as the fugitives discussed in the article. The Spanish colonial government implemented laws on permits and taxation. Thus, any foreign worker is required to follow the laws of the host nation. Galang exposes a practice of evasion and exploitative labor policies under Spanish laws; however, after more than a century, we should ask ourselves why it seems that nothing has changed when it comes to a relatively relaxed approach to Chinese workers in general in the Philippines. The influx of Chinese workers in the Philippines since 2016 and the rise of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGO) show negligence of government practices in implementing labor laws. This can also imply bias in allowing certain foreign workers without the proper working permit.

Meanwhile, Enrique Benjamin R. Fernando III's "Can trees have standing?: An argument against conferring legal rights upon natural objects on the basis of guardianship" emphasizes duties, a humanistic approach, and legal custodianship for the protection of natural objects. Utilizing a philosophical framework, Fernando does not speak of rights of natural objects but legal and moral duties of humans to care for natural objects. As legal custodians, we become responsible for the environment. Zoonotic diseases such as the current COVID-19 pandemic remind humanity of our fragile relationship with the environment, where humans find themselves at the losing end. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone to care for the natural environment as we all have a right to live in a clean and safe world.

In "Fertility, sex, and reproductive health dynamics after Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban North, Philippines," Ladylyn Lim Mangada and Ginbert Permejo

Cuaton demonstrate the need for local government units to include sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in their post-disaster response. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is most often overlooked in a post-disaster response. The government and civilians tend to provide for the immediate needs of survivors such as food, clothing, and shelter. As part of the overall health of an individual, sexual and reproductive health is a human right. Thus, the government must ensure that its citizens must have access to reproductive healthcare products and services.

In Regalado Trota Jose's book review of the English translation of Pedro Luengo's *The convents of Manila: Globalized architecture during the Iberian Union* (2018), I want to focus on the process of translation. The lack of proficiency of non-English language necessitates readers to rely on translated versions. Since Jose also read the original in Spanish, he specified examples that the translator missed which can lead to misinformation among readers. With Jose's careful scrutiny, his footnotes in this book review enrich our understanding of the original book and inform us of the challenges in translating a book. Through this book review, Jose's responsible scholarship gently reminds his readers to be analytical of translated works too.

Aileen SP Baviera reviewed Alfredo C. Robles, Jr.'s *The South China Sea arbitration: Understanding the awards and debating with China* (2018). This book is a summary of the legal arguments of both the Philippines and China in the case filed by the former against the latter regarding the South China Sea disputes. Included in this book are descriptions of the processes in international law. Although sovereignty was not part of the legal proceedings, China's presence in Philippine waters undermines the arbitration ruling. This is the second book on the West Philippine Sea controversy reviewed in *Social Science Diliman* (see Volume 15, no. 2) under my editorship. As Filipino citizens, it is our right to be well-informed of the case to protect what belongs to the Philippines. As head of state, Duterte ought to be reminded of his responsibilities to protect the interest of the Filipino people.

Lastly, this volume is also about visibility since the research presented here unveils the lives of peoples, things, and events that would under other circumstances remain unexamined.

**Grace Barretto-Tesoro**

June 2020