

Book Reviews

Analyzing the Estrada Debacle

Amando Doronila. *The Fall of Joseph Estrada: The Inside Story*. Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2001. 316 pages.

Aprodicio Laquian and Eleanor Laquian. *The Erap Tragedy: Tales from the Snake Pit*. Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2002. 354 pages.

One of the most significant events in post-Marcos Philippine politics has been the overthrow of former President Joseph Estrada from power. In 1998, former movie actor Estrada was elected in a relatively overwhelming fashion, capturing 40 percent of the national vote. Negative perceptions and criticisms on his competence and moral foundations did not deny him electoral victory as he promised to focus on the needs and issues that concerned the Filipino poor that comprise 70 percent of the country's population. Two and a half years later and not even halfway to his six-year term, Estrada was forcibly ousted through a nonviolent and civilian-led "People Power" Revolt (otherwise known as EDSA 2) on grounds of brazen corruption and cronyism. This happened after the political institutions mandated to make Estrada accountable through the impeachment process proved incapable to deliver on its mandate. Some have heralded it as a triumph for democracy, indicating that without popular support, the legitimacy of any government is questionable. However, several international observers have claimed that it was "mob rule" in action—a not so good indication of the health of Philippine democracy.

This is the context of the two books under review. Both represent the most detailed attempts to uncover the story behind the former president's spectacular rise and abrupt fall. Written under extreme pressures to produce an account immediately *ex-post facto*, the two books should be seen as attempts to capture and provide snapshots of a rapidly moving tide of events.

Truthful to its title, the book written by prominent political analyst Doronila describes in extensive detail the last few months of the Estrada regime, with special attention to the EDSA 2 mobilization. It is relatively comprehensive

given its reliance not only on newspaper articles but also interviews with eminent persons that included politicians, civil society leaders, and even military officers, both active and retired. On the other hand, the book of the Laquians, who both personally served in the Estrada administration, is a revealing insider's chronicle that analyzes the fall of the former President focusing on the innate pitfalls of the political system and the idiosyncrasies of Estrada's persona. As its subtitle suggests, the value of this "conjugal endeavor" is its clandestine anecdotes about the infamous Malacañang snakepit.

Both books attributed the fall of Estrada to the problematic nature of Philippine democracy. In particular, Doronila and the Laquians mentioned the dysfunction of political institutions that convinced and mobilized the people to resort to extra-constitutional means to oust a president that has failed to govern and eroded the popular mandate given to him. However, closer scrutiny would reveal a noticeable divergence between the supporting arguments of the two books. The Laquians were critical of the EDSA 2 mobilization as not being indicative of the true sentiment of the Filipino people. In contrast, Doronila argued that Estrada was strictly a minority president who claimed an "indestructible electoral mandate" that became his blank pass to do whatever pleased him. Not concerning himself with the numbers issue, the author contended that EDSA 2 was democracy in action as the major forces were concerned with upholding the rule of law (despite the opposition of some segments) and resorted to democratic options in averting the political crisis.

To the reader, the ultimate worth of the books is the blow-by-blow account of Estrada's road to perdition by recounting his involvement in various issues and scandals. It is discernible that they could be analytically categorized into three. The first is the *competence deficit* that Estrada exhibited in assuming the responsibilities of the presidency. The Laquians were first-hand witnesses to this as they came up with a comprehensive discussion in the fourth chapter of not only his ineptitude but also a complete psychological profile that proved highly helpful in understanding Estrada. For his part, Doronila's third chapter generally uncovered how the former president manifested this lack of appreciation of his obligations and responsibilities.

The second issue is *cronyism* in which both books were able to generate vivid illustrations. Doronila extensively relied on the incident that involved Karina Constantino-David, the first cabinet official to resign from Estrada's cabinet out of disgust with his undue preference for personal friends. The Laquians had a more damning account in the sixth chapter of how Estrada favored his cronies. As the presidential chief of staff, Aprodicio Laquian personally witnessed how Estrada violated official protocol to entertain a friendly visit or attend a social occasion. Perhaps the most compelling anecdote that *The Erap Tragedy* narrated was when Laquian divulged the existence of the notorious "Midnight Cabinet"—a clique of high profile businessmen and politicians who would frequently visit the Palace for drinking and gambling sessions.

