

## **THE MAY 2019 MID-TERM ELECTIONS: Outcomes, Process, Policy Implications**

### **Introduction**

The May 2019 mid-term elections took place amidst the now familiar problems of compromised voting transparency and accuracy linked with the automated election system (AES). Moreover, martial law was still in place in Mindanao making it difficult for opposition candidates to campaign freely. Towards election time, the systematic red-tagging and harassment of militant opposition candidates and civil society organizations further contributed to an environment of fear and impunity. In this context, the Duterte administration's official candidates and allies won most of the contested seats nationally and locally but how this outcome impacts on the remaining three years of the administration is open to question. This early, the partisan realignments and negotiations for key positions in both the House and the Senate and the maneuverings for the 2022 presidential elections are already in place. Such actions are bound to deepen more opportunistic behavior by political allies and families and affect the political capital of the presidency as it faces new challenges and problems in its final three years in office.

### **The Senate Elections: “Duterte Magic?”**

In an electoral process marred by persistent transparency and accuracy problems embedded in the automated election system, the administration candidates and allies dominated the elections. This victory has been attributed to the so-called “Duterte magic” but a careful analysis of the winning 12 candidates for the Senate shows a more nuanced reading of the results. At best, President Duterte and the administration can claim full credit for the victory of four senators: Christopher “Bong” Go, Ronald “Bato” de la Rosa, Francis Tolentino, and Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III. Without a doubt, both Go and de la Rosa owe their Senate seats to their close association with President Duterte and the massive government resources deployed for their campaign. On the other hand, Pimentel is a reelectionist candidate while Tolentino is a veteran politician who almost made it to the Senate elections in 2016 when he placed number 13<sup>th</sup>. In short, both Pimentel and Tolentino already had significant national exposure and electoral bases as built-in advantages for their senate candidacies vis-à-vis the official opposition candidates.

Six other winning senatorial bets who were guest candidates of either PDP-Laban or *Hugpong ng Pagbabago* are also well-known national political personalities coming from powerful political families: Cynthia Villar, Pia Cayetano, Sonny Angara, Imee Marcos, and Bong Revilla. All are nationally known reelectionist senators (except for Governor Marcos of Ilocos Norte) with proven political bailiwicks and huge financial resources to wage a winning campaign with or without the formal endorsement of the administration.

Of the winning senatorial candidates, three ran without the formal endorsement or support of the administration: reelectionist senators Grace Poe and Nancy Binay, and former

senator Lito Lapid who capitalized on his major role in a long running, blockbuster television movie series. Not beholden to the administration for their reelection, Senators Poe and Binay are expected to be able to exercise the widest degree of independence among the winning senators. In combination with the existing opposition members in the Senate (Senators Pangilinan, Drilon, Hontiveros, de Lima), Poe and Binay could constitute the expanded base of the opposition bloc in the Senate, possibly with support from other senators such as Panfilo Lacson depending on the policy issue at hand.

The eight candidates of the official opposition alliance organized by the Liberal Party (LP) and which campaigned as the *Otso Diretso* (OD) failed to win any Senate position in the May 2019 elections. The alliance's strongest and best-known candidates, reelectionist senator Bam Aquino and former senator and presidential candidate Mar Roxas, only managed to place numbers 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, respectively. The OD candidates experienced their worst defeat in the whole of Mindanao (Regions 9-12, the CARAGA region, and BARMM-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao) where none of its candidates managed to make it to the first 12 slots in all of the Mindanao provinces. The sole exception occurred in Lanao del Sur, Samira Gutoc's home province, where she received the highest number of votes. Since Duterte's presidential victory in 2016, Mindanao has provided strong political support for the president, including three winning Mindanao-based official candidates of PDP-Laban: close presidential aide Bong Go, former Gen. "Bato" de la Rosa, and reelectionist senator Koko Pimentel. However, critics of the administration point out that continuing martial rule in the whole Mindanao region made any effective electoral challenge against the administration difficult and dangerous.

Outside of Mindanao, the OD senatorial candidates also trailed far behind the administration candidates. In four vote rich regions (NCR, Regions 3, 4-A (Calabarzon) and 7), only Aquino made it to the top 12, placing 12<sup>th</sup> in the NCR, 10<sup>th</sup> in Regions 3 and 7, and 8<sup>th</sup> in Region 4-A (Calabarzon). Region 5 (Bicol) provided the biggest support for the OD candidates where four of its candidates made it to the top 12 in the total region count (Aquino, Roxas, Diokno and Alejano). The strongest showing by the OD candidates in all of the provinces in the country took place in Camarines Sur, Vice-President Robredo's bailiwick, where seven of its candidates made it to the top 12 led by Aquino who topped the provincial canvass.

