1 Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact people’s health and livelihood systems around the globe. As governments roll out mass vaccination programs in their respective jurisdictions, it is uncertain whether herd immunity can be achieved at the soonest time, given the mutations and emergence of new COVID-19 variants and vaccine hesitancy on the part of citizens. Meanwhile, political leaders have straddled the thin line between imposing mobility restrictions to save lives and reopening the economy to save jobs. This raised fundamental concerns about the political responses at both domestic and international levels toward the crisis.

It is important to examine and compare the political dynamics of the pandemic in various contexts. The articles in this special issue unpack the role of politics in confronting an existential health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it delineates three core dimensions of the state necessary to address such a crisis: authority, capacity, and legitimacy (Gisselquist and Vaccaro 2021).
2 An Outbreak of Autocratic Governance

The strong predisposition towards autocratic governance was spreading across the globe even before the outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 (Cooper and Aitchison 2020). However, the pandemic exacerbated this tendency. In many countries, it provided an opportunity for authoritarian leaders to expand their powers. As the pandemic raged, these elected chief executives demanded and received even more authority from the legislature to manage the health crisis.

Various forms of democratic backsliding worldwide have intensified more than a decade ago. This trend involves the erosion of democratic governance features within any regime (Waldner and Lust 2018). It occurs through an incremental process where elected populist leaders draw measures to weaken the countervailing power exercised by institutional checks such as the political opposition, independent media, and civil society that are important in a vibrant democracy (Diamond 2021).

The military takeovers and electoral violence prevalent during the Cold War have waned in the contemporary period. Instead of fomenting regime change, current forms of democratic backsliding tend to produce political systems that are ambivalently democratic or hybrid. According to Bermeo (2016), executive aggrandizement has become the more common type of backsliding. This happens when elected executives dilute the constitutional checks on executive power through concerted actions that erode the power of independent groups to offer alternate options and challenge executive choices.

3 Democratic Backsliding in the Philippines

The Philippines presents an interesting case of democratic backsliding that accelerated with the election of a populist leader, Rodrigo Duterte, as president in 2016. Populism is considered a thin-centered ideology that portrays society as divided into two homogeneous and contending camps: the pure people versus the corrupt elite (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2018). Populism is a recurring feature of Philippine politics (Magno 2021). However, under Duterte’s populist presidency, executive aggrandizement was pushed to the hilt. Pappas (2019) argued that when populism cannot settle on the point of political equilibrium, it often swings at either end of the spectrum, at times toward mending liberalism and at other times veering towards autocracy. Under Duterte’s rule, the autocratic version of populism became dominant, facilitating democratic backsliding in the Philippines.
Democratic backsliding has affected pandemic governance in the Philippines. The rise of autocratic populism weakened democratic institutions and systems of checks and balances within the state and society. The concentration of power in the executive, coupled with the lack of willingness to consult with stakeholders and the limited capacity to integrate various proposals, prevented the government from mounting a coherent policy response to the crisis. Democratic backsliding has contributed to poor pandemic governance, especially in responding to health and economic problems and addressing the second-order issues of ensuring accountability in public expenditure management under emergency conditions. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 initially threatened Duterte’s populist legacy (Teehankee 2021).

4 The Arrival of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is acknowledged to have begun on November 17, 2019, with the first recorded case of the disease in the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province, China. In the following weeks, cases of people infected with the virus piled up. However, the government kept a tight lid on health data and even reprimanded the local doctors who warned of the new disease. The Chinese government informed the World Health Organization (WHO) of the existence of the virus only on December 31, 2019. Such a lack of transparency prevented health authorities globally from taking preventive action and containing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus across cities, nations, and borders (Steingrüber et al. 2020).

The Inter-Agency Task Force Against Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) was convened in January 2020 to deal with the COVID-19 problem in the Philippines. The policy architecture to address the crisis took shape in response to previous contagious diseases. Executive Order No. 168 that created the IATF was originally issued in 2014 to confront emerging infectious diseases (EIDS). These include Avian Influenza, Ebola, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-COV), which can easily spread due to heightened mobility of travelers and products brought by globalization. The IATF was designed to facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration and efficiently manage the effects of any potential epidemic or pandemic.