Corruption is the third and most serious issue hurled against Estrada. Culling from newspaper accounts and the investigative reports, the Laquians even came up with a valuable shortlist of all allegations of Estrada's corruption. Meanwhile, Doronila had the opportunity to interview Ilocos Sur Governor Luis 'Chavit' Singson, the unlikely whistleblower on the former president's involvement in illegal gambling and the confiscation of public funds for personal aggrandizement. While both books also exhibited an extensive discussion on the nature and complexities of corruption in the Philippines, Doronila only made tangential remarks compared to an elaborate discussion by the Laquians, indicative of the pair's expertise as public administration scholars.

Another prominent theme that the two books pursued was how to depict the gradual erosion of popular support from the former president during the protracted anti-Estrada campaign. *The Fall* devoted half of its pages narrating the dramatic unfolding of events in particular detail, which proved to be one of its strong points. From the early period of the resignation phase until that fateful day when the "second envelope" was not opened, Doronila vividly describes each episode. The Laquians have a chapter entitled "The Civil Society" but did not discuss how it became a prominent player unlike Doronila's treatment of it. Rather, they discussed its nature and evolution in the country. Moreover, they also boldly passed a highly critical judgment on the participation of civil society as it apparently usurped Estrada's mandate and assumed itself as the voice of the popular will in Edsa 2.

Another valuable contribution of the two books is an in-depth account of the dynamics of the historic impeachment trial of Estrada. *The Erap Tragedy* provided the reader with a concise summary of the political exercise through a discussion of the specific charges, the strategy of the prosecution and defense, the impact of media, and the implications of the aborted trial for the country's political institutions. However, if one would prefer a more detailed narrative of the impeachment proceedings, Doronila spent four chapters recounting every significant development and also analyzed the witnesses' testimonies, arguments of opposing counsel, and opinions of senator-jurors without being too legalistic. As he promised, the last chapters discussed the unseen stories behind the last few days of the former President. The reader is given a chance to become privy to the negotiations between the power brokers of both sides that included the administration, the political opposition, and members of the military and civil society.

The last remaining pages of the books revealed the supposed intentions of both projects. Doronila gave the reader a persuasive justification of the legitimacy of Estrada's removal from the presidency and the constitutionality of Arroyo's succession as indicated in his analysis of the pivotal Supreme Court decision. Meanwhile, the Laquians enumerated several lessons from the Estrada presidency and even made recommendations on how to address the weaknesses of the country's polity, economy and society. However, both narratives ended on a cautious note and a reminder that a dangerous precedent of removing unaccountable leaders can never be a substitute for stable and mature political institutions.

Doronila's well-ordered, chronological analysis coupled with a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of Philippine politics makes his book an indispensable contribution. What the Laquians produced is a compelling read made valuable by its anecdotes on the idiosyncrasies of the former President. ❖

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Michael Cullinane. *Ilustrado Politics: Filipino Elite Responses to American Rule, 1898-1908*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003. 466 pp.

Extant scholarship on politics in the Philippines at the start of the twentieth century has been dominated by national-level historical accounts. Literature on the formative years of American colonial rule focused on the larger picture: American policies and practices, the activities of prominent Manila-based elites, and the nationalist movement among educated Filipinos and the *masa*-led resistance movement. While some works tried to explain elite politics during this period, little attention has been given to analyzing the political relationships and associations that formed among elites. There was also no satisfactory explanation on the social structure that existed and the political developments outside Manila. History books and biographies left us assuming that national politics, as exemplified by the careers of Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Quezon, was a consequence of the political developments at the center and their nationalist credentials.

Cullinane's book addresses these gaps in Philippine history. Using an analytical framework that categorizes elites not only according to their internally differentiated socioeconomic status but also their place of residence, the author identified four types of elites: (1) municipal elite, (2) provincial elite, (3) urban elite, and (4) urban middle sector. He also categorized the interactions of these elites with each other and with the masses.

Cullinane limited his study on the *ilustrados*. This term connotes wealth, intelligence, and advanced education. As compared to other works that used different terminologies, Cullinane favored a study of *ilustrados* to explain how men coming from "the directing class" responded to American colonial regime and eventually ruled national politics. While other types of elites such as *caciques*, *principalias*, or *mestizos* were dominant at the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century, *ilustrados*, which included the urban middle sector, were at the core of elite politics at the end of the century.

By placing emphasis on this subgroup of Filipino elites, Cullinane enriches the theorizing of elite studies in the country. One major contribution lies in his findings that although urban elites dominated politics in Manila during the early stages of American occupation, national politics years later were headed by provincial *ilustrados*, namely, Osmeña and Quezon. This is a refreshing insight given that previous works usually refer to Manila as the locus and main source of national politics. Also, this insight strengthens the findings of works on elite politics, which show that a legislative position is a gate pass to Malacañang. Osmeña and Quezon, members of the Philippine Assembly in 1907, both became presidents of the Republic.

