

## Brute force governance: public approval despite policy failure during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines

Thompson, Mark R.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

**Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:**

GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Thompson, M. R. (2022). Brute force governance: public approval despite policy failure during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 41(3), 399-421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034221092453>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

# Brute Force Governance: Public Approval Despite Policy Failure During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines

Mark R. Thompson

Journal of Current  
Southeast Asian Affairs  
2022, Vol. 41(3) 399–421

© The Author(s) 2022

Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/18681034221092453

journals.sagepub.com/home/saa



## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed enormous governance deficits globally. Several populist strongmen practiced “medical populism” – ignoring scientific advice, proffering denials, and blaming others. More technocratic leaders recognised its severity, implementing strict lockdowns. But some failed to adopt more flexible restrictions once testing improved due to local enforcement difficulties, termed “blunt force regulation.” Although neither a pandemic denialist nor an obtuse technocrat, Philippine president Rodrigo R. Duterte’s response combined aspects of both approaches with blame shifting and one-size-fits-all lockdowns while also securitising the crisis. Utilising methods developed during his bloody “war on drugs,” Duterte imposed a heavily militarised approach, scapegoated supposedly disobedient Filipinos (*pasaway*) and bullied local politicians. While the Philippines has been among the worst pandemic performers globally, Duterte’s approval ratings remained robust. It is argued “brute force governance” undermined the dynamics of accountability, enabling him to win public approval despite policy failure.

Manuscript received 17 November 2021; accepted 10 March 2022

## Keywords

Governance, COVID-19, Philippines, drug war, securisation, Duterte

Asian and International Studies, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

## Corresponding Author:

Mark R. Thompson, Asian and International Studies, City University of Hong Kong, Tat Chee Ave, Kowloon, Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

Email: [mthomps@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:mthomps@cityu.edu.hk)



Creative Commons CC BY: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits any use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the SAGE and Open Access page (<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/open-access-at-sage>).

## Introduction

Similar to the U.S. president Donald Trump and his Brazilian counterpart Jair Bolsonaro, Philippine president Rodrigo R. Duterte gave a “masculinist political performance” during the COVID-19 pandemic (Parmanand, 2019, 2020). But while Trump and Bolsonaro continued to downplay the pandemic, Duterte abandoned denialism, switching course to implement draconian lockdown measures to curb the spread of the disease. Playing to their political bases, Trump and Bolsonaro instrumentalised a libertarian discourse and projected an image of invincibility. Duterte, by contrast, “shapeshifted” from “the invincible man” who did not fear COVID-19 to his nation’s “tough protector” in the fight against it (Parmanand, 2021).

Once Duterte finally did act in mid-March 2020, he imposed one of the world’s longest and most severe lockdowns (Mendoza, 2020). He declared a national state of calamity and had a pliant Congress enact the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (RA 11469) which gave him emergency powers to combat the virus and provided for subsidies to deal with its social impact. The lockdown was carried out in a highly militarised fashion due to heavy reliance on the police and armed forces as testing for and tracing of COVID-19 cases lagged badly (Dizon, 2020; Yusingco and Pizarro, 2020).

Duterte’s approach appeared similar to other countries facing administrative hurdles which also opted for severe and prolonged lockdowns, such as Italy (Roberts, 2020). But besides being due to information deficits early on during the pandemic, these inflexible lockdowns were also a response to uncertainties regarding enforcement – particularly of the national government’s concern that local administrators would not carry out orders. This resulted in “blunt force regulation” as this “simplifies monitoring and controlling individuals from afar” (van der Kamp, 2021b).

This analysis appears applicable to the Philippine state given its well-known administrative deficits and enforcement challenges it faces even in normal circumstances, much less during major crises (Piling, 2013). Yet Duterte’s reaction to the pandemic cannot be fully understood in such public administration terms as it overlooks the importance of his populist repertoire and strong-arm tactics. Although no longer a COVID-19 denialist, Duterte was also not merely engaged in an effort in problem solving, albeit with the tools of “blunt force regulation.” Rather, he remained a “vigilante president” (Coronel, 2019) whose demonstration of decisiveness has enabled him to distract attention from the larger picture of his failure to solve major problems in the country. Adapting tactics developed during the so-called “war on drugs,” Duterte’s COVID-19 response was an additional chance for him to demonstrate his supposed ability to deal with severe crisis which the notoriously corrupt and inefficient Philippine state was incapable of handling.

Under the lockdown, the social conditions of the poor worsened dramatically as hunger reached record levels with a third of households affected. Demonstrations demanding food deliveries to deprived areas during the lockdown were met by Duterte ordering police to “shoot them dead” (Arguelles, 2021; Billing, 2020; Tomacruz, 2020). As COVID-19 cases mounted in spring, late summer and early fall of 2021 amidst a slow vaccine roll out, the Philippines became not just one of the worst pandemic

performers in Asia but also globally, being ranked the last of 121 countries surveyed in infection control, vaccination, and mobility (Sarao, 2021). It was also rated last in a similar COVID-19 “resilience” survey of fifty-one countries (Bloomberg, 2021). Yet instead of taking responsibility for his government’s poor performance, Duterte blamed “*pasaway*” – obstinate and irresponsible, largely lower class Filipinos – for supposedly following pandemic regulations (Hapal, 2021; Lasco, 2020a, 2020b) and local governments for their incompetence and patronage politics (Gera, 2020).

This paper argues Duterte has neither been a COVID-19 denialist nor an obtuse technocrat in dealing with the pandemic. Rather, his approach has combined the blame shifting characteristic of “medical populism” with a lockdown strategy typical of “blunt force regulation.” He has securitised the pandemic by singling out the *pasaway*. The next part of this paper discusses the concepts of “medical populism” (which involves the exculpatory logic of denialism) and “blunt force regulation” (a technocratic but still inefficient approach overly dependent on lockdowns). It then suggests neither of these concepts adequately explains Duterte’s pandemic response. However, like the medical populists, he did attempt to deflect from his pandemic management by securitising the crisis while using “one-size-fits-all” lockdowns.

The subsequent section shows how Duterte fashioned this strategem as mayor of Davao city during his “war on drugs” that securitised a major but not acute problem to deflect from broader social and political issues that involved brutal “one-size-fits-all” enforcement, which became his “calling card” to win the presidency. He then implemented the drug war nationally, scapegoating small time users and dealers who were targeted in police campaigns which local officials were strong-armed into joining.

The final section shows how – drawing on the highly militarised techniques of the drug war – Duterte utilised a brute force governance strategy to deal with the pandemic. Like the drug war, it was also largely a failure. But it too helped deflect public criticism toward a “securitised” enemy, the *pasaway*.

## **Medical Populism, Blunt Force Regulation, and Brute Force Governance**

For the sake of the analysis offered in this paper, it is useful to distinguish two flawed governance approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic employed in several countries around the world – “medical populism” and “blunt force regulation” – before introducing a third concept, “brute force governance,” in an attempt to elucidate the Philippine case. The first involves populist leaders such as Trump or Bolsonaro who ignore science, deny the severity of the crisis, and dramatise (“spectacularise”) their unscientific pandemic responses based on conspiratorial “knowledge claims” which allow them to shift the blame to others in order to deflect from their ineffective pandemic policies (Hedges and Lasco, 2021; Lasco and Curato, 2019; Lasco, 2020b). Blunt force regulation, by contrast, employed in Italy for example, has involved implementing lockdowns which proved inefficient as they failed to allow for flexibility in the application of these economically punishing measures once it became possible through better testing due to local

enforcement concerns (van der Kamp, 2021a, 2021b). It is argued Duterte's brute force governance represents a third approach, combining negative aspects of the first two but also worsening it further through the securitisation of the pandemic. Duterte opted for highly militarised and indiscriminate enforcement in which he bullied local officials to comply while scapegoating dangerous "others" in order to deflect public attention from policy failures.

Populist leaders such as Brazil's Bolsonaro and the U.S.'s Trump are the most obvious examples of medical populist efforts to simplify the pandemic by downplaying its severity and offering easy (quack) solutions while deepening the divisions by promising to protect the "good" people from dangerous others (Hedges and Lasco, 2021; Lasco, 2020a). With the outbreak of COVID-19 in the early spring of 2020, both U.S. president Trump and his Brazilian counterpart Bolsonaro denied the severity of the pandemic (Parmanand, 2021). They both also prized their own physical virility and promised their respective populations that they would largely be immune to the pandemic (Parmanand, 2021). Moreover, they often rejected or at least cast doubt on scientific advice offered from experts in their own governments, instead promoting unproven cures and discouraging social distancing and mask wearing. They thus defied standard crisis management which entails a serious assessment of risks, transparency, aiming for unity and relying on scientific advice, particularly important in a medical emergency. Although the pandemic only worsened – with both Trump and Bolsonaro accused of causing the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of thousands by their inaction and anti-science posture – they both remained popular among their base of supporters.