The functions of the IATF included establishing a system to identify, screen, and assist those suspected or confirmed to be infected with EIDS. It is expected to prevent or minimize the entry of suspected patients into the country through rigid screening and identification of EID carriers and institutionalizing a
surveillance system in all ports of entry. The IATF is tasked with preventing the local spread of EID through contact tracing and quarantine procedures. It also strives to lessen casualties by strengthening clinical management, healthcare facilities, and public safety measures.

To combat COVID-19, the reconstituted IATF proposed temporary restrictions on travel to and from Hubei Province, China, and the institution of quarantine protocols for returning Filipinos from the area under Resolution No. 1, dated January 28, 2020. The first COVID-19 infections in the Philippines were detected in a tourist couple from Hubei Province who entered the country through Hongkong. They were admitted to the San Lazaro Hospital, a national infectious disease referral hospital in Manila. While the first patient recovered, her companion’s condition deteriorated and was confirmed as the first COVID-19 death outside China on February 1, 2020 (Edrada et al. 2020).

5 Series of Lockdown Policies

On March 8, 2020, President Duterte signed Proclamation No. 922, declaring a state of a public health emergency. At that time, there were only 20 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Classes were suspended in Metro Manila. A few days later, on March 12, Duterte placed the National Capital Region under lockdown. Travels going in and out of Metro Manila were banned. Another executive edict was released on March 16, 2020. Under Proclamation No. 929, the entire country was placed under a state of calamity. This measure enabled local government units (LGUs) to tap their local calamity funds for COVID-19-related expenditures. It also extended the strict lockdown policies in Metro Manila to the entire island of Luzon. The most stringent restrictions were applied under this lockdown category, officially known as enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Under ECQ protocols, the movement of people was severely restricted. Mass public transportation services were suspended, while land, air, and sea travel were restricted. The restrictions included transport network vehicle services. All establishments were closed, except those that provide necessities like supermarkets, convenience stores, hospitals, medical clinics, pharmacies, banks, food preparation and delivery services, and water-refilling stations. Government offices, business process outsourcing companies, and export-oriented industries were allowed to operate with skeletal staff. Work in the private sector went on under work-from-home arrangements (Gregorio 2020).

While the IATF crafted policy recommendations for the President, the National Task Force Against COVID-19, headed by the Secretary of the Department of National Defense, handled the operational command. An
Incident Command System also functioned as an on-scene disaster response mechanism to manage hazards and other consequences associated with COVID-19.

The IATF may call upon any department, bureau, office, agency, or instrumentality of the government, including Government-Owned-or-Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), government financial institutions (GFI$s), LGUs, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the private sector for assistance. On the other hand, the Joint Task Force COVID-19 Shield was established to enforce quarantine protocols and manage border checkpoints. It was composed of elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Bureau of Fire Protection, and barangay officers.

The Duterte administration sought the support of Congress to legitimize emergency powers for the president to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the *Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act, was enacted on March 25, 2020. It contained policy measures to curb the spread of the virus, strengthen the healthcare system, and provide the affected sectors with social assistance. The law authorized the president to exercise temporary budgetary measures and effectively allowed the executive branch to discontinue government programs to generate savings and realign, reallocate, and reprogram funds to implement COVID-19 measures.