While his analytical framework is helpful in defining *ilustrados*, Cullinane did not present a theoretical framework for systematically assessing the responses of *ilustrados*. While he provided the various responses, he did not explicitly reveal the parameters of his analysis. He did not provide a basis and thus did not categorize his findings. In his first chapter, he appears to favor arguments stating that the more educated and wealthy elites tend to cooperate with the colonizers. Throughout the book, the author appears to utilize a structural frame for assessing *ilustrados*' political actions. This is in keeping with sections in the book where the author concludes that *ilustrados*' vested interests for power, wealth, and patronage are the bases of their ten-year collaboration with the Americans. However, in some parts of the book, he appears to focus squarely on elite personalities separate from their milieu. In describing the emerging opposition to American colonization in Manila headed by Isabelo de los Reyes, Dominador Gomez, and Pascual Poblete, Cullinane made efforts to explicitly describe their personalities, "[e]ach of them had a strong personality... Although the three worked together and had much in common, they maintained separate identities and never seemed to be bound by any mutually agreed upon ways of doing things. Their association with one another, therefore, was always tenuous and subject to differences and periodic divisions" (p. 85).

Moreover, some of Cullinane's findings were not exactly novel. However, they contribute in putting facts on previously articulated arguments. For example, history books and leftist works have overly stated one of Cullinane's major findings: "[d]emocratic institutions from the beginning were

manipulated and adjusted to serve the special interests of American colonial administrators and the Filipino directing class. The relationship that developed between Filipino politicians and American colonial officials, founded as it was on mutual interests, is the primary political legacy upon which 'special' U.S.-Philippine relations have been based up to the present" (p. 343). Cullinane was able to substantiate this claim by tracing the rise to power of the Partido Federal and Partido Nacionalista and of Osmeña and Quezon.

Through extensive research, Cullinane was also able to prove that the *ilustrados* represented a "political oligarchy whose power was rooted in the democratic institutions imposed by the early American colonial authorities" (p. 340). He reveals that in rhetoric, elites had different responses to American colonialism ranging from collaboration to outright struggle for independence. In reality, the quest for political power prevailed over nationalism.

Cullinane also provided proof that party labels were of little importance. The leading figures of the Partido Nacionalista were as conservative as their *Americanista* counterparts. The Partido Nacionalista and its leaders were pushing for autonomy from the colonial government rather than independence. Again, the author's main contribution on this subject is his wealth of new data. Cullinane was able to substantially prove that in the end, "the colonial government was the real winner in 1907, since the Nacionalistas would be unable to obtain independence and would therefore 'cooperate with the present government'." (p. 337).

This historico-political book is thus significant not only because it enriches the study of elites by focusing on the *ilustrados* but also because the questions that it elicits are important in analyzing leadership and elites in the Philippines. It also provides new data on nationalism, elites, and U.S.-Philippine relations at the turn of the twentieth century. ❖

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Sheila S. Coronel, Yvonne T. Chua, Luz Rimban, and Booma Cruz. *The Rulemakers: How the Wealthy and Well-Born Dominate Congress*. Quezon City: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), 2004. 270 pages.

The restoration of democracy and incremental changes in the composition of Congress did not really alter the distorted governance practices of the Legislature. This is the message the PCIJ publication presents to its readers. It is an elaboration of PCIJ's earlier works, such as *The Ties that Bind*, *Pork and Other Perks*, and *Boss*. What makes *Rulemakers* different is its attempt to chronicle how politics became a business venture. Moreover, Congress is seen as more than just an institution where policies are made, but also as an institution of moneymaking, especially for elite families. The study also confirms the distorted relationship between politics and business, affirming the relationship between wealth and political power.

Chapter One (House of Privilege) presents the profiles of members of the Philippine Legislature. They represent not the poor section of the population but a class having property, multiple economic interests and education. Most would come from political families with an established political network at the local level. The various tables in this chapter show the socio-demographic profiles of representatives to support the findings.

Chapter Two (Born to Rule) is an elaboration of the preceding chapter. Most members of Congress could trace their roots from the *principalia* class during the Spanish era. Moreover, the Americans, by limiting political participation, created political institutions that gave birth to a national oligarchy composed of families. Families run for public office to protect their business interests in their particular geographic areas.

