

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

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The year 1986 witnessed the surge of people power, the drama of the February Revolution, the formation of a provisional government and the framing of a new constitution, the zealous hunt for hidden wealth and the clamor for local elections, civil rights and demilitarization. While many Filipino social scientists rallied behind the new government and worked for political stability, they also continued to press for much needed socioeconomic reforms. It was obvious that the February Revolution was no panacea for social change.

After all, as Benjamin Bagadion, Jr. documents, demonstrations of Filipino people's power, antedate the EDSA Revolution. Several manifestations of people power – instances of effective, non-violent resistance by a collective – already existed in the 1970s (and much earlier in our history), proving that Filipinos can liberate themselves from oppressive conditions if they have the courage, determination, and perseverance to struggle together. Impressive as they are, however, expressions of people's power should be unnecessary if socioeconomic policies and programs of both the government and private sector work out for the people's benefit. Sadly, this is not the case. The quality of program success, to paraphrase Shakespeare's Portia, is strained; it does not fall as the gentle rain upon the place beneath.

This issue's authors identify some of these policy and program dilemmas. Sam Fujisaka finds that Bureau of Forest Development policies still require flexibility, an appreciation of population trends, and the tailoring of innovations to local conditions in order to solve the problems of Filipino uplanders and upland ecosystems. Mayu T. Munnarriz marshals evidence to show that despite increases in income levels and school enrollment, the Tondo Foreshore Development Project did not improve the health status and savings pattern of Foreshore residents. Luis Carmelo C. Buenaventura and Luzviminda B. Valencia's research team speak of the stigma attached to the physically disabled and Hansenite victims; they call for more program support and greater public understanding of discredited persons. Similarly, and on a more theoretical plane, Paul Mathews argues that the ineffectiveness of fertility control programs may spring from a misunderstanding of the values and disvalues which Filipinos have towards children – an indication perhaps that Filipino social scientists continue to depend on western theories to explain Philippine culture. Priscilla Weeks stresses this argument. She observes that part of the difficulty faced by the National Nutrition Program in raising the nutritional level of rural residents in Nueva Ecija lies in the developer's preconceived notions about peasant behavior – a set of notions perpetuated by social scientists who interpret development phenomena solely in terms of Western theories, Marxist or non-Marxist. Weeks praises efforts towards the indigenization of social theory, but adds that these efforts should be a "ground up exercise," i.e., a serious attempt to deconstruct current models and then, to reconstruct them on the basis of field data. Thomas Gibson's ethnographic material on the Buid religion is one set of useful field data; unfortunately, as Maria Elena Z. Lopez finds, Gibson's book is expensive and as such, inaccessible to many students and social scientists. Comparative survey data also help, as Marilou Palabrica-Costello notes, since they enrich current thinking of social phenomena, in this case the ethnic factor in population change.

The election fever rose at the closing of 1986. Senatorial and congressional aspirants, encouraged by a perceived widening of a so-called democratic space, launched their campaigns and promised socioeconomic deliverance once elected to office. We can only remain skeptical about these promises. The Aquino government, try as it may to make drastic alterations in public policy, stands according to Cristina Montiel, as a centrist collective. And while many cabinet members, including the

president herself, are viewed as non-traditional politicians, we still have to wait and see if the new government's approach to social change (e.g., the land reform issue) will be as non-traditional as their public image suggests. Many articles in this issue point out that changes required in contemporary Philippine society demand long, painstaking and serious thinking by social scientists and decision-makers alike. Some of these changes may even represent radical solutions to long-standing problems. Will the new government encourage this kind of thinking and be open to radical alternatives when necessary? We shall see, we shall act, we shall try to survive another year. We shall find ways, as Fernando N. Zialcita's paper on lenten rituals suggests, to reconcile ourselves with our fellowmen. And like Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon, we can also hope for a Godot who will stop us from despair and will give us the strength to continue the struggle for a meaningful world — a fight which may include, among others, another outburst of Filipino people power.

A final note: rising printing costs and a modest publication fund forced the PSS to release only one issue of the *PSR* this year. We encourage friends and colleagues to renew their membership and subscription, recruit new members, and encourage the use of *PSR* articles for teaching and research. These acts of kindness will help us to publish more issues each year.