The legislation provided the president with special powers to launch aid programs and punish people disobeying the emergency regulations. In this regard, people faced prison sentences for breaking lockdown regulations. More than 76,000 people were arrested between March and July 2020. Among those apprehended were homeless people and street vendors. Indeed, the capacity to observe quarantine regulations varied across income classes (Holmes and Hutchcroft 2020). The law punished those violating restrictions with up to two months imprisonment or fines up to PHP 1 million (USD 20,000). These sanctions also applied to individuals or groups found to be creating or spreading false information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 6 Lockdown and Economic Downturn

The response of the Filipino government to the pandemic showed the negative effects of the trade-off between health and the economy. The administration of harsh lockdown measures prevented the spike in COVID-19 cases that would overwhelm the capacity of the health care system but came at the expense of plunging the country into a deep economic recession. At the onset of the
pandemic, the Philippines registered a gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of −0.7 percent during the first quarter of 2020. The impact of stringent restrictions was dramatically felt when the economy contracted by 16.9 percent in the next quarter. The economy continued to falter in the following quarters, with GDP growth rates of −11.4 percent in the third quarter and −8.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020 (See Figure 1).

The economy slightly improved but was still down by 4.2 percent in the first quarter of 2021. The negative growth for five successive quarters represents the most prolonged recession faced by the country since the 1985 debt crisis. The Philippines posted the worst growth record among peers in the Southeast Asian region in the first quarter of 2021, including Thailand (−2.6 percent), Indonesia (−0.7 percent), Malaysia (−0.5 percent), and Vietnam (4.5 percent). The contraction was pushed by the decline in private domestic demand due to inflation, income losses, and protracted lockdown measures (World Bank 2021, 10).

In 2020, the number of persons in the labor force was estimated at 43.9 million. This number represents the economically active population, either employed or unemployed, accounting for a 59.5 percent labor force participation rate (LFPR) of the 73.7 million 15 years old and over. This annual LFPR
is the lowest since adopting the new definition of unemployed in April 2005, reflecting the effect of the various community quarantine controls, business closures, and physical distancing measures put in place in the Philippines in response to the pandemic.

The unemployment rate surged to 17.6 percent at the height of the lockdown restrictions in April 2020. It dropped to 10 percent in July 2020. It slid down further to 7.1 percent in March 2021, which is the lowest reported rate covering the period of the COVID-19 pandemic since April 2020 (See Table 1). The economic fallout from the prolonged lockdown measures was also reflected in the involuntary hunger experienced by Filipino families due to the loss of employment and livelihood opportunities. In a September 2020 survey, the Social Weather Stations (SWS) reported a hunger rate of 30.7 percent (7.6 million families). The average hunger rate for 2020 was 21.1 percent, exceeding the previous record of 19.9 percent in 2011 and 2012 and double the average of 9.3 percent for 2019. The survey showed that Metro Manila has the highest incidence of Hunger at 23.3 percent (780,000 families), followed by Mindanao at 16.0 percent (909,000 families), Balance of Luzon at 14.4 percent (1.6 million families), and the Visayas at 14.3 percent (674,000 families).

7 Vaccination Woes

On March 1, 2021, the Philippines became the last country in Southeast Asia to roll out a national vaccination program against COVID-19. The absence of a law providing for an indemnity fund had delayed the shipment of the vaccines. Congress had to rush the approval of a bill creating a PHP 500 million National Vaccine Indemnity Fund to cover compensation for the potentially

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Table 1: Unemployment rate (April 2020–March 2021)

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<tr>
<td>Labor force participation rate (%)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate (%)</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
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Notes: *p* – Estimates are preliminary and may change; *f* – Final Estimates
adverse effects stemming from the doses’ emergency use. President Duterte
signed R.A. No. 11525, otherwise known as the COVID-19 Vaccination Program
Act, on February 26, 2021.

The indemnity law granted COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers immunity
from lawsuits for claims from people experiencing any adverse effects from the
COVID-19 vaccines. It was confirmed that pharmaceutical companies, which
asked for an indemnification clause from the government, were fearful that
what happened to Sanofi in the anti-dengue vaccine case might be repeated in
the COVID-19 situation (Valderama 2021).