There are several factors that help families create their political empires. These are: (1) money, (2) machinery, (3) media and/or movies, (4) marriage with another political family to expand the network, (5) murder and mayhem or the use of political violence, (6) myth in terms of slogans used by various politicians, and (7) mergers or alliances with winning presidential candidates. In this view, it is not the political parties that are responsible for elite perpetuation as they are seen only as coalitions of political clans. In addition,

political parties did not develop organically and are dominated by landlords and big business interests.

Chapter Three (The Perks of Lawmaking) satirically describes some of the perks of being a lawmaker. These are the use of lawmaking as a sideline, use of discretionary funds without accounting, and being a lawbreaker. The focus of most lawmakers is not about drafting policies but how to please their constituents. This is true in both the pre-Marcos and post-Marcos Congress. Decline in legislation from the 9th to the 12th Congress could be attributed to the lack of long-term legislative agenda.

Chapter Four (For the Love of Pork) relates how the availability of pork, however you call it—Congressional Initiative Allocation, Priority Development Assistance Fund, Congressional Development Fund, etc.—is used as a business venture and a source of legitimated corruption because of the lack of financial accountability. Though some allocation contributed to development, it is used most of the time to perpetuate patronage politics and personal enrichment. Pork seems to be a permanent scandal in Congress and it is the grease that runs the institution. Even though there have been earnest efforts to stop this practice, not enough political will is forthcoming from leaders of Congress.

Chapter Five (In Search of Alternatives) talks about the introduction of the party-list system in the Lower House where marginalized sectors can now participate in policy-making or even pork spending. The chapter skillfully describes the dynamics between the party-list representatives and the district representatives, impressing upon the reader that the party-list system has yet to make its mark in Congress.

This book assists readers in understanding the historical roots of elite democracy in the Philippines by focusing on Congress and looking at how political families use Congressional perks to perpetuate their clans in politics. Though the book examines mainly the post-Marcos Congress, it also gives readers a glimpse of the past to substantiate its earlier claim that political families dominate both elective and appointive positions in government. Despite political changes, the book concludes that elites remain resilient in politics and use Congress as milking cow for both personal and official funds.

The study is well researched and well documented, but the authors failed to devote discussion on the implications of the character of the Philippine Legislature on democracy and even to development. There was little attempt to document why despite availability of huge sums of funds, some districts remain underdeveloped.

Like previous PCIJ reports, *Rulemakers* has not come up with conclusions that would coherently tie-up the various claims it made in the preceding chapters and sum up the challenges to both the electorate and the elected reform-minded members of Congress. As expected in any investigative report, it is about wrongdoings and anomalies in Congress—an exposé on the corrupt practices in Congress. Nevertheless, *Rulemakers* went beyond the usual investigative reports as it tried to conceptually define terms used and validate most of its findings using previous academic work on Congress and elite families.

Though the book exhaustively discussed elite families, little space was devoted to outlining the achievements of elite families and the new entrants in their localities. Thus, readers are unable to discern who performs better—the new entrants or the entrenched? In addition, the reader finds himself or herself at a loss as to what steers the wheel of corruption. Is it the presence of privileges or the political culture of the electorate? One can also observe inconsistent statements, in particular, regarding the Political Summit in 2002. The book initially stated that the Summit's aim is to solve the problem of dominant celebrity politics. Yet, in later pages, the aims are said to be reforms in the party system.

The report also faintly points to the fact that the decline in lawmaking in the last Congress could also be attributed to the excessive usage of its investigative powers that yields no policies, and more importantly, the lack of a leadership that would drive Congress towards a more coherent legislative agenda. Coronel and PCIJ delivered exactly what the subtitle says, *How the Wealthy and Well-Born Dominate Congress*. ♦

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Samuel K. Tan. *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle (Revised Edition)*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2003. 244 pages.

Scholars utilizing various perspectives and covering the many dimensions of the conflict have told the story of the Bangsamoro in myriad ways. Samuel K. Tan's revised edition of the *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle* is an attempt to explore the role of international factors in the decades-old resistance being waged by Muslims in southern Philippines. It is the first endeavor by a Filipino scholar to document the significant role of international factors, particularly the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), in a Philippine domestic conflict.

The book's eight chapters tackle the origin and development of the Bangsamoro struggle, the role of international factors in the resistance and his institutional recommendation to accommodate the demands of the Moros. This revised edition includes a new chapter, "Beyond Freedom: The Juma'a Abu Sayyaf", which argues that the internationalization of the struggle led by the Abu Sayyaf Group has reached a "radical level".