As discussed above, Duterte was also initially a denialist, joking about the pandemic and saying Filipinos' strong antibodies would make them highly resistant to the new virus. A "macho populist" like Bolsonaro and Trump, Duterte initially "stigmatised public concern and caution by characterising it as a hysterical overreaction" and "feminising" those warning of the dangers to public health (Parmanand, 2020, 2021). This was characteristic of the Philippine president who has often been openly misogynist, repeatedly telling rape jokes in public appearances which earned him international notoriety but have been widely interpreted in the Philippines as rejecting the hypocritical moralism of the previous administration in favour of a "crass" but more authentic politics (Abinales, 2015; Curato and Ong, 2018). It is telling that four of the highest profile public figures Duterte has targeted have been women. Duterte had senator Leila de Lima jailed who had earlier been the Chair of the Commission on Human Rights and Justice Secretary. She had investigated Duterte's involvement in drug vigilante killings when he was mayor of Davao. As senator she had chaired senate hearings examining drug killings when Duterte was mayor of Davao and after he had become president before being removed by the president's allies in the senate the autumn of 2016. These senators then turned the tables by interrogating her driver, who was also her lover (a dual sin in a class-bound society with double standards), in order to "slut shame" her and "prove" alleged links between de Lima and drug lords, which she denounced as outrageously misogynist (de Lima, 2020). Duterte fired (separately elected) Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Robredo from a cabinet post after she had criticised the drug war, including in

front of the UN.<sup>1</sup> Maria Ressa, editor of the critical online newspaper Rappler and Nobel Peace Prize winner, still faces a possible long jail term based on cases supported by the Duterte administration widely seen as harassment and part of a general effort to intimidate critical voices in the media. Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno was removed from office through a highly irregular legal manoeuvre after questioning Duterte's claim several judges were involved in the drug trade (Deinla et al., 2018).

But, as discussed above, Duterte quickly pivoted away from pandemic denialism, no longer claiming he and the nation were invincible but instead implementing a drastic lockdown as the nation's "tough protector." This, however, still allowed him to frame his response in macho populist terms (Parmanand, 2021). While Lasco (2020b) considers Duterte a "medical populist," a crucial difference between the Philippine president, on the one hand and Bolsonaro and Trump, on the other, is that the Philippine president quickly transitioned from denying the severity of the pandemic to adopting a harsh lockdown strategy. He nonetheless remained true to his previous illiberal populism in his politics of securitisation and scapegoating, as will be discussed in more detail below. He also continued to attract strong partisan support with his crude but seemingly authentic political style which contrasts a virtuous people with an out of touch elite who are often coddling supposedly dangerous marginalised groups (Abinales, 2015; Judis, 2016: 15).

Duterte's messaging was that personal responsibility was crucial for the success of the government's lockdown during the pandemic (Lasco, 2020b). To explain its failures, the Philippine president engaged in "finger pointing" which was "parroted" by his "minions and government" at the irresponsible "*pasaway*" said to regularly violate quarantine who were primarily to blame for an increase in COVID-19 cases during successive waves of the pandemic (Lasca, 2021: 1). Kusaka (2020) has termed this "disciplinary quarantine" that is based "on a moral dichotomy between 'good citizens,' who abide by strict regulations, and undisciplined 'evil others (*pasaway*), who endanger the nation." As will be discussed more below, this helped him deflect from the government's failures in dealing with pandemic, ensuring that his popularity long remained at record levels.<sup>2</sup>

More technocratically oriented leaders around the world initially ordered sweeping lockdowns to deal with the onset of the pandemic. But some who failed to adopt more flexible approaches once testing and contact tracing capacity improved have been described as employing blunt force regulation (van der Kamp, 2021b). Such indiscriminate enforcement measures were due to uncertain local compliance to national pandemic directives that simplify monitoring and were meant to ensure greater control from afar. This can be understood as "principal-agent" problem, due to the national government's (the principal) doubts about agents' local officials' (their agents) willingness to carry out national policies, leading to a strict, one-size-fits-all approach as opposed to less severe and economically punishing lockdowns (van der Kamp, 2021b).

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, for example, imposed a harsh nationwide lockdown in early 2020 but refused to adopt a softer, more regionally targeted approach once greater possibilities of testing and tracing became available (Roberts, 2020). Conte's initial lockdown was widely accepted by the public but after the economic impact of these indiscriminate lockdown measures had become increasingly evident, his popularity sank

and his government collapsed in early 2021 (Poggioli, 2021). Van der Kamp (2021b) argues that Italy's inflexible lockdown was largely due to concerns that local politicians would be unwilling to enforce restrictions without strict national controls. But ultimately this backfired economically and politically.

By contrast, Angela Merkel's government in Germany adopted a more flexible approach with regionally targeted, rolling lockdowns. While in part due to the German federal system, it was also attributed to flexible national steering which improved the resiliency of the German response (Robinet-Borgomano, 2020). In addition, the Federal Government and the local states (*Länder*) worked closely together to fashion a post-lockdown strategy "characterised by a gradual resumption of economic activity, along with the obligation to wear masks in public space and the use of a digital tracking application" (Robinet-Borgomano, 2020). This allowed Germany "to pursue the more complex, risky, but far less costly approach of targeted restrictions" (van der Kamp, 2021a, 2021b). While this contributed to Germany having one of Europe's lowest death rates and suffering the least economic impact during the pandemic, it did have the unintended consequence of provoking a large anti-lockdown movement.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside Germany, relative success stories in combatting COVID-19 – for example, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam – "effectively flattened the curve *and* managed to minimise the damage to their economies." Keys to success included "agile test, trace, and treat systems to counter any flare ups; strong public-private partnerships in the health industry; effective application of technologies for information dissemination and contact tracing; and all this with less dependence on draconian lockdown measures" (Mendoza, 2020).

Because the Philippines failed to implement such subtle "scalpel"-like strategies used in these successful countries, it had to adopt the "axe" of "blunt force regulation" (Mendoza, 2020; van der Kamp 2021a). In imposing severe and often indiscriminate measures, Duterte openly expressed distrust in the willingness of local governments to follow national policy. He bullied local governments, blaming them for policy failures and accusing them of patronage politics. He also securitised the pandemic, justifying the heavy use of police and military in enforcing often indiscriminate measures. Thus, Duterte had gone well beyond simply using the blunt instrument of "one-size-fits-all" to control local governments' enforcement. Rather, he implemented a highly militarised response to the pandemic which also involved blame shifting. As will be shown below, the impact on the Philippine economy – sharply increased poverty and record levels of hunger – proved devastating to the poor.

## **The Drug War as Brute Force Governance**

Following Hapal (2021) and Thompson (2021a, 2021b), the Philippines' response to COVID-19 shows striking continuity with Duterte's "war on drugs." Both involved securitising a major but containable problem, defying expert advice in the process. This justified a highly militarised approach which Local Government Units (LGUs) were bullied to carry out. Both Duterte's drug war and his COVID-19 strategy relied

on a populist dichotomy of “virtuous,” law abiding citizens, versus “evil” outsiders/criminals or even “angels versus demons” (Jensen and Hapal, 2018). The Philippines was “still stuck with the drug war blueprint” during the pandemic (Gavilan and Talabong, 2020). Hapal (2021: 3) suggests that in “many ways, the *pasaway* is a construct resembling the drug addict in the context of the war on drugs.”<sup>4</sup>

Duterte has often been misunderstood as a typical local mayor and political “boss.” Sidel (1999; also Rocamora, 1995) understands bossism as involving coercive control over territory and local populations. But as Davao mayor or power-behind-the throne (with interruptions due to term limits) from 1987 to 2016, Duterte created a form of “neo-bossism” involving alliance building around external enemies rather than focusing on eliminating political rivals or intimidating the electorate (Thompson, 2021b). A notoriously violent city, post-Marcos Davao had been plagued not only by everyday criminality but also by assassinations and revenge killings by communist rebels and their paramilitary opponents. Moving to end this violence, Duterte struck a deal with both communists and para-militaries, lessening conflict between them. He then secretly employed policeman, ex-rebels and militia members in what came to be known as the “Davao Death Squad” (DDS) that covertly murdered supposed drug users and dealers (Reyes, 2016: 124). This allowed Duterte to triangulate between the communist rebels and the military while winning popular support by targeting suspected criminals with vigilantes.<sup>5</sup> Tellingly, Duterte promised to ramp up this strategy when he faced a close mayoral race with an opponent whom he accused of being soft on crime (not surprisingly Duterte, who would come to be known as “the Punisher,” won easily) (Reyes, 2021).<sup>6</sup> Human rights groups estimated that over 700 suspected drug criminals were killed extra-judicially by DDS vigilantes during his time as Davao mayor, with Duterte at one point “bragging” it was actually 1000 (Peel, 2017). Duterte’s drug war strategy retained the violent methods of bossism and redirected an anti-insurgency campaign to target alleged drug users and dealers.

