From the Editors

“Dutertismo”: Roots, Outcomes, Trends

Since his election as Philippine president in 2016, Rodrigo Roa Duterte has arguably become the most contentious executive in the country's postwar politics. The first local politician to be elected president from the southern region (Mindanao) of the country, Duterte's unorthodox and disruptive leadership style has provoked adulation from his supporters and abhorrence from his detractors.

From his first day in office, Duterte has pursued a relentless, bloody campaign against illegal drugs resulting in at least 6,000 deaths as conceded by the Philippine National Police to as high as 25,000 as reported by human rights monitoring groups. Through his campaign advocacy for a federal system of government, he has sought a radical transformation of the country's formal governance structures. Seeking to establish closer relations with China, Duterte has instigated a major foreign policy shift that had been long anchored on close ties with the United States. He continues to defy international agencies that seek to investigate rampant cases of human rights abuses and actually initiated the country's withdrawal from the International Criminal Court.

In an unprecedented move in his first year in office, Duterte appointed three prominent leaders of the Left movement to his cabinet and presided over a peace process with the communist-led armed movement. Today, Duterte has resumed a full-scale attack against the Left, including members of the broad legal opposition and critics from all walks of life. But under his administration Duterte also succeeded in concluding a major peace agreement with the largest armed Muslim movement in Mindanao.

In his first three years in office, Duterte has received consistently high public opinion survey ratings. A number of consequential legislation were also passed during his administration, including: The Free Public Tertiary Education Act,

the Universal Health Care Act, the Mental Health Services Act, the Expanded Maternity Leave Act, and the Institutionalization of the 4-Ps Program for the poorest families. Except for a short episode of inflation in 2018, the economy has not suffered from any major crisis and growth remains relatively high in comparison with our Asian neighbors. COVID-19 of course would stop this trend.

Interestingly, the emergence of Pres. Duterte coincides with the rise of other leaders in Asia and the rest of the world whose electoral mandates have been practiced with strong doses of populism and authoritarianism in societies increasingly referred to as illiberal democracies. No doubt, Duterte shares some of the attributes of willful elected leaders increasingly unmoored from legal and institutional constraints in their political practice. But more challenging is the need to understand the local bases of this phenomenon and its differences from others and whether Western concepts and approaches are adequate in explaining this development.

Against this backdrop, the editorial team of the *Philippine Political Science Journal* issued a call for papers focusing on the sources of the emergence of President Duterte, unfolding impacts not only on Philippine politics but other areas of society, as well as other trends. We received quite a number of submissions since late last year. COVID-19 also happened early this year and the review and revision processes were severely affected. However, seven papers managed to pass not only the initial editorial assessment and the peer review process but the authors were able to substantially respond to the comments of the reviewers and the editorial team and meet the deadlines. We are extremely proud of this double special issue.

This special issue of course covers mostly only the first three years of the administration of President Duterte. We will likely receive manuscripts in the near future to cover the second half and an overall assessment of the Duterte presidency. However, these articles will hopefully provide scholars and students of Philippine politics theoretical and empirical explanations and assessments on the rise of President Duterte, impacts of his leadership and administration on politics and other aspects, as well as possible trends in Philippine politics and society as a result of his Presidency that can be discussed, debated, and further probed in future publications and other fora.

We acknowledge the authors of the manuscripts that appear in this special issue: Mark R. Thompson, Raul V. Fabella, Antonio P. Contreras, Naomi B. Arata, Ador R. Torneo, Yuko Kasuya, Julio Teehankee, Jenny D. Balboa, and Robert Joseph Medillo. Their manuscripts covered topics such as explanations to Duterte's rise and leadership as well as Philippine oligarchic democracy; the

drug war as a possible explanation for Duterte's electoral victory; academic versus social media myths and representations related to Duterte and their implications to political order; partisanship, political support, and information processing among Duterte's youth supporters and non-supporters; the impact of the Duterte presidency on the midterm elections of 2019 and political parties in the Philippines; Duterte's foreign policy pivot and possible impact on Philippine trade and investments; and the role of Congressional intervention in the Philippines' South China Sea policy under three Presidents (Macapagal-Arroyo, Aquino, and Duterte). We are also grateful to the very sharp and gracious reviewers who took time to give constructive comments and suggestions that helped further improve all these manuscripts.

COVID-19 has also become personal for the Philippine Political Science Association and the *Philippine Political Science Journal*. We dedicate this special issue to Professor Aileen San Pablo Baviera, a prolific Filipino scholar who has worked extensively on China and international affairs, built scholarly networks in the Philippines and abroad, and mentored a younger generation of scholars.

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