Tan argues that the struggle originated from the political, economic, social and cultural deprivation of the Muslims in southern Philippines brought about by the colonial masters, first Spain and later the United States. He also argues that after the United States granted independence to the Philippines, the Christianized Filipinos continued the oppression of the Moros. These factors have set the pre-conditions for conflict which was later on triggered by the Jabidah Massacre.

The struggle is multi-faceted for the Moros are a heterogeneous collective of mostly Muslims from different ethnic groups. Each ethnic group may be led by elites who would be in favor of integration, secession, or separation from the Philippine state. The differences in the views of the Moro elites have been exploited by the national government to remain in control of the territories in the South. Tan argues that concessions, including political

positions, were given by the national government to Moro elites who were willing to give up the fight for secession or separation.

The struggle is further complicated by the various groups claiming to represent the Moro namely, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) of Chairman Nur Misuari of the Tausug-Sama group, the MNLF Reformists led by Maranaoan Dimas Pundato, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) led by Maguindanaoan Hashim Salamat. Tan focuses on the internationalization of the secessionist struggle led by MNLF. With the new chapter on the Abu Sayyaf, the study explores the role of other international movements in the Moro struggle.

One of the most important contributions of the book is a survey of the views of the members of the MNLF regarding the involvement of the OIC in the Moro struggle. The interviewees came from the various ethnic groups that comprise the MNLF. Tan argues that the MNLF sought international support after acknowledging that mere domestic resources are not enough to sustain the resistance against the Philippine government. The members of the MNLF were open to the involvement of the OIC and they do not see the OIC as interfering in their struggle. Tan further argues that this is opposed to the government's view of the OIC. The government sees the OIC involvement in the struggle as interference to a domestic problem. The MNLF interviewees further view the OIC involvement as a spiritual and moral obligation to the needy members of the *ummah* (international community of Muslims). This aspect of the study has not been duplicated by any scholar in the Philippines or elsewhere.

Through the efforts of Misuari, the MNLF gained international status and international support from various Muslim countries including Libya, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Malaysia. Misuari used different international fora to depict the oppression committed by the Philippine government against the Muslims in the South. This gained sympathy to the cause of the MNLF. Misuari also gained recognition as the leader of the Bangsamoro.

For Tan, the internationalization of the Moro secessionist movement was inevitable. The MNLF cause is part of the *ummah* and the MNLF cannot

only rely on its domestic resources against the Philippine government. As a result of the inevitable internationalization of the Bangsamoro struggle, the Tripoli Agreement was drafted and signed with the help of the OIC. Since the MNLF was recognized by the international Muslim community, the Philippine government was very careful in dealing with its "domestic problem". The MNLF, on the other hand, had to work within the framework prescribed by the OIC, which includes the recognition of Philippine sovereignty. The OIC according to Tan recognizes only the MNLF as the sole representative of the Bangsamoro.

However, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle* lacks pertinent information on the current development of the struggle. Particularly lacking in the study is attention to the MILF, which now has a more significant role in the Bangsamoro struggle. While the MNLF is the officially recognized representative of the Bangsamoro by the OIC, the MILF is given much more consideration now than ever before by the Conference. Although the study claims to limit itself with the MNLF, this delimitation does not explain the inclusion of the Abu Sayyaf and the exclusion of the MILF in the revised edition.

Still, Tan's work definitely sets it apart from studies previously done on the Moro struggle by any scholar due to its focus on the international factors of the resistance. It has opened the gates to scholars like Soliman Santos who is working on the international factors that have implications for the MILF. Tan is only one of the few scholars dealing with the international dimension of conflict. His work is not only an important contribution to Philippine studies but also to the larger intervention and conflict literature. It contributes not only to the empirical aspects but also to the theoretical aspects of the conflict literature, particularly the international dimension of conflict. ❖

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Jose J. Magadia. *State-Society Dynamics: Policy Making in a Restored Democracy*. Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003. 226 pages.

Since the restoration of democracy in 1986 and the re-establishment of the Philippine Congress, scholars of Philippine politics have taken interest in the role of non-government organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations in the crafting of important social reform policies. The book *State-Society Dynamics: Policy Making in a Restored Democracy* written by Dr. Jose J. Magadia delves into this particular aspect of Philippine politics. Magadia's study contributes to the building of knowledge as far as the policymaking process and the role of societal organizations in such process are concerned. The book highlights the significance of the participation of societal organizations in the formulation of policies as well as the dynamics of the relationship between the state and societal groups.

