

Editor's Notes

Articles contained in this issue delve on a myriad of concerns revolving around the realm of public administration, extension service delivery, poverty diagnosis, public management reform, among others.

The Philippines has always been primarily an agricultural country despite repeated attempts at industrialization. The agricultural sector needs to enhance productivity in order to contribute to overall economic growth. "Improving the Delivery of Extension Services in the Philippines: Lessons Learned and Future Directions" by Remigio D. Ocenar, Alex B. Brillantes, Jr., Sandy Cuthbertson and Michael A. Tumanut asserts that the lessons of devolved agricultural extension services are mixed as well as the lessons of devolution. Farm productivity and income do not seem to have improved; nonetheless, this end-result cannot be attributed to the failures in the delivery of agricultural extension.

The impasse of poverty in the country has reached a very critical level. Local government units (LGUs) are now confronted with the challenge of formulating a plan to alleviate poverty in their respective locales. A guidebook on Local Poverty Diagnosis and Planning System (LPDPS) was instituted by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003 to help LGUs in formulating their respective poverty-alleviation strategies. "A Critique of the Local Poverty Diagnosis and Poverty Planning System" by Victoria A. Bautista emphasizes that the responsibility for poverty alleviation should not only lie with the national government—it should be more importantly initiated by LGUs where the marginalized and their environs are evident. She notes that the LPDPS is a management technology that can be harnessed to ensure that LGUs devise a plan in a poverty perspective.

"Reform as Policy Theory: The Case of Public Management Reform in the Philippines" by Simeon Agustin Ilago revisits public management reform initiatives in the Philippines within the milieu of reform as a policy theory. Such an attempt could lead to a better understanding of reform and its implications. Ilago reminds us that reform, in its essence, is a theory of change. Reform proposals are linked to desired changes in governmental structure, operations and even role in society. The desired changes, or the desirable situation, are often based on what are perceived as shortcomings of current government structure and operations.

Theoretical studies and even political declarations have postulated that the burden of alleviating poverty rests on an efficient, responsive and incorruptible public bureaucracy. Furthermore, it has been observed that the ingenious steering of political leaders is a major drive towards the direction of national prosperity and unity. "Public Administration and Political Determination: A Review of Theoretical and Rhetorical Notions in 'Healing the Nation'" by Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase reviews the theoretical ramifications of Public Administration in an attempt to substantiate the call for a new brand of politics by the administration of President Gloria

Macapagal-Arroyo to "heal the nation." The various retrospectives of the theories that were professed since the start of the academic field only show that despite attempts to separate politics from administration in hopes of professionalizing the latter, the nature of political relationships weighs heavily on rulers, administrators and civil society in governance.

Modern and scientific medicine is based on the premise that people are biological mechanisms operating in logical and reproducible ways. Healthcare providers and researchers are detached observers capable of detecting consistent patterns such as diseases, diagnoses and syndromes. Julius A. Lecciones in "Postmodernism in 21st Century Medicine: Implications for Philippine Healthcare and Public Administration" articulates that postmodernity is providing an opportunity to redesign the present medical care concepts and paradigms. He points out that it will not completely negate and replace the advantages that are still present in orthodox modern medicine. Lecciones reminds us that the Philippines has an enduring culture and belief system that is not alien to the holistic postmodern notion of healing.