

## Editor's notes

Volume 17.2 is my last issue as the *Social Science Diliman* Editor-in-Chief (EIC). The image that came to mind while editing the articles and book reviews included here is of a mother. I admire the mothers who struggle to teach their children basic literacy despite lacking resources and educational accomplishments in Honeylee Tayag-Binuya and Excelsa Tongson's "Preparing children for Kindergarten: Practices and concerns of low-income stay-at-home peri-urban mothers." I see mothers taking care of what they call home in Noreen H. Sapalo's "Binabahang tahanan: Notions of home amidst disaster in a peri-urban relocation site." I pity the mothers who lost their fathers, husbands, and sons in wars such as World War II in Karen Connie Abalos-Orendain's "Maruyama Masao in the Philippine context: Subjectivity as a key concept in processing WWII. The fight to survive and succeed to be able to give their children access to education went through my mind as I read Jose Monfred C. Sy's "Bungkalan as natural praxis: Peasant agroecology in the land struggle in Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac and Ma. Christina F. Epetia's book review of *Labor pioneers: Economy, labor, and migration in Filipino-Danish relations*. Marco Stefan B. Lagman reviewed the book *Remote sensing the margins of the gold trade: Ethnohistorical archaeology and GIS analysis of five gold trade networks in Luzon, Philippines in the last millennium*. The book itself did not mention women but I reflect on the roles of Indigenous women in the gold trade in the Philippines centuries ago.

It is widely accepted that mothers are their children's first teachers. Tayag-Binuya and Tongson articulated this in their article on low-income stay-at-home peri-urban mothers. They examined the active role of mothers who should be commended for making use of alternative learning resources and methods in preparing their children for kindergarten. The mothers emphasize the importance of education by teaching their children in spite of educational and financial limitations.

Sapalo's study on urban poor relocatees—who resettled in a flood-prone area in one of the largest housing relocation projects of the Philippine government—demonstrates that many are unable to afford basic necessities such as shelter. Sapalo's use of *tahanan* (home) highlights the role of mothers in creating a safe space for their families and simultaneously acknowledges the role of men in providing physical and financial security. The mothers' homemaking extends to community-

wide activities that convert the resettlement area into a home. The article calls for the government to reassess its relocation programs for urban poor families. It should go beyond providing housing units and be more mindful of a holistic approach that involves disaster risk reduction and management, particularly in areas that generally may not be suitable for settlement.

Sy's article reminds me of the book *Scent of rain, sun, and soil: Stories of agroecology by Lumad youth in the Philippines* reviewed by Arnold Alamon (2021). Agroecology entails sustainable and organic farming that subverts state authority in the fight for Indigenous and ancestral lands (Alamon 2021) and the feudal system for the right to cultivate "unjustly distributed lands" (Sy, this volume). A form of resistance, agroecology is led by farmworkers' associations. Through the *bungkalan* system, sugar lands have been converted into organic farms. This type of farming opposes capitalist farming that exhausts and exploits both land and farmers. Thus, *bungkalan* is a practical, environment-friendly, and natural approach that grants farmworkers the dignity that has been historically denied from them by *hacienda* owners.

In wars, all lose, especially mothers. Throughout world history, mothers have experienced the unbearable pain of losing children and outliving them because of fights between rulers of competing ideologies. Aggressors are seldom seen as humane and logical. However, while not justifying World War II, Abalos-Orendain argues that a critical assessment of the war from the perspective of Japanese philosophy, particularly that of Maruyama Masao, may help us "understand Japanese thought and behavior during WWII" (this volume).

Many mothers who toil away every day—whether here in the Philippines or as part of the migrant labor force—to give their children a chance at a better future have lost them to extrajudicial killings in the last five years. This volume encapsulates the feudal and oligarchy system of the Philippine government that has contributed to the rising poverty, concealment and disregard for the urban poor, and the red tagging of individuals who develop alternative means of interacting with nature and resisting oppressive forces through non-violent ways. Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, female leaders have demonstrated their strength, resilience, and effectiveness in battling COVID-19 (Bear and Agner 2021; Freizer et al. 2020; Mayer and May 2021; Zenger and Folkman 2020). We are still under health and political crises, and I strongly believe that the reins of power should shift. In the Philippines, we have the power to change the system through the national elections in May 2022.

---

The incoming Editor-in-Chief is Dr. Ariel Lopez of the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. Under his leadership, may *SSD* create a bigger impact on the dissemination of breakthrough research in the social sciences. One of things I value as EIC was the submission and publication of articles by scholars from different universities in the country. It clearly defines the mandate of *SSD* to publish varied and relevant topics.

My term as EIC was a challenging period, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic that is unfortunately still ongoing. I understand that all of us went/are going through difficult phases in both our professional and personal lives because of the impact of COVID-19. Thus, I genuinely appreciate the support extended by the Associate Editors, International Advisory Board members, and external referees. Your reviews, advice, and suggestions allowed *SSD* to maintain its status and integrity as a leading journal in the social sciences. The copyeditors and layout artists meticulously check the manuscripts for corrections to ensure that we follow *SSD* standards.

The Managing Editor and Editorial Assistants made a huge difference in the completion of each volume. I believe that all of us, unknowingly, in our own little way, contributed to each other's well-being given the pandemic context of the 2020 and 2021 issues.

I look forward to reading many more insightful articles in future *SSD* volumes. With renewed thanks.

**Grace Barretto-Tesoro**  
December 2021

## References:

- Alamon, Arnold. 2021. Book review of *Scent of rain, sun, and soil: Stories of agroecology by Lumad youth in the Philippines*. *Social Science Diliman* 17, no. 1: 87–90.
- Bear, Allyson, and Roselle Agner. 2021. "Why more countries need female leaders." *U.S. News*, March 8, 2021. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2021-03-08/why-countries-with-female-leaders-have-responded-well-to-the-pandemic>.
- Freizer, Sabine, Ginette Azcona, Ionica Berevoescu, and Tara Patricia Cookson. 2020. "COVID-19 and women's Leadership: From an effective response to building back better." UN Women Headquarters. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/policy-brief-covid-19-and-womens-leadership>.
- Mayer, Claude-Hélène, and Michelle S. May. 2021. "Women leaders transcending the demands of COVID-19: A positive psychology 2.0 perspective." *Front. Psychol.*, June 3, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.647658>.
- Zenger, Jack, and Joseph Folkman. 2020. "Research: Women are better leaders during a crisis." *Harvard Business Review*, December 30, 2020. <https://hbr.org/2020/12/research-women-are-better-leaders-during-a-crisis>.