

‘Thinking and Working Politically’: The Case of Donor-Supported Reform Coalitions in the Philippines 2010-2016

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Structured Abstract

Motivation	Reform coalitions represent a potential means for donors to support macro-political reform in developing countries, enabling them to avoid the limitations of micro-political or public sector reform where appropriate circumstances exist. Donor support for reform coalitions, however, is difficult to engineer in institutional terms, and is fraught with political risk, including the risk of partisan taint.
Purpose	To illustrate these difficulties and risks, this article explores the efforts of Australian Aid and the World Bank to promote reform coalitions and constituencies in the Philippines during the Presidency of Benigno S. Aquino III (2010-2016) and to institutionalise the reform agenda of his administration.
Approach & Methods	It draws on a range of sources including programme design documents, mid-term & end-of-term reviews, and contextual policy documents. It also draws on economic and governance data sets to explore relevant correlations.
Findings	It finds that second-generation reform coalitions brought together stakeholders from government, the private sector and civil society and promoted both economic and other reforms. These donor strategies arguably failed, however, with the election of Rodrigo Duterte in May 2016, a President critical of Aquino’s record of office and ostensibly committed to reverse-engineering many of the Aquino administration’s positive achievements. The article critiques a governance-centric explanatory chain of causation and proposes an expanded politics-centric chain to aid the assessment of reform coalition activities.
Policy Implications	In conceptual terms, planning of reform coalition activities must better account for dominant coalitions and the political settlements which they underpin and must set out explicit theories of change, specifying distinct political pathways to change. In operational terms, donors must work to avoid traditional 'transactional' relationships in favour of more innovative 'transformative' ones and must balance 'strategic opportunism' with strategic retreat and adaptation where necessary.

1. Introduction

Within the inter-disciplinary field of development studies, literature on ‘good governance’ is characterised by two main approaches. The first, and dominant, approach, *micro-political reform*, focuses on largely technical and discrete (project or programme-based) approaches to public sector reform and on cumulative, incremental change over time and is largely supportive of the concept of ‘good governance’. It can lead, however, to the failure of reforms conceived in apolitical terms or in isolation from the wider institutional environment in which they are embedded. The second, currently resurgent, approach, *macro-political reform*, focuses on the wider context to public sector reform, and on the link between contentious politics and disruptive change. It is more sceptical of ‘good governance’ discourse and focuses on the identification of clear pathways to change, rooted in political economy and related analysis, which are both contingent and risky but where the potential to break-through structural impediments to improved governance is significant (Grindle 2017).

The academic concept of macro-political reform coincides with the operational norm of ‘thinking and working politically’ (hereafter, TWP). Normally attributed to Leftwich (2011), TWP now covers a wide body of development practice and related initiatives.¹ At heart, it emphasises three operational principles:

- Strong political analysis, insights and understanding;
- A detailed appreciation of, and response to, local context; and
- Flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation (Laws & Marquette 2018: 2)

A recent review of TWP literature notes that it largely and uncritically validates the approach through case-studies, normally singular, reporting predominantly positive results, and with few counterfactuals, possibly because much of the literature is produced by aid agencies or by contracted consultants (Ibid: 6-7). This article seeks to address this lacunae through a more critical exploration of reform coalition experiences, and analysis of a significant methodological challenge (capturing the chain of causation behind reform success/failure).

One element of the macro-political and TWP approaches is the analysis of *reform coalitions*, linking reform-oriented stakeholders in government and the public sector to

¹ The approach is closely associated with the Developmental Leadership Programme (DLP) (See <https://www.dlprog.org/>) and the TWP Community of Practice (<https://twpcommunity.org/>), both based at the University of Birmingham. For iterations in the form of ‘development entrepreneurship’, see Faustino 2012 and Faustino & Booth 2014, and in the form of ‘politically smart locally led development’, see Booth & Unsworth 2014.

strategic allies in the business community and/or in civil society. Reform coalitions tackle macro-political and historically-resilient (path-dependent) obstacles to improved governance and are salient where reform-minded stakeholders in government and the public sector face deeply-rooted opposition within the state (or parts of the state) and within wider society and seek strategic allies in the business and/or voluntary sectors. This scenario typically arises in weak democracies where existing state capacity is dysfunctional or limited in its distribution across government and the public sector.

Drawing on the macro-political approach within the good governance literature, and the operational TWP approach, this article explores donor-supported reform coalition (DSRC) initiatives in the Philippines, i.e. reform coalitions initiated and supported by international aid donors. It focuses on two DSRC initiatives: the Australian Aid (AusAid)/Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Coalitions for Change (CfC) programme (2011-2018) and the World Bank Supporting Reform Coalitions and Inclusive Institutions for Sustainable Change in the Philippines (SRCP) programme (2015-2016).