A confluence of other factors can account for the defeat of opposition candidates aside from the overall environment of fear and impunity that worked against those opposed to the administration. One factor had to do with the low national awareness of the candidates by the electorate. With the exception of Aquino and Roxas, the other OD candidates (Chel Diokno, Erin Tañada, Gary Alejano, Romy Macalintal, Florin Hilbay, and Samira Gutoc) struggled with low awareness ratings, averaging 42%, with Gutoc and Hilbay with only 37% and 31%, respectively (Pulse Asia, 10-14 April 2019). In contrast, all the winning candidates had awareness ratings at 100% or in the high nineties. These low awareness ratings are normally addressed through an effective information and education campaign usually through the mass media but the OD candidates, with the exception of Roxas and Aquino, could not match the huge campaign financial resources of the administration candidates.

Election campaigns in the country especially for national positions have become extremely expensive. For instance, for pre-election expenses alone covering total

advertisements (TV, radio, print, outdoor) from January 2018 to January 2019, the following candidates had already spent these mind boggling amounts (rounded figures): Bong Go, P422 million; Imee Marcos, P413 million; Sonny Angara, P157 million; Francis Tolentino, P92 million; and Cynthia Villar, P81 million. For the same period for their total pre-election expenses, the following OD candidates incurred equally huge amounts: Mar Roxas, P401 million; Bam Aquino, P136 million; and Gary Alejandro, P76 million.<sup>1</sup> As stressed by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), these campaign expenditures clearly exceeded the declared net worth of the candidates as reported in their Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALNs). As such these funds could have come from hidden and undeclared wealth, public funds, or from illicit sources. For instance, as early as January 2019, Bong Go's total advertisement expenditures as also reported by the PCIJ was already equivalent to 3,287 percent of his declared net worth. Moreover, these reported campaign expenses also fail to capture the massive vote buying engaged in by candidates especially at local government units.

The candidates' Statements of Contributions and Expenditures (SOCE) as required by the Commission on Elections further lend credence to the unconscionable cost of election campaigning in the country. For the administration candidates, the highest expenditures were reported by the following (amounts in rounded figures): Bong Go, P161 million; Francis Tolentino, P159 million; Sonny Angara, P154 million; Cynthia Villar, P136 million; Imee Marcos, P132 million; Bong Revilla, P122 million; Dong Mangudadatu, P110 million; and Pia Cayetano, P74 million. For the opposition candidates, the biggest spender was Mar Roxas at P179 million followed by the much smaller amounts reported by Chel Diokno at P26 million; Erin Tañada, P21 million, and Romy Macalintal, P8 million.<sup>2</sup> However, there are serious doubts in these reported amounts especially for the big spenders since most of them claim their expenditures to be covered by campaign contributions. But oftentimes it is difficult to ascertain the veracity and accuracy of these reported contributions.

Another weakness of the OD opposition was the perceived lack of unity and cohesiveness of the party and the absence of any clear, appealing party campaign message beyond the individual strengths and merits of each candidate. By virtue of his political experience, seniority, and family affluence, Mar Roxas was expected to provide the overall leadership for the OD's campaign but he was seen as campaigning largely on his own and even was physically absent during some critical periods. In contrast, President Duterte campaigned aggressively and openly for the PDP-Laban slate at a time when he enjoyed high trust and performance ratings.

Finally, the *Otsa Diretso* campaign may have benefited from a more inclusive approach to other independent candidates and critics of the administration. For instance, the Makabayan bloc was open to a working electoral alliance with the OD but there was no support for this project by the latter's leadership. Nonetheless, Makabayan on its own initiative supported the candidacies of OD candidates such as Bam Aquino, Chel Diokno,

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<sup>1</sup> See, <https://pcij.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/mysterious-millions-feb14.jpg>

<sup>2</sup> Comelec Official Data on SOCE as reported in <https://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2019/233081-senate-candidates-statement-contributions-expenses>

Samira Gutoc, Florin Hilbay and Erin Tañada, together with reelectionist candidates, Grace Poe, Nancy Binay, and former senator Serge Osmeña.

