

DUTERTE, COVID-19, AND POPULIST-AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE PHILIPPINES: Contentions and contradictions

By: Verna Dinah Q. Viajar

This paper is part of the series "Lessons learned from Covid-19: Transforming a global crisis to global solidarity?"

At the start of the pandemic, many predicted that even in a post-pandemic world, things would never be the same again. The sheer enormity of the global health crisis exposed in sharp relief issues of economic and social inequality, the apocalyptic impact of human activity on the environment, and the importance of community solidarity over material consumption globally.



Progressive organizations gather for an independence day protest in 2020 against the anti-terror bill. (Photo: Verna Viajar)

In dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, the Duterte government's response was too little in terms of preparation, too late to stop local transmission, and excessive in terms of lockdown enforcement. The Philippines has had the strictest and longest lockdown in Asia, yet COVID-19 infections steadily increased from June 2020 until the surge in March 2021. This shows that lockdowns, without strong health interventions, are ineffective at stopping transmission of COVID-19. Instead of swiftly addressing the loss of lives and livelihoods, the government tightened its authoritarian grip on power. This paper examines the contradictions and contentions of Duterte's sustained populism in the context of growing authoritarian tendencies in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing a Gramscian perspective and critical theories on neoliberalism, populism, and authoritarianism, this paper analyses the increasing inequalities, neoliberal policies, and fascist tendencies of the current Philippine political economy.



Introduction

In March 2020, one year after the COVID-19 pandemic was finally recognized as a major public concern that caused a public health crisis and economic devastation, the Philippines is still battling to control the virus. A new surge of COVID-19 infections beginning in mid-March 2021 resulted in the government instituting lockdowns from 29 March until 4 April 2021.¹ By April 2021, as the daily count of COVID-19 infections had risen to almost 10,000, the all-too-familiar lockdowns and restrictions, called 'community quarantines' by the government, returned in full force.

After several months of gradually easing community quarantine restrictions, the policy announcements that restrictions would continue until May 2021 brought forth renewed frustrations. From the outset, the Duterte government's response to the virus was inadequate. The administration's measures were enacted too late to stop local transmission; there was far too little preparation by relevant government bodies to respond to a crisis like the pandemic and the state was notoriously excessive in enforcing lockdown measures against citizens.² The Philippines enacted the strictest and longest lockdown in Asia.³ However, the steady increase of COVID-19 infections since June 2020 showed that lockdowns, without strong public health interventions, such as free mass testing and a swift vaccination program, are ineffective at stopping the transmission of COVID-19.

Instead of swiftly addressing the loss of lives and livelihoods, the government tightened its authoritarian grip on power.⁴ Social media platforms and mass media outlets were flooded with criticisms of the government's incoherent institutional actions, double-standard enforcement of quarantine policies, and highly militarized response to the pandemic. However, Duterte received high popularity ratings in a survey conducted in September 2020.

This paper discusses Duterte's journey from populism to authoritarianism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing a Gramscian perspective to analyze the increasing inequalities, neoliberal policies, and fascist tendencies of the current Philippine political economy. This paper utilizes critical theories on neoliberalism, populism, and authoritarianism to interrogate the contradictions and contentions of Duterte's sustained populism in the context of growing authoritarian tendencies. Using critical theories on populist authoritarianism, this paper analyses Duterte's increasing bent towards authoritarian rule through the lens of the Gramscian notion of hegemony.

The COVID-19 Virus: A Series of Unfortunate Events

Presently, the Philippines continues to battle a rising number of COVID-19 infections despite declarations from the government that everything is under control when compared to other countries.⁵ However, the numbers say otherwise. Data from Johns Hopkins University shows that as of May 2021, the Philippines ranks 25th among countries with the highest number of COVID-19 cases and 28th-highest for number of COVID-19 deaths globally.⁶

¹ Nick Aspenwall, "Manila Locks Down as Covid-19 Cases Surge in the Philippines", The Diplomat, 29 March 2021, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/manila-locks-down-as-covid-19-cases-surge-in-the-philippines/>.

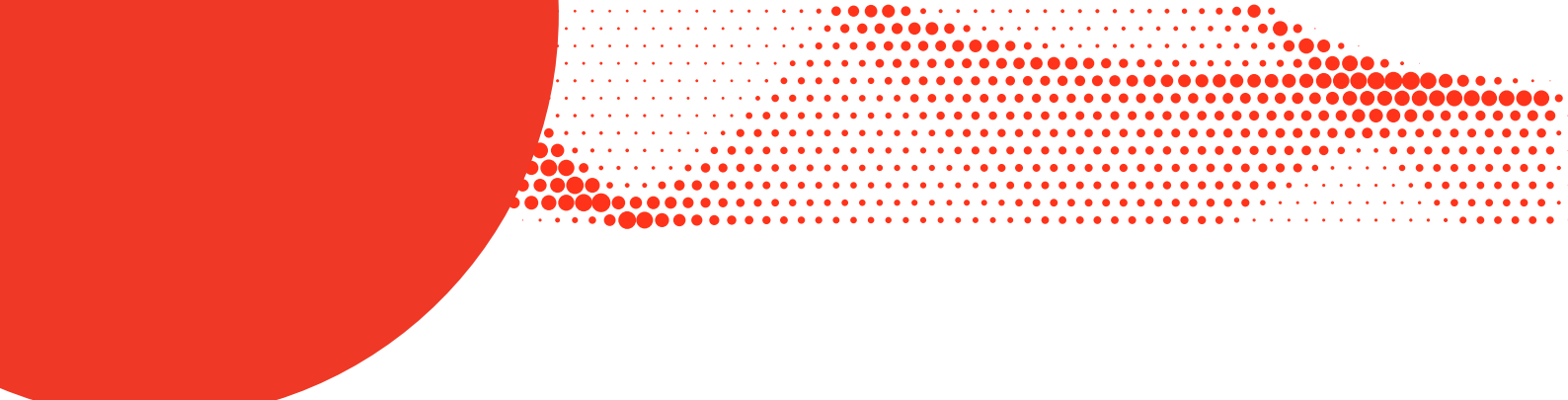
² Verna Dinah Q. Viajar, "Unravelling Duterte's Iron Hand in the Time of COVID-19", IRGAC, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 22 July 2020, available at: <https://www.irgac.org/2020/07/22/unravelling-dutertes-iron-hand-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>.

³ CBCP Laiko, "PH has the Strictest Lockdown in Asia, but ineffective vs. Covid-19", CBCP Laiko, 11 May 2020, available at: <https://www.cbcplaiko.org/2020/05/11/philippines-lockdown-is-the-strictest-in-the-region/>.

⁴ See, Aie Balagtas, "Rodrigo Duterte Is Using One of the World's Longest Covid-19 Lockdowns to Strengthen His Grip on the Philippines", Time, 15 March 2021, available at: <https://time.com/5945616/covid-philippines-pandemic-lockdown/>.

⁵ "Duterte: PH 'doing good' on Covid-19 response compared with other countries", CNN Philippines, 4 May 2021, available at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/5/4/Duterte-PH-COVID-19-response-.html>.

⁶ Ibid.



In the Southeast Asia region, among the ten member countries, the Philippines is second only to Indonesia, which has the highest number of COVID-19 infections and deaths with 1.6 million total cases and around 45,000 deaths.⁷ The Philippines total number of cases, as of 3 May 2021, is at 1.062 million, with 69,466 active cases and 17,525 deaths, according to the COVID-19 tracker of the Department of Health.⁸

In March 2021, to ease the pressure on the healthcare system—reminiscent of the 2020 lockdowns—restrictions on transportation, business operations, public services, and movement of people across borders were once again enforced through a variety or gradations of ‘community quarantines’. The strictest form of community quarantine is the enhanced community quarantine or ECQ,⁹ characterized by full restrictions on movement of people (with exceptions for those buying food and medicine), suspension of public transportation, closure of schools, minimal economic activity, imposition of curfews, and closure of both city and provincial borders.

Succeeding forms of community quarantine include the ‘modified ECQ’ or MECQ (a 30–50 percent opening up of economic activities and movement), ‘general community quarantine’ or GCQ (a 50–75 percent opening up), and the ‘modified GCQ’ or MGCQ, which is the most relaxed form of lockdown. For one whole year, the Philippines has moved through these different forms of restrictions without really effectively controlling the spread of COVID-19.

One year into the pandemic, and COVID-19 continues to rage on, particularly in the developing world. The pandemic horror that India has experienced in May 2021 provided a stark example of the extent to which lives can be lost when the virus remains uncontrolled due to government neglect and incompetence. Arundhati Roy stated that the “system hasn’t collapsed”¹⁰, claiming that the healthcare system in India was non-existent to begin with. Roy claimed that it was the government that had failed, adding that perhaps “‘failed’ is an inaccurate word, because what we are witnessing is not criminal negligence, but an outright crime against humanity”¹¹. As of early May 2021, India had registered more than 20 million total cases of COVID-19 and 222,000 COVID-19 deaths.¹² In response to this, Roy wrote that things “will settle down eventually. Of course, they will. But we don’t know who among us will survive to see that day. The rich will breathe easier. The poor will not”.

Since last year, harsh social restrictions used to contain the spread of COVID-19 have been instituted both in the developed and the developing world. However, for people in the developing world, pandemic restrictions mean hunger for the millions of informal workers relying on freedom of movement to earn their livelihoods. Suspension of work and transportation means job uncertainty for the millions of hourly-paid precarious workers in the Philippines and in many parts of the developing world. The pandemic has exposed the unequal impact of restrictions on the poor.¹³ The rich have houses to comfortably quarantine in, as well as cars to freely travel in without violating social distancing rules. The poor need to leave their houses to find food for their families and avoid being suffocated by the summer heat. The harsh enforcement of quarantine restrictions in many developing countries also exposed how some states around the world are exploiting the need for lockdowns and quarantines “to intensify patterns of violence that are already normalized in policing”¹⁴. Many governments were caught

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Department of Health Covid-19 Tracker. 2020. <https://www.doh.gov.ph/covid19tracker>,

⁹ Catalina Ricci S Madarang, “From ECQ to modified ECQ and modified GCQ, what do these phases mean?” Interaksyon, 14 May 2020, available at: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2020/05/14/168523/from-ecq-to-modified-ecq-and-modified-gcq-what-do-these-phases-mean/>.

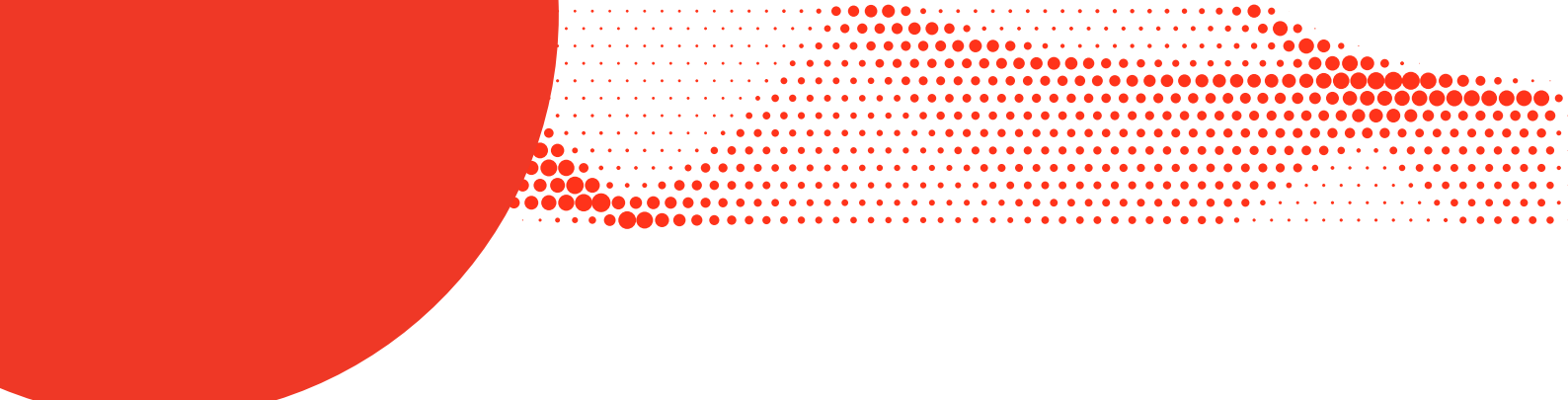
¹⁰ Arundhati Roy, “We are witnessing a crime against humanity”: Arundhati Roy on India’s Covid Catastrophe”, The Guardian, 28 April 2021, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/apr/28/crime-against-humanity-arundhati-roy-india-covid-catastrophe>.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Arun Kundnani, “From Fanon to ventilators: Fighting for our right to breathe”, Transnational Institute, 7 May 2020, available at: <https://www.tni.org/en/article/from-fanon-to-ventilators>.

¹⁴ Ibid



unaware as the pandemic laid bare the societal inequalities both between and within nations. States with weak public healthcare systems caused by neoliberal policies, such as privatized healthcare, are grappling to save lives in this contagion and are confronting unprecedented economic, political, and humanitarian crises.