In 2016, Duterte used his Davao drug war as his calling card to win the Philippine presidency. Duterte’s national appeal was that given the weakness of institutions in the Philippines, particularly a broken justice system, he was able to offer a drug crackdown as a silver bullet to solve the problem. Narag (2017) argues Duterte called for “the sidestepping of due process and human rights of the suspects, with the belief that we need to cleanse first the corrupt legal system before we can even introduce any meaningful reforms.” He played to a “legally cynical public” that did not trust a broken judicial system to convict drug offenders whose cases were often dismissed on technicalities. David (2021) argues that during the presidential campaign Duterte established “a direct union between him, the leader, and the people’s destiny” which appealed to many Filipinos “in the context of the growing perception that the entire system of government, politics, the economy, and the law was hopelessly broken.” This required “an unconventional leader who could solve the country’s persistent problems in as short a period as three to six months, using novel means” (David, 2021) Duterte’s “dystopian narrative shifted the discussion to a more urgent solution,” the arrest and/or killing of drug dealers and users “until the



problem is eradicated.” But this “comes at a price,” Duterte warned, “the price of liberal rights” (Curato, 2017: 7).

Quimpo (2017: 146) has argued securitisation – “how security threats are constructed and how extreme measures in addressing such threats are justified” – lay at the heart of Duterte’s drug war. Duterte “shrewdly picked on an issue of broad popular concern – drug trafficking – and securitised it” (Quimpo, 2017). This involved turning a major but not acute (and according to the government’s own official figures declining) problem, into a major issue of public concern (Lasco, 2016). Garrido (2021) suggests “Duterte fits the archetype of the strong leader,” with the drug war representing “a performance of discipline made all the more effective by its spectacular quality.” But its significance has been “primarily symbolic,” suggesting “the drug war is targeted not just at drug dealers and users but at a disorderly public generally” (Garrido, 2021).

It is telling that opinion poll survey data show the traction Duterte gained with this illiberal populist messaging, with the fight against illegal drugs going from a lower-level concern to the public’s top priority in Pulse Asia surveys of January, February and April 2016. Strikingly, just a few months after Duterte’s election, poverty, jobs, inflation, and corruption again overtook criminality as major concerns (Pulse Asia, 2016; Thompson, 2021b). Duterte had created a “narrative of a nation overrun by illegal drugs which, if left unmitigated, would lead to the destruction of the Philippines” and “this dire depiction evoked a sense of urgency and warranted extraordinary action” that was “framed in such a way that it valorised and protected the innocent and dealt harsh or deadly consequences to the errant” (Hapal, 2021: 5). This highly militarised, police-centric approach enabled Duterte to “govern through killing” (Johnson and Fernquest, 2018; Juego, 2017). It also enabled him to justify “increased state repression, intensified criminalisation of the drug problem,” while rejecting “a public health approach to the proliferation of illegal drugs” (Regilme, 2020).

Duterte’s rise to some extent parallels the ascendancy of other populist demagogues who have drawn on the “globalisation of rage” given “massive disparities of wealth, power, education, and status” (Mishra, 2016, quoted in McCoy, 2017: 5).<sup>7</sup> But Duterte’s drug war makes his form of populism quite distinctive. Duterte has inscribed his politics on “the battered and bloodied bodies” of his victims (McCoy, 2017: 5). His “violent populism” is unique because he alone among contemporary illiberal populist leaders “has instigated mass murder under the guise of a ‘war on drugs’” (Thompson, 2021b). Tens of thousands of suspected users and dealers have been extra-judicially murdered during the drug war according to human rights groups and the United Nations (Maru, 2018; United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, 2020).

Although implemented nationally, Duterte’s drug war relied on bullying local governments to implement it. Dozens of mayors and vice mayors have been killed during the Duterte presidency, an unprecedented number (Gavilan 2018). Many of the assassinated local officials had been accused by the government of abetting the drug problem, although they had never been formally charged (Roper, 2021; Talabong, 2019). Given such intense intimidation, it is not surprising that local officials were reluctant to stand in the way of Duterte’s drug war carried out by the Philippine National Police

(PNP) who were given *carte blanche* powers. Kreuzer (2020, also see Kreuzer, 2016) shows that in areas where LGU officials demonstrated “political submission to the new administration and largely left the implementation of the national policies to the local branch of the PNP” there was not only “a huge spike of deadly police violence during the first year of the war on drugs” but also “excessive levels of vigilantism that seems to have gone unchecked in these LGUs.”

A leading global expert on anti-drug campaigns – who pointed out that “the failures of the ‘war on drugs’ have been well documented” – predicted from the outset that “the Philippines’ new ‘war’ will fail and society will emerge worse off from it” (Collins, 2016a: 9, 2016b). Collins (2016a: 16) warned against “widespread criminalisation or any other ‘pigheaded’ antidrug policies.” Duterte, of course, ignored such expert advice which in fact proved prescient. Besides the terrible toll of the killings as well large number of arrests which have swelled the prison population, this violent campaign has not led to a reduction in supply, as even the country’s top police drug official admitted in early 2020 (Allard and Lema, 2020).

Yet this does not mean the drug war was a failure in political terms. Duterte’s popularity soared not despite but *because* of the drug war (Cabato, 2016; Thompson, 2018). It deflected from the nation’s major problems of unequal development, un- and under-employment, and high poverty levels (Rodan, 2021: 247). The drug war symbolised Duterte’s unyielding political will to transform a country with a broken system of governance. His discursive demonology resonated strongly, putting “order over law” (Pepinsky, 2017: 120).

## **Brute Force Governance During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

COVID-19 was a grave challenge to all world leaders but posed a particular problem for illiberal populists. Teehankee (2021) argues it has proved difficult to sustain the typical populist “people” versus “the elite” narrative against this “viral and existential threat,” which was as an “unfamiliar ‘enemy’” that proved difficult to “discipline.” In addition, Duterte could not blame an external enemy, China, as Trump and Bolsonaro had, given the Philippine president’s efforts to maintain his close ties with China and his hostility to the West for its criticism of his drug war (Teehankee, 2021; Suorsa and Thompson, 2018). In addition, as discussed above, Duterte abandoned the denialist strategy taken by the medical populists Bolsonaro and Trump, which enabled them (largely successfully) to play down the severity of the pandemic to their own base of supporters (Lasco, 2020b).

Instead, Duterte opted for a severe and long lasting lockdown which began when he declared a public health emergency in early March 2020. By the middle of that month he had placed the country under a state of calamity for six months. During this time, much of the Philippines was under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) which was effectively a total lockdown, with the lists of those activities outside the home permitted decided government’s Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases. Only in late 2020 was most of the country placed under the modified general community quarantine

that was somewhat looser, allowing for the resumption of many business and other activities, though still subject to strict limitations (Atienza, 2021). But further “hard” ECQ lockdowns were imposed in March 2021 and again in August 2021 as cases surged, with mounting deaths in the first four waves of the novel coronavirus (De Leon, 2021).<sup>8</sup> A fifth Omicron variant wave occurred in early 2022, with major hospitals becoming inundated by admissions which increased by as much as six times in the first week of the year (Bolledo, 2022). With more health workers infected with COVID-19, the government struggled to keep the healthcare system functioning (Magsambol, 2022). Fortunately, the fifth wave quickly peaked and had rapidly subsided by late February 2022.

As the pandemic has evolved, the government claimed its response has been “excellent” (Ranada, 2021a), with Duterte’s leadership receiving high praise from his underlings (Lalu, 2022). But experts have been much less upbeat, arguing that “the Philippines are already paying a high economic price due to lockdowns that choke economic growth, intensify unemployment, and ratchet up poverty now that the pandemic is nearing its second year” (Hartigan-Go and Mendoza, 2021). They added that “due to less effective pandemic management, the trade off on the margin is likely to be brutal in terms of lives lost.” Overall, they suggest that “containment in the Philippines is weak” despite implementing the “longest general lockdown in the world” and being “one of only five countries that have kept their schools closed for well over one year of pandemic” (Hartigan-Go and Mendoza, 2021). A World Bank Report blamed the low vaccination rate due to a slow roll out for the rapid spread of the Omicron variant (de Vera and Aurelio, 2022). The government did, however, begin adopting more granular lockdown strategies.