Of the 12 new senators, nine or 75% belong to influential established political families (Villar, Marcos, Cayetano, Angara, Binay, Revilla, Tolentino, Pimentel, and Lapid). The new full senate of 24 members will have a total of 16 or 67% belonging to political families.

### **Elections for the House of Representatives, Party List System, and the Local Government Units**

As a governance body, the House of Representatives (HoR) serves as the institutional link between local territorial interests and national state power and resources as mediated through powerful political families. In the absence of a well-institutionalized national party system and the short electoral cycle of three years for each term, the members of the HoR typically act to maximize their family and district interests in the most opportunistic political alignments. Oftentimes, this alignment or realignment of political affiliation is primarily determined by facilitating access to presidential power through the administration's principal power brokers in the HoR, starting with the House Speaker.

By and large, the May 2019 elections saw the perpetuation and consolidation of long established dynasties even while a few families did lose to new challengers or rivals from other political families. Among the more notable defeats suffered by powerful families are the following: Mayor Joseph Estrada's defeat by former ally Francisco Domagoso (Isko Moreno) in Manila; the victory of Francis Zamora (son of veteran politician Rep. Ronaldo Zamora) over Janella Estrada as Mayor of San Juan city and the failure of the Estrada half-brothers (Jinggoy and JV) for their Senate bids; the unexpected defeat of Makati patriarch and former Vice-President Jejomar Binay for a congressional seat in Makati; the defeat of the Osmeñas (former senator Serge in the Senate, Tomas who lost as mayor in Cebu city, and former senator Sonny for a congressional seat in Cebu); the ending of Mayor Eusebio's long rule in Pasig city by Mayor-elect Vico Sotto, son of the Senate President; and the victory of grassroots lawyer and former representative Kaka Bag-ao over an Ecleo scion for the governorship of Dinagat Islands.

It must be stressed, however, that these defeats by the political families named above do not signal a trend for repudiating dynastic politics. For instance, the Binays continue to dominate Makati politics by winning the mayorship, one congressional seat, and one Senate seat. In Cebu, many of the traditional dynastic families including the powerful Garcia family (Governor-elect Gwen and Rep. Pablo, a brother) continue to win key elective positions. Even in Dinagat Islands, a member of the Ecleo family won a lone congressional district. If we examine the family linkages of candidates winning the most powerful positions in a province (governor, congressperson, and city mayors), almost all provinces are ruled by at least one dominant political family.

For the 2019 May elections, 36 provinces or 44 percent of the total number of 81 provinces had a political family which elected a governor and at least one congressperson (see Table 1). Not surprisingly, these same provinces are home to the most resilient and powerful political families in the country (Marcos, Singson, Ortega, Albano, Cua, Garcia, Yap, Remulla, Suarez, Villafuerte, Escudero, Defensor, Espina, Zubiri, Romualdo,

Dimaporo, Matugas, Adiong, Mangudadatu, Hataman, etc.,) including the three most populous provinces of Cavite, Pangasinan, and Cebu.

Another unmistakable indicator of the power of political families is the linkage between politicians occupying national elective positions and their immediate relatives in control of major local elective positions such as the positions of governor, congresspersons, and city mayors. In the May 2019 elections, President Duterte's family now leads this commanding concentration of power with the election of son, Paolo, to Congress, the reelection of Mayor Sara of Davao city and another son, Sebastian, as city vice-mayor. Table 2 shows this profile of national politicians and their local bases of power through their elected immediate relatives.

With the weakly institutionalized party system, the country's political dynamics is best understood by focusing on the behavior of its political families in the context of regular electoral contests that set the arena for opportunistic alliances and rivalries. Unlike political affiliations which predictably change depending on the winning presidential candidate, political families are enduring collectivities with defined independent bases of power, interests and priorities.