The Pandemic Response: A Tragedy of Errors

It is 2020 all over again. A year ago, in May 2020, Nikkei Asia reported that the Philippines had the “strictest lockdown in Asia, but [it has been] ineffective vs. COVID-19” and that at that time, the Duterte government had “brought down public mobility by 85% in transit stations; by 79% in retail and recreation; and by 71% in workplaces”¹⁵. However, the report further stated that the harsh lockdowns have not been effective at stopping transmission and instead, have been used to consolidate Duterte’s authoritarian rule.¹⁶

The strictest lockdown, the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), was imposed island-wide in Luzon from 15 March 2020 until 15 May 2020.¹⁷ It was then extended until June 2020. After easing the community quarantines, a two-week strict lockdown was imposed once again in August 2020. Alternating community quarantines, such as localized ECQ, MECQ, GCQ, and MGCQ were enforced until the end of the year with no end in sight. For the whole year, the confusing assortment of community quarantines meant there were suspension of classes in schools, curfews, checkpoints, policies banning anyone under 15 years old and over 60 years old from going out, limitations on transportation services, and further limitations on the opening of restaurants, gatherings, and other economic activities.

The Philippine economy contracted by 9.5 percent due to the pandemic restrictions, the worst economic constriction since World War II.¹⁸ The Philippine economy was also the worst performer when compared to the ten other Southeast Asian economies.¹⁹ As of 5 May 2021, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that close to ten million Filipino workers had lost their jobs after one year of the pandemic.²⁰ Moreover, the 9.8 million Filipinos who have lost their jobs after a year of protracted lockdowns and continuing restrictions are lacking adequate support from the government.²¹ The Duterte government’s uninspired vaccine procurement and vaccination program has caused prolonged suffering for many.

The lockdown policy of harsh penalties and arrests of quarantine violators was heavily criticized, especially as there were more people apprehended for violating the community quarantines than tested for coronavirus. In mid-April 2020, more than 120,000 people were apprehended for violation of community quarantines by the police and the military but only 70,000 were tested for coronavirus.²² On 29 April 2020, the United Nations rebuked the

¹⁵ CBCP Laiko, “PH has the Strictest Lockdown in Asia, but ineffective vs. Covid-19”, CBCP Laiko, 11 May 2020, available at: <https://www.cbcplaiiko.org/2020/05/11/philippines-lockdown-is-the-strictest-in-the-region/>.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ The political and economic centre of the country, the National Capital Region (NCR), is located in the island of Luzon.

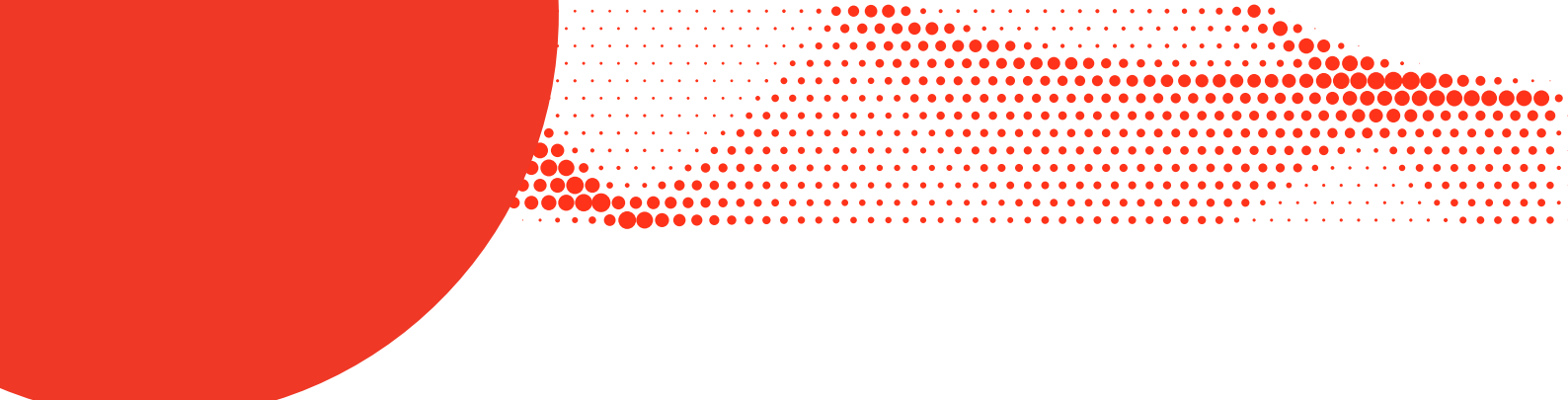
¹⁸ Beatrice M. Laforga, “Philippine GDP shrinks by record 9.5% in 2020”, BusinessWorld, 29 January 2021, available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/philippine-gdp-shrinks-by-record-9-5-in-2020/>.

¹⁹ Beatrice M. Laforga, “Philippines to be SE Asia’s worst performer this year”, BusinessWorld, 11 December 2020, available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/philippines-to-be-se-asias-worst-performer-this-year/>.

²⁰ Ted Cordero, “PSA: 9.82M Filipinos laid off from March 2020 to March 2021 – PSA”, GMA News, 6 May 2021, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/786448/psa-9-82m-filipinos-laid-off-from-march-2020-to-march-2021-psa/story/>.

²¹ Ibid

²² Paul John Caña, “Philippines Tops List of Most People Apprehended for Quarantine Violations in the World”, Esquire, 2 May 2020 at: <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/news/philippines-tops-list-of-most-people-apprehended-for-quarantine-violations-in-the-world-src-reportr-a00289-20200502?fbclid=IwAR0kgWli8Rs5dsbFU8g1jirN-kn4knHSTJYjEnsp0KMRchCn3cNplqZz254>.



Philippines for its “highly militarized response” to lockdown violators.²³ The strict enforcement and harsh penalties were encouraged by Duterte himself. In one of his late-night press statements, Duterte warned that anyone caught violating the restrictions would be shot.²⁴ In April 2020, after a month of strict lockdowns, there were more people arrested for quarantine violations than people who tested positive for COVID-19.²⁵

In July 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the Duterte government enacted the controversial Anti-Terrorism Act, broadening police powers over ‘suspected terrorists’—a term that was expanded to include activists and critics of the government.²⁶ At present, the law is being challenged by various sectors of society both on the streets and in the halls of the Supreme Court. Moreover, on 5 May 2020, as a means to restrict critical views on the government’s pandemic response and through the instigation of Duterte, the House of Representatives or the Lower House of the Congress of the Philippines voted to withhold the franchise of the major broadcast network ABS-CBN.²⁷ The broadcast network had earned the ire of the President during his campaign period and was perceived to be critical of the Duterte government and its incoherent response to COVID-19. Before the year ended, the International Criminal Court also found substantial evidence that crimes against humanity were committed during Duterte’s bloody war on drugs which began in 2016.²⁸

Fast forward to mid-March 2021 and to a surge in the number of infections, which by reaching 6,000 cases every day was putting a strain on the weak healthcare system. Even after the two-week lockdown imposed from 29 March to 4 April 2021, hospitals were at a breaking point by 19 April 2021 with intensive care units (ICUs) at 84 percent capacity, beds in COVID-19 wards at 70 percent capacity, and isolation beds at 63 percent capacity.²⁹ By the end of April 2021, the lockdown measures or modified ECQ had been extended and continued to limit movements and gatherings of people, as well as economic activity.³⁰ Curfews and checkpoints continued to be enforced. According to a report by Reuters, these restrictions that aimed to curb the spread of COVID-19 have “taken a painful toll on the Southeast Asian economy, which suffered its worst contraction on record due to the pandemic last year”³¹. Since last year, many have criticized the Duterte government for forgoing a medical and health emergency approach in response to the pandemic and instead responding in a militarized and authoritarian fashion.³² Discontent has also grown on social media regarding the government’s incompetence in handling the devastating effects on people’s lives, health, and livelihoods caused by the still-raging COVID-19 pandemic.

With the lack of coordinated food and financial assistance from the government, people responded with

²³ Julia Mari Ornedo, Ornedo, Julia Mari, “UN rebukes Philippines’ ‘highly militarized response’ to ECQ violators”, GMA News, 29 April 2020, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/736111/un-rebukes-philippines-highly-militarized-response-to-ecq-violators/story/>.

²⁴ Lynzy Billing, “Duterte’s Response to the Coronavirus: ‘Shoot Them Dead’”, FP, April 16, 2020, available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/16/duterte-philippines-coronavirus-response-shoot-them-dead/>.

²⁵ Paul John Caña, “Philippines Tops List of Most People Apprehended for Quarantine Violations in the World”, Esquire, 2 May 2020 at: <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/news/philippines-tops-list-of-most-people-apprehended-for-quarantine-violations-in-the-world-src-report-a00289-20200502?fbclid=IwAR0kgWli8Rs5dsbFU8g1jirN-kn4knHSTJYjEnsp0KMRchCn3cNplqZz254>.

²⁶ Julie McCarthy, “Why Rights Groups Worry About the Philippines’ New Anti-Terrorism Law”, NPR, 21 July 2020, available at: <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/21/893019057/why-rights-groups-worry-about-the-philippines-new-anti-terrorism-law?t=1620157667547&t=1643193735222>.

²⁷ Ralf Rivas, “NTC orders ABS-CBN to stop operations”. Rappler.com, 5 May 2020, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/259974-ntc-orders-abs-cbn-stop-operations-may-5-2020>.

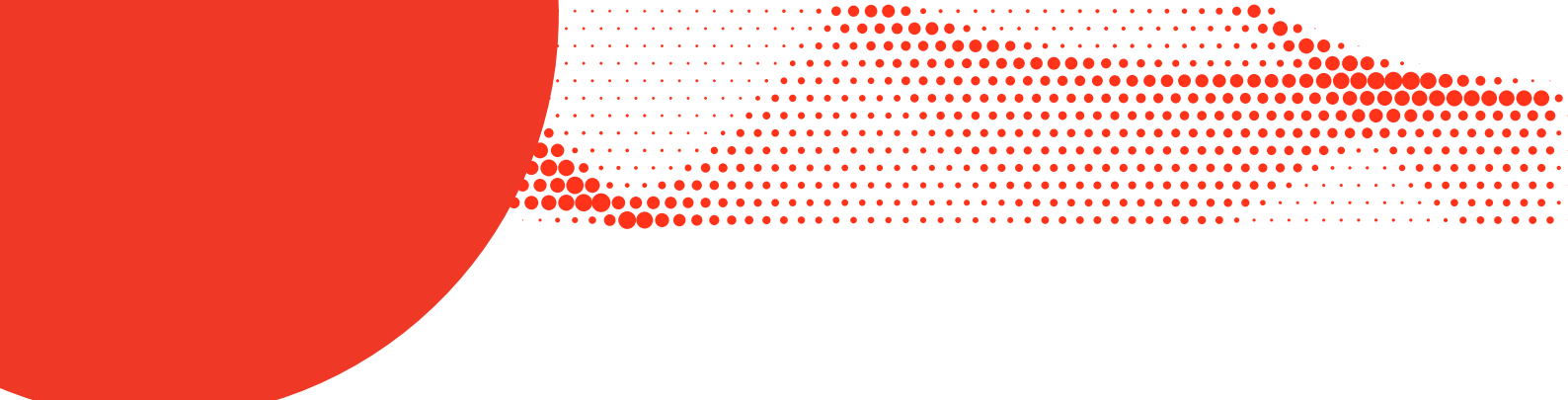
²⁸ Jason Gutierrez, “Court Finds Evidence of Crimes Against Humanity in the Philippines”, The New York Times, 15 December 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/15/world/asia/philippines-duterte-drugs-icc.html>.

²⁹ Neil Morales and Karen Lema, “Philippine hospitals struggle to cope as more severe Covid-19 wave hits”, Reuters, 20 April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippine-hospitals-struggle-cope-more-severe-covid-19-wave-hits-2021-04-20/>.

³⁰ Karen Lema, “Philippines extends limits on movement, gatherings to curb Covid”, Reuters, 28 April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-extends-limits-movement-gatherings-curb-covid-2021-04-28/>.

³¹ Ibid

³² Therese Reyes, “The Philippine Gov’t Banned Rallies, So Protesters Threw a ‘Party’ on Independence Day Instead”, Vice World News, 12 June 2020, available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/935ada/philippine-government-independence-day-rallies-protests>.



community pantries which sprouted up across the country. These community pantries are free and aim to help the many hungry, jobless, and frustrated Filipinos. The community pantries started with a small wooden cart full of food, parked on the side street of a village in Quezon City, with a sign that said: “Maginhawa Community Pantry. Take what you need. Give what you can”³³. The free community pantry took off from there, growing into a national movement of mutual aid among Filipinos in dire straits. Thousands of community pantries have been established in an effort to provide both free food to those in need and a place for people to donate what they can. However, the Duterte government was quick to denounce the community initiative as being organized by communists. Duterte himself dissuaded people from using the free goods which community pantries provided.³⁴ This expression of solidarity, which has taken on a life of its own and is now a national movement, came on the heels of a government that neglected to provide much-needed food and financial assistance for many who were suffering due to the lockdown restrictions.