Despite this poor performance, Duterte wasted little time in trying to gain control of messaging about the government’s pandemic prevention measures. By mid-March 2020, he had begun a weekly address to the nation in which he stressed the need for personal discipline and that his orders be strictly enforced by LGUs. In April following Duterte’s notorious “shoot them dead” denunciation of protestors demonstrating against lockdown restrictions because of growing hunger, the government ramped up round ups of quarantine violators, with 100,000 quarantine violators arrested by September. Aggressive lockdown enforcement resulted “in multiple incidents of abuse by police and deputised civilian officials” (Tablabong, 2020). This was not surprising as the PNP was using “the same rules of engagement in the pandemic as in its other operations, primarily the anti-drug campaign” (Gavilan and Talabong, 2020). While neighbouring Southeast Asian countries also opted for periodic lockdowns, the Philippines was distinct in that it “placed the entire country in a highly-securitised lockdown – one of the longest and strictest in the world” (Arguelles, 2021).

Although Duterte was not as openly anti-science as other illiberal populists like Bolsonaro and Trump, he often targeted health critical doctors and nurses (Ranada, 2020). Duterte’s weekly COVID-19 briefings soon turned into “late-night tirades” which were often “directed against healthcare professionals” by seeking to “delegitimise their claims” for a better pandemic response and “silence dissent” while masking “an

inconvenient truth, that is, the Philippines continues to lag in its COVID-19 response, and Filipinos continue to suffer for it” (Hapal, 2021: 15).

This showed that while Duterte was no longer a COVID-19 denialist, he was not carefully following scientific advice either. Rather he was a determined strongman claiming he could offer a quick fix through an inflexible lockdown that was in fact unable to cope with the complex problems involved in dealing effectively with the pandemic, particularly because testing and tracing were not sufficiently ramped up. Already by the end of 2020 it had become clear that the harsh, across-the-board quarantine measures had turned the pandemic into a “full-blown economic, health, political and social crisis” (Arguelles, 2021). Due to a lack of testing and tracing, the lockdown failed to keep cases and deaths from rising rapidly, soon becoming the highest per capita in Southeast Asia. At the same time, “hunger and poverty among Filipino families and the loss of jobs and economic opportunities reached historical highs,” with 7.6 million Filipino households (representing one-third) experiencing involuntary hunger as the economy contracted in 2020 by nearly 10 per cent, the highest ever recorded (Arguelles, 2021). The poor lost daily earnings in a subsistence informal economy they were dependent on for survival. Slow and often erratic deliveries of food support and cash subsidies impacted the most vulnerable Filipinos. For urban poor Filipinos in Metro Manila and other major urban areas living in cramped slums, “social distancing and work-from-home arrangements are privileges reserved for the middle and upper classes of Philippine society” (Teehankee, 2021).

By this point it had become evident that Duterte had found a scapegoat to justify these indiscriminate but largely ineffective lockdown measures by securitising the pandemic. As mentioned above, he blamed the *pasaway* – hard headed, largely lower class Filipinos – for supposedly not following pandemic regulations (Hapal, 2021; Lasca, 2021; Lasco, 2020a). Hapal (2021: 10–11) elaborates on the significance of the *pasaway* as scapegoat for Duterte’s harsh lockdown measures:

Informing the Philippines’ draconian COVID-19 response is an entire discourse surrounding the archetype of the *pasaway*. The *pasaway*, seen as a bullheaded character ignoring the ill-effects of COVID-19, serves as the embodiment of an existential threat that needs disciplining. By arresting the *pasaway*, the government is, in effect, protecting the well-being of law-abiding Filipino citizens. The antithetical relation between the *pasaway* and law-abiding citizen reinforces the war-like narrative and justifies the intense policing of the former. The construct of the *pasaway* is informed by deep-seated class prejudices, amplified by a populist leader peddling oppositional narratives in an attempt to maintain control and gain power. The *pasaway* is such a concern for the government that no less than President Duterte himself has repeatedly lambasted Filipinos for their lack of discipline.

The *pasaway* could be blamed for the devastating waves of the coronavirus as the best laid government plans could be portrayed as having been upended by these disobedient Filipinos. Class prejudices could be mobilised as the *pasaway* were seen to be ill-disciplined, largely urban poor males who had also been the main target of the drug

war. The term brought together “a range of different negative traits with implicit class contempt,” thereby reinforcing middle class prejudices and legitimating a militarised response to control this underclass (Hapal, 2021: 11). Filipinos’ supposed lack of discipline created the need for a stern authority figure, “*Tatay Digong*” (father Duterte), as the Philippine president is popularly known. Malcom Cook has suggested many supporters feel a “connection with Duterte...emotional and visceral, not based upon a cost-benefit judgment of his policy performance” (cited in Aquino, 2019).

As has been pointed out by several authors (e.g. Hapal, 2021; Lasca, 2021; Lasco, 2020a), blaming the *pasaway* for the rise in cases during the pandemic was pure scape-goating without any evidence for such disobedience whatsoever. Available data shows that most Filipinos have followed quarantine regulations *quite carefully*. In fact, they have been among the most “obedient” citizens globally (Punongbayan 2020). According to Imperial College London/YouGov Covid-19 Tracker by the Institute of Global Health Innovation from March 2020 to July 2021, among citizens of twenty-four countries surveyed, Filipinos were actually the *most* likely to wear masks (in the July 6–12, 2021 survey), with 92 per cent of respondents saying they *always* wore them when outside the home. In that same survey, they were also most likely to always avoid “crowded areas” (Institute of Global Health Innovation, 2021). Social distancing and wearing masks are not wedge issues in the Philippines (Hapal, 2021: 11). This obviously differs from countries like the U.S. where mask-wearing became part of a cultural war, with only a little more than half of Americans saying they always wore masks outside in mid-2021 at the height of the Delta wave of COVID-19 (Institute of Global Health Innovation, 2021).

Besides singling out the *pasaway* for blame, Duterte also bullied LGUs during the pandemic. In mid-March 2020, Duterte ordered LGUs to abide by his national quarantine orders or face disciplinary measures (Valente, 2020). However, most LGUs were not given “clear instructions from the national government” about the lockdown and how to meet the challenges of the pandemic (Atienza, 2021). They often lacked resources and management skills in local contexts in which patronage politics was common (Gera, 2020). This distinguished Duterte’s approach from blunt force regulation, discussed above, while suggesting parallels to the drug war. Instead of relying of bureaucratic procedures to enact lockdowns, Duterte intimidated local governments into submission, with national police and military taking over key roles during the pandemic. Duterte had ordered the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Department of Justice to closely monitor LGUs and not hesitate in filing cases against “wayward officials” (Valente, 2020).

Duterte had centralised national power over LGUs earlier in his presidency despite promises to make constitutional changes to turn the country into a federal system (Gera and Hutchcroft, 2021). Shortly before the pandemic, one of Duterte’s congressional allies had criticised the DILG for its bullying of LGUs which involved them being “dictated upon” and “ordered around” (cited in Fernandez, 2020). The pandemic enabled Duterte to further concentrate national powers through the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act” in which Congress granted President Duterte sweeping emergency powers

(Hutchcroft and Holmes, 2021). But Duterte's centralisation of power disguised the national government's "weak steering" which therefore was more reliant on "strong-arming" local officials to implement policies than on regularised bureaucratic regulations (Gera and Hutchcroft, 2021). The dysfunctional nature of the relationship between LGUs and the national government became particularly apparent during delays in vaccine procurement in 2021, leading it to be the country in Southeast Asia slowest to receive the vaccines and to ramp up inoculations (Cook, 2021; Noble, 2021).

The government's Social Amelioration Program (SAP) was also politicised by the national government, making the LGUs easy targets for Duterte. Emergency subsidies, particularly cash aid for poor households, were a key provision of the Bayanihan Act. Given widespread delays in their distribution, it was not long before Duterte was accusing many LGUs of abusing these funds for patronage purposes. The DILG, ordered by Duterte to "probe and arrest corrupt officials," warned LGUs about "injecting politics in relief distribution" (cited in Gera, 2020). The LGUs, in turn, rejected these charges, saying that these problems were due to difficulties the national government's Department of Social Welfare and Development's had encountered in identifying beneficiaries and validating beneficiary lists. They "faulted the national agency for its red tape, fragmented guidelines, vague information and lack of clarity in task allocation" (Gera, 2020). While the Duterte administration was criticising patronage abuses at the local level, Senator Bong Go, a close Duterte aide, was claiming credit for the distribution of SAP benefits in preparation for his (later abandoned) presidential bid in 2022. This very much also appeared to be patronage politics, except in this case practiced at the national level by an administration loyalist (Gera, 2020). There was ample evidence of hypocrisy in the Duterte administration during the pandemic, particularly scandals related to procurement issues such as overpriced face shields (long required in the Philippines despite their doubtful efficacy) which the Philippine Senate began investigating in mid-2021 (Buan, 2021).