2. Conceptual Framework: The Case for Reform Coalitions

From the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars first pointed to the possibilities of reform coalitions, variously conceived, mostly focusing on state-business coalitions designed to promote neoliberal, pro-market reforms by sharing rent opportunities within recalibrated dominant coalitions (e.g. Kingstone 1999; Schamis 1999; Etchemendy 2002; Johnston & Kpundeh 2002; and Bräutigam, Rakner & Taylor 2002). This prompted donors to experiment with reform coalitions with more wide-ranging objectives concerned with good governance, anti-corruption and pro-poor change. As a result, conceptual and programmatic work on reform coalitions developed further in the 2010s and represents a significant example of donors ‘thinking and working politically’ (see, for instance, Peiffer 2012; DLP 2012; Booth & Unsworth 2014; Faustino & Booth 2014).

Despite this work, however, both the conceptualization and empirical assessment of reform coalitions remains in its infancy. Reform coalitions, for instance, come in many guises (e.g. ‘growth alliances’, ‘developmental coalitions’, ‘distributional coalitions’, ‘social action coalitions’, or ‘anti-corruption coalitions’), making them difficult to define or typologies, or to identify a coherent literature base on which reform coalition assessment can draw. Secondly, their commitment to macro-political objectives introduces complex problems of causation and makes them difficult to evaluate with precision. Thirdly, reform coalitions are

constructed on the basis of implicit or explicit theories of change which can be difficult to discern and evaluate. From a literature survey, for instance, Pfeiffer defines reform coalitions as:

(formal or informal) political mechanism[s] and process[es] utilized and formed by state and business actors, initiated by either, which enables them to work cooperatively to address specific state and market collective action problems through institutional and policy reforms in pursuit of a specific reform agenda. (Pfeiffer 2012: 4)

This definition, however, excludes civil society participation, is limited to economic reform and excludes the possibility of donor-initiated coalitions. It effectively captures a first generation of reform coalitions. The argument here focuses on a putative second generation of reforms coalitions, defined as:

Formal or informal institutional mechanisms linking state, business and/or civil society leaders and organizations, with or without external donor support, and designed to confront or engage dominant coalitions and to promote economic and other reforms, based on an implicit or explicit theory of change.

Although none refers explicitly to a second generation of reform coalitions, a new generation of studies (e.g. Ryan 2011; Faustino 2012; Sidel 2014 & 2017; and Booth 2014) provides the basis for analysis of coalitions which include civil society as well as state and business actors, which promote social and political (pro-poor) and well as economic (or pro-market) reform,

Table 1: From First to Second Generation Reform Coalitions

	Institutional Basis	Programmatic Focus	Donor Involvement	Conceptual focus
First generation (e.g. Kingstone 1999; Etchemendy 2001; Brautigam, Rakner & Taylor 2002; Asia Foundation 2011; Peiffer 2012).	State-business	Economic (pro-market) reforms, to enhance competition & break up oligopolies	Secondary and indirect	Economic (market reforms & rent-sharing)
Second generation (e.g.; Ryan 2011; Faustino 2012; Booth 2014; Sidel 2014 & 2017);	State-business-civil society or state-civil society	Economic, social and other (pro-poor) reforms to enhance democracy & social inclusion	Salient and significant	Political (democratic reforms & power sharing)

which are donor-funded; and which aim to politically disrupt dominant coalitions, rather than on recalibrating the rent-sharing formula in economic terms (See Table 1, above).

Many of these studies are influenced by the case of the Philippines. Since the early 2000s, the Philippines has been an important laboratory for TWP-style experiments in macro-political reform for at least three main reasons. First, it has a democratic system of rule and an active civil society, with prominent civil society activists, for instance, serving in senior roles in successive governments. Second, despite the rule of reform-minded Presidents in its recent history, it suffers from persistently poor governance and from enduringly high rates of poverty and inequality (in comparative international terms in both cases). Third, the Philippines remains relatively aid-dependent and international aid donors can work productively with national stakeholders. The combination of these three factors leads to a relatively unique enabling environment for the DSRC initiatives considered here.

