



PHILIPPINE POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

2026 International Conference of the Philippine Political Science Association

Democracy: Navigating the Tensions of Unity and Division

Dumaguete City | [28-30] April 2026

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Conference Theme

In the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and around the world, the politics of unity and division have long defined the trajectories of state formation, nation-building, and everyday power struggles. From the forging of postcolonial states to the negotiation of regional alliances, appeals to unity have often been cast as a moral and political imperative. These are manifest in dynamic political activities, ranging from the assertion of national solidarity against external threats to regional integration under international bodies like ASEAN and the EU, or collective action at different levels of society during times of crisis.

Despite these, Unity is rarely neutral and frequently built on selective narratives, practices of exclusion, and the silencing of dissenting voices, leaving questions about who benefits from unity and who is rendered invisible in its name.

Conversely, division is frequently framed as a threat to peace, stability, and progress. It is invoked as the antithesis of harmony and as a justification for authoritarian consolidation. However, history shows that division is not merely a disruptive force. It can be a deliberate tool of governance, enabling elites to fragment opposition, mobilise loyal constituencies, or reinforce social hierarchies.

At the same time, division can serve not only as a reminder from reality that diversity is inevitable. It is also a political resource for change and resistance—fueling movements that challenge the status quo, articulate alternative visions of belonging, or assert the rights of marginalised groups.

This conference invites scholars, practitioners, and activists to examine how unity and division operate as intertwined and dynamic forces in Southeast Asia's political landscapes, as well as globally. How do ordinary citizens and leaders craft, receive, and respond to narratives of Unity, especially in relation to authority and plurality? In what ways are divisions—ethnic, religious, linguistic, class-based, or ideological—constructed, contested, and institutionalised? How do marginalised communities navigate these tensions, reclaim narratives, and transform exclusion into spaces of empowerment through storytelling, grassroots organising, and everyday acts of defiance?



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With this theme, we aim to reframe unity and division not as static conditions, but as evolving processes shaped by historical legacies, shifting authoritarian and democratic practices, transnational flows, international relations, and the pressures of global capitalism. In critically engaging with these themes, the conference aims to create a space for envisioning political futures in which unity does not necessitate conformity, and division can serve as a foundation for pluralism, democratic deepening, and social justice.

The conference seeks to offer a wide range of opportunities for scientific inquiry and critical analysis in the fields of Philippine politics, political theory, comparative politics, international relations, and research methodology. The 2026 International Conference of PPSA aims to convene presentations that explore both the unity and division within Philippine politics and the discipline of political science.

Conference Sub-themes

Among the sub-themes that the conference panels could address are the following:

1. Artificial Intelligence and Democracy: Elections, Opinion, Engagement
2. Class, Inequality, and the Myth of Solidarity
3. Conflict and Peacebuilding: Negotiating Unity After Violence
4. Constitutional Design and Federalism: Unity or Division?
5. Digital Publics: Polarization, Disinformation, and Communities
6. Diasporas and Transnational Ties Beyond Borders
7. Divisions from Below: Grassroots Movements and Resistance
8. Environmental Politics: Shared Crises, Divided Responses
9. Ethnic and Religious Fault Lines in Southeast Asia
10. Forging Unity Amid Conflict and Diversity
11. Gendered Dimensions of Unity and Division in Politics
12. Global Politics of Unity and Division: Conflict and Cooperation
13. Identity Politics and the Boundaries of Citizenship
14. Imagining Futures: Pluralism, Solidarity, and Post-Division Politics
15. Memory, History, and the Politics of Belonging
16. Narratives of Power: Constructing Unity, Marking Division
17. Nation-Building and Its Discontents in Plural Societies
18. Political Dynasties, Graft, and Corruption
19. Political Parties: Bridging or Exploiting Divisions
20. Polarization and Its Impact on Democratic Institutions
21. Populism and Authoritarianism: Mobilizing Unity, Deepening Division
22. Regional Maritime Security Cooperation
23. Social Media Platforms, Polarization, and Democracy
24. Sovereignty and International Organizations
25. The Security Sector in Contentious Politics
26. Unity as Spectacle: Media, Propaganda, and Consensus
27. Youth and Student Movements for Unity



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In addition to the above research panels, the conference also allows for pedagogical panels that can include the following:

- Comparative Politics and Area Studies
- Regional Situations (Northeast, Southeast, West, South, and Central Asia Perspectives)
- The Study of Political Science as a Discipline: Contemporaries and Futures
- Research Methodologies in Political Science
- Ethics and Politics

About the PPSA

The Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) has continued to make path-breaking contributions to the promotion of the study of politics through the professional development of its members and academic advances in teaching, research, and public service for over 60 years. The PPSA, through its activities in general and its annual conferences in particular, has continuously and critically engaged fellow academics, policymakers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and social movement players, as well as public intellectuals, on topics touching on day-to-day political realities at the local, regional, and international levels.

A key strength of the PPSA is that it is multidisciplinary in both its approaches and engagements. Thus, its members do not only include political scientists but also scholars from other social science disciplines. As with the previous PPSA conferences, the 2026 International Conference is expected to attract around 200 academics, researchers, public intellectuals, well-known policy and opinion makers, social movements, and civil society players to Dumaguete City.

Proposal Submissions and Participation Rules

Paper abstracts should consist of a maximum of 250 words and include research question(s) and research method(s). Panel proposals should also contain a panel description of not more than 250 words, aside from the individual abstracts of the papers included in the panel. Proposals will be peer-reviewed.

Individual appearances are limited to one (1) appearance in the program in each role to maximise participation. No individual may appear more than once in each of these roles: (a) chair of a panel, (b) presenter (principal author), and (c) co-author.

Panel proposals should strive for regional and gender balance and include younger scholars, following the diversity policy outlined in PPSA's Goals (2023-2025). As such, proposals with all-male panels are not permitted.

Those interested in presenting or convening panels may submit their proposals through this Google Form: [\[LINK\]](#)



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Deadlines and Dates to Remember

Call for Proposals (Paper and Panels)	01 October 2025
Deadline for Submission of Abstracts	15 November 2025
Release of Acceptance Notices	15 January 2026
Confirmation of Participation and Registration of Presenters	31 January 2026
Deadline of Payment for Participants	30 March 2025
Release of Book of Abstracts	15 April 2025

Eligibility

Scholars, activists, practitioners, public servants, and public intellectuals from the Philippines, Asia, and other regions are encouraged to participate in the conference.

Conference Fees

All participants, including presenters and role players, must pay the conference fee of PhP 6,000.00¹. Discounted rates are available for graduate and undergraduate students upon presentation of (1) proof of enrollment and (2) a school identification card. Nominated individuals by institutional members also enjoy a discounted rate.

Conference fees

For all presenters and role players (includes presenting graduate students)	PhP 6,000.00
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Discounted rates

Life-time members (former PPSA presidents)	PhP 3,000.00
Graduate students (non-presenting)	PhP 5,500.00
Nominated individuals of institutional members ²	PhP 2,500.00
Undergraduate students (non-presenting) ³	PhP 2,000.00

Further Inquiries

For inquiries, please contact:

The Secretariat

Philippine Political Science Association
E-mail: philpolsci@gmail.com

¹ Inclusive of one (1) year membership worth PhP 3,000.00.

² Each institutional member can nominate four (4) individuals. Only these nominated individuals are eligible for the institutional member discount. Individuals who are affiliated with an institutional member but are not nominated cannot avail of the discounted rate.

³ Undergraduate students may attend the conference as participants but are not eligible to present and be members of the Association.