The pandemic has exposed the weak healthcare system in the Philippines and the lack of preparation of the country’s healthcare institutions to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Driven by neoliberal policies focused on privatization, 60 percent of hospitals in the country are privately owned while only 40 percent are public hospitals. Based on a Department of Health report,³⁵ there are 1,071 licensed private hospitals and 721 public hospitals, of which only 70 are operated by the Department of Health, while the rest are run by local government.³⁶ A majority of these hospitals, 56 percent, are classified as ‘Level 1’ healthcare facilities with limited capacities, similar to infirmaries. There is also an uneven distribution of healthcare facilities wherein the most technologically advanced are concentrated in metropolises. Healthcare workers such as nurses are also concentrated in big cities because the opportunities of being employed in big hospitals or to work abroad are greater. Last year, the government needed to hire more than 8,000 healthcare workers to meet the demands of the pandemic but were not able to attract significant amounts of healthcare professionals.³⁷ Low wages coupled with hazardous work discouraged many from taking up the offer. In a fit of pique and to alleviate the pressure on the healthcare system due to lack of health workers, Duterte banned the deployment of nurses abroad from May 2020 until November 2020.³⁸ In March 2021, the Department of Health announced that they have allocated “PHP548 million for the hiring of 7,613 health workers for January to June this year amid the renewed surge of COVID-19 infections”³⁹. During the pandemic year, the Department of Health adopted a policy that the hospital is the last line of defense and that the home is the first line of defense. People infected with COVID-19 are advised to quarantine at home and to avoid putting strain on the weak healthcare system and should only go to the hospital when they have trouble breathing.⁴⁰

From Populism to Authoritarianism: Contentions and Contradictions

After more than 200 days of lockdown, the year 2020 closed with an economic flatline and the worst contraction

³³ Michael Beltran, “How a Community Pantry Sparked Movement of Mutual Aid in the Philippines”, The News Lens, 21 April 2021, available at: <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/149976>.

³⁴ JC Gotinga, “Food pantries for hungry Filipinos get tagged as communist”, Aljazeera, 24 April 2021, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/24/food-pantry-for>.

³⁵ See Microsoft Word - final NOH for layout_Sept27_chap1to4.docx (doh.gov.ph).

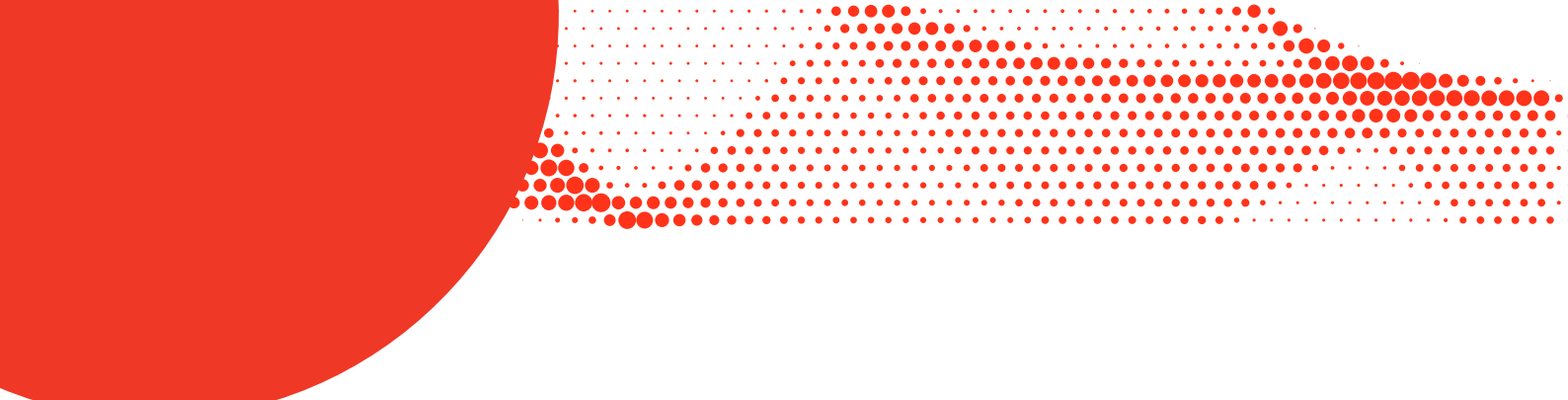
³⁶ Manila Times, “At a glance: The Philippine health care system”, The Manila Times, 26 April 2018, available at: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2018/04/26/supplements/at-a-glance-the-philippine-health-care-system/395117/>.

³⁷ Philippine Daily Inquirer, “Only few takers of gov’t offer of nursing jobs”, Inquirer.net, 26 August 2020, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1327087/only-few-takers-of-govt-offer-of-nursing-jobs#ixzz6uTe1xzpVW>.

³⁸ Ferdinand Patinio, “PH deployment ban on nurses abroad stays: DOLE”, Philippine News Agency, 14 August 2020, available at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112250>.

³⁹ Catherine Gonzalez, “DOH allots P548M to hire 7,613 health workers”, Inquirer.net, 25 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1411403/doh-allots-p548m-to-hire-7613-health-workers#ixzz6uTg8m2xz>.

⁴⁰ (Interview with medical doctor, April 2020).



among all the countries in Southeast Asia. However, in the midst of the pandemic, Duterte's ratings for trustworthiness rose to 91 percent, according to Pulse Asia, a private polling firm that conducted a survey in September 2020.⁴¹ Whilst many distrust the pollster's findings, the report boosted the morale of the Duterte camp despite rising criticism. The survey came out despite growing opposition towards the government's COVID-19 response and this period became defined by a series of unfortunate events and a tragedy of errors.

With sustained popular support, Duterte continued to consolidate the ranks of the military and the police, as well as securing the loyalty of newly formed and old political dynasties. Duterte is often characterized as a popular and charismatic leader, reminiscent of the likes of Narendra Modi in India and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. In an opinion piece written by Richard Heydarian on the "populist tragedy" of India, Brazil, and the Philippines, Heydarian suggests that these three countries similarly could not provide "sophisticated, systematic empirically-driven public policy responses" to control the spread of COVID-19.⁴² Similarly, Walden Bello positioned Duterte as a beleaguered strongman and incompetent when faced with COVID-19, stating that the pandemic "has exposed the gross incompetence of a small-town mayor with few qualifications for higher office flung to the presidency by an electoral insurgency"⁴³. In his book, *Counter Revolution: The Global Rise of the Far Right*, Bello discusses the Duterte phenomenon as a counter revolution of the liberal democratic order and Duterte as a fascist original. Based on Duterte's policy responses to the pandemic, a crisis of his political moment, this paper argues that Duterte's mode of governance embodies authoritarian leadership with fascist tendencies.

Many have offered analytical approaches such as an institutional approach, personality analysis, or a counter-revolutionary approach as lenses through which to understand Duterte's form of authoritarianism.⁴⁴ Another approach uses Antonio Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and fascism. This paper utilizes a Gramscian theory of power to discuss the authoritarian bent and fascist tendencies present in Duterte's COVID-19 policy response.

Conceptualizing authoritarianism always leads back to the question of power. There are different kinds of power: coercive power or behavioral control over another; power through agenda-setting, such as control of information, through the mass media, and through the processes of socialization; power that is shaping perceptions and preferences; and power that is shaping context and conduct. The conventional view of authoritarianism is described in Juan José Linz's influential 1964 article "An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain" wherein Linz described four qualities of authoritarian political systems: (a) limited political pluralism; that is, regimes that place constraints on political institutions and groups like legislatures, political parties, and interest groups; (b) a basis for legitimacy based on emotion, especially the identification of the regime as a necessary evil to combat easily recognizable societal problems such as underdevelopment or insurgency; (c) minimal social mobilization, most often caused by constraints on the public such as suppression of political opponents and anti-regime activity; and (d) informally defined executive power with often vague and shifting powers.

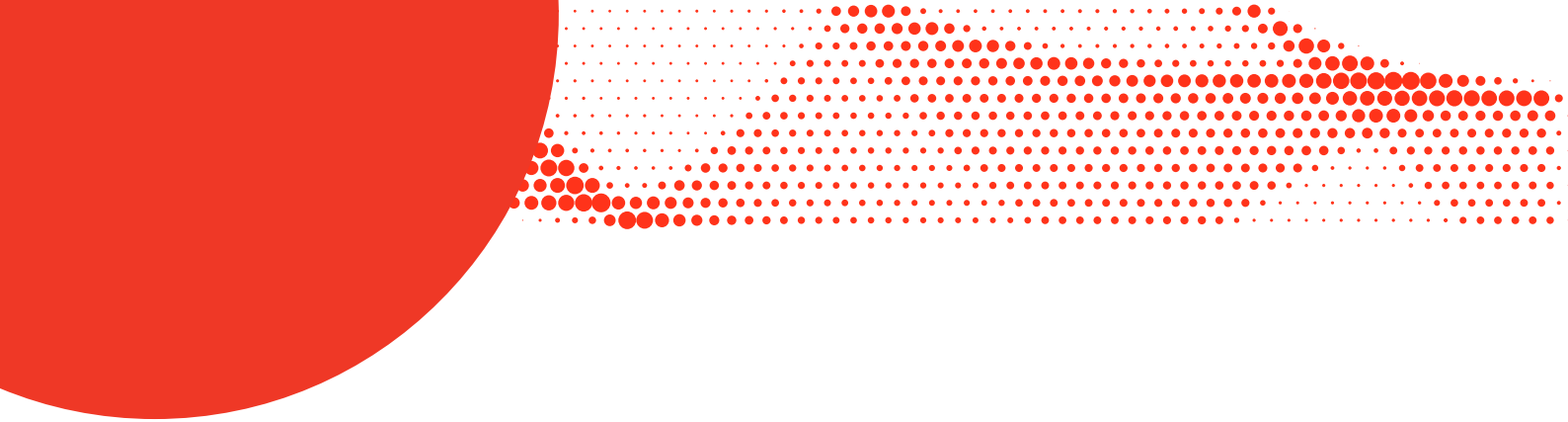
As the pandemic revealed, Duterte's authoritarian leadership is thoroughly expressed in his collusion with the military and the police, which legitimizes the use of state violence to enforce harsh COVID-19 restrictions, repress dissent and critics, and suspend civil and political rights to maintain a grip on power. The harsh and inconsistent

⁴¹ CNN Philippines Staff, "Duterte approval rating rises to 91% amid pandemic, Cayetano suffers drop – survey", CNN Philippines, 5 October 2020, available at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/5/Duterte-approval-trust-rating-COVID-19-September-2020-Pulse-Asia-survey.html>.

⁴² Richard Heydarian, "Populist tragedy: India, Brazil, PH", *Inquirer.net*, 4 May 2021, available at: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/139909/populist-tragedy-india-brazil-ph>.

⁴³ Walden Bello, *Counterrevolution: The Global Rise of the Far Right*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2019.

⁴⁴ Curato, N. (ed.), *A Duterte Reader: Critical Essays on Rodrigo Duterte's Early Presidency*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2017.



pandemic guidelines, which were justified as law-and-order imperatives, were used to consolidate power—in the executive, judicial, and legislative senses—towards one man. The health crisis highlighted two authoritarian characteristics of the Duterte regime. Firstly, the lack of people’s participation in crafting the pandemic policy responses or participatory governance, and secondly the use of coercive power via naked violence (killings) or threats of violence towards violators of the COVID-19 restrictions, justified through twisted legal mechanisms that support impunity. Surprisingly, Duterte’s populism remains strong but follows the demobilized populism model wherein the people are restricted from participating in policy formulation and decision-making.⁴⁵

This paper argues that Duterte’s authoritarian attributes are expressed through two aspects: (a) the narrowing of freedoms and democratic spaces such as civil, political, and human rights, of communities and social movements; and (b) the demobilization of people’s participation in determining the future of their communities. The narrowing of freedoms under Duterte, such as the freedom to dissent and to express political views, contributes to the death of pluralism as we know it. A recent survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) and released in March 2021 found that “65% of Filipinos perceive it is dangerous to publish anything critical to the administration”.⁴⁶ Likewise, being a communist in the Philippines is a crime and might literally lead to death at the hands of state forces. The “red-tagging” of activists has increased during the pandemic, as the police target activists connected to the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliated legal political organizations. However, police and military intelligence lack a sophisticated understanding of different political orientations among the broad Left movement and therefore are also “red-tagging” all vocal, dissenting, and progressive Left activists. On 7 March 2021, now termed ‘Bloody Sunday’, police raided the offices of civil rights groups who were red-tagged by the military, and killed nine activists.⁴⁷

When analyzing Duterte’s authoritarian attributes, it is important to dissect the implications of authoritarianism on the following five dimensions: (a) the role of the state military and police; (b) the impact on state institutions i.e., Congress, political parties, and electoral bodies; (c) towards the media; (d) how the economy is being transformed or untransformed during authoritarian times; and (e) on repression of dissent and people’s resistance.

