

6-30-2015

From the Editor

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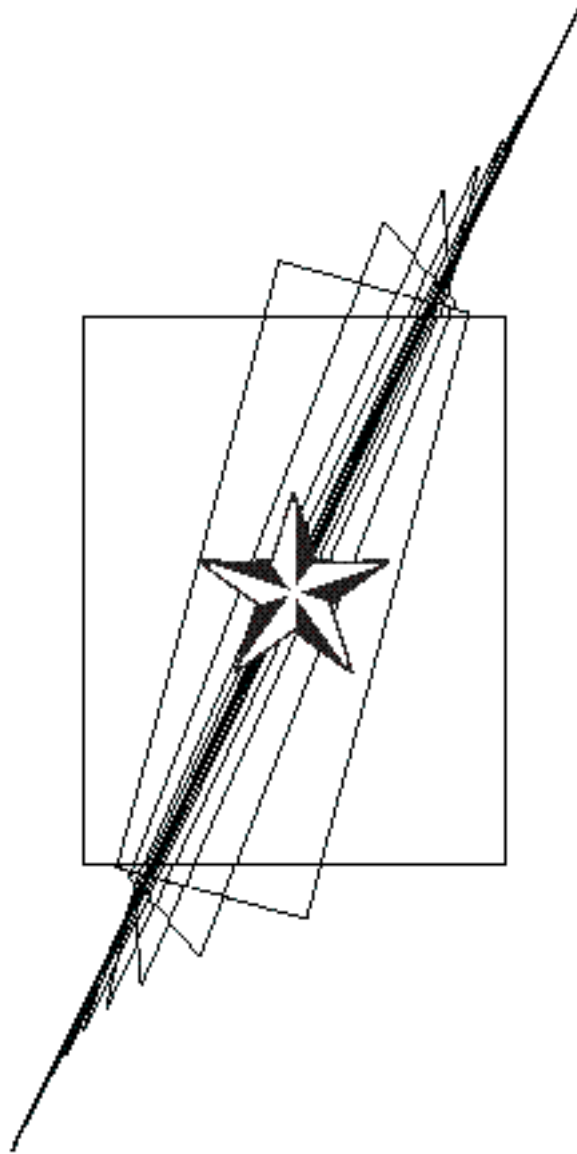
Recommended Citation

Lee, Romeo B. (2015) "From the Editor," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*. Vol. 15: Iss. 1, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1040>

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ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Volume 15 Number 1
JUNE 2015

The *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review (APSSR)* is an internationally refereed journal published biannually by the De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines and is abstracted by Scopus. It aims to introduce a venue for the discussion of contemporary issues related to economics, politics, development, society, and international relations. Subject matter should be on topics that concern the Asia-Pacific region, or that which provides a perspective from within the region. The APSSR encourages theoretical and methodological papers with an emphasis on comparative study and empirical research addressing development problems in Asia and Pacific contexts. It seeks to publish research arising from a broad variety of methodological traditions and those with multi- and inter-disciplinary focus.

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ISSN 0119-8386

Published by De La Salle University Publishing House
2401 Taft Avenue, Manila 1004 Philippines
Telephone: (63 2) 523-4281 / 524-2611 loc 271
Fax: (63 2) 523-4281
Emails: dlsupublishinghouse@dlsu.edu.ph
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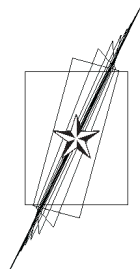
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ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Table of Contents

FROM THE EDITOR

Dr. Romeo Lee

RESEARCH ARTICLES

- Reimagining Federalism in India: Exploring the Frontiers of Collaborative
Federal Architecture 1
Chanchal Kumar Sharma
- Exploring Publication Productivity in the Philippines: 26
A 10-year Gendered Analysis of Six Academic Disciplines
Charisse N. Reyes and Joseph Anthony L. Reyes
- A Multivariate Analysis of Suicide Ideation Among University Students 46
in the Philippines
*Madelene Sta Maria, Romeo B. Lee, Susana Estanislao, Cristina Rodriguez,
Jianli Wang, and Yan Liu*
- The Case Against a Free Market for Human Organs in the Philippines 63
John Ian K. Boongaling
- The Status of Philippine Lake Studies: Scholarly Deficit in Social Science 78
and Small-Lake Research
Bing Baltazar C. Brillo
- The Role of Cluster Governance in the Process of Firm Internationalization: 102
Based on the Example of Two Malaysian Halal Industrial Parks
François N. Dubé, Huang Lijun, and Yang Haijuan

RESEARCH BRIEFS

- Is it Really the Thought That Counts? The Deadweight Loss of Gift-Giving 116
*Charlyn Janna H. Francisco, Beatrice Regina S. Lagdameo, John Paolo R. Rivera
and Rosanina A. Sayoc*
- Escobar's Proposed Alternative to Development: A Critique and Proposed Revisions 125
Marcus Antonius Ynalvez
- Religious Experiences of Filipino Catholic Women Migrants in Japan: 135
The Case of the Kaagapay Oita Filipino Association
Melvin Jabar
- Status of the Indigenous Regions in Russia: The Case of Khakas People 141
Svetlana Panikarova

BOOK REVIEW

- Of Sense-Making, Introspection, and Social Awareness 149
Diana Therese M. Veloso