The theoretical case for reform coalitions stems in part from the nature of dominant coalitions in what North, Wallace and Weingast (2009) (hereafter NWW) label as ‘natural’ states (or Limited Access Orders, LAOs), i.e. states which deal with the fundamental problem of violence (and violence potential) in a particular way. In contrast to ‘Open Access Orders’ which suppress violence potential by facilitating inclusive participation in economic and political life, thus ensuring peace and stability, natural states or LAOs limit participation, fuelling violence potential, but, according to NWW, they solve the resultant problem by sharing rent-generating opportunities among potential belligerents to promote an unstable peace. ‘The natural state’, they argue, ‘reduces the problem of violence through the formation of a dominant coalition whose members possess special privileges’ (North, Wallace & Weingast 2009: 18). ‘By limiting access to these privileges to members of the dominant coalition’, they continue, ‘elites create credible incentives to cooperate rather than fight...In this way, the political system of a natural state manipulates the economic system to produce rents that then secure the political order’ (Ibid). One important implication of their analysis is that the influence of dominant coalitions, can be disrupted by reform coalitions capable of amassing superior strength. This possibility arises from what they view as an inherent trade-off facing dominant coalitions in natural states:

Expanding the coalition with increasing rent-generating activities adds members and increases the coalition’s ability to survive against internal and external threats. However, it also dissipates rents, which both lowers the value of being in the coalition and reduces the ability of members to punish the coalition by withdrawing support. Because of this rent dissipation, natural state dominant coalitions are naturally self-limiting in size. Too large a coalition is unstable. The dominant coalition must be

constantly aware of the danger that a subset of the existing coalition will attempt to displace the rest and take control of the state. (ibid: 39)

This trade-off makes dominant coalitions inherently unstable, providing strategic opportunities for reform coalitions: to tackle the dominant coalition head-on where it identifies systemic weakness; to work with select members of the dominant coalition in the hope of peeling them away; or to exploit limited opportunities to negotiate specific reforms which the dominant coalition feels able to concede from a position of strength.

Making the theoretical case for reform coalitions is very different, however, to making the case that they are successful or to establishing the chain of causation behind putative successes. Existing approaches, which I label as *governance-centric*, focus on the chain of causation that leads from reform coalition activities to (initial) macro-political reforms. This can be represented in notational form as $\langle V1 \rangle V2 \rangle$, where $V1$ = reform coalitions activity and $V2$ = initial macro-political reform (for instance, legislative measures). Genuine macro-political reform, however, is rarely isolated from the wider political environment, so the $\langle V1 \rangle V2 \rangle$ chain of causation must necessarily be expanded. Here, therefore, I posit an expanded, *politics-centric*, chain of causation as follows: Reform coalition activity can induce initial macro-political reform but on-going efforts to embed these reforms are contingent and linked to broader patterns of political change. In democratic systems characterised by periodic changes of government, for instance, macro-political reform can dissipate where a successor government either reverses the reform or undermines it through neglect. This chain of causation can be represented as a hypothesis as follows:

Reform coalitions ($V1$) induce initial macro-political reforms ($V2$) which, along with extraneous and contingent events ($V3$), influence and are influenced by the wider macro-political reform agenda of the government ($V4$) and its electoral fate ($V5$).

Here, $V4$ and $V5$ are dependent variables, $V1$ and $V2$ independent variables and $V3$ an intervening variable. This scheme is simplified, omitting, for instance, the important influence of political culture, including public opinion and voting behaviour, on election results. Nevertheless, it is useful to the extent that the chain of causation $\langle V1 \rangle V2 \rangle$, the focus of existing literature, is rarely determinant of the final political settlement, i.e. $\langle V1 \rangle V2 \rangle$ must normally be assessed in light of changes to $V4$ & $V5$, since these changes determine whether reforms are maintained and institutionalised in the medium to long term, surviving the initial moment of reform. Although the chain of causation $\langle V1 \rangle V2 \rangle V4 \rangle V5 \rangle$ is critically influenced by $V3$, the extraneous and contingent nature of $V3$ makes it difficult to assess. Nevertheless, the argument below seeks to demonstrate the importance of the

<V1>V2>V4>V5> chain of causation, and the role of V3 within it, to the assessment of macro-political reforms induced by reform coalitions in ‘natural’ states.

