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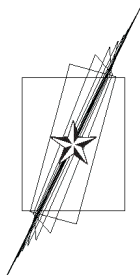
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# From the Editor

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I welcome you all to the Supplementary Edition of the *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* (Scopus).

In this Year of the Dog and beyond, our countries in the Asia-Pacific will have more broad-based challenges, because of the shifts and transformations that we continue to experience, such as those at the political and economic fronts. We expect these challenges to affect our individual and collective lives. Governments need to address these challenges so that their adverse outcomes, whose impact is most severe particularly on us in the lower tiers, can be tempered. Governments, the general public, and the primary sectors must help one another to resolve the challenges at hand. Helping one another (HOA) is a very important norm that we ought to vigorously foster among our countries. HOA would be our united movement against adversities. HOA would make us more responsible, accountable, and, most crucially, other-centered. If properly and earnestly executed, HOA would be the most endearing quality and identity of and for our region, as it would underscore the benevolence and goodness of humankind in this part of the world. It should be noted that HOA has been linked to globalization, or regionalization in our case—for example, HOA forms part of the ASEAN's core values.

HOA has been in practice in the region's countries for some time, for example, in the area of knowledge sharing. Over the years, some countries have been providing key information to other countries on persisting and emerging challenges of the times, such as terrorism, climate change, pandemics, and poverty alleviation. The extent of the practice, however, is only sporadic; simply put, our region's knowledge sharing is limited. So far, we just have a budding culture on the said practice, which means we are in dearth of the enabling structures, for example, in terms of parameters, systems, and resources. Fortunately, we have the ASEAN bloc, the APEC, and furthermore, there is our collective goal of going global and of being at par with the best of the world—these frameworks could push us to seriously develop knowledge sharing as a vital component of our ethos on HOA.

The *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* (Scopus) helps foster knowledge sharing by publishing manuscripts with messages on critical challenges, which, I must add, are common phenomena in many of our region's countries. We need to further describe the cross-national extent of these challenges to our readers, however. According to studies, not many of us are aware that, even if we are more than a billion of people in this region, we are monolithic in multiple ways owing to our similar experiences. We ought to make more of our people aware of this convergence; their awareness could lead to their appreciation of and action against the challenges besetting us. We can only realize and optimize knowledge sharing—even our ethos on HOA—if we know that the information we give and receive is relevant to many of us.

In the following, I cited three challenges featured in this edition's manuscripts and I highlighted their relevance, or their being big issues, in our region. We hope to foster cross-national perspectives among our people for a successful implementation of the suggested knowledge sharing.

From Thailand, Puchada Sirivunnabood discusses the state-based financing of political parties in her homeland, which she says was introduced in 1997, "to reinforce the internal coherence of parties and encourage their democratic functions." What do you think has happened since then? Sad to say, according to the author, instead of strengthening political parties, public financing has led to abusive and corrupt practices among political parties themselves. Sounds too familiar? Corrupt practices of political parties are way too common in our region, and contrary to dominant opinion, corruption prevails in both rich and non-rich countries in this part of the world. Parties are predisposed to certain malpractices because they cannot afford to lose elections and to bid goodbye to the rewards of a victory, which include power and its rights, privileges and opportunities, and, most crucially, control over territories, people, and resources. Because of these intoxicating rewards, parties would jostle each other to access funding from either the state, party members, or private sources, any of which is critical to an election victory in the region's highly commercialized political exercise. In Indonesia, much has been written about the dysfunction of political parties and campaign financing system. In India, where the funding sources of political parties are unknown but substantial nonetheless, there is a call for reforms of party financing and election expenditure laws, indicating that big money is helping some parties to victory. In Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, financing is key to staying in power or to snatching it from an incumbent party. An OECD publication underscores the instrumental role of money for powerful vested interests to exercise undue influence as well as the loopholes in existing funding regulations. As you can sense, financing—and the things that political parties do with it—is a very big challenge for our region, and because it affects us, particularly our future, we should share knowledge on how best to optimize its use in politics.

From the Philippines, Mary Irene Clare O. Deleña and Ron R. Resurreccion write about the experiences of teachers who encountered students with diagnosed psychological disorders. The number of students on campus having psychological disorders appears to be increasing, and teachers, as second parents, are expected to carry out certain responsibilities, for instance on how to reach out to these students. As the authors indicate in their empirical account, teachers varied in their individual strategies when they reached out to students with psychological disorders, suggesting in general that teachers and their university appear only inadequately equipped with professional skills and resources to meet the demands of the challenge. Psychological disorders among the student population are emerging as a big challenge in the Philippines, but elsewhere, for example in Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and many more, these are prevalent problems. Moreover, training teachers to effectively fulfill their role in assisting the academic development of students with psychological disorders is an equally challenging goal for us. While teachers, including me, have a responsibility in this area, our universities should ultimately take and address the challenge. Universities must develop and implement a campus-based comprehensive mental health prevention and control program, such as those suggested and introduced in India, Mongolia, and Vietnam. We have so much to share with one another regarding our knowledge, or lack thereof, of mental health issues in our students. The need for sharing is urgent.

From India, B.D. Panda and N.M Leepsa discuss the nexus between institutional ownership and local market performance. Their findings, which were based on 8-year panel data from NIFTY 500 companies, reveal a favorable assessment of foreign institutional investors (FIIs) over the domestic ones vis-à-vis the market performance of the financial market in India. The authors note that while FIIs enhance India's market performance, their domestic counterparts tend to dampen the same. Much has been written about FII for their many positive roles, such as improving flows of equity capital, decreasing market volatility, and subsequently, enhancing the capital market as a whole. It is then hardly surprising for our countries to aim to attract as many responsible FII into our respective financial markets. Based on reported data, some of us in the region are doing very well (e.g., Singapore), while others are in the middle ground (e.g., Indonesia) or in a formative stage (e.g., Cambodia). There is much more



to learn about the roles of FII in our financial markets, particularly in terms of controls and regulations (in the Philippines, these are precisely the challenges being raised at present). The roles of domestic institutional investors should be a critical subject matter as well since these local investors would fill the void when FII scamper for safety during troubled times. The financial meltdowns in the 1990s and 2000s, which had catastrophic impacts on our lives, should remind us of the need to share knowledge with one another so that we avoid another financial market crash. Incidentally, the book review of Monir Hossain Moni (Bangladesh) published in this edition focuses on Asia's responses to a global financial crisis.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges (i.e., political party financing, teachers' roles in students with psychological disorders, and foreign institutional investors), there are other equally colonizing challenges featured in this edition, such as that related to tourism (Pornpisanu Promsivapallop and Tatiyaporn Jarumaneeerat), environmental resource sustainability (Siriwat Potivejkul and Paitoon Pimdee), and gender-based poverty (Arup Mitra). We continue to be a stellar global performer in tourism, but frankly, we perform quite poorly in protecting and regenerating our environmental resources, and in alleviating poverty. I do recognize the complexities of protecting our natural environment and improving the citizenry's financial conditions, but our efforts in general in these areas are at best fragmentary; moreover, these efforts are fraught with striking discontinuities, for example when we elect a new set of national leaders. Our successes in the tourism sector and our failures in environment and poverty sectors should have already equipped us with more than enough experience and wisdom to strengthen our ethos on HOA—in particular, our cross-national knowledge sharing.

The year 2018 will be very busy for the *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* (Scopus). After this supplement, we will produce three more in June, August (Special Issue), and December.

We look forward to receiving your manuscripts and to sharing your data and perspectives with our region-wide readers. Visit our Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/DLSUAPSSR/>.

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