## Conclusion

Neither a pandemic denialist nor an obtuse technocrat, Philippine president Duterte's pandemic response nonetheless combined blame shifting characteristic of "medical populism" with a one-size-fits-all lockdown strategy typical of "blunt force regulation" while at the same time securitising the pandemic. After initially flirting with denialism, Duterte opted for a highly militarised lockdown, reliant on heavy police and military presence. Though not as blatantly anti-science as Trump or Bolsonaro, he attacked health professionals. Duterte instead presented himself as a strongman offering a quick fix. But the problems posed by the pandemic were complex which his inflexibly imposed and highly militarised lockdowns were incapable of solving. Duterte scapegoated the *pasaway* despite data showing Filipinos were among the world's most obedient citizens in following lockdown instructions. He also criticised the poor performance as well as patronage politics of local governments although they faced confusing national instructions and the slow distribution of subsidies. Long and inflexible ECQ lockdowns led

to soaring poverty and record hunger levels with huge job losses and lost economic opportunities.

As of October 2021, the Philippines remained at the bottom of Bloomberg's (2021) global pandemic "resilience" ranking of fifty-three countries based on vaccination coverage, virus containment, the severity of lockdowns, quality of healthcare, progress toward restarting travel, and the overall mortality throughout the pandemic. The Philippines was also last among 121 countries in the similar Nikkei Asia "recovery" index covering infection control, vaccination and mobility (Sarao, 2021). The Philippine government itself estimates it will take at least 10 years to recover from the effects of the pandemic (Agence-France, 2021).

Globally, opinion polls showed the pandemic "reversed the rise of populism," including diminishing "approval of populist leaders" (Foa et al., 2022). But for Duterte, "rather than being a curse...the pandemic turned out to be a gift" which allowed him to "renew the public mandate for his illiberal agenda" (Arguelles, 2021). Despite mismanaging the pandemic, his popularity remained high, aided by pro-Duterte social media trolls and with people gravitating toward a strong leader who made them feel secure (Reed, 2021).

A militarised approach, the scapegoating of the urban poor, and the bullying of local politicians was a strategy Duterte had already been fashioned during his bloody "war on drugs." The foundering of his COVID-19 strategy paralleled the failure of the drug war to reduce the supply of drugs. But it too shifted blame toward a "securitised" enemy, the small-time drug addict/dealer in the former, the *pasaway* in the latter. Just as the war on drugs had, his securitised pandemic lockdown boosted his popularity to record levels, peaking in November 2020 when nine in ten Filipinos backed him (this fell to two thirds supporting him by late October 2021 which was, still adjudged as "very good" and higher than his opinion poll ratings had been before the pandemic) (Social Weather Stations, 2021).

The larger question – to which this paper has attempted to make a contribution in answering – is why Duterte continues to "ride high" in the surveys despite his poor performance (Reuters 2020; Regencia, 2021). This has been the case across a number of policy areas, not just his mismanagement of the pandemic but also the related deep economic recession (the worst since WWII) and the continued prevalence of illegal narcotics despite a bloody "war on drugs" (Mendoza, 2021). The paradox of Duterte's popularity despite poor performance during the pandemic can be linked to a discourse of "collective discipline" which had become the hallmark of the 'virtuous citizens' who make up his base" (Lasco, 2020b: 1424). By emphasising the importance of personal responsibility during the pandemic and focusing on the local setbacks in the implementation of national government policy, Duterte "othered" supposedly irresponsible, urban poor *pasaway* while faulting LGUs. Such "brute force governance" undermined the dynamics of accountability, enabling Duterte to win public approval despite policy failure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported by the Hong Kong Government, General Research Fund (grant numbers 11610021 and 11600921).

## Notes

1. Robredo was very pro-active during the COVID-19 pandemic, using the limited resources of the office of the vice president to undertake several initiatives, for example, helping health care workers, setting up job platforms for the unemployed, and funding drive-through vaccination centres, consulting with medical experts and using a radio show and social media accounts to disseminate important information about dealing with COVID-19. She said she was often tempted to tell Duterte: “Just let me handle pandemic response” (Cepeda, 2021).
2. Duterte’s high popularity ratings throughout his presidency have been the subject of much skepticism (for an early example, see Parameswaran, 2016). In addition, Duterte’s victory in the 2016 election was narrower than often realized – a plurality typical of multi-candidate contest in which three more liberal-minded candidates divided most of the remaining vote (Regilme, 2021). Although all opposition candidates lost in the 2019 mid-term senatorial elections for the first time since the Commonwealth era, three independent-minded candidates – two of whom had been outspoken on the defence of human rights – were also elected (Regilme, 2021). But not only has Duterte’s popularity remained high throughout his presidency, it appears likely he will complete his term as the *most popular* president since opinion polls began in the post-Marcos era (Ranada, 2021b). It should be added that Philippine surveys are likely more accurate than comparable surveys in Western countries such as the US as they use face-to-face interviews with high response rates rather than telephone interviews which have very low response rates (Albert, 2021).
3. The *Querdenker* (unconventional thinkers or mavericks) protesters were particularly active in regions with the strictest lockdowns in Germany who pointed to more relaxed restrictions in other *Länder* (Pfaff, et al. 2021). This seems to show that although the flexible approach adopted in Germany spared the country from a more severe economic slowdown than an indiscriminate lockdown would have caused, it made it easier for the anti-lockdown movement to claim this method of regionally selective quarantine restrictions was unfair.
4. Besides the parallels between the drug war and militarized lockdowns, it needs to be noted that killings linked to the former actually increased during the latter (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director Robertson (2020) claimed that the Duterte administration took “advantage of Covid-19 curfews in 2020 to expand its gruesome and bloody ‘war on drugs’.” In addition, “red baiting” by Duterte of legal leftists accounts for an increase in killings of activists in 2020, with rights groups claiming 78 were murdered by the state in that year (Haynes, 2021).
5. Duterte kept close ties with the communist left during his early presidency, initiating peace talks and bringing several of its allies into his first cabinet. But soon the talks were halted, leftists were kicked out of government, and an “anti-terror” law passed, in effect legalising the targeting of activists. Duterte’s supposedly left-influenced policies have also been dismissed by critics. Leading left intellectual and former congressman Bello (2017) argued they were but “cheap populist stunts shorn of mechanisms for funding.” Theriault (2020) makes a related point concerning Duterte’s “greenwashing,” which he terms “green authoritarianism.” He argues through



his duplicitous “performative ecopolitics” Duterte “has sought to consolidate his populist, anti-establishment image amid a souring of his relationship with the left, mounting civil unrest, and rising inflation.”

6. Testimony to the International Criminal Court by an estranged leading member of the Heinous Crimes Task Force (better known as the Davao Death Squad) documented in detail how the vigilante kill group expanded operations and what its techniques were, including reporting to Duterte and others in the Davao City Hall such as aide, Bong Go. Rewards were given for each supposed criminal killed, evidence planted, warning signs put on bodies to deter others, and mass graves dug. This became the template for the national drug war after Duterte was elected president (Rappler Investigative Team, 2021).
7. In addition, Regilme (2021: 10) has made the point that Duterte’s brutal rule must be set in the context of the “persistent delegitimation of human rights advocacy,” particularly with the weakening of rights advocacy by the EU and the US as well as the rise of powerful “illiberal and authoritarian regimes such as Russia and China.” After a contentious relationship with the Obama administration because of the bloody war on drugs, Trump (literally, during a visit to Manila) embraced Duterte, playing down human rights concerns. The Biden administration appears to have taken a similar approach, inviting Duterte to a “Summit for Democracy” in December 2021 which aimed to “counter authoritarianism, combat corruption, and promote respect for human rights.”
8. The impact of the Philippines’ first wave in the spring of 2020 was modest (reaching a peak of 316 daily cases in early April 2020 with daily deaths peaking on the 12th of the month at 50). The second wave, from early June 2020, saw steadily increasing cases (reaching a peak of around 4300 daily cases in late August 2020 with daily deaths peaking at 101 on the 30th of that month). The third wave, in spring 2021, saw cases increase further still (reaching a peak of 11,000 average daily cases in mid-April 2021 with daily deaths peaking at 401 on the 9th of the month). The deadly fourth Delta-variant wave was the most severe (reaching nearly 19,000 daily cases by early September 2021 with daily deaths peaking at 310 on the 17th of that month) (Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 2021; Toole, 2021). The fifth wave of the highly infectious Omicron variant led to a record number in cases (reaching nearly 40,000 daily cases in mid-January 2022) but with a lower number of deaths (peaking at 198 on the 19th of February 2022).