To this end, this article explores DSRC initiatives during the reformist Presidency of Benigno S. Aquino III (2010-2016). Limited to a single, six-year term, Aquino was replaced in June 2016 by Rodrigo Duterte, the former Mayor of Davao and a populist nationalist ostensibly committed to reverse-engineering many of Aquino’s reforms. In theory, at least, this represented failure on the part of the DSRC initiatives explored below and their fit with Aquino’s reform programme and record. The approach here, therefore, takes Duterte’s election as a notable event and explores the record of DSRC initiatives in the period to mid-2016, their contribution to the rejection of Aquino’s reform agenda by the Filipino electorate, and their implications for the assessment of reform coalitions. Given the focus on DSRC initiatives, rather than reform coalition *per se*, the argument below addresses two subsidiary questions: (1) To what extent can reform coalitions be imposed from outside; and (2) To what extent should donors intervene in partisan political contests to support reform-oriented ruling administrations to push through contentious reforms and/or to secure re-election? Answers may well shed light on the potential, and risks, for DSRC initiatives in other countries.

3. Governance and the Reform Agenda in the Philippines

The regime of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) blighted the Philippines politically, socially and economically. In the intervening 34 years, a lively democracy has been rebuilt, but economic growth has been uneven and the political process unstable, with variable standards of governance over time. The party-political system remains personalist rather than programmatic; corruption remains systemic with diffuse and inadequate regulatory controls; politicians retain significant discretionary control over public spending; both civil service independence and the rule of law are undermined by political interference; and the state remains unable to enforce a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Of the four Presidents who served between 1986 and 2010 (Corazon Aquino (1986-1992); Fidel Ramos (1992-1998); Joseph Estrada (1998-2001) and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010)), one was driven from office by the prospect of impeachment (Estrada) and another implicated in corruption and electoral malpractice (Macapagal-Arroyo). The more reform-minded Presidents, Aquino and Ramos, made important in-roads but other reforms were blocked at birth or reversed once they left office. In the Philippines, as one political economist notes, ‘change so often proves to be temporary and superficial’ (Hodder 2018: 79).

This makes governance reform in the Philippines a ‘wicked’ problem: complex, unstable, changing and difficult to resolve. Successive governments have addressed component parts and since 1986, international donors have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the Philippines promoting ‘good governance’ by targeting niche or component parts through discrete and technical programmes. Applying the NWW framework to the Philippines, for instance, Montinola concludes that dominant, ‘ruling’ or ‘rent’ coalitions remained powerful and entrenched in the early 2010s, with reform successes offset by the emergence of new types of rents which sustain them (Montinola 2013). Within this context, international donors have increasingly looked to ‘reform coalitions’ as a means to break a perceived log-jam and to promote transformational, rather than incremental, change.

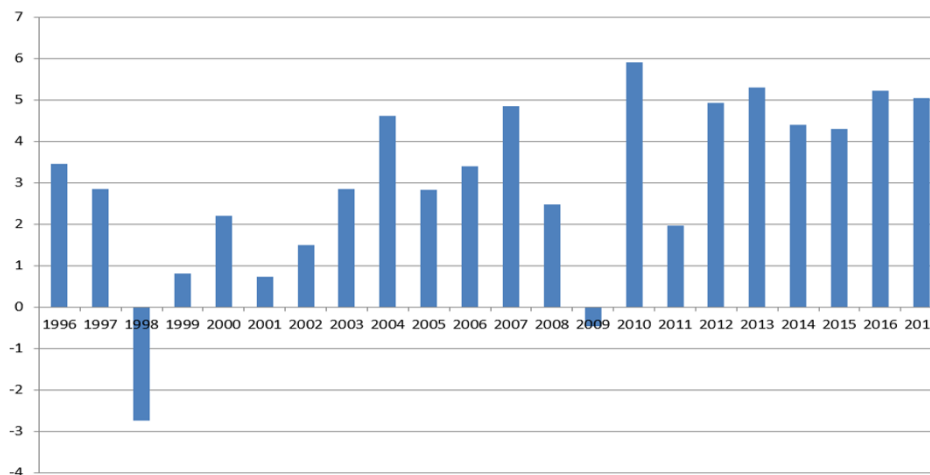
Asia Foundation (2011), a book-length edited collection, captures a first generation of reform coalitions in the Philippines evident between 2004 and 2010, focusing on economic reforms and linking government and private sector actors, with minimal civil society participation. It examines seven cases of reform, two of which failed but five of which were judged to be successful. Reforms in marine transport, civil aviation, water privatization and telecommunications strengthened domestic competition to the benefit of consumers and new market entrants while tax reform boosted tax collection and the resources available for public goods and services. Likewise, Schwesifurth *et al* (2018) examine three putatively successful Philippine reform coalitions operational between 1995 and 2010, focusing on public procurement, electoral reform and poverty alleviation respectively, exploring the role of education in the generation of ‘development entrepreneurship’ within each.