The post-May 2019 contest for the House Speakership exemplifies once again the truism that clan-based politics and not party affiliations are the prime movers in deciding major positions of power. By tradition and with the institutional weakness of the House of Representatives vis-à-vis the office of the presidency, the ascendant Duterte political family was expected to make the final choice for the House speakership. Not surprisingly, all the major contenders coming from well-known political families (Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of Taguig City, Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez of Leyte, Rep. Lord Allan Velasco of Marinduque) expressed fealty to President Duterte in their jockeying for the House speakership. President Duterte's final decision for a term-sharing arrangement between Representatives Cayetano and Velasco with Rep. Romualdez as the anointed majority leader hints at a hidden strategic agenda in preparation for the 2022 presidential election. By providing his declared political allies and lesser lords the pomp and power of a limited term-sharing arrangement, Duterte seeks to undercut any possible early fracturing of his "supermajority" of supporters. And yet in the same breath, this arrangement also makes it more difficult for any of the three politicians, especially for Cayetano and Romualdez, to expand and consolidate resources in preparation for any possible challenge for the presidency in 2012. This scenario becomes all the more plausible with the increasingly visible participation of the two Duterte children (Mayor Sara and Rep. Paulo Duterte) in major political decisions as well as their pronounced interest for a national political role. This early, the plotting for the presidential plum in 2022 has begun.

### **The Party List System**

In practice, the Party List (PL) system has radically departed from the original intent of the Constitutional framers in 1987 to enable the "marginalized and underrepresented" sectors in our society to be directly represented in the House of Representatives through this new electoral system. In the early years of the implementation of the PL system, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) failed to set up a reliable vetting system that could have effectively screened out party list applicants pretending to represent every imaginable "marginalized and underrepresented" sector, including security guards, athletes, religious

organizations, professionals, etc. Two landmark rulings of the Supreme Court (*Ang Bagong Bayani vs. Comelec*, 2001, and *Banat vs. Comelec*, 2009) reaffirmed the original intent of the 1987 Constitution that the PL system be restricted only to organizations and parties and their nominees belonging to the “marginalized and underrepresented” sectors. However, the Supreme Court (SC) reversed these rulings in 2013 through *Atong Paglaum vs. Comelec* and ruled that national and regional parties and organizations under the PL system need not represent any marginalized and underrepresented sector. In the same ruling the SC also stated that major political parties can now participate (earlier disallowed by the SC ruling in *Banat vs. Comelec*) in the PL system through its sectoral wing.

Not surprisingly, this fatal combination of Comelec ineptitude and the latest SC ruling has completely undermined the original social justice moorings and goal of the PL system. It has now been transformed into another convenient electoral gateway to power controlled by political families, business groups, regionalistic groupings, and dubious organizations of all shades representing vague interests and concerns.

In the 2019 May elections, at least 25 PL organizations or 49 percent of the total list of 51 declared winners are directly linked with political families. These PL organizations founded or led by political families include: *Probinsyano Ako* (Fariñas of Ilocos Norte), *Tingog Sinirangan* (Romualdez of Leyte), *An Waray* (Noel and Evardone of Leyte and Samar), *Ako Bisaya* (Uy of Northern Samar), *Ako Padayon* (Emano of Misamis Oriental), *Abang Lingkod* (Benitez of Negros Occidental), *Abono* (Estrella and Ortega of Pangasinan and La Union), *Buhay* (Atienza of Manila), *Puwersa ng Bayaning Aleta-PBA* (Nogralles of Davao City), *A Teacher* (Umali of Oriental Mindoro), *Anakalusugan* (Defensor of Quezon City), *Aambis-OWA* (Garin of Iloilo), *Kusug Tausug* (Tan of Sulu), *Dumper Philippines* (Bautista of Davao Occidental), *Talino at Galing ng Pinoy* (Teves of Catanduanes), *Anak Mindanao* (Hataman of Basilan), *LPG Marketers Association* (Albano of Isabela), *OFW Family* (Pacquiao of Sarangani), *Kabayan* (Abaya of Cavite), *Diwa* (Aglipay-Villar), *Trade Union Congress Party* (Taliño-Mendoza of Cotabato), and *Citizens’ Battle Against Corruption-CIBAC* ( Villanueva of Bulacan).

In the 2019 PL winning list, at least five are identified with major business interests or represented by extremely rich nominees: *IPacman* of billionaire businessman, Michael L. Romero, richest representative in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress with net worth at P7.8 billion pesos; *Ang Probinsyano* (gasoline franchising), *Marino* (construction related services), *Construction Workers Solidarity-CWS* (major construction firms), and *Manila Teachers* led by multimillionaire, Rep. Virgilio Lacson, fifth richest representative in the 17 Congress with net worth at P794 million pesos.