## References

- Abinales PN (2015) Digong’s Mouth. *Rappler*, December 6. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/115071-duterte-mouth-censorship> (accessed 8 February 2020)
- Agence France-Presse (2021) Philippine Economy to Take 10 Years to Recover from COVID-19: NEDA Chief. *ABS-CBN*, October 3. Available at: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/10/02/21/ph-economy-to-take-10-years-to-recover-from-covid-neda>.
- Albert JR (2021) Part 1: Survey Says or Not. *Rappler*, October 30. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/analysis-what-surveys-says-or-not-lecture-series-public-service-business-government-part-1/>.
- Allard T and Lema K (2020) Exclusive: “Shock and Awe” has Failed in Philippines’ Drug War, Enforcement Chief Says. *Reuters*, 7 February. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-drugs-performance-exclusi-idUSKBN2010IL> (accessed 8 February 2020).
- Aquino NP (2019) “Tatay Digong” Thrives on Pathos to Keep Rock-star Status. *Business World*, 22 July. Available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/tatay-digong-thrives-on-pathos-to-keep-rock-star-status/> (accessed 9 July 2021).

- Arguelles CV (2021) The Populist Brand is Crisis: Durable Duterteismo Amidst Mismanaged COVID-19 Response. *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2021: 257–274.
- Atienza ME (2021) The Philippines a Year under Lockdown. *Verfassungsblog*, April 26. Available at: <https://verfassungsblog.de/the-philippines-a-year-under-lockdown/>.
- Bello W (2017) Why it's time for progressives in the Duterte Cabinet to leave. *Rappler*. 20 August. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thoughtleaders/179285-time-progressives-duterte-cabinet-leave-drug-war-killings/> (accessed 5 October 2017).
- Bello W (2019) Duterte's revolt against liberal democracy. *Global Dialogue* 8(3). Available at: <http://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/dutertes-revolt-against-liberal-democracy/>.
- Billing L (2020) Duterte's Response to the Coronavirus: "Shoot Them Dead". *Foreign Policy*, April 16. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/16/duterte-philippines-coronavirus-response-shoot-them-dead/> (accessed 14 May 2021)
- Bloomberg (2021) The Covid Resilience Ranking: The Best and Worst Places to Be as We Learn to Live With Delta. *Bloomberg*, September 28. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-resilience-ranking/> (accessed 4 November 2021).
- Bolledo J (2022) Philippines Tallies Record-breaking 26,458 COVID-19 Cases. *Rappler*, January 8. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/coronavirus-cases-philippines-january-8-2022/>
- Buan L (2021) Tale of Pandemic Face Shields: Costly, Overstocked, Unauthorized Gov't Buys. *Rappler*, 25 August. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/tale-covid-19-pandemic-face-shields-costly-overstocked-unauthorized-government-buys> (accessed 4 November 2021).
- Cabato R (2016) Thousands Dead. Police Accused of Criminal Acts. Yet Duterte's Drug War is Wildly Popular. *Washington Post*, 23 October. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/thousands-dead-police-accused-of-criminal-acts-yet-dutertes-drug-war-is-wildly-popular/2019/10/23/4fdb542a-f494-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/thousands-dead-police-accused-of-criminal-acts-yet-dutertes-drug-war-is-wildly-popular/2019/10/23/4fdb542a-f494-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb_story.html) (accessed 3 November 2016).
- Cepeda M (2021) Robredo Tempted to Tell Duterte: Just Let Me Handle Pandemic Response. *Rappler*, September 3. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/robredo-tempted-tell-duterte-just-let-me-handle-covid-19-pandemic-response/>.
- Collins J (2016a) Development First: Multilateralism in the Post-"war on drugs" Era. In *After the Drug Wars: Report of the LSE Expert Group on the Economics of Drug Policy*. London: London School of Economics, pp. 9–18.
- Collins J (2016b) Why the Philippines' New War on Drug Users Will Fail. *Business World Online*, August 2. Accessed October 26, 2016. Available at: <https://www.bworld.online.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=why-the-philippines-new-war-on-drug-users-will-fail&id=131265> (accessed 3 August 2016).
- Cook M (2021) The Philippines' Vexed Vaccine Rollout. *Asialink*, 1 April. Available at: <https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/the-philippines-vexed-vaccine-rollout> (accessed 28 October 2021).
- Coronel SS (2019) The Vigilante President: How Duterte's Brutal Populism Conquered the Philippines. *Foreign Affairs*, September/October. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/philippines/2019-08-12/vigilante-president> (accessed 19 December 2019).
- Curato N (2017) Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(1): 142–153.
- Curato N and Ong JC (2018) *Who Laughs at a Rape Joke? Illiberal Responsiveness in Rodrigo Duterte*. University of Massachusetts Amherst, ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst, Communication Department Faculty Publication. Available at: [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=communication\\_faculty\\_pubs](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1064&context=communication_faculty_pubs).

- David R (2021) Duterteismo and the War on Drugs. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 24 October. Available at: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/145540/duterteismo-and-the-war-on-drugs> (accessed 24 October 2021).
- Deinla I, Taylor V and Rood S (2018) Philippines: Justice Removed, Justice Denied. *The Interpreter*, May 17. Available at: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/philippines-justice-removed-justice-denied>.
- de Leon D (2021) Hard Lockdown Again: Metro Manila Begins 3rd ECQ. *Rappler*, 6 August. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/metro-manila-officially-undergoes-ecq-august-6-2021> (accessed 28 October 2021).
- de Lima LM (2020) De Lima Urges Women to Continue Resisting Duterte's Misogynistic, Abusive Regime. Senate, 18th Congress, Press Release, November 8. Available at: [http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press\\_release/2020/1108\\_delima1.asp](http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2020/1108_delima1.asp).
- de Vera BO and Aurelio JM (2022) PH Vaccine Rollout Still Slow; Lag Likely Caused COVID Case Spike – World Bank. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 20 January. Available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1542651/wb-ph-jab-rollout-still-slow-lag-likely-caused-case-spike> (accessed 20 January 2022).
- Dizon N (2020) Duterte and his Generals: A Shock and Awe Response to the Pandemic. *Rappler*, July 31. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/duterte-shock-and-awe-coronavirus-pandemic-response-generals> (accessed 28 October 2021).
- Fernandez R (2020) Lawmaker Questions DILG Orders on LGUs. *Sun Star Cebu*, 10 March. Available at: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1847958/Cebu/Local-News/Cebu-Representative-Pablo-John-Garcia-questions-DILG-orders-on-local-government-units> (accessed 4 November 2021).
- Foa RS, Romero-Vidal X, Klassen AJ, et al. (2022) *The Great Reset: Public Opinion, Populism, and the Pandemic*. University of Cambridge: Centre for the Future of Democracy. Available at: [https://luminategroup.com/storage/1443/The\\_Great\\_Reset\\_Public\\_Opinion\\_Populism\\_and\\_the\\_Pandemic.pdf](https://luminategroup.com/storage/1443/The_Great_Reset_Public_Opinion_Populism_and_the_Pandemic.pdf) (accessed 20 January 2022).
- Garrido M (2021) Waiting for Duterte. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 45: 1. Available at: <https://www.ijurr.org/spotlight-on/political-geographies-of-right-wing-populism/waiting-for-duterte/>.
- Gavilan J (2018) Mayors, Vice Mayors Killed under Duterte Gov't. *Rappler*, 2 July. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/list-mayors-vice-mayors-killed-since-july-2016-duterte-government> (accessed 3 July 2018).
- Gavilan J and Talabong R (2020) Policing a Pandemic: Philippines Still Stuck with Drug War Blueprint. *Rappler*, 1 May. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/policing-coronavirus-pandemic-philippines-still-stuck-drug-war-blueprint> (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Gera W (2020) Heightened Contradictions: Duterte and Local Autonomy in the Era of COVID-19. *New Mandala*, 5 June. Available at: <https://www.newmandala.org/heightened-contradictions-duterte-and-local-autonomy-in-the-era-of-covid-1/> (accessed 3 July 2020).
- Gera W and Hutchcroft P (2021) Duterte's Tight Grip over Local Politicians: Can it Endure?. *New Mandala*, February 19. Available at: <https://www.newmandala.org/dutertes-tight-grip-over-local-politicians-can-it-endure/>.
- Hapal K (2021) The Philippines' COVID-19 Response: Securitizing the Pandemic and Disciplining the Pasaway. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 140(2): 224–244.
- Hartigan-Go KY and Mendoza RU (2021) Singapore and the Philippines: From Zero-COVID-19 to Living with COVID-19. *The Diplomat*, October 14. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/singapore-and-the-philippines-from-zero-covid-19-to-living-with-covid-19/>.

