

# On the book “Virtuous Impatience”. What Our Country Needs in this Fast- Changing World. A Collection of Essays<sup>1</sup>

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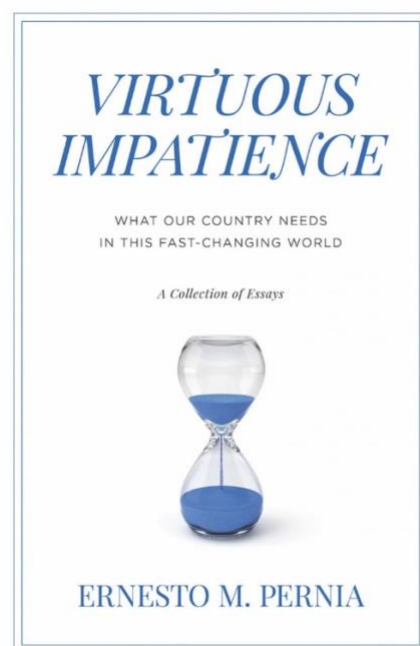
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The upliftment of the poor is Dr. Pernia’s life-long advocacy and commitment. In “Virtuous Impatience”, he shares nuanced reflections on how problems of poverty and inequality of income and opportunity are deeply rooted in personal human traits - the “viciously patient” nature of Filipinos, embedded in Filipino socio-cultural values, shaped through centuries of mental subjugation by colonization and religion. The Filipino citizenry, local and national leaders, manifest great tolerance for uninformed decision-making, unskilled implementation of actions, leading to inefficient, nonproductive performance and outcomes.

This perpetrates a vicious cycle that keeps the country’s economy in a metastable state, away from the trajectory to a stable, inclusive, diversified and resilient economy like those of its ASEAN neighbors. Nowhere is this more evident again than in this time of COVID.

Dr. Pernia engages us in public discourse on a range of socio-economic issues of grave national importance – issues he has courageously addressed throughout his professional life as an academic and public servant in the field of development economics. Specific situationers and arguments are presented in simple, readable, yet compelling language. Responsible family

planning limits the number of family dependents, reduces hunger and malnutrition, and empowers women to join the workforce. Massive training and upgrading of skills and




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<sup>1</sup> A collection of essays authored by Dr. Ernesto M. Pernia, Professor Emeritus, School of Economics, University of the Philippines Diliman; published by the University of the Philippines Press, October 2020

competencies build the labor force indispensable for the growth of agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing, tourism and ICT industries in the regions. This as the alternative to massive labor export which drains talent, disrupts families and exacerbates regional inequality – a glaring example of a vicious patience cycle that we have not exited.

Paramount is investment in an advanced, robust higher education system, with emphasis on science, technology and innovation, to build human knowledge capital, the so-called “suprastructure”, attract foreign investments, and with local R&D, lead to sprouting of innovative, income-generating enterprises in the regions. Only with an educated citizenry can we expect to see the rise of a critically discerning and virtuously impatient public, an electorate that demands Integrity (Incorruptibility), Competence and Dedication (ICD) from elected officials, and the decline of patronage politics. Institutional reforms towards organized, effective governance at the national, regional and LGU levels, led by virtuously impatient leaders and implemented by ethical civil servants, would spell pro-poor growth or a larger proportion of GDP accruing to the poor. Government investments that empower poor individuals, in addition to infrastructure, land use, transport and ICT programs, would redound to upliftment of the poor. The Filipino citizenry, public leaders, as well as religious and private sector leaders, are urged to reexamine the true meaning and practice of Christian values in the context of challenges we continue to face in Philippine society. “Virtuous Impatience” is a must- read for all of us.