

Editors' Note

In 2015, five faculty members were awarded the President Edgardo J. Angara (PEJA) Fellowship. The awardees, namely Professors Aileen Baviera, Clarissa David, Stella Quimbo, Caesar Saloma, and Lucia Tangi delivered public lectures on their respective topics upon completing their researches in 2016. Their research reports are featured in this volume of the Public Policy Journal (PPJ).

Professor Aileen Baviera's "Territorial and Maritime Disputes in the West Philippine Sea: Foreign Policy Choices and their Impact on Domestic Stakeholders" examines the role of the various domestic stakeholders, their views on the controversial maritime dispute between China and the Philippines and how these impact their lives. The study describes the efforts primarily made by the Department of Foreign Affairs in soliciting stakeholders' feedbacks and recognizes the indicative support of the stakeholders, including Filipino-Chinese nationals torn on the territorial issue and on their loyalties. The study also recognizes the vulnerabilities that persist and bother the Philippine government and the domestic stakeholders such as the need to normalize fishing activities in the West Philippine territories, the need to protect marine resources, the imperative to fast track the modernization of marine capabilities, resources, and equipment. With the onset of a new administration under Duterte, the author raises the question as to whether domestic stakeholders could be a democratic voice and source of strength of a nation whose foreign policy is yet caught in the unfinished business of the maritime dispute.

Using three service frontline government agencies as cases, Dr. Clarissa David's "Social Media Use by Frontline Government Services: Review and Recommendations" examines how social networking, whether internally crafted or outsourced by the agencies, perform to help achieve the agency goals and their own work settings. Social networking as a communication strategy varies in utilization by the three agencies, namely the Department of Education, Department of Health, and the Home Mutual Development Fund. Based on her conclusion, the study recommends some policies, organizational arrangements, and integration of the agency strategies in the overall digital communication strategies.

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Professor Stella Quimbo and her team's "Do Investments Respond to Taxation and Incentives? Evidence from the Philippines" assesses the responsiveness of industry investments to tax changes and incentives. Using data from industry and firms, the relationships between tax incentives and industry investments are explained. A modified version of the study, which was conducted in time series, validates the research's earlier cross-section findings. The study suggests a reduction of corporate income tax rates to even off with the industry investment level of some ASEAN countries. Quimbo and her team recognize that a study on corporate taxation is quite limited and under-researched, and should be pursued.

Dr. Caesar Saloma's study on "Measuring the Performance of the Philippine Scientific Enterprise System" presents an interesting set of data from publications and other sources, and uses these data to diagnose the performance indices used by institutions and organizations that are involved in the production of scientific outputs. The author used the Academic Productivity Index, the Scientific Productivity Index, and the PhD Production Efficiency Index in examining the value of metrics that align individual performance and institutional outputs. These outputs are useful measures to determine or decide on faculty tenure and promotion. In a sense, these metrics also facilitate the governance of the academic and scientific work by making performances and decisions transparent, objective, and measurable.

Professor Lucia Tangi's "Empowering Women Seafarers in the Maritime Sector" discusses how female seafarers find themselves in the maritime school and on board sea vessels, and how they face up to various forms of discrimination, bullying by male counterparts, sexual harassment, and loneliness. The narrative is gathered through first-hand accounts among seafarers. The researcher concludes with recommendations that would change the conditions of women sea farers by addressing challenges to welfare, mobilization, awareness raising, and general improvement of their status and lives.

The volume includes the speech delivered by Senator Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara which was reviewed by a professor from the School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR) of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

The speech of Senator Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara titled "Mind the Skills Gap: The Case of the Philippines" delivered in a British Council-sponsored policy dialogue on 26 October 2015 is reviewed by Professor Emily Christi A. Cabegin of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations.

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In his speech, Senator Angara poses an interesting challenge to Philippine education, saying that in the context of the so-called “jobs war”, formal education—and specifically public education—has to be improved by making education accessible, flexible, and seamless, thereby also tempering the “collegiate delusion” where formal higher education seems to be the only way to jobs. A big challenge, he narrates, is the close interface between school and work, implying a better match between job and skills and a harmony between the two sectors of education and job. Education should meet the job requirements. According to Angara, there are different routes to jobs – not only or not necessarily the path of formal higher education. The senator enumerates the various laws and policies adopted to meet the challenges of the education-job equation, and recognizes that although there are clear policies already adopted by the government through legislative measures and executive fiat, all these are a work in progress.

Professor Cabegin in her review of the Angara speech brings in another dimension to the jobs and skills discourse, saying the Philippines is not wanting in highly-skilled labor, but rather lacks job opportunities.

The articles in this PPJ volume contribute to or provide insights toward policy making by leaders in their respective sectors, namely domestic and foreign policy on the Philippine marine sector, higher education, finance and taxation, communications in frontline service, and women seafarers. A subtle cross-cutting thread among these themes is how policy and practice affect human resources, and vice versa.

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