Briefly, this paper elaborates on the relevant dimensions that shape the authoritarian bent of Duterte’s government. First is the role of the military and police and how they exercise power and control to sustain authoritarian policies. The military and the police are highly influential within the Duterte government. Around 59 ex-military personnel are included in Duterte’s executive cabinet.⁴⁸ The policies against communist movements and the war on drugs are the government’s top priorities and a long-term source of major frustration for the military and the police. Based on our history of military and police interventions in politics, as they were politicized during the Marcos dictatorship, successive Philippine presidents have to appease the military and police when they take office. In the period following the Marcos dictatorship, the military staged more than a dozen coups in an attempt to wrest power from civilian authority during Corazon Aquino’s presidency.⁴⁹ The military and the police withdrew their support from former president Joseph Estrada which led to his ousting in January 2001 in a series of protests

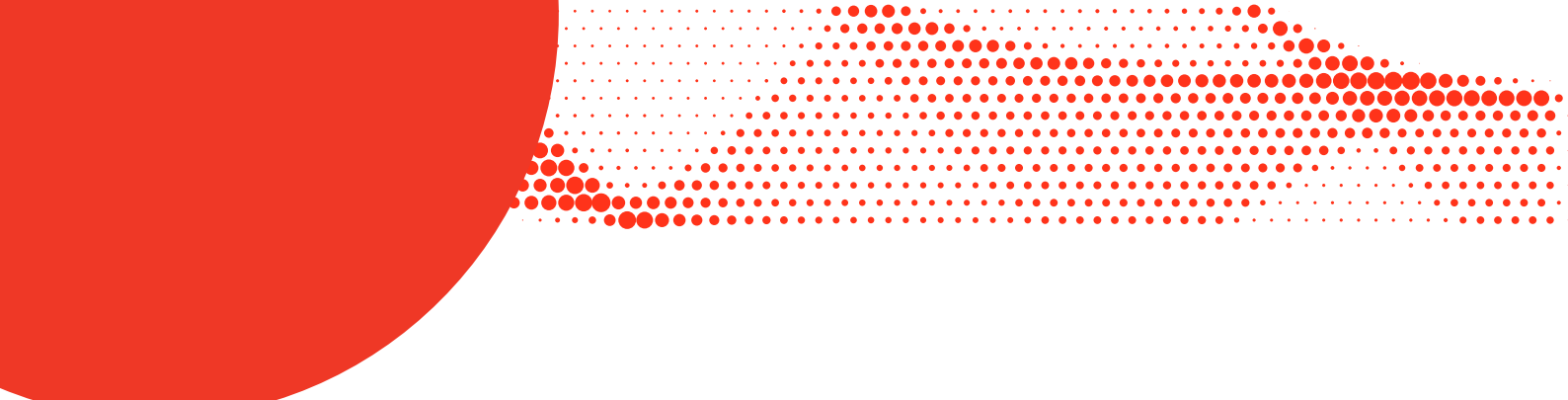
⁴⁵ Joel Rocamora, *Impossible is not so easy: A life in politics*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2020.

⁴⁶ Neil Arwin Mercado, “65% of Filipinos believe it’s ‘dangerous’ to publish anything critical of administration — SWS”, *Inquirer.net*, 19 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1408893/sws-65-of-filipinos-believe-its-dangerous-to-publish-anything-critical-of-administration#ixzz6uTne7aUe>

⁴⁷ Raul Dancel, “‘Bloody Sunday’: At least 9 killed in raids against civil rights groups across the Philippines”, *The Straits Times*, 7 March 2021, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/bloody-sunday-at-least9-killed-in-raids-against-civil-rights-groups-across-the>

⁴⁸ Fe Zamora and Philip Tubeza, “Duterte hires 59 former AFP, PNP men to Cabinet, agencies”, *Inquirer.net*, 27 June 2017 available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/908958/duterte-hires-59-former-afp-pnp-men-to-cabinet-agencies>.

⁴⁹ Reuters Staff, “TIMELINE: Recent coups and attempted coups in the Philippines”, *Reuters*, 29 November 2007, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-unrest-idUSSP3116220071129>.



known as the People Power Revolution II.⁵⁰ Estrada was later incarcerated and convicted of corruption. Duterte showed the most extreme kind of appeasement by integrating the police and military into the government.

The second dimension is the impact of authoritarian policies on the state and state institutions under an authoritarian model, which structurally weakens the political, economic, and social institutions affected by increasing corruption and the meritless appointments of Duterte loyalists. The incompetence and the lack of scientific or technical expertise of Duterte's appointees in government offices was particularly exposed by the COVID-19 crisis. Under Duterte, the executive branch continues to seek control of the legislative and judicial branches of government. There is a continuous attempt to consolidate state institutions and force the government to accept Duterte's policies, power, and principles.

The third dimension is that media outlets who are critical of Duterte are under attack. On 5 May 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the Philippines' largest broadcast network, ABS-CBN, was shut down by Duterte via his supporters in Congress.⁵¹ Maria Ressa, the CEO of Rappler, an online media outlet that is critical of Duterte, is currently facing multiple libel cases instigated by Duterte's associates.⁵² In contrast, the government-operated media outlet People's Television Network has been strengthened and infused with fresh money and technology.

A fourth significant dimension is the economy, which can be transformed or remain stagnant during authoritarian times. The Philippine economy under Duterte is in free fall. Debt has ballooned during the pandemic, and dependence on investment and now vaccines from China is increasing. The economy was hit hardest by the harsh lockdowns and continuing community quarantines that lasted over a year. The devastation of the Philippine economy will be felt in the coming years, bringing hardships to many Filipinos and further increasing existing inequality in the country. Furthermore, workers remain unprotected against the virus and that unemployment, as of March 2021, is at an all-time high of 9.8 million according to the PSA.⁵³ The Department of Labor and Employment reported that around 4.5 million Filipino workers have lost their jobs during the pandemic, contributing to the highest unemployment rate in 15 years.⁵⁴ Interestingly, Duterte remains hands-off in reforming the neoliberal economic structures of the country that aim to address inequality. While Duterte primarily spews rhetoric which vehemently opposes the oligarchy controlling the country, he remains submissive to neoliberal economic masterminds when running the economy. Furthermore, his government focuses on allotting greater funds for its anti-communist agenda to be implemented at the village level.⁵⁵

Finally, there is the dimension of the people's resistance in the face of state repression. Critiques of Duterte's pandemic response and authoritarian policy actions, like the Anti-Terrorism Act,⁵⁶ have been steadily rising both

⁵⁰ Addie Pobre and Cathrine Gonzales, "Looking back at EDSA II: The political paths of Estrada and Arroyo", Rappler, 17 January 2017, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/158523-look-back-edsa-ii-joseph-estrada-gloria-arroyo/>.

⁵¹ In October 2021, Ressa won the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her struggle for freedom of the press.

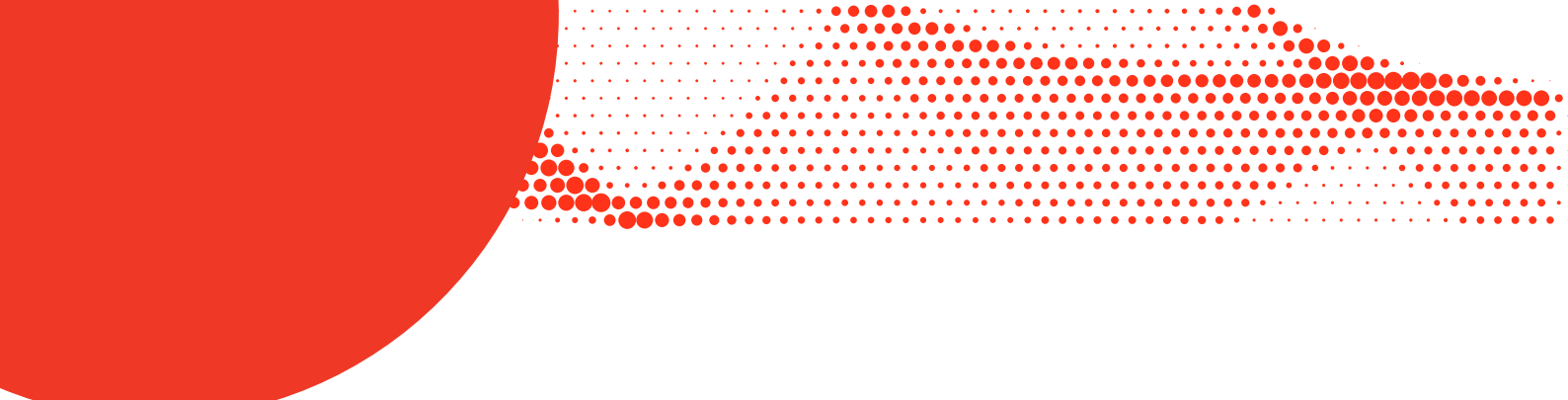
⁵² Ted Regencia, "Maria Ressa found guilty in blow to Philippines' press freedom", Aljazeera, 15 June 2020, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/15/maria-ressa-found-guilty-in-blow-to-philippines-press-freedom>.

⁵³ Ted Cordero, "PSA: 9.82M Filipinos laid off from March 2020 to March 2021 – PSA", GMA News, 6 May 2021, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/786448/psa-9-82m-filipinos-laid-off-from-march-2020-to-march-2021-psa/story/>.

⁵⁴ Ben Vera, "4.5 million Filipinos jobless in 2020; highest in 15 years", Inquirer, 9 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1404612/4-5m-filipinos-jobless-in-2020-highest-in-15-years>.

⁵⁵ CNN Philippines Staff, "P19B NTF-ELCAC fund stays in Congress-approved budget", CNN Philippines, 10 December 2020, available at: <https://www.cnn.ph/news/2020/12/10/P19-billion-NTF-ELCAC-stays-Congress-ratified-budget.html>.

⁵⁶ The Anti-Terrorism Act (ATL) of 2020 drew massive opposition and many groups challenged the law at the Supreme Court. The ATL contain provisions that threaten human rights and freedom of expression by enabling an appointed group of individuals to surveil, identify, and detain for 24 days suspected terrorists. See: Sebastian Strangio, "Philippine Supreme Court Upholds Majority of Controversial Anti-Terror Law", The Diplomat, 10 December 2021, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/philippine-supreme-court-upholds-majority-of-controversial-anti-terror-law/>.



online and offline during the health crisis. Opposition is mounting against the Duterte administration as, one year after the first lockdown was declared, the virus remains uncontrolled, and the vaccination program is being implemented in slow motion amidst the longest and strictest lockdown in the world. Duterte's weekly late-night pre-recorded TV speeches focused more on expressing anger towards his critics,⁵⁷ spewing hate at communists, women, and drug addicts, and defending his failure to stop China from occupying Philippine waters.⁵⁸

Cracks and inconsistencies from competing forces within the Duterte camp are beginning to show from within the Duterte government.⁵⁹ Last year, calls for Duterte's resignation over the incompetent pandemic response trended on social media.⁶⁰ People's demands via social media for transparency and competence have forced the government to backtrack on some of its controversial pandemic policies.⁶¹

The broad protest movement—including the business sector, workers, professionals, students, religious groups, and progressive and leftist organizations—even collaborated and organized in order to remove Duterte's propaganda trolls from social media sites.⁶² Many analyses found after the 2016 presidential elections that Duterte's social media campaign machinery utilized an organized online army of trolls to spread disinformation and attack his opponents online. This was confirmed by a study from the University of Oxford which identified an online troll army used to spread propaganda for Duterte and attack his opponents online. The study revealed that Duterte's campaign spent USD 200,000 or PHP 10 million to hire trolls as "cyber troops who use a variety of strategies, tools and techniques to shape public opinion".⁶³ Around 28 countries were included in the study wherein certain political parties and electoral candidates organized a social media campaign to spread propaganda and target opponents online using hate speech, verbal abuse, and harassment. During the pandemic, social media also became a medium used to criticize the Duterte government and its incompetent pandemic response, the war on drugs fiasco, and other policy stances and statements, such as on China's incursions into the West Philippine Sea (WPS).⁶⁴

In early 2021, a broad coalition of mainstream and progressive organizations formed 1Sambayan (One Nation),⁶⁵ an alliance to counter the early campaigning of Duterte's daughter as a presidential candidate for 2022. The national coalition plans to field a candidate to run against Duterte's camp in the 2022 presidential elections. Among the political and social actors in this opposition movement are grassroots people's movements, liberal

⁵⁷ Bong Lozada, "De Lima: Duterte rant vs Makabayan bloc 'damage control' for pandemic response shortcoming", Inquirer.net, 2 December 2020, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1367291/de-lima-duterte-rant-vs-makabayan-bloc-damage-control-for-pandemic-response-shortcoming#ixzz6uU5NqlaS>.

⁵⁸ Nicole-Anne Lagrimas, "Duterte admits he's 'inutile', won't go to war vs. China over claims", GMA News Online, 27 July 2020, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/748685/duterte-admits-he-s-inutile-won-t-go-to-war-vs-china-over-claims/story/>.

⁵⁹ Dwight de Leon, "DILG's contradicting statements on community pantry permit sow confusion", Rappler, 20 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/dilg-officials-contradicting-statements-permits-community-pantries-confusion/>.

⁶⁰ Sofia Tomacruz, "Coronavirus response: Online outrage drowns out Duterte propaganda machine", Rappler, 24 April 2020, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/coronavirus-response-online-outrage-drowns-duterte-propaganda-machine/>.