The dismal overall record of the PL system requires an urgent amendment of the existing law. This change must balance the need for a system that will enable legitimate smaller organizations with progressive agenda to be represented at the HoR while avoiding its capture by the same traditional families and powerful vested interest groups. Amendments that seek to restore the original intent of the PL Law of privileging the representation of “marginalized and underrepresented sectors” need to be activated. Such amendments can be complemented by an election system that is more aligned with the principle of proportional representation (PR). This will require doing away with the maximum three-seat cap currently imposed on winning PL organizations and raising the current two percent minimum threshold

of votes for legislative representation. These amendments to the existing PL Law will prevent the extreme fragmentation of the PL system, discourage fly-by-night opportunistic parties from participating, and provide incentives for organizations to take more seriously the task of party building.

### **Contentious Policy Issues for the Administration's Last Three Years: An Alternative Agenda**

For all past administrations, the most disabling weakness of political leadership has been the failure to put in place the institutional foundations of a strong nation-state that is both democratic and prosperous. This herculean task requires the combination of a visionary and decisive leadership engaged at the same time in creating and sustaining inclusive political and economic institutions. Due to the absence of strong, inclusive institutions and recurrent cycles of economic and political crises, the attraction for authoritarian leaders who promise quick-fix solutions has deep cultural and historical roots in our society. The Duterte brand of authoritarian leadership is the latest of such episodes. Here lies the supreme contradiction of this political dilemma: a decisive leader with an electoral mandate to rule but at the expense of rules and procedure (rule of law) designed to ensure accountability and stability. The more successful the authoritarian leader is perceived in addressing problems in the short run, the more the leader ends up weakening existing institutions. The more the authoritarian leader gets unmoored from legal constraints and accountability mechanisms, the more abuses are committed in the name of the leader's singular definition of what is good for the whole nation.

It is within this framework that we try to make sense of the first three years of President Duterte. His continuing high ratings in public opinion surveys must be scrutinized side by side with the perils intrinsically linked with a style of leadership that is unquestionably authoritarian, arguably even charismatic yet with little accountability and institution-building.

Public order and security in the first three years of President Duterte have focused on the war against illegal drugs, the peace process in Muslim Mindanao and, the long running revolutionary war waged by the CPP-NPA-NDF forces. After three years in pursuing a ruthless and bloody campaign against the distribution and use of illegal drugs, there appears to be no satisfactory resolution to the conflict. The PNP concedes to about 6,000 drug-related killings but independent human rights and civil society monitoring groups report much higher casualties with victims overwhelmingly from poor families. In its most recent report in 2019, Amnesty International has pointed out that the scale of abuses had reached "the threshold of crimes against humanity" and that there was now "a perilous normalization" of illegal executions and police abuses. It is instructive to know that at the end of 2018, an SWS public opinion survey showed that two-thirds of the public believe that the police themselves are involved in the illegal drug trade and two-thirds also believe the police are the ones doing the extra-judicial killings (Fourth Quarter 2018 Social Weather Survey). The same survey further showed that over half believe that the police plant evidence against arrested suspects.<sup>3</sup>

Drawing on comparative evidence-based studies, critics stress that only a holistic, rehabilitative approach to the problem that is sensitive to its economic, social, and

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<sup>3</sup> Mahar Mangahas, "Data on EJKs and Chinese 'friendship', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 June 2019, A9.

psychological-medical dimensions will be viable in the long run. For instance, a more comprehensive approach to the problem must focus on addressing endemic problems of poverty and unemployment, professionalizing the police to prevent widespread abuses and impunity (extra-judicial killings), strengthening the prosecutorial and judicial agencies of government, and setting up community-based rehabilitation agencies for long-term support to victims of addiction.

Early this year, the administration succeeded in pushing through and ratifying a peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and putting in place a transitional government till the scheduled regular elections in 2022. While this is a major step in the long effort to establish peace and stability in the region and jumpstart economic growth and development, some serious problems remain to be addressed. The transitional government must find ways to integrate other armed groups not bound by the formal agreement and preside over a difficult process of decommissioning the MILF's thousands of armed fighters. Moreover, the newly established Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) must negotiate governance relations with the existing local government units (provinces, cities, and municipalities) which continue to retain their administrative powers and authority vis-à-vis the transitional government. For instance, the tension between elected traditional local political families with the MILF emerged as early as the plebiscite conducted to ratify the new Bangsamoro Organic Law this year. Some of the most entrenched political dynasties in Muslim Mindanao (Tan of Sulu, Dimaporo of Lanao del Norte, Guiani-Sayadi of Cotabato City) actively campaigned against their incorporation in the new BARMM while others entered into opportunistic alliances with the MILF specially with the continuing martial rule imposed for the whole region.