The election of Benigno S. Aquino III as President in May 2010 provided the conditions for a second generation of reform coalitions in the Philippines. Aquino ran on a platform of opposing the patronage politics of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration and promising pro-poor growth and reform within a neoliberal framework which appealed to large donors such as USAID and the World Bank. His election slogan, *Kung Walang Corrupt, Walang Mahirap* (without corruption, there is no poverty), together with his ‘social contract with the Filipino people’, offered an indictment of the outgoing regime and a radical agenda for ‘transformational change’ (GoP 2010). Elected to a six-year term to May 2016, Aquino made good progress in the first half of his Presidency. From a contraction of 0.5% in 2009, for instance, the economy grew by 5.9% in 2010, and by 5% in 2012 and 2013 (see

Figure 1, below).² The incidence of poverty, measured every three years, also declined, from 26.3% of the population in 2009 to 21.6% in 2015.³

The quality of governance also improved. Governance indicator scores for the Philippines in Figure 2, below, reveal two significant patterns over the fourteen preceding years. First, overall scores oscillated wildly over time, indicating the lack of a stable political environment. Second, individual scores for the six indicators also varied wildly, with voice & accountability, regulatory quality and government effectiveness scoring well in the late 1990s, and with control of corruption and political stability & absence of violence scoring poorly. In the early years of the Aquino presidency, scores for all six key governance indicators improved, especially those for control of corruption and the restoration of political stability & control of violence, the largest improvements evident since 1996, when data collection began.⁴ The data shows that by 2012, scores for regulatory quality and government effectiveness had overtaken those for voice & accountability. Reform coalitions also secured notable successes in the first few years of the Aquino administration, although these successes began to taper off in the second half of the 2010-2016 period.

Figure 2: GDP Per Capita Growth (annual %) in the Philippines, 1996-2017



GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion or degradation of natural resources. Data re in current U.S. dollars.

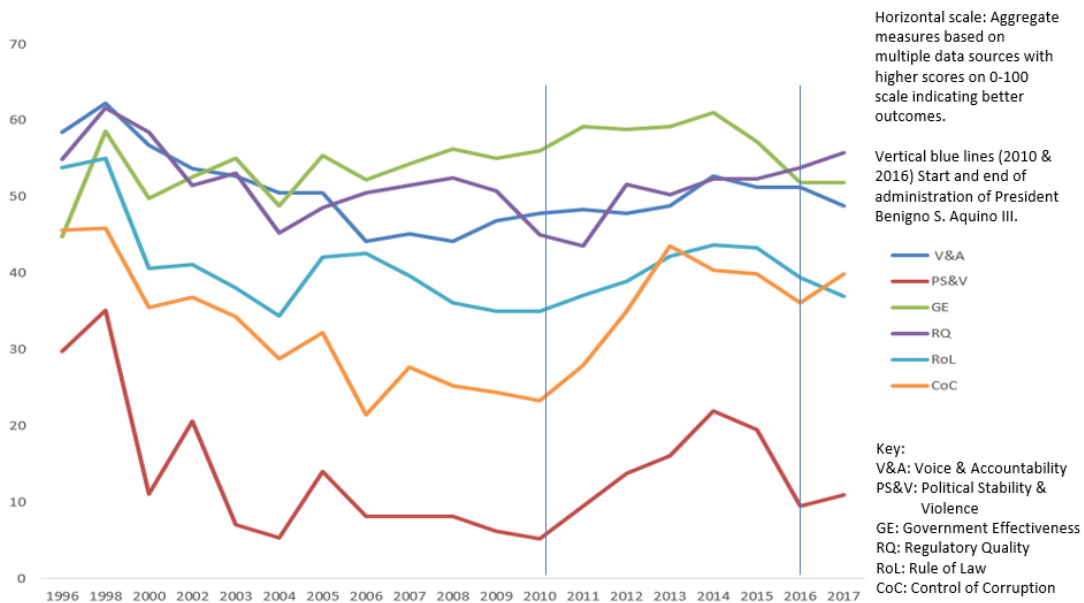
Source: Country Data (Philippines)(full data set, Excel), World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/philippines>

² Figure 1 illustrates the economic setbacks from the 1997-1998 East Asian crisis and the 2007-2009 global economic down turn, interspersed by uneven rates of economic growth.

³ Philippine Statistics Agency (PSA)(<https://psa.gov.ph/>), Press releases, 27 October 2016 (PHDSH-1610-04) and 10 April 2019 (2019-053).

⁴ Figure 2 also reveals the combined political cost of the East Asian crisis, and the Presidency of Joseph Estrada (1998-2001), with governance