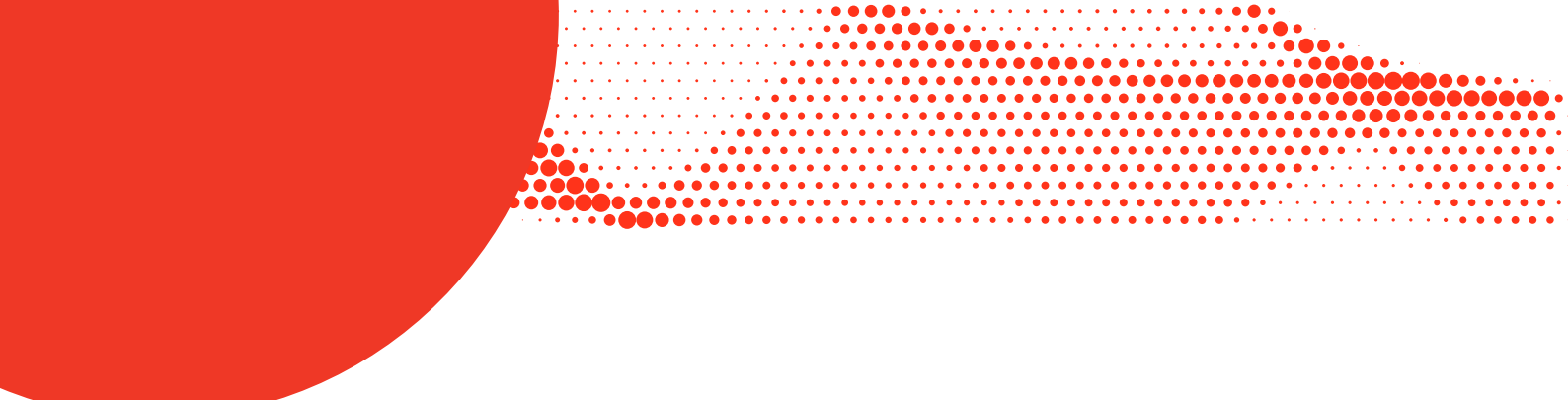
⁶¹ Vanne Elaine Terrazola, "Review of motorcycle barrier for pillion riding pressed", Manila Bulletin, 20 July 2020, available at: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/20/review-of-motorcycle-barrier-for-pillion-riding-pressed/>.

⁶² Chi Almario-Gonzalez, "Unmasking the trolls: Countering attacks in social media", ABS-CBN News, 24 January 2017, available at: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/01/23/17/unmasking-the-trolls-countering-attacks-in-social-media>.

⁶³ Mikas Matsuzawa, "Duterte camp spent \$200,000 for troll army, Oxford study finds", Philippine Star, 24 July 2017, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/07/24/1721044/duterte-camp-spent-200000-troll-army-oxford-study-finds>.

⁶⁴ T.J. Gacura, "Celebs, personalities, netizens slam Pres. Rodrigo Duterte for forgetting his promise about WPS", LionheartTV, 6 May 2021, available at: Celebs, personalities, netizens slam Pres. Rodrigo Duterte for forgetting his promise about WPS (msn.com)

⁶⁵ Gabriel Pabico Lala, "Labor leader: 1Sambayan is 'breath of fresh air', but needs broad public participation", Inquirer.net, 19 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1409102/labor-leader-says-1sambayan-breath-of-fresh-air-but-needs-inclusive-mass-participation#ixzz6uUSO43f2>.



democratic groups, neglected political groups, i.e., former vice-presidential candidate Jejomar Binay's group, and anti-Duterte celebrities, alongside others hoping to counter Duterte's populist magic.

A Gramscian Perspective on Duterte's Authoritarian and Fascist Tendencies

Duterte is a product of the country's historical moments. The trends that led to his rise to power can be traced back to the unfinished (first) People Power Revolution and subsequent decades of the Marcos dictatorship. To understand Duterte's populist yet authoritarian leadership, Antonio Gramsci's discussion of fascism and hegemony may be instructive.⁶⁶ Gramsci's usage of hegemony refers to leadership or dominance, and the power of ideas, values, and beliefs in a particular historical moment over a particular political-economic context. In looking at Duterte's authoritarian leadership with fascist tendencies, Gramsci's notion of hegemony seems appropriate. Hegemony is about "political leadership based on the consent of the led, a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class".⁶⁷ Gramsci's struggle in fascist Italy led to an understanding of the conditions of his time and a rational analysis of irrational political moments. Gramsci's analysis reflected the struggle to understand how people can support an irrational fascist political movement and was geared towards finding counter-hegemonic strategies and actions.⁶⁸

Duterte was the 'dark horse' of the 2016 presidential elections, propelled by popular discontent over ineffective liberal democratic institutions. His supporters mainly came from the new middle class, those that had benefitted from recent economic growth, and from working abroad. They sought quick solutions to everyday issues such as crime and horrendously congested cities. In part due to frustrations over the dominance of the politically-correct or intellectual crowd and persistent socio-economic inequalities, Duterte swept the electoral stage with the slogan "change is coming". In his campaigns, Duterte promised to single-handedly solve all problems of crime, corruption, and drug abuse, in just a few months in office. Regardless of Duterte's promises appearing too good to be true, more than 16 million Filipinos believed his rhetoric and were entertained by his self-styled bravado and charismatic language. However, after five years in office, the persistent problems Duterte promised to eradicate remained and even intensified, such as in the case of corruption, drugs, crime, and congestion. A shrewd warlord and politician, Duterte became the bane of the fractured elite who previously had benefitted from the now-challenged liberal democratic system. Many local political analysts were left with questions about Duterte's rise to power, wondering if this was a historical accident or a chance occurrence in the Philippine march to political development? Was it the unfinished Philippine People Power Revolution that produced populist leaders like Estrada and Duterte?⁶⁹ Was Duterte's electoral victory a reflection of a protest vote against a liberal democratic system that tolerated increasing inequality despite economic growth? Was the rise of Duterte perhaps part of a worldwide trend toward authoritarian populist leaders?

Duterte's rise to power is reminiscent of the Gramscian perspective of revolutionary politics, that a political

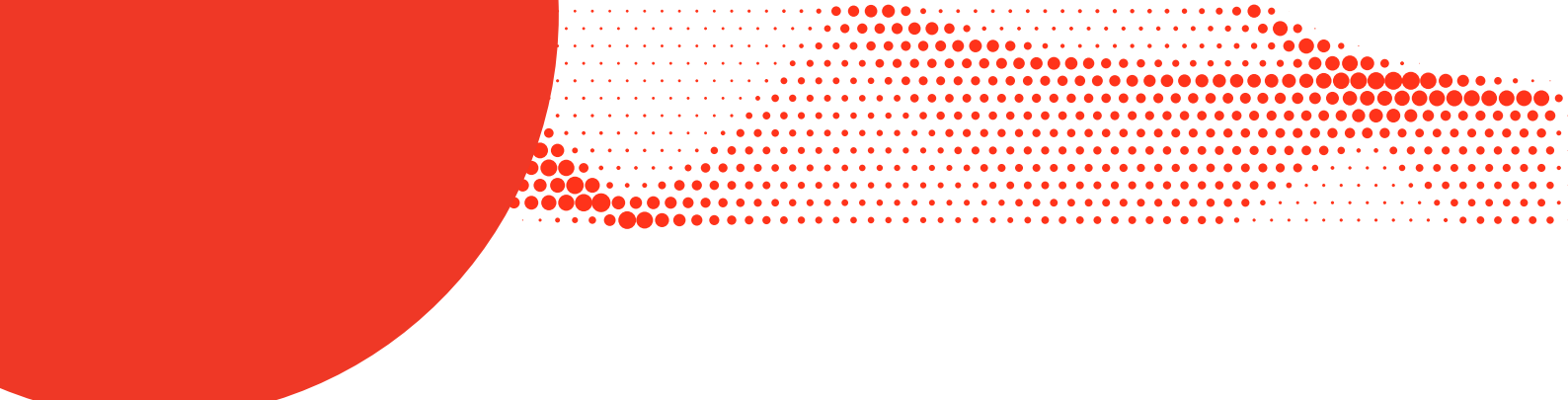
⁶⁶ Walter L. Adamson, "Gramsci's Interpretation of Fascism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 4, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 615–33, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709277>.

⁶⁷ Bates, Thomas, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Apr. - Jun., 1975, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 351-366.

⁶⁸ Walter L. Adamson, "Gramsci's Interpretation of Fascism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 4, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 615–33, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709277>.

⁶⁹ Joseph Ejercito Estrada, a former actor, served as President from 1998 to 2001, when he was ousted from office due to corruption cases. Indicted for corruption in 2007 and sentenced to lifetime imprisonment, Estrada was later pardoned by former president Gloria Arroyo. Estrada became Mayor of Manila City in the 2010 elections and was then defeated in the 2016 elections.

⁷⁰ Walter L. Adamson, "Gramsci's Interpretation of Fascism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 4, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 615–33, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709277>.



moment pregnant with change is when a hegemonic crisis occurs.⁷⁰ According to Gramsci, a hegemonic crisis happens when the ruling class fails to completely dominate or use force to dominate, for example via wars, until such a time that a broad mass puts forward demands and seizes a particular political moment.⁷¹ In such a hegemonic crisis, the political field becomes open and “violent solutions ... represented by charismatic ‘men of destiny’” may provide an alternative in order to achieve a “static equilibrium during a hegemonic crisis”.⁷² Without any strong challenge from other social forces, such as moderates or the conservative elite, Gramsci likened the change towards fascism as Caesarism, which “refers to a political intervention by some previously dormant, or even previously unknown political force capable of asserting domination and thus of restoring a static equilibrium during a hegemonic crisis”.⁷³ In this political moment according to Gramsci, the fascist takeover may emerge, through “the sudden creation of a single heroic figure, or it may be the gradual and institutionalized outcome of a coalition government”.⁷⁴ Drawing from this, one questions whether the transition to liberal democracy in the Philippines is not liberal enough. Did it fail to achieve hegemony for political and civil society? The discord between political forces and the incompleteness that cannot birth a new political situation have produced a vacuum, and a charismatic leader with fascist tendencies has emerged to fill that void.

Populist Authoritarianism in the Global North and South

International media depicts Duterte as comparable to other populist leaders such as Donald Trump in the United States, Narendra Modi in India, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Vladimir Putin in Russia, and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. Similarly, persistent questions abound over whether, due to the crisis of neoliberalism and liberal democracy, there is an authoritarian bent in both the Global North and Global South.

Since the 1980s, the dominance of neoliberal policies brought about by Reaganomics and Thatcherism have propelled the dominance of capital markets and systematically weakened labor organizations, orientating ideas and culture towards competition and consumerism. Under neoliberalism, the markets became unfettered leaving many immiserated. The emergence of populist strongmen leaders, coupled with populist rhetoric, fueled conceptual debates on the concept of authoritarian populism. In the West, populist rhetoric as exemplified by Trump leans towards right-wing conservative perspectives and is therefore anti-immigration, suspicious of liberal values and establishments like human rights, skeptical of intellectualism and science such as climate change, and encouraging of racism. The term authoritarian populism was first used by Stuart Hall to characterize Thatcherism in the 1970s but the concept has since evolved and broadened.⁷⁵ Whilst Hall contextualized the concept in Europe, the concept of authoritarian populism in this instance applies to the widespread rise of contemporary authoritarian populist leaders and its meaning has since broadened.

Authoritarianism as a concept refers “to seek[ing] social homogeneity through coercion” and “populism” refers to “defining a section of the population as truly and rightfully ‘the people’ and aligning with this section against a different group identified as elites”.⁷⁶ Thus, putting the two terms together, authoritarian populism refers to: “the pitting of ‘the people’ against ‘elites’ in order to have the power to drive out, wipe out, or otherwise dominate

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Walter L. Adamson, “Gramsci’s Interpretation of Fascism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 4, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 615–33, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709277>.

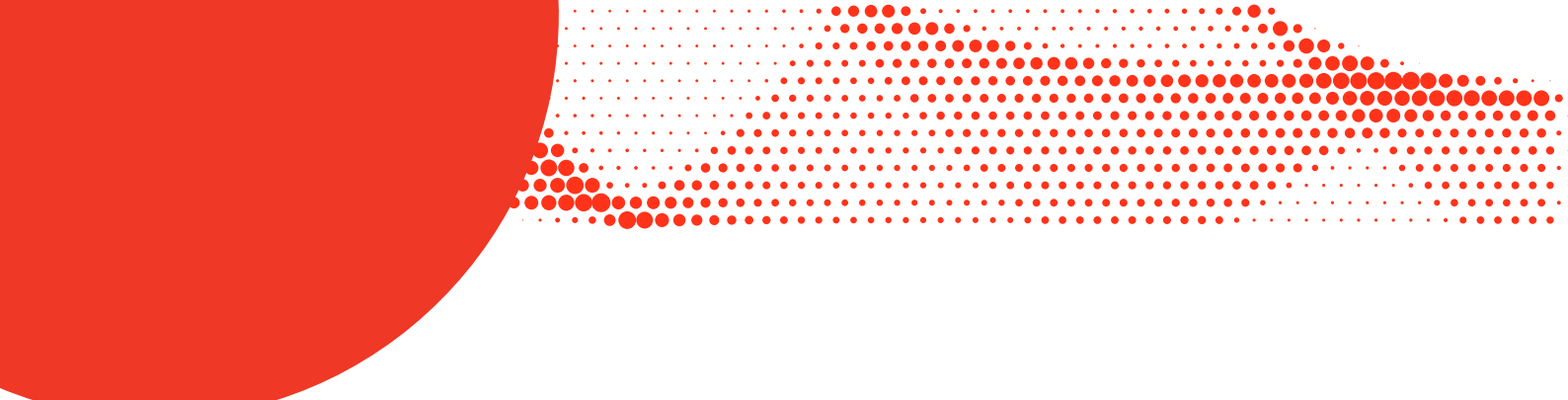
⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ J Morelock (ed.), “Introduction: The Frankfurt School and Authoritarian Populism – A Historical Outline”, *Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism*, London: University of Westminster Press, 2018, pp. xiii–xxxviii.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. xiv.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. xiv.