In sharp contrast with the initial gains in the peace process with the MILF, the same peace process with the CPP-NDF-NPA is at a complete standstill. After the breakdown of the peace talks with the NDF forces in 2017, the government has embarked on a renewed war against the guerrilla forces in the countryside and has systematically harassed progressive legal militant organizations and killed or imprisoned selected leaders of the peace process. The many twists and turns of the protracted peace process with the NDF actually resulted in some significant episodes of partially negotiated settlements and the only rational way to move forward on this issue is for both parties to resume peace negotiations.

Another key problem that the administration has committed itself to address is the endemic corruption in government. Duterte has oftentimes announced his "zero tolerance" policy on corruption but the actual administration record is not very encouraging. A number of high profile government officials, including former Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II, former Tourism Secretary Wanda Tulfo-Teo, former Customs head, Nicanor Faeldon, and others have all been implicated in corrupt practices but have not been formally charged. In many cases, these same compromised officials were reappointed and even promoted as in the case of Faeldon and other former military and police officers. Drawing from the successful comparative cases of anti-corruption campaigns, a key element involves the passage and strict implementation of a Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation and the strengthening of accountability agencies such as the Commission on Audit and the Ombudsman.

One of the most urgent reforms long ignored by past and the present administration is the automated election system (AES) first used nationally in 2010. Since then, the AES



operated by Smartmatic under the supervision of the Comelec has consistently been plagued by transparency and technical problems of all kinds, including non-compliance with various provisions of the AES Law (RA 9369). The 2019 May elections showed the worst automation exercise with thousands of malfunctioning vote counting machines (VCMs), corrupted SD cards (storage devices), incomplete vote transmissions, continued absence of digital signatures by members of the Board of Election Inspectors, and topped by an unprecedented seven-hour long stoppage in vote transmissions with no credible explanation by the Comelec. All of these recurrent problems have put the reported election results under doubt. No less than President Duterte has expressed exasperation with the record of Smartmatic and there is now a stronger demand to shift to a “hybrid” election system based on a fully transparent manual or computer-aided public counting system even while the transmission and canvassing of votes remain automated.

How serious is the administration in pushing through its proposed shift to Federalism? There are recent developments that seem to put a brake on the federalist project. Given the much shorter time available for the administration in its final three years, pursuing the federalist project could detract from addressing more urgent and doable reforms. Not only is there little understanding by the public of the contentious issues involved in the proposed shift but there is also significant opposition by the cabinet officials directly involved in financial and fiscal matters as recently articulated by no less than the Central Bank governor and also by the Finance Secretary and NEDA head. Moreover, it would be prudent for the administration to evaluate first the experience with the new BARMM since this is the closest that we have to some of the features of a federalist structure. Some of the legitimate demands of local government units (LGUs) for enhancing their local autonomy and resources could actually be addressed either by amending the existing Local Government Code, strictly implementing its current provisions, or passing new legislation. In this regard, it is instructive that the Supreme Court ruled last year that the “just share” of LGUs in the revenue allocation scheme mandated by the Local Government Code should include all national taxes (including all taxes collected by the Bureau of Customs) and not just those collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The set of important economic reforms to be addressed by the administration can focus on two areas. First is the pursuit of policies aimed at providing a sustainable environment for industrial growth and the modernization of agriculture with the widest impact on the reduction of poverty and creation of secure jobs. Second, is the maximization of the reach and impact of existing progressive social legislation, notably the Universal Health Care Act, the Free Public Tertiary Education Act, the Institutionalization of the 4-Ps Program for the poorest families, the Mental Health Services Act, and the Expanded Maternity Leave Act. Equally urgent legislation is needed to address the demand for accessible and affordable public housing, an end to illegal short-term employment (end of contract-“ENDO” as practiced by many employers), provision of safe and reliable mass transport systems, and increasing the basic compensation of teachers and nurses and related health workers.