8 Prelude to Pandemic Politics

The process of democratic backsliding characterized by executive aggrandize-
ment was reflected in a series of actions that undermined the independence
of state and societal institutions. The executive encroached on the powers of
the co-equal branches of government and stymied the exercise of media free-
dom. A supermajority coalition of parties supportive of the new president was
established in the House of Representatives of the Philippine Congress fol-
lowing the 2016 national elections. The PDP-Laban led the coalition, the party
of the new executive, together with the Nacionalista Party, National People’s
Coalition, National Unity Party, Lakas-CMD, and various party-list organiza-
tions. Ironically, the bulk of the elected representatives from the Liberal Party,
the former administration party, opted to join the majority instead of the
minority bloc. There was a similar realignment in the upper chamber, with
the parties identified with the new administration forming a majority bloc to
support the president’s legislative agenda. However, unlike the lower house, a
substantial minority bloc was formed in the Senate.

The judiciary did not escape executive aggrandizement. A quo warranto
proceeding was initiated in the Supreme Court against Chief Justice Maria
Lourdes Sereno. It is a legal procedure for removing a public official on the
ground that the individual has no legal right to the office. Prior to her removal,
Sereno voiced the need to observe the rule of law in the war on drugs and to
respect legal procedure in dealing with judges accused of involvement in the
drug trade. In May 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that Sereno’s appointment
was invalid by a vote of 8–6 (Deinla et al. 2018).

Aside from whipping the legislature and judiciary into line, the executive
also challenged the independence of constitutional bodies. Due to its criticism
of the drug war, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) was threatened with
abolition. At one time, a proposal was made during the Congressional hear-
ingen for the 2018 national budget to render the CHR inutile by allocating an annual budget of only 1,000 pesos to the beleaguered agency. The president also pushed but failed for the impeachment of former Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales after her agency said it was investigating the Duterte family’s wealth (Esmaquel II 2021).

Another constitutional body that earned the ire of the chief executive was the Commission on Audit (COA) after the agency flagged the deficiencies of the Department of Health (DOH) in the administration of PHP 67.3 billion COVID-19 emergency funds. These included purchases deemed to be disadvantageous to the government, as well as defects in the sworn statements in contracts, non-posting of procurement information on government websites, and non-provision of technical specifications in contracts. However, the president dismissed the 2020 COA report as inadequate and merely indicated missing paperwork rather than corruption (Cator et al. 2021). The COA is the supreme audit institution in the country. Under the Constitution, it is mandated to prepare an annual report covering the financial condition and operation of the government, its subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities, including government-owned or controlled corporations and non-governmental entities subject to its audit.

Non-state actors like the media play a key role in democratic oversight as suppliers of information fostering reasoned debate in society. This critical function of media was severely tested as lawsuits were filed against independent media practitioners. Congress also denied the franchise renewal of a leading media firm. Media harassment and coordinated bashing from electronic trolls generated a chilling effect that drove media practitioners to exercise self-regulation.

9 Erosion of Institutional Checks and Balances

As democratic backsliding proceeded apace, executive aggrandizement led to the erosion of legislative and judicial independence and weakened the institutional checks exercised by constitutional bodies. The power of appointment was also used to expand the political control of the chief executive. It becomes a matter of public concern whether loyalty or competence are the driving factors for personnel recruitment in key positions in the bureaucracy. Congressional oversight in confirmation of appointees becomes perfunctory with strong executive influence over the legislature. Under presidential systems, the waning clout of traditional actors such as party organizations over personnel selection has given a wide latitude for the chief executive to choose
loyalists in the context of accomplishing the administration’s policy and political goals in the bureaucracy (Lewis 2011). It is acknowledged in Philippine development planning documents that the integrity of the civil service has been diminished by an appointment process based on political accommodation rather than merit, which partly stems from the president’s broad powers of appointment and discretion (NEDA 2011, p. 21).

The appointment of retired generals in key cabinet posts, and other high executive positions, was not new. However, the high ratio of such appointments was evident under the Duterte administration. More than 60 former military officers held ranking positions in the government as of early 2021 (Parrocha 2021). When the pandemic struck the Philippines in 2020, President Duterte tapped former military officials, who were already in the cabinet, to lead the COVID-19 response.