Others who are not ‘the people’.”⁷⁷

However, populist authoritarian challenges against mainstream “liberal social and cultural norms” expressed through “multiculturalism, universal human rights and multilateralism”⁷⁸ have been linked to the rise of far-right politics characterized by “nationalist, racist and xenophobic tendencies”.⁷⁹ Blake Stewart, in his article “The Rise of Far-Right Civilizationism”, argues that the surge of reactionary and “far-right wing politics” emanate from “elite far-right actors” and intellectuals from North America and Europe, former colonial powers, as a reaction to “economic crisis and social anxieties produced by globalization”.⁸⁰ The rise of contemporary populist leaders in the West has been traced back to 2002, when Jean-Marie Le Pen won the first round of presidential elections in France, and Pim Fortuyn led his party to the Dutch Parliament with an anti-immigrant platform.⁸¹ Since then, increasing support for right-wing political parties led by populist authoritarian leaders has alarmed centrist and leftist movements in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, and Poland.⁸² More recently, Donald Trump won the 2016 elections in the United States and in 2019, Boris Johnson became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. A common denominator among the populist leaders in the West is their anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy actions laced with xenophobic tendencies.

Pippa Norris explored contradictions in the standard explanation on the rise of populism, noting that it is often seen as the product of extreme inequality and the mobilization of the socially excluded, however, populist authoritarianism has also arisen in affluent countries in the West. The rise of populist authoritarianism thus “can be explained as a cultural backlash in Western societies against long-term, ongoing social change”.⁸³ Due to the rise of populist authoritarianism in Europe, in 2016 British polling company YouGov surveyed 12 European countries on how susceptible their populations were to authoritarian populist ideas and politics. Germany scored the lowest among countries in Western Europe with 18 percent, France had 63 percent, Britain 48 percent, and Italy 47 percent.⁸⁴ In response to the survey, German newspaper Die Welt reported that the support for authoritarian populism in Germany remain confined to the far-right wing political party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), unlike in other European countries surveyed.⁸⁵ YouGov and Die Welt both stated that support for populist authoritarianism in Germany can be found among older, averagely-educated Germans and among more men than women.

Populist authoritarianism also swept across Latin America, notably Venezuela and Brazil, and has also reached Asia, notably with the cases of Duterte in the Philippines, Modi in India, and Xi Jinping in China.⁸⁶ Populist authoritarian regimes are not new in Asian countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand, which have reshaped the meaning and forms of democracy. Unlike that of the West, the rise of authoritarian populist leaders

⁷⁸ Blake Stewart, “The Rise of Far-Right Civilizationism”, *Critical Sociology*, vol. 46, nos. 7–8, pp. 1207–20, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0896920519894051>.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p1208.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p1208.

⁸¹ Pippa Norris, “It’s not just Trump. Authoritarian populism is rising across the West. Here’s why.” *The Washington Post*, 11 March 2016, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/11/its-not-just-trump-authoritarian-populism-is-rising-across-the-west-heres-why/>.

⁸² Ibid.

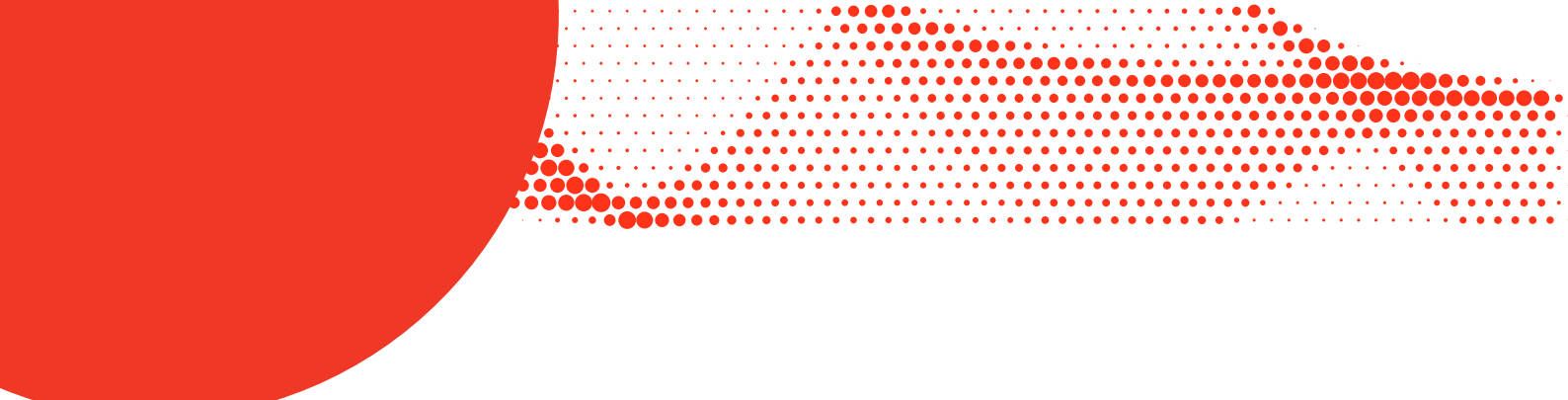
⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Adam Taylor, “Germany may be European stalwart against authoritarian populism, survey suggests”, *The Washington Post*, 21 November 2016, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/11/21/germany-may-be-european-stalwart-against-authoritarian-populism-survey-suggests>.

⁸⁵ Adam Taylor, “Germany may be European stalwart against authoritarian populism, survey suggests”, *The Washington Post*, 21 November 2016, available at:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/11/21/germany-may-be-european-stalwart-against-authoritarian-populism-survey-suggests>.

⁸⁶ J. Kurlantzick, “Asia’s Rising Populists Could Be More Dangerous to Democracy Than the West’s”, *World Politics Review*, 18 December 2017, available at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/insights/23842/asia-s-rising-populists-could-be-more-dangerous-to-democracy-than-the-west-s>.



in Asia can be traced back to 1997 in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis. Relevant to note in the context of Asia would be the debate on “illiberal democracies” as defined by Fareed Zakaria.⁸⁷ These are “democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been re-elected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms”.⁸⁸

In the context of Europe, Giovanna Campani and Mojca Pajnik raised the question of whether populists are threats to democracy, because while confronting the European Union, populist forces also call for genuine representative democracy and present themselves as “true democrats” who articulate the people’s real needs and issues.⁸⁹ Significant in this discussion is the definition of populism according to Ernesto Laclau in light of the concept of hegemony that “populism can be the right or the left, presenting different constructions of the people competing in the aim of hegemony”.⁹⁰

Post-Pandemic Prospects: Inequalities, Neoliberalism, and Authoritarianism

One year on, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on millions of lives and livelihoods around the world. As the virus has ravaged every continent on the planet, it has caused economic devastation, political instability, and a massive global humanitarian and health crisis for both developed and developing countries. Economies are shattered, millions have lost their jobs, and many have been thrown into unprecedentedly precarious economic conditions.

In the Philippines alone, almost ten million workers lost their jobs, and this number continues to increase.⁹¹ Economic production and demand slowed down during the pandemic. This meant millions of work hours lost, businesses folding, and workers’ families experiencing anxiety over where to get their next meal. The Spanish Flu, which occurred one hundred years ago in 1918, lasted for two years and infected one fifth of the world population, killing between 70–100 million people. As the COVID-19 pandemic reaches its second year, discussions on how to speed up the end of the pandemic through vaccinations and how to overcome the devastation being felt during the pandemic are accelerating. According to Bello, this time the race to end the pandemic and the “Race to replace a dying neoliberalism” are intertwined.⁹² Bello contends that there are three lines of thinking and possible scenarios in response to the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic. The first is neoliberals, positing that these are extraordinary times, but that capitalist structures of production and consumption remain sound. The second is the search for a ‘new normal’ which involves redesigning the workplace, instituting stronger healthcare systems, and digitalization. However, Bello perceived that a third opportunity was created by the pandemic: the transformation of the whole economic, yet politically inadequate and ecologically unviable system. In the Global North, the alternative recovery proposal the Green New Deal—which proposes to address environmental devastation and achieve social goals, such as sustainable job creation and the reduction of income inequality—is gaining ground. Thus, the global Left may still offer a viable and consolidated alternative in the post-pandemic world.

If the strategy to end the pandemic is a vaccination drive aimed at attaining herd immunity, it is working for rich

⁸⁷ Zakaria, Fareed. “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (1997): 22–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20048274>.

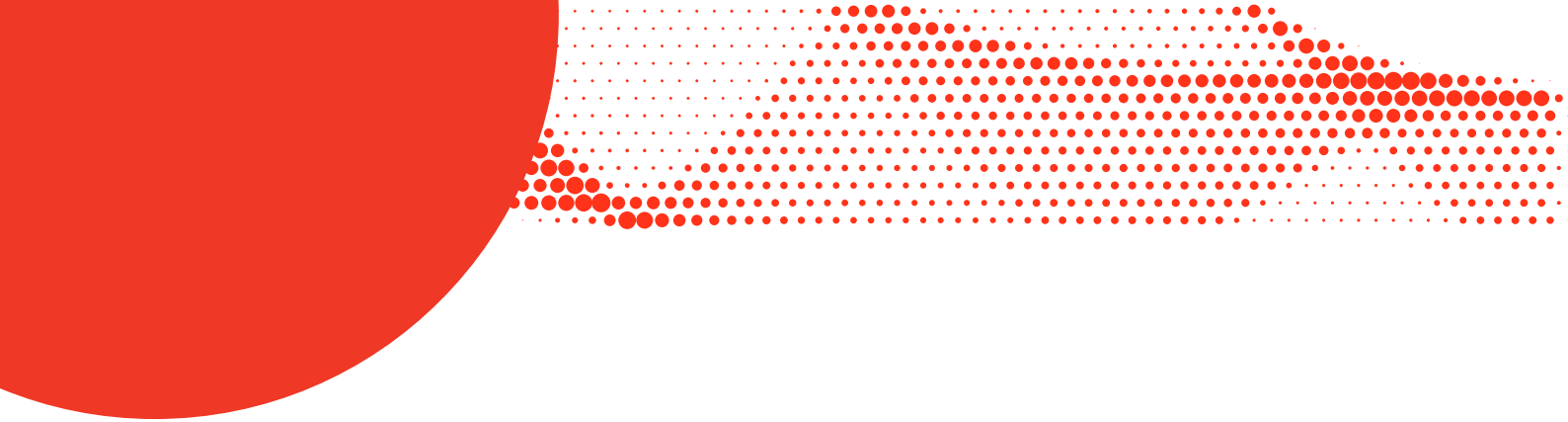
⁸⁸ G. Campani and M. Pajnik, “Democracy, post-democracy and the populist challenge”, *Understanding the Populist Shift: Othering in a Europe in Crisis*, G. Lazaridis and G. Campani (eds.), London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 179–96.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ted Cordero, “PSA: 9.82M Filipinos laid off from March 2020 to March 2021 – PSA”, *GMA News*, 6 May 2021, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/786448/psa-9-82m-filipinos-laid-off-from-march-2020-to-march-2021-psa/story/>.

⁹² Bello Walden, “The race to replace a dying neoliberalism. The world’s prevailing socio-political models aren’t going to survive this pandemic. What’s going to replace them?” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 13 May 2020, available at: <https://fpif.org/the-race-to-replace-a-dying-neoliberalism/>.



countries which bought the vast majority of COVID-19 vaccines. However, it is not working on a global scale. To state that access to vaccines is uneven and lopsided would be an understatement. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that as of March 2021, “Global COVID vaccine inequality is becoming more grotesque every day”.⁹³ As of 6 May 2021, more than 1.23 billion vaccines have been administered and about 8.1 percent of the global population vaccinated.⁹⁴ However, people from high income countries account for the majority of the vaccinated and people are vaccinated about 25 times faster in high income countries when compared to those with the lowest incomes.⁹⁵ As of April 2021, more than 40 percent of vaccines went to rich countries, comprising about 11 percent of the global population, while just over one percent went to low-income countries. Inequality in vaccine access and distribution is real and is “economically and epidemiologically self-defeating”, according to the WHO.⁹⁶

New COVID-19 variants are emerging in less vaccinated populations. Found mostly in low-income countries, new variants can threaten the health security of countries with more vaccinations. As Dr Tedros, WHO Secretary-General states, “as long as the virus continues to circulate anywhere, people will continue to die, trade and travel will continue to be disrupted, and the economic recovery will be further delayed”.⁹⁷ The development of new vaccines to counter the endless cycle of new variants generated by of vaccine inequality will increase the overall cost of recovery from COVID-19 for both high- and low-income countries.

Among the major stumbling blocks of shoring up the supply of COVID-19 vaccines are patents which prevent the sharing of vaccine technology with developing countries. In a recent reversal of policy, US President Joe Biden announced that he will support the waiving of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines and will support negotiations on COVID-19 vaccine-sharing with the World Trade Organization (WTO).⁹⁸ The WTO’s Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement includes compulsory licenses for medicine exports, however the agreement⁹⁹ in relation to public health contains the proviso that intellectual property rights can be waived during a global health crisis, which the COVID-19 pandemic qualifies as.¹⁰⁰ To protect their pharmaceutical companies, the US, EU, Japan, Brazil, Australia, Canada, UK, Switzerland, and Norway have initially blocked the proposal for a COVID-19 vaccine TRIPS waiver for developing countries. However, proponents of the waiver have argued that most of the COVID-19 vaccine development and research comes from public funds and not from the private funding of pharmaceutical companies. In the race to save lives in this pandemic, everyone is in the same storm but in different boats.