- Haynes O (2021) Deadly “Red-Tagging” Campaign Ramps Up in Philippines. *Voice of America*, 18 February. Available at: [https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific\\_deadly-red-tagging-campaign-ramps-philippines/6202221.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_deadly-red-tagging-campaign-ramps-philippines/6202221.html).
- Hedges K and Lasco G (2021) Medical Populism and COVID-19 Testing. *Open Anthropological Research* 1: 73–86.
- Human Rights Watch (2021) Philippines: ‘Drug War’ Killings Rise During Pandemic. 13 January. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/13/philippines-drug-war-killings-rise-during-pandemic> (accessed 22 January 2021).
- Hutchcroft P and Holmes RD (2020) A Failure of Execution. *Inside Story*, April 4. Available at: <https://insidestory.org.au/a-failure-of-execution/> (accessed 30 April 2020).
- Institute of Global Health Innovation (2021) ICL Yougov Covid-19 Behaviour Tracker. Available at: [https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/ighi/viz/ICLYouGovCovid-19Tracker\\_V0\\_3/1Specificpreventativebehaviourbycountry](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/ighi/viz/ICLYouGovCovid-19Tracker_V0_3/1Specificpreventativebehaviourbycountry) (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Jensen S and Hapal K (2018) Police Violence and Corruption in the Philippines: Violent Exchange and the War on Drugs. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 37(2): 39–62.
- Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering (2021) COVID-19 Content Portal: Philippines. 15 November. Available at: [https://www.google.com/search?q=philippines+covid+19+deaths&rlz=1C1SQJL\\_enHK868HK868&oq=philippines+covid+19+deaths&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i457i512j0i22i30l3j0i390l2.4337j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&shem=ssmd](https://www.google.com/search?q=philippines+covid+19+deaths&rlz=1C1SQJL_enHK868HK868&oq=philippines+covid+19+deaths&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i457i512j0i22i30l3j0i390l2.4337j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&shem=ssmd) (accessed 15 November 2021).
- Johnson DT and Fernquest J (2018) Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines. *Asian Journal of Law and Society* 5(2): 359–390.
- Judis J (2016) *The Populist Explosion: How the Great Recession Transformed American and European Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Juego B (2017) The Philippines 2017: Duterte-led Authoritarian Populism and its Liberal-democratic Roots. In: Torri M, Basile E and Mocchi N (eds) *Asia in the Waning Shadow of American Hegemony*, Asia Maior, XXVIII, pp. 129–164.
- Kreuzer P (2016) ‘If They Resist, Kill Them All’: Police Vigilantism in the Philippines. Peace Research Institute (PRIF) Report No. 142. Frankfurt am Main: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung. Available at: [https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk\\_publicationen/prif142](https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk_publicationen/prif142) (accessed 3 January 2017).
- Kreuzer P (2020) Governors and Mayors in the Philippines: Resistance to or Support for Duterte’s Deadly War on Drugs. Peace Research Institute (PRIF) Report, Frankfurt am Main: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung. Available at: <https://nbnresolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-71309-0> (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Kusaka W (2020) Duterte’s Disciplinary Quarantine: How a Moral Dichotomy was Constructed and Undermined. *Philippine Studies* 68(3): 423–442.
- Lalu GP (2022) Duterte Key to Fewer COVID Cases in PH vs Rest of SE Asia – Duque. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 7. Available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1564746/duterte-key-to-fewer-covid-cases-in-ph-vs-rest-of-se-asia-duque#ixzz7MwrtM1ax>.
- Lasca JEM (2021) Who is the “Pasaway”? Duterte’s Pandemic (COVID-19) Blame Game Narrative. *Journal of Public Health*, fdab234. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab234> (accessed 14 July 2021).
- Lasco G (2016) Just How Big is the Drug Problem in the Philippines Anyway? *The Conversation*, 13 October. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/just-how-big-is-the-drug-problem-in-the-philippines-anyway-66640> (accessed March 3, 2021).
- Lasco G (2020b) Medical Populism and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Global Public Health* 15(10): 1417–1429.

- Lasco G (2020a) The “Pasaway” as scapegoat. *Inquirer. net*. Available at: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/129356/the-pasaway-as-scapegoat> (accessed 30 April 2020).
- Lasco G and Curato N (2019) Medical populism. *Social Science & Medicine* 221: 1–8.
- Magsambol B (2022) “Massive, Uncontrolled” Transmission of Omicron Feared in Metro Manila. *Rappler*, January 10. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/experts-fear-massive-uncontrolled-transmission-omicron-variant-metro-manila/>.
- Maru D (2018) CHR chief: Drug War Deaths Could be as High as 27,000. *ABS-CBN News*, December 5. Available at: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/12/05/18/chr-chief-drug-war-deaths-could-be-as-high-as-27000> (accessed 9 December 2018).
- McCoy A (2017) Philippine Populism: Local Violence and Global Context in the Rise of a Filipino Strongman. *Surveillance & Society* 15(3 & 4): 514–522.
- Mendoza R (2020) Fighting Covid-19 in the Philippines. *The Diplomat*, May 5. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/fighting-covid-19-in-the-philippines-the-scalpel-vs-the-axe/> (accessed 14 May 2020).
- Mendoza R (2021) Popularity vs. Performance. *Rappler*, August 26. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/opinion-popularity-vs-performance-rejoinder-duterte-reform-legacy/>.
- Mishra P (2016) The Globalization of Rage. *Foreign Affairs* 95(6): 46–54.
- Narang RE (2017) Failure of the Legal System: A Challenge to Filipino Lawyers. *Rappler*, 7 August. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/177893-failure-legal-system-challenge-filipino-lawyers> (accessed April 15, 2020)
- Noble LWT (2021) PHL Among Most Risk-exposed Asian Economies Due to Slow Vaccination. *Business World*, 20 May. Available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/phl-among-most-risk-exposed-asian-economies-due-to-slow-vaccination/> (accessed 29 June 2021).
- Parameswaran P (2016) The Truth About Duterte’s ‘Popularity’ in the Philippines. *The Diplomat*, October 7. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/10/the-truth-about-dutertes-popularity-in-the-philippines/>.
- Parmanand S (2019) Duterte as the Macho Messiah: Chauvinist Populism and the Deminisation of Human Rights in the Philippines. *Review of Women’s Studies*. 29(2): 1–30.
- Parmanand S (2020) The Dangers of Masculinity Contests in a Time of Pandemic. *Oxford Political Review*, April 18. Available at: <http://oxfordpoliticalreview.com/2020/04/18/the-dangers-of-masculinity-contests-in-a-time-of-pandemic/>
- Parmanand S (2021) Macho Populists versus COVID: Comparing Political Masculinities in Pandemic Times. Paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference panel, “Right Populism World Wide: Rodrigo Duterte in Comparative Perspective”, March 22.
- Peel M (2017) Drugs and Death in Davao: The Making of Rodrigo Duterte. *Financial Times*, 2 February. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/9d6225dc-e805-11e6-967b-c88452263daf> (accessed 27 October 2017).
- Pepinsky T (2017) Southeast Asia: Voting against Disorder. *Journal of Democracy* 28(2): 120–131.
- Pfaff K, Neumayer E and Plümper T (2021) Querdenken: the German Anti-lockdown Movement. *London School of Economics (LSE)*, September 29. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/covid19/2021/09/29/querdenken-the-german-anti-lockdown-movement-that-thrives-on-public-distrust/> (accessed 25 October 2021).
- Piling D (2013) Typhoon Haiyan Highlights the Weak Philippines State. *Financial Times*, 11 November. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/a85528f6-20ef-36a4-842e-b2a7928f3ed3> (accessed 12 December 2013).
- Poggioli S (2021) Italy’s Prime Minister Quits as COVID-19 Response Splits Coalition Government. *NPR*, January 26. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2021/01/26/960744631/>