In battling COVID-19, the Philippines imposed one of the longest lockdowns in the world. Entire provinces and cities were put into lockdown under various quarantine classifications. The government relied heavily on the police and the military to maintain order. All health protocols, including mobility restrictions, wearing masks, and social distancing, were followed through punitive action (Hapal 2021). It was only in September 2021 that a more contained, granular lockdown approach was adopted. Various sectors have criticized the militarized approach to the pandemic for not paying enough attention to the health and economic dimensions of the problem.

The poor pandemic performance of the government drove health frontliners to call for a medical time-out at the end of July 2020. During a press conference, Jose Santiago, president of the Philippine Medical Association, said that the medical time-out should be used to refine pandemic control strategies by addressing hospital workforce efficiency, failure of contact tracing and quarantine, transportation safety, workplace safety, public compliance with self-protection, and social amelioration (Hallare 2020).

Since the pandemic, the community of health professionals forwarded many bright ideas on managing the health crisis. For instance, the Healthcare Professionals Against COVID-19, a coalition of over 170 medical groups, proposed the recalibration of the DOH One Hospital Command into a One COVID-19 referral network to integrate other health facilities aside from hospitals, such as barangay health centers, clinics, laboratories, and even pharmacies. This would expand care provision in communities and prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed by patients. An added move to answer the challenge of getting medical attention, especially where social distancing measures are in place, was to improve telemedicine services. The medical group also pushed for strengthening the role of science and experts in making decisions,
specifically by tapping the Health Technology and Assessment Council created by the Universal Health Care Act (Tomacruz 2020).

The insidious effects of democratic backsliding on introducing an appropriate pandemic response were felt under conditions where key stakeholders were not consulted, and alternative viewpoints were abandoned as politically motivated. Repeated calls by the Senate for the Department of Health (DOH) Secretary to step down due to poor performance in handling the COVID-19 crisis were left unanswered (CNN Philippines Staff 2021).

10 Corruption in Pandemic Times

The eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore severe corruption vulnerabilities in many countries. However, even before the pandemic, it is estimated that an average of 10–25 percent of a public contract’s value may be lost to corruption (UNODC 2013). Globally, over USD 7.8 trillion were allocated annually for public health (WHO 2019). With more public funds being made available to fight the pandemic, better safeguards are needed to prevent corruption.

The potential for corruption in pandemic times was high, especially when pressures for swift government action may lead to shortcuts that damage the integrity of institutional processes. The main risk areas include withholding accurate health data, irregularities in public procurement, the purchase of sub-standard equipment, and misappropriation of health budgets (Steingrüber 2020).

The corruption risks in the health sector surfaced in a big way with the eruption of allegations regarding the misuse of funds by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) at the height of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. The PhilHealth case brought to the fore the weak exercise of institutional control mechanisms in the state-run agency. The resigned anti-fraud officer and head executive assistant of PhilHealth became whistle-blowers in revealing information that led to investigations by the legislature on the malpractices in the government corporation. These came on the heels of COA observations regarding the questionable transactions in PhilHealth. These indicate the importance of legislative and audit oversight agencies as accountability institutions within a system of checks and balances.

It was reported that COA had a hard time auditing PhilHealth due to the difficulty of obtaining documents from its central office. Corruption is perpetrated when there is a deviation from legal and institutional norms. The system of checks and balances to combat corruption can be improved by adopting an integrated approach. This requires promoting a comprehensive strategy
that includes the facilitation of basic democratic standards, participation of a strong civil society engaged in transparency and accountability work, and the consistent application of the rule of law.

It is disconcerting that a spate of allegations had been raised about the misuse of public funds amid the uphill battle of the Philippines to control the COVID-19 crisis. The Senate investigated the questionable disbursement of PhilHealth funds drawn from the PHP 30-billion Interim Reimbursement Mechanism (IRM). The IRM was an emergency support program for hospitals taking care of COVID-19 patients. The COVID-19 crisis affected people's health and public finance in a very injurious way. As the crisis deepened, it began to unravel that the use of the IRM was just one of the many alleged corrupt practices that happened in pandemic times.