The inequalities highlighted by the pandemic—such as the lack of vaccine equity and the uneven impact of suffering or social protection—raises important questions about the neoliberal global economic order and the rise of right-wing authoritarian populist leaders. Patent rules and intellectual property rights under the neoliberal rules of the

⁹³ See Global COVID vaccine inequality ‘becoming more grotesque every day,’ WHO warns | Euronews.

⁹⁴ Bloomberg Vaccine Tracker. “More than 1.29 Billion Shots Given: Covid-19 Tracker”, Bloomberg.com, May 9, 2021. More Than 1.29 Billion Shots Given: Covid-19 Vaccine Tracker (bloomberg.com)

⁹⁵ Randall, Ted. “Prognosis: The World’s Wealthiest Countries Are Getting Vaccinated 25 Times Faster”, Bloomberg.com, April 9, 2021. World’s Wealthiest Countries Are Getting Covid Vaccinated 2,400% Times Faster - Bloomberg

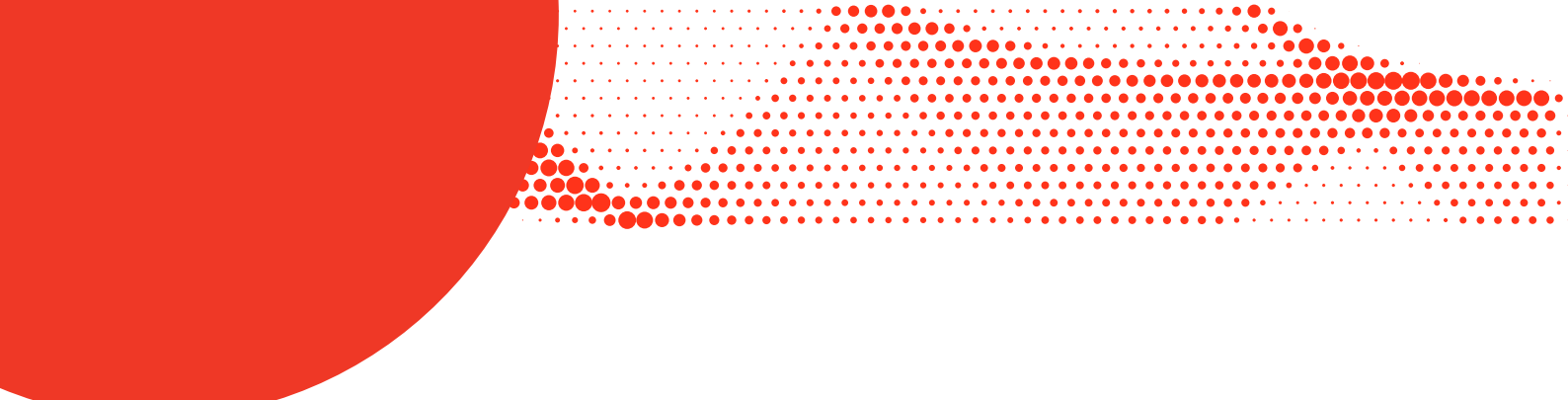
⁹⁶ Euronews with AFP, “Global COVID vaccine inequality ‘becoming more grotesque every day,’ WHO warns”, Euronews, 22 March 2021, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/22/global-covid-vaccine-inequality-becoming-more-grotesque-every-day-who-warns>.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Andrea Shalal, Jeff Mason, and David Lawder, “US Reverses stance, backs giving poorer countries access to COVID vaccine patents”, Reuters, 5 May 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biden-says-plans-back-wto-waiver-vaccines-2021-05-05/>.

⁹⁹ World Trade Organization, “Trips and Public Health”, undated, available at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/pharmpatent_e.htm.

¹⁰⁰ Médecins Sans Frontières, “WTO COVID-19 TRIPS waiver proposal”, available at: https://msfaccess.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/MSF-AC_COVID_IP_TRIPSWaiverMythsRealities_Dec2020.pdf.



WTO continue to hinder the transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries, preventing them from being able to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines on their own. India, as a case in point, is known as the “pharmacy of the world”¹⁰¹ but due to its commitment to export most of its vaccine production to the developed world, is still battling rising COVID-19 infections and shortages in vaccine supply. Populist authoritarian leadership has not transformed the unequal neoliberal structures on a national level in India, Brazil, or the Philippines, even though populist authoritarian politicians won elections in these countries with promises of change. Duterte’s criticisms of the West only led him to an unequal relationship with another superpower, China, without a transformation of the structural inequalities present in neoliberal economic policies.

At the start of the pandemic, many predicted that even in a post-pandemic world, things would never be the same again. The sheer enormity of the global health crisis exposed in sharp relief issues of economic and social inequality, the apocalyptic impact of human activity on the environment, and the importance of community solidarity over material consumption globally. As countries race towards a fourth industrial revolution, technological or digital inequalities have also emerged. A post-pandemic future raises questions about the widening of global inequality and the legitimacy of neoliberal policies which have decimated global public health in exchange for profits and the glorification of the free market.

Conclusion

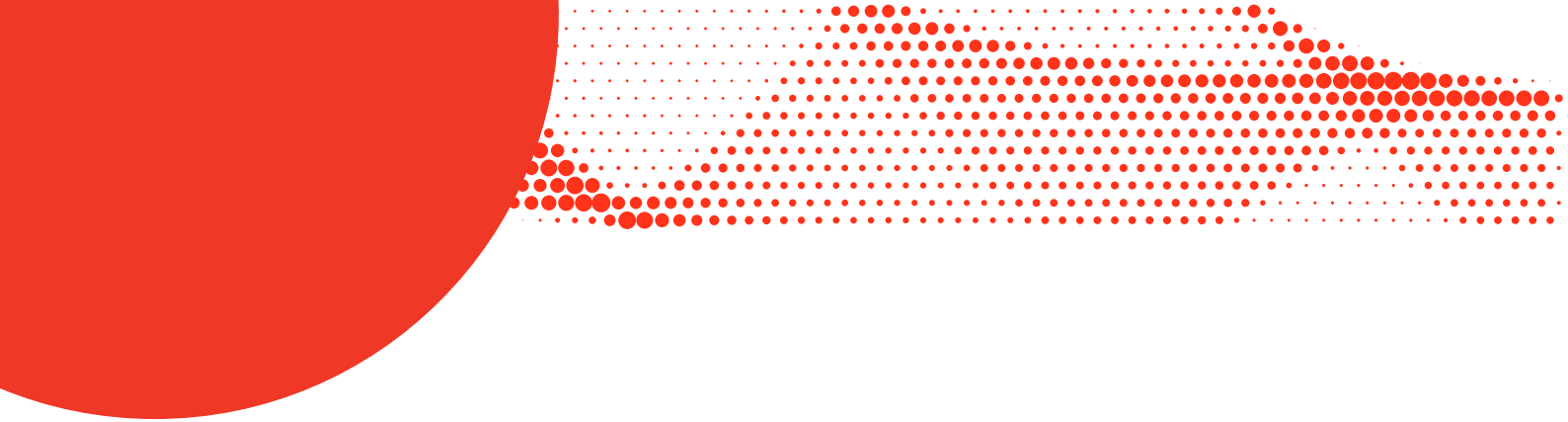
More than one year into this global crisis, proposals long suggested by the Left and progressive movements have become more legitimate and the reasons for them more apparent. Early in the pandemic, people learned the deadly inescapable effects of something as small and invisible to the eye as a virus. They learned that COVID-19 does not discriminate and infects regardless of wealth, power, and material possessions.

However, whilst everyone is ravaged by the same storm, not everyone is in the same boat. Some boats have more social protection than others. The uneven development of countries has subjected people in the developing world to immense suffering, without proper healthcare and without work. The pandemic has shown the stark inequalities present in life under neoliberal economic policies, which are predicted to worsen as soon as the worst of the health crisis is over.

Among the important lessons learnt from this harrowing experience are that: (a) neoliberal economic policies, such as privatization of healthcare, cannot address a public health crisis of this magnitude; (b) neoliberal policies do not come out of thin air but are intentionally driven by social forces with the ideological interest of subsuming the social dimension of the economy to the dominance of the market and capital interests; and (3) populist authoritarian governments are not effective in combating the pandemic because they demobilize people’s participation in pandemic response in their communities.

The curtailing of democratic freedoms in Duterte’s COVID-19 response constrains innovative and participative programs that could combat the crisis at the community level. Vibrant local and community-based solidarity and support during the pandemic can help to establish global solidarity. The phenomenon of community pantries in the Philippines and the global call for vaccine equity are examples of movements towards people-to-people solidarity. Democratic governments whose ears are tuned to their peoples’ voices can better respond to these

¹⁰¹ Aashish Chandorkar, “When the Pharmacy of the World Needs Prescriptions Itself”, Bloomberg, 14 April 2021, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-04-13/india-s-double-challenge-the-pharmacy-of-the-world-needs-prescriptions-its>.



calls and lead the efforts towards building a more equitable post-pandemic world. In the case of the Philippines, the Duterte government has failed the test of its democratic resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Duterte's brash brand of leadership contributes to the current polarization of the country's political and civil society. Culturally, Duterte has upended long-held Filipino values and belief in solidarity, community, and respect. Duterte has circumvented liberal policies, violated human rights, and hindered women's empowerment, all of which Filipinos have come to embrace over the last 40 years. Family ties and friendships have become strained over Duterte's polarizing and hateful stances, his poisonous statements against his critics, his brutal and militarized policies, such as the killings of drug addicts and suspected communists, and his unconstitutional restrictions on human rights and other freedoms. Duterte's mode of governance and policy responses during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed his authoritarian leadership and fascist tendencies. These were expressed through the narrowing of freedoms and democratic spaces for people's civil, political, and human rights, and the demobilization of people's participation in determining the future of their communities.

Duterte's popularity remained intact during the pandemic due to the equation of his strong-arm pandemic response with decisive leadership, positioning him as someone who can get things done, and done quickly. However, Duterte's brand of leadership cannot compensate for the shortage of vaccines for developing countries like the Philippines and the inequality of global vaccine distribution. Duterte's populist authoritarian leadership, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, can be linked to the global rise of far-right ideas and values, such as nationalism, xenophobia, misogyny, and racism as seen both in the West and elsewhere. Whilst Duterte is a product of Philippine political economic development, his authoritarian yet populist leadership echoes a global challenge to neoliberal globalization which has created a hegemonic crisis of liberal democratic structures.

Verna Dinah Q. Viajar is a scholar-activist and a post-doctoral research fellow at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Berlin, Germany.

References:

- Adamson, Walter L., "Gramsci's Interpretation of Fascism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 41, no. 4, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, pp. 615–33, available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2709277>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Almarion-Gonzales, Chi, "Unmasking the trolls: Countering attacks in social media", *ABS-CBN News*, 24 January 2017, available at: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/01/23/17/unmasking-the-trolls-countering-attacks-in-social-media>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Aspenwall, Nick, "Manila Locks Down as Covid-19 Cases Surge in the Philippines", *The Diplomat*, 29 March 2021, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/manila-locks-down-as-covid-19-cases-surge-in-the-philippines>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Bates, Thomas, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Apr. - Jun., 1975, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1975), pp. 351–366.
- Bello, Walden, *Counterrevolution: The Global Rise of the Far Right*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2019.
- "The race to replace a dying neoliberalism. The world's prevailing socio-political models aren't going to survive this pandemic. What's going to replace them?" *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 13 May 2020, available at: <https://fpif.org/the-race-to-replace-a-dying-neoliberalism/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Beltran, Michael, "The Philippines' Pandemic Response: A Tragedy of Errors", *The Diplomat*, 12 May 2020, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/the-philippines-pandemic-response-a-tragedy-of-errors/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- "How a Community Pantry Sparked Movement of Mutual Aid in the Philippines", *The News Lens*, 21 April 2021, available at: <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/149976>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Bloomberg Vaccine Tracker, Bloomberg, accessed 9 May 2021, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-vaccine-tracker-global-distribution/>.
- Billing, Lynzy, "Duterte's Response to the Coronavirus: 'Shoot Them Dead'", *FP*, 16 April 2020, available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/16/duterte-philippines-coronavirus-response-shoot-them-dead/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Caña, Paul John, "Philippines Tops List of Most People Apprehended for Quarantine Violations in the World", *Esquire*, 2 May 2020, available at: <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/news/philippines-tops-list-of-most-people-apprehended-for-quarantine-violations-in-the-world-src-report-a00289-20200502?fbclid=IwAR0kgWli8Rs5dsbFU8g1jirN-kn4knHSTJYjEnsp0KMRchCn3cNplqZz254>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.
- Campani, G. and M. Pajnik, "Democracy, post-democracy and the populist challenge", *Understanding the Populist Shift: Othering in a Europe in Crisis*, G. Lazaridis and G. Campani (eds.), London: Routledge, 2017, pp. 179–96.
- Chandorkar, Aashish, "When the Pharmacy of the World Needs Prescriptions

Itself", Bloomberg, 14 April 2021, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-04-13/india-s-double-challenge-the-pharmacy-of-the-world-needs-prescriptions-its>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

CNN Philippines Staff, "Duterte approval rating rises to 91% amid pandemic, Cayetano suffers drop – survey", CNN Philippines, 5 October 2020, available at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/10/5/Duterte-approval-rating-COVID-19-September-2020-Pulse-Asia-survey.html>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

——— "P19B NTF-ELCAC fund stays in Congress-approved budget", CNN Philippines, 10 December 2020, available at: <https://www.cnn.ph/news/2020/12/10/P19-billion-NTF-ELCAC-stays-Congress-ratified-budget.html>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

——— "Duterte: PH 'doing good' on Covid-19 response compared with other countries", CNN Philippines, 4 May 2021, available at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/5/4/Duterte-PH-COVID-19-response-.html>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Cordero, Ted, "PSA: 9.82M Filipinos laid off from March 2020 to March 2021 – PSA", GMA News, 6 May 2021, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/786448/psa-9-82m-filipinos-laid-off-from-march-2020-to-march-2021-psa/story/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Curato, N. (ed.), *A Duterte Reader: Critical Essays on Rodrigo Duterte's Early Presidency*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2017.