Finally, the administration has to sort out its foreign policy mess. The challenge is to avoid being too dependent on any foreign power while enhancing the gains that could be generated in our foreign relations, especially with the major powers. For weaker states such as the Philippines, this requires striking a balance between preserving and protecting our

independence and autonomy while accessing skillfully the external resources we need for sustainable development. In our contentious relations with China, especially in the competing claims over the South China/West Philippine sea islands and resources, the Philippines would do well to pursue both multilateral and bilateral approaches to resolve the conflict. A robust assertion through peaceful means of our rights recognized in international law is not tantamount to provoking war with our more powerful neighbors or sabotaging evolving relations of friendship with other powers.

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**Table 1: Provinces with Elected Governor and at least One Representative from the Same Political Family (2019-2022).**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Political Family</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Political Family</b>
<i>Region 1</i>		<i>Region 9</i>	
1. Ilocos Norte	Marcos (Manotoc, Barba)	1. Zamboanga del Sur	Yu
2. Ilocos Sur	Singson	2. Zamboanga Sibugay	Palma
3. La Union	Ortega	<i>Region 10</i>	
4. Pangasinan	Espino	1. Bukidnon	Zubiri
<i>Region 2</i>		2. Camiguin	Romualdo
1. Isabela	Albano	3. Lanao del Norte	Dimaporo
2. Quirino	Cua	<i>Region 11</i>	
<i>Region 3</i>		1. Davao del Sur	Cagas
1. Bataan	Garcia	<i>Caraga</i>	
2. Tarlac	Yap	1. Surigao del Norte	Matugas
<i>Region 4</i>		2. Surigao del Sur	Pimentel
1. Cavite	Remulla	<i>BARMM</i>	
2. Laguna	Hernandez	1. Basilan	Hataman
3. Quezon	Suarez	2. Lanao del Sur	Adiong
<i>Region 4-B</i>		3. Maguindanao	Mangudadatu
1. Marinduque	Velasco	4. Sulu	Tan
2. Palawan	Alvarez		
<i>Region 5</i>		<i>CAR</i>	
1. Camarines Norte	Tallado	1. Abra	Bernos
2. Camarines Sur	Villafuerte	2. Apayao	Bulut
3. Masbate	Kho		
4. Sorsogon	Escudero		
<i>Region 6</i>			
1. Iloilo	Defensor		
<i>Region 7</i>			
1. Cebu	Garcia		
<i>Region 8</i>			
1. Biliran	Espina		
2. Western Samar	Tan		
3. Southern Leyte	Mercado		

**Table 2: National Elected Officials and Immediate Relatives in Major Local Elective Positions (2019-2022).**

<i>National Official</i>	<i>Relatives (Governor, Representative, City Mayor)</i>
1. Pres. Rodrigo Roa Duterte	Rep. Paolo Duterte, Mayor Sara Duterte (Davao city)
2. Senate Pres. Vicente Sotto III	Mayor Vico Sotto of Pasig city
3. Senator Cynthia Villar	Rep. Camille Villar, Mayor Imelda Aguilar (Las Piñas city)
4. Senator Pia Cayetano	Rep. Alan Cayetano, Rep. Lani Cayetano, Mayor Lino Cayetano (Taguig city)
5. Senator Imee Marcos	Gov. Matthew Marcos Manotoc, Rep. Eugenio Marcos Barba, Mayor Michael Marcos Keon (Ilocos Norte)
6. Senator Nancy Binay	Rep. Luis Campos, Jr., Mayor Abby Binay (Makati city)
7. Senator Sonny Angara	Rep. Rommel Rico Angara (Aurora province)
8. Senator Ramon Revilla, Jr.	Rep. Strike Revilla, Mayor Lani Revilla (Cavite and Bacoor city))
9. Senator Ralph Recto	Rep. Vilma Santos Recto (Batangas)
10. Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri	Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri, Jr., Rep. Manuel Zubiri (Bukidnon)
11. Senator Sherwin Gatchalian	Rep. Wes Gatchalian, Mayor Rex Gatchalian (Valenzuela city)
12. Senator Manny Pacquiao	Rep. Ruel Pacquiao (Sarangani), Rep. Alberto Pacquiao (OFW Family Party List)
13. Senator Joel Villanueva	Rep. Eddie Villanueva (Cibac Party List)
14. Senator Francis Tolentino	Rep. Abraham Tolentino, Mayor Agnes Tolentino (Cavite and Tagaytay city)