From the Editor

In this APSSR edition, I shall express my views around the following conclusions offered by some of our Research Articles:

1. *The central government of India would be better off in achieving its policy goals if it engages in more collaborative interactions*, by Sharma (2015), *Reimagining federalism in India: Exploring the frontiers of collaborative federal architecture*, pp.1-25;
2. *Only a third of the publications in chemical engineering, education, literature, mathematics, political science, and psychology in the Philippines, were written by women*, by Reyes and Reyes (2015), *Exploring publication productivity in the Philippines: A 10-year gendered analysis of six academic disciplines*, pp. 26-45;
3. *Almost a fourth of the 2,450 university students interviewed had thought about suicide, albeit the severity level of their suicidal thoughts was low*, by Sta Maria, Lee, Estanislao, Rodriguez, Wang, and Liu (2015), *A multivariate analysis of suicide ideation among university students in the Philippines*, pp. 46-62; and,
4. *Personal autonomy and economic efficiency are defective grounds for creating a public policy in support of the commodification of human kidneys*, by Boongaling (2015), *The case against a free market for human organs in the Philippines*, pp. 63-77.

Though the conclusions are country-specific, these resonate well with the experiences of the citizens of other countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. People are resisting the traditional top-down approach of national governance in favor of collaborative engagements (Thailand and Myanmar); governments are being called upon to further engender the empowerment of women (India, Indonesia, and Nepal); burgeoning numbers of young people are committing suicide (Japan and South Korea); and the commodification of human organs, such as kidneys, is a flourishing enterprise (Nepal, China, and Bangladesh).

Collaboration is a key factor to effective governance because the ideas and sentiments of the general public are essential rather than external to the process. In collaborative engagements, there is inter-subjectivity, or inherent bond, between and among stakeholders. While the trajectory of the decision-making involved may be uncertain at times, the challenges to collaboration are a given, and thus accepted as part of governance. Collaboration is tedious to non-believers, but glorious to its adherents. Certainly, India with its highly educated citizenry stands to benefit more with a collaborative federal government.

Women all over the region are being encouraged and/or supported to be more productive, in largely economic terms, which means having an income source of their own. Through the decades, however, only 59% of the economic gap has been closed. According to a status report of women's leadership position in Asia, amidst improvements in their education, health, and employment, women are lagging behind their male counterparts overall. In the academe, the productivity level among women in terms of their publication outputs is low. This should not be taken to mean that women are less capable (research has confirmed this as mythical rather than empirical). In fact, they do have the capacity to publish more. However, their learned

engagements in nurturing others (e.g., their communities, family, students, and academic departments), which are also indicators of productivity, may be too difficult for women to leave behind for something as extrinsic an activity as publishing. What I am saying is that even when women are not churning out as many published outputs as their male counterparts (or they are not employed or not going to school), they are doing something great in the academe—as nurturers. Most universities and academic departments thrive beautifully, precisely because of women’s nurturance traits revolving around the ways they interact, collaborate, and connect. With these alone, the region should be in great hands!

When young people throughout Asia-Pacific who have so much to live for commit suicide, it should be very troubling for all of us. Signs and symptoms of having a suicide predisposition are not necessarily detectable, so research has to be a continual source of relevant empirical information. Identifying the prevalence of suicide ideation is a critical move towards suicide prevention. If the number of young people holding suicide thoughts and the severity level of these thoughts are known, then appropriate interventions can be done. One of the most critical dimensions to examine vis-à-vis suicide is young people’s social capital (i.e., social networks, relationships, and interactions). Social capital is not just about the presence or absence of a relationship but also about relationship quality. Unfortunately, suicide prevention programs at educational institutions throughout the region are wanting. Researchers should use their findings as information tools to advocate for these programs.

The trading of human organs deeply saddens me because it is indicative of our loss of respect for the sanctity of our human body, but most importantly, of the failure of political governance that has given rise to massive structural poverty. Either from the angle of personal autonomy (“it is my body after all”) or economic imperative (“i need it to buy food or medicine”), there is no justification for the commodification of organs from living persons. The phenomenon is widespread from north (China) to south (Indonesia) and from east (India) to west (Philippines); this broad prevalence is exactly what is being used to push for the legitimization of organ trading. The move should be towards the opposite—let us form a policy that will stop the practice. The deep-seated issue here is abject poverty, which governments in the region can readily address with political will.

The Research Briefs are offering interesting and relatable perspectives. Let me cite some of them. Francisco, Lagdameo, Rivera, and Sayoc are presenting data on gift-giving, which reminds me, touchingly, of our generous spirits. Ynalvez updates us about a way of looking at development in the purview of the globalizing world and the Internet. Indeed, Ynalvez is telling us, somewhat, that perspectives should be pliable to integrate the lifestyle of the times. Panikarova highlights the low levels of economic improvement and quality of life of one indigenous group in Russia, and calls for appropriate government intervention. These findings are resonating well with many of us in the region, given that we have numerous indigenous peoples as well suffering from poverty. Veloso’s book review on Mindanao, much of it is politically troubled, dabbles into the burning issues of the day—government incompetence, corruption, and peace-niks, among others. Whatever is learned about Mindanao is a vital lesson for other countries in the region.

If you have research-based stories to tell, it will be my pleasure to receive your manuscripts.

Romeo B. Lee
Editor