Dancel, Raul, "'Bloody Sunday': At least 9 killed in raids against civil rights groups across the Philippines", The Straits Times, 7 March 2021, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/bloody-sunday-at-least-9-killed-in-raids-against-civil-rights-groups-across-the>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Department of Health Covid-19 Tracker, 2020, available at: <https://doh.gov.ph/covid-19/case-tracker>.

Euronews with AFP, "Global COVID vaccine inequality 'becoming more grotesque every day,' WHO warns", Euronews, 22 March 2021, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2021/03/22/global-covid-vaccine-inequality-becoming-more-grotesque-every-day-who-warns>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Gacura, T. J., "Celebs, personalities, netizens slam Pres. Rodrigo Duterte for forgetting his promise about WPS", LionheartTV, 4 May 2021, available at: <https://www.lionhearttv.net/2021/05/celebs-personalities-netizens-slam-pres-rodrigo-duterte-for-forgetting-his-promise-about-wps/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Gonzalez, Cathrine, "DOH allots P548M to hire 7,613 health workers", Inquirer.net, 25 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1411403/doh-allots-p548m-to-hire-7613-health-workers>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Gotinga, J.C., "Food pantries for hungry Filipinos get tagged as communist", Aljazeera, 24 April 2021, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/24/food-pantry-for>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (eds.), New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Gregorio, Xave, "Duterte tells police, military to shoot unruly quarantine violators", CNN Philippines, 1 April 2020, available at: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/1/Rodrigo-Duterte-police-military-shoot-unruly-quarantine-violators.html>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Gutierrez, Jason, "Court Finds Evidence of Crimes Against Humanity in the Philippines", The New York Times, 15 December 2020, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/15/world/asia/philippines-duterte-drugs-icc.html>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Heydarian, Richard, 2021, "Populist tragedy: India, Brazil, PH", Inquirer.net, 4 May 2021, available at: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/139909/populist-tragedy-india-brazil-ph>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Kundnani, Arun, "From Fanon to ventilators: Fighting for our right to breathe", Transnational Institute, 7 May 2020, available at: <https://www.tni.org/en/article/from-fanon-to-ventilators>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Kurlantzick, J., "Asia's Rising Populists Could Be More Dangerous to Democracy Than the West's", World Politics Review, 18 December 2017, available at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/insights/23842/asia-s-rising-populists-could-be-more-dangerous-to-democracy-than-the-west-s>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Lagrimas, Nicole-Anne C., "Duterte admits he's 'inutile', won't go to war vs. China over claims", GMA News, 27 July 2020, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/748685/duterte-admits-he-s-inutile-won-t-go-to-war-vs-china-over-claims/story/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Lafora, Beatrice M., "Philippine GDP shrinks by record 9.5% in 2020", BusinessWorld, 29 January 2021, available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/philippine-gdp-shrinks-by-record-9-5-in-2020/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

——— "Philippines to be SE Asia's worst performer this year", BusinessWorld, 11 December 2020, available at: <https://www.bworldonline.com/philippines-to-be-se-asias-worst-performer-this-year/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Lalu, Gabriel Pabico, "Labor leader: 1Sambayan is 'breath of fresh air', but needs broad public participation", Inquirer.net, 19 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1409102/labor-leader-says-1sambayan-breath-of-fresh-air-but-needs-inclusive-mass-participation#ixzz6uUSO43f2>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Lema, Karen, "Philippines extends limits on movement, gatherings to curb Covid", Reuters, 28 April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-extends-limits-movement-gatherings-curb-covid-2021-04-28/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Leon, Dwight de, "DILG's contradicting statements on community pantry permit sow confusion", Rappler, 20 April 2021, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/dilg-officials-contradicting-statements-permits-community-pantries-confusion/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Linz, Juan J., *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000.

Lozada, Bong, "De Lima: Duterte rant vs Makabayan bloc 'damage control' for pandemic response shortcoming", Inquirer.net, 2 December 2020, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1367291/de-lima-duterte-rant-vs-makabayan-bloc-damage-control-for-pandemic-response-shortcoming#ixzz6uU5NqlaS>.

Madarang, Catalina Ricci S., "From ECQ to modified ECQ and modified GCQ, what do these phases mean?", Interaksyon, 14 May 2020, available at: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2020/05/14/168523/from-ecq-to-modified-ecq-and-modified-gcq-what-do-these-phases-mean/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Manila Times, "At a glance: The Philippine health care system", The Manila Times, 26 April 2018, available at: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2018/04/26/supplements/at-a-glance-the-philippine-health-care-system/395117/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Matsuzawa, Mikas, "Duterte camp spent \$200,000 for troll army, Oxford study finds", philstar, 24 July 2017, available at: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/07/24/1721044/duterte-camp-spent-200000-troll-army-oxford-study-finds>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

McCarthy, Julie, "Why Rights Groups Worry About the Philippines' New Anti-Terrorism Law", NPR, 21 July 2020, available at: <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/21/893019057/why-rights-groups-worry-about-the-philippines-new-anti-terrorism-law?t=1620157667547&t=1643193735222>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Médecins Sans Frontières, "WTO COVID-19 TRIPS waiver proposal", available at: https://msfaccess.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/MSF-AC_COVID_IP_TRIPSWaiverMythsRealities_Dec2020.pdf. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Mercado, Neil Arwin, "65% of Filipinos believe it's 'dangerous' to publish anything critical of administration – SWS", Inquirer.net, 19 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1408893/sws-65-of-filipinos-believe-its-dangerous-to-publish-anything-critical-of-administration#ixzz6uTne7aUe>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Morales, N. J., and Karen Lema, "Philippine hospitals struggle to cope as more severe Covid-19 wave hits", Reuters, 20 April 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippine-hospitals-struggle-cope-more-severe-covid-19-wave-hits-2021-04-20/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Morelock, J. (ed.), *Introduction: The Frankfurt School and Authoritarian Populism – A Historical Outline*, Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism, London: University of Westminster Press, 2018, pp. xiii–xxviii.

CBPC Laiko, "PH has the Strictest Lockdown in Asia, but ineffective vs. Covid-19", CBPC Laiko, 11 May 2020, available at: <https://www.cbclaiko.org/2020/05/11/philippines-lockdown-is-the-strictest-in-the-region/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

——— "Philippines' lockdown is the strictest in the region", CBPC Laiko, 11 May, 2020, available at: <https://www.cbclaiko.org/2020/05/11/philippines-lockdown-is-the-strictest-in-the-region/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Norris, P., "It's not just Trump. Authoritarian populism is rising across the West. Here's why.", The Washington Post, 11 March 2016, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/11/its-not-just-trump-authoritarian-populism-is-rising-across-the-west-heres-why/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Olanday, Dan and Jennifer Rigby, "Inside the world's longest and strictest coronavirus lockdown in the Philippines", The Telegraph, 11 July 2020, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/inside-worlds-longest-strictest-coronavirus-lockdown-philippines/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Ornedo, Julia Mari, "UN rebukes Philippines' 'highly militarized response' to ECQ violators", GMA News, 29 April 2020, available at: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/736111/un-rebukes-philippines-highly-militarized-response-to-ecq-violators/story/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Patinio, Ferdinand, "PH deployment ban on nurses abroad stays: DOLE", Philippine News Agency, 14 August 2020, available at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112250>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, "Only few takers of gov't offer of nursing jobs", Inquirer.net, 26 August 2020, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1327087/only-few-takers-of-govt-offer-of-nursing-jobs#ixzz6uTe1xzpW>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Pobre, Addie and Cathrine Gonzales, "Looking back at EDSA II: The political paths of Estrada and Arroyo", Rappler, 17 January 2017, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/158523-look-back-edsa-ii-joseph-estrada-gloria-arroyo/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Ranada, Pia, "List: Duterte's top military, police appointees", Rappler, 15 December 2018, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/218702-list-duterte-top-military-police-appointees-year-end-2018>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Randall, Tom, "Prognosis: The World's Wealthiest Countries Are Getting Vaccinated 25 Times Faster", Bloomberg Equality, 9 April 2021, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-09/when-will-world-be-fully-vaccinated-pace-is-2-400-faster-in-wealthy-countries>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Regencia, Ted, "Maria Ressa found guilty in blow to Philippines' press freedom", Aljazeera, 15 June 2020, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/15/maria-ressa-found-guilty-in-blow-to-philippines-press-freedom>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Reuters Staff, "TIMELINE: Recent coups and attempted coups in the Philippines", Reuters, 29 November 2007, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-unrest-idUSPP3116220071129>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Reyes, Therese, "The Philippine Gov't Banned Rallies, So Protesters Threw a 'Party' on Independence Day Instead", Vice World News, 12 June 2020, available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/935ada/philippine-government-independence-day-rallies-protests>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Rivas, Ralf, "NTC orders ABS-CBN to stop operations", Rappler.com, 5 May 2020, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/259974-ntc-orders-abs-cbn-stop-operations-may-5-2020>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Roy, Arundhati. 2021. "We are witnessing a crime against humanity": Arundhati Roy on India's Covid Catastrophe", The Guardian, 28 April 2021, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/apr/28/crime-against-humanity-arundhati-roy-india-covid-catastrophe>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Rocamora, Joel, Impossible is not so easy: A life in politics, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2020.

See, Aie Balagtas, "Rodrigo Duterte Is Using One of the World's Longest Covid-19 Lockdowns to Strengthen His Grip on the Philippines", Time, 15 March 2021, available at: <https://time.com/5945616/covid-philippines-pandemic-lockdown>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Shalal, Andrea, Jeff Mason, and David Lawder, "US Reverses stance, backs giving poorer countries access to COVID vaccine patents", Reuters, 5 May 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biden-says-plans-back-wto-waiver-vaccines-2021-05-05/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Stewart, Blake, "The Rise of Far-Right Civilizationism", Critical Sociology, vol. 46, nos. 7–8, pp. 1207–20, available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0896920519894051>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Strangio, Sebastian, "Philippine Supreme Court Upholds Majority of Controversial Anti-Terror Law", The Diplomat, 10 December 2021, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/philippine-supreme-court-upholds-majority-of-controversial-anti-terror-law/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Taylor, Adam, "Germany may be European stalwart against authoritarian populism, survey suggests", The Washington Post, 21 November 2016, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/11/21/germany-may-be-european-stalwart-against-authoritarian-populism-survey-suggests>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Telegraph, "Duterte vows to 'shoot dead' lockdown violators as unrest grows in Philippines", The Telegraph, 2 April 2020, available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/02/duterte-vows-shoot-dead-lockdown-violators-unrest-grows-philippines/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Terrazola, Vanne Elaine, "Review of motorcycle barrier for pillion riding pressed", Manila Bulletin, 20 July 20, available at: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/20/review-of-motorcycle-barrier-for-pillion-riding-pressed/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Tolentino, Reina C. and Currie Cator, "Pandemic bared health care system's weaknesses", The Manila Times, 16 April 2021, available at: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/16/news/national/pandemic-bared-health-care-systems-weaknesses/864247/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Tomacruz, Sofia, "Coronavirus response: Online outrage drowns out Duterte propaganda machine", Rappler, 24 April 2020, available at: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/coronavirus-response-online-outrage-drowns-duterte-propaganda-machine/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Vera, Ben O. de, "4.5 million Filipinos jobless in 2020; highest in 15 years", Inquirer, 9 March 2021, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1404612/4-5m-filipinos-jobless-in-2020-highest-in-15-years>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Viajar, Verna Dinah Q., "Unravelling Duterte's Iron Hand in the Time of COVID-19", IRGAC, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 22 July 2020, available at: <https://www.irgac.org/2020/07/22/unravelling-dutertes-iron-hand-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

World Trade Organization, "Trips and Public Health", undated, available at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/pharmapatent_e.htm. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.

Zakaria, Fareed. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." Foreign Affairs 76, no. 6 (1997): 22–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20048274>.

Zamora, Fe and Philip C. Tubeza, "Duterte hires 59 former AFP, PNP men to Cabinet, agencies", Inquirer.net, 27 June 2017, available at: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/908958/duterte-hires-59-former-afp-pnp-men-to-cabinet-agencies>. Last accessed on 26 January 2022.