- italys-prime-minister-quits-as-covid-19-response-splits-coalition-government (accessed 25 October 2021).
- Pulse Asia (2016) Ulat ng Bayan – Nationwide Survey on Urgent National and Local Concerns. December. Available at: <http://www.pulseasia.ph/> (accessed 14 December 2016).
- Punongbayan J (2020) How Data Debunk Duterte's Toxic 'Pasaway' Narrative. *Rappler*, 22 June. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/analysis-how-datadebunk-duterte-toxic-pasaway-narrative> (accessed 23 June 2020).
- Quimpo N (2017) Duterte's "War on Drugs": The Securitization of Illegal Drugs and the Return of National Boss Rule. In: Curato N (ed) *A Duterte Reader: Critical Essays on Rodrigo Duterte's Early Presidency*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, pp. 145–166.
- Ranada P (2020) Piqued Duterte Taunts Doctors to Mount 'Revolution' against Him. *Rappler*, 3 August. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/piqued-duterte-taunts-doctors-to-mount-revolution-against-him> (18 August 2020).
- Ranada P (2021a) Duterte Gov't Says it did 'Excellent' Job Handling COVID-19 Pandemic. *Rappler*, March 8. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/malacanang-says-duterte-government-did-excellent-job-handing-covid-19-pandemic/>.
- Ranada P (2021b) Duterte May Cap Term as Most Popular Philippine President. *Rappler*, June 30. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/so-what-if-duterte-may-cap-term-as-philippines-most-popular-president/>.
- Rappler Investigative Team (2021) Duterte as "Superman": Lascañas Details Davao Death Squad Operations. *Rappler*, 16 November. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/duterte-superman-arthur-lascañas-details-davao-death-squad-operations> (accessed 16 November 2021).
- Reed J (2021) Duterte Maintains Firm Support Despite Mishandling of Covid-19. *Financial Times*, January 28. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/47e7bfda-ad5f-4f1c-b16c-e1108679d623> (accessed 12 February 2021).
- Regencia T (2021) Why is Duterte Still Riding High Despite the Pandemic. *Aljazeera*, July 28. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/28/duterte-still-rides-high-in-polls-amid-pandemic-economic-slump>.
- Regilme SSF (2020) Visions of Peace Amidst a Human Rights Crisis: War on Drugs in Colombia and the Philippines. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6(2). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogaa022>.
- Regilme SSF (2021) Contested spaces of illiberal and authoritarian politics: human rights and democracy in crisis. *Political Geography* 89. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S096262982100871>.
- Reuters (2020) Philippines' Duterte Scores Record High Rating, Despite Virus Crisis. *Reuters*, 5 October. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte-idUSKBN26Q0YK> (accessed 10 November 2020).
- Reyes D (2016) The Spectacle of Violence in Duterte's "War on Drugs". *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 35(3): 111–137.
- Reyes D (2021) The Persistence of Political Violence in the Philippines after the Fall of the Marcos Dictatorship. PhD Thesis, City University of Hong Kong.
- Roberts H (2020) Italian Government Defied Scientists to Impose Strict Coronavirus Lockdown. *Politico*, August 6. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/italian-government-defied-scientists-to-impose-strict-coronavirus-lockdown/> (accessed 25 October 2021).
- Robertson P (2020) Philippines Uses "Drug War" Tactics to Fight Covid-19. *Human Rights Watch*, 16 July. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/15/philippines-uses-drug-war-tactics-fight-covid-19> (accessed 15 July 2020).

- Robinet-Borgomano A (2020) Europe Versus Coronavirus – Germany, a Resilient Model. *Institut Montaigne*, June 4. Available at: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/states-facing-coronavirus-crisis-germany-resilient-model> (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Rocamora J (1995) *Boss: 5 Case Studies of Local Politics in the Philippines*. Pasig, Metro Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism Institute for Popular Democracy.
- Rodan G (2021) Inequality and Political Representation in the Philippines and Singapore. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 51(2): 233–261.
- Ropero G (2021) Mayors and Vice Mayors Killed during Duterte Administration. *ABS-CBN News*, March 10. Available at: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/04/18/mayors-and-vice-mayors-killed-under-duterte-administration> (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Sarao ZGH (2021) PH Ranks Last Out of 121 Countries in Global COVID-19 Recovery Index – Nikkei. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 6 October. Available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1498167/ph-ranks-last-out-of-121-countries-in-global-covid-19-recovery-index-nikkei> (accessed 8 October 2021).
- Sidel J (1999) *Capital, Coercion, and Crime: Bossism in the Philippines*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Social Weather Stations (2021) Third Quarter 2021 Social Weather Survey: Pres. Duterte’s Net Rating Drops 10 points to +52, but still “Very Good”. *Social Weather Stations*, 29 October. Available at: [https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20211029114416&mc\\_cid=4482962bc4&mc\\_eid=0b1d02646a](https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20211029114416&mc_cid=4482962bc4&mc_eid=0b1d02646a) (accessed 3 November 2021).
- Suorsa O and Thompson MR (2018) Choosing Sides? Illiberal Realignment and Hedging in the Philippines and Thailand. *Panorama - Insights into Asia and European Affairs*, April 24, Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, pp. 63–76.
- Tablabong R (2020) Over 100,000 Quarantine Violators Arrested in PH since March. *Rappler*, 8 September. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/arrested-quarantine-violators-philippines-2020> (accessed 27 October 2021).
- Talabong R (2019) Duterte Releases Drug List Ahead of 2019 Election. *Rappler*, 14 March. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/duterte-releases-drug-list-ahead-of-2019-elections> (accessed 28 March 2019).
- Teehankee JC (2021) Duterte’s COVID-19 Powers and the Paradox of the Philippine Presidency. *CSEAS-Kyoto*, April 28. Available at: [https://covid-19chronicles.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/post-007.html?fbclid=IwAR2-swiSiI-ehgjzSThLj5Tng0mmwhv35T0qi6HeoEt\\_4zDRRXKH2cYLZ8](https://covid-19chronicles.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/post-007.html?fbclid=IwAR2-swiSiI-ehgjzSThLj5Tng0mmwhv35T0qi6HeoEt_4zDRRXKH2cYLZ8) (accessed 15 May 2021).
- Theriault N (2020) Euphemisms we Die By: On Eco-anxiety, Necropolitics, and Green Authoritarianism in the Philippines. In: Maskovsky J and Bjork-James S (eds) *Beyond Populism: Angry Politics and the Twilight of Neoliberalism*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, pp. 182–205.
- Thompson MR (2018) Why Duterte Remains So Popular: The Failures of the Philippine’s Liberal Reformism. *Foreign Affairs*, October 9. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/philippines/2018-10-09/why-duterte-remains-so-popular> (accessed 9 October 2018).
- Thompson MR (2021a) The COVID-19 Pandemic, the “War on Drugs,” and Duterte’s Brute Force Governance in the Philippines. *Panorama – Insights into Asia and European Affairs*, Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, January 2021. Available at: [https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/11061405/Panorama\\_2020\\_01\\_democracy\\_MarkRThompson.pdf/2aa3ae38-06b0-4116-c235-10451a32c024?t=1608073406782](https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/11061405/Panorama_2020_01_democracy_MarkRThompson.pdf/2aa3ae38-06b0-4116-c235-10451a32c024?t=1608073406782) (accessed 5 February 2021).
- Thompson MR (2021b) Duterte’s Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the “Death of Development” in the Philippines. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00472336.2021.1910859?journalCode=rjoc20>.

- Tomacruz S (2020) “Shoot Them Dead”: Duterte Orders Troops to Kill Quarantine Violators. *Rappler*, 1 April. Available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/duterte-orders-troops-shoot-kill-coronavirus-quarantine-violators> (accessed 2 April 2021).
- Toole M (2021) The Philippines Passes the 2 Million Mark as COVID-19 Cases Surge in Southeast Asia. *The Conversation*, 9 September. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/the-philippines-passes-the-2-million-mark-as-covid-19-cases-surge-in-southeast-asia-167186> (accessed 15 September 2021).
- United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (2020) Situation of Human Rights in the Philippines. Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 29. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PH/Philippines-HRC44-AEV.pdf> (accessed 11 March 2021).
- Valente CS (2020) Duterte to LGUs: “Stand Down” or Face Charges. *Manila Times*, 20 March. Available at: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/20/latest-stories/breakingnews/duterte-to-lgus-stand-down-or-face-charges/704541> (accessed 15 October 2021).
- van der Kamp D (2021a) Blunt Force Regulation and Bureaucratic Control: Understanding China’s War on Pollution. *Governance* 34(1): 191–209.
- van der Kamp D (2021b) Blunt Force Regulation and the Coronavirus: Why States Choose to Lockdown during the Pandemic. (unpublished manuscript May 2021).
- Yusingco M and Pizarro A (2020) The Militarized Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines: An Escalating Threat to Human Rights. *International Association of Constitutional Law, l’association Internationale de Droit Constitutionnel (IACL-AIDC) Blog*, June 18. Available at: <https://blog-iacl-aidc.org/2020-posts/2020/6/18/the-militarized-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-the-philippines-an-escalating-threat-to-human-rights> (accessed 25 October 2021).

## Author Biography

**Mark R. Thompson** is head and professor of Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS) and director of Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC), City University of Hong Kong. The past president of the Hong Kong Political Science Association, he previously taught in the UK and Germany and was Lee Kong Chian Distinguished Fellow at National University of Singapore and Stanford University. Recent publications include *Governance and Democracy in the Asia-Pacific* (co-editor, Routledge 2020), *China’s “Singapore Model” and Authoritarian Learning* (co-editor, Routledge 2020), *Authoritarian Modernism in East Asia* (Palgrave 2019), and the *Routledge Handbook of the Contemporary Philippines* (co-editor, 2018).