Magadia's book focuses on the policy-making process during the Aquino administration (1988-1992). It aimed "to explain the variation in the participation of societal groups in policy making" (p. 5). The author's main hypothesis is that "the more catalyzed the political situation, the greater the participation of societal organizations in policy deliberations, or synonymously, the greater the interaction between the state and societal organizations" (p.4). Magadia was able to test this hypothesis by presenting case studies on the policy issues of agrarian reform, labor relations reform, and urban land reform. The author also presented his framework for explaining state-society relations, which is based on the concept of political catalysis, or the process of accelerating state-society interaction as both state actors and societal actors send signals of willingness to engage each other in the development of policy (p. 5). Based on this framework, the case studies focused on three variables, namely: (1) the incorporative state sector; (2) the pivotal societal organization; and (3) the profile of the policy issue. Magadia observed that despite the openings in the new regime, different policy issues still manifested variation in the degree of participation by societal organizations in policy deliberations. Thus, he aimed to present data to show the variation in greater detail, as experienced in the deliberation stage of national policy issues.

The chapters on the case studies (chapters 3, 4 and 5) proved to be interesting and useful as these provided substantive data on the policy issues studied. Each chapter discussed in detail a particular policy area, the role of the pivotal societal organization in the formulation of the policy, and the other factors that were significant in the policy making process. Another aspect that makes this book useful and academically relevant is the chapter that compared the findings of the three case studies (chapter 6). In his comparison, Magadia found out that the three cases highlight the differences in the level of participation of societal organizations, particularly in policy deliberations. In the case of agrarian reform, there was extensive participation by the Congress for People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR), the pivotal societal organization. However, in the case of urban land reform and labor relations, the pivotal societal organizations, namely, the Urban Land Reform Task Force (ULR-TF) and the Labor Advisory and Coordinating Council (LACC), participated in a limited and minimal way, respectively. Based on the case studies, the author was able to verify his hypothesis, i.e., what spells the difference between zero and minimal participation in policy deliberations is the overall level of political catalysis in the country. In turn, this structure is mediated by the strategies employed by significant actors in both the state and society (p. 116). Moreover, Magadia also found out that the level of political catalysis in the three cases varied significantly. He asserted that it is this factor that is better able to account for the differences between minimal, limited, and extensive state-society interaction. Furthermore, the case studies emphasized the importance of three factors: (1) the availability of formal institutions to address the various policy concerns; (2) the efficiency of pivotal societal organizations as well as the important role of key individual state actors; and (3) the contentiousness of the policy issue.

Another interesting aspect of the study is the author's inclusion of an "exceptional case". In spite of his claims based on the three cases, Magadia admitted that exceptional cases also exist. Hence, another case study on the Generics Drugs Act (Republic Act 8875) was discussed. This case was described as an "exceptional case" because despite the level of political catalysis comparable to the urban land reform case, the participation of the pivotal societal organization, the Philippine Drug Action Network (PDAN),

in the deliberation was minimal. This, according to the author, was contrary to expectations. The inclusion of the case of the Generics Drugs Act therefore points out a limitation of studies that focus on particular cases, that is, generalizations cannot be asserted based on the analysis of a few cases. However, this does not diminish the contribution made by Magadia's study as it provided questions that future research can delve into.

On the whole, the analysis of the cases showed that: (1) the incongruity between the level of societal participation in deliberations and the degree to which societal organizations' causes reflected in the final policy measure is a manifestation of the still disjointed policy making in the Philippines; (2) it is still possible for societal groups to expand their influence up to the level of national policy making; and (3) new modes of state-society relations are possible, even at the highest level of national policy making and even in political settings dominated by structural inequality.

The final chapter of the book provides a discussion of state-society relations in the post-Aquino years and takes into account the reconstitution of various institutions for state-society interaction. As noted above, the book provides questions for further research that would contribute to the knowledge that have been gained from past studies on state-society relations in policy making, including the works undertaken by the Third World Studies Center of the University of the Philippines. Definitely, Magadia's book has contributed to the understanding of Philippine politics, in general, and the policy process and state-society relations, in particular. It is therefore a must reading for all scholars interested in these areas. Aside from academics, the book would also benefit members of societal organizations and policy makers as the study also provides important insights in state-society interaction in policymaking. ❖

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