The Articles Ahead

Despite imposing one of the world's strictest lockdowns, the Duterte administration struggled with the health crisis. In his final year in government, the populist Duterte confronted the deadly surge of the Delta strain of the COVID-19 pandemic (Teehankee 2022). Nevertheless, Duterte's populism proved resilient, supported by high approval ratings. The irony of Duterte's populist resilience despite his inadequate pandemic response highlights his skill of political deployment in a weak state.

This special issue compiles four articles that examine the various facets of pandemic politics in the Philippines, including state authority, capacity, and legitimacy. For the lead article, Paul D. Hutchcroft and Weena Geera investigate central-local dynamics in the Philippines during the pandemic, showing that the national government has not maintained the “central steering” needed to combat COVID-19. Instead, President Rodrigo Duterte strong-armed local politicians. This authority may mask the government’s “weak steering” and make the president look in charge, but it didn't generate the national-subnational cooperation needed for a successful pandemic response. It intensifies Duterte's 2016–19 methods, but without the local autonomy rhetoric. Through assessing the government's pandemic response, the authors argue that strong-arming is no replacement for efficient central steering in this or future crises.

Rosalie Arcala Hall assesses President Rodrigo Duterte's use of emergency powers to lock down Metro Manila and Cebu City. In 2020, deployed soldiers ran quarantine checkpoints at borders and city wards and enforced curfew and liquor bans. The increased visibility of uniformed troops in urban areas
and subsequent arrests of quarantine offenders were heavily criticized. The militaristic lockdown failed to stop the virus’ spread and introduced new civil-military dynamics locally. The deployment broadened the military’s civilian reach. Its law enforcement actions with the police threatened civil-military balance and democracy. President Duterte relied on the state’s coercive infrastructure to respond to the outbreak, allowing him to dominate local governments and stifle dissent.

The continued popularity of President Duterte despite his government’s dismal handling of the pandemic continues to be a puzzle among analysts, pundits, and observers of Philippine politics. Ronald Pernia attempts to account for the uptick in political trust in the Philippines. His article theorizes that subjective health and political attitude (democratic or non-democratic) explain political trust in the Philippines. It hypothesizes that healthy authoritarians are more inclined to prefer political institutions because they appreciate order and stability. Strongmen trigger such political beliefs. The 2019 World Values Survey supports this claim. The operationalization of Pernia’s study nuances citizen perceptions of political trust in nascent democracies. Overall, the major results provide credibility to the cultural foundations of political trust and explain why Philippine political institutions remain trusted despite the bungled pandemic response and Filipinos’ support for Duterte.

Lastly, the article by Mathea Melissa Lim and Jesse Hession Grayman focuses on the Philippines’ response to the humanitarian crisis that is the COVID-19 pandemic. They examine the use of face masks and face shields to reduce viral transmission. In the Philippines, where individuals were compelled to wear face masks and face shields for individual and public protection during the pandemic, such objects have become part of everyday life for both healthcare staff and the general population. Their article contends that these artifacts have become symbols of extraordinary meaning that shape social relationships, everyday politics, and ways of life during a global pandemic. Following Karl Marx’s idea of “commodity fetishism,” the article traces the concealment, transformation, and mystification of face masks and face shields as humanitarian objects for COVID-19 in the Filipino context and the implications of this fetishization on the Philippines’ most vulnerable populations.

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Julio C. Teehankee is a Professor of Political Science and International Studies at De La Salle University, where he served as Chair of the Political Science Department, Chair of the International Studies Department, and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. He served as President of the Philippine Political Science Association from 2017 to 2019 and the Asian Political and International Studies Association from 2009 to 2011. Since 2019, he has served as the Philippine representative to the Council of the International Political Science Association. He has held several visiting appointments, including Kyoto University, Australian National University, City University of Hong Kong, Osaka University, University of Tokyo, Waseda University, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. In 2022, he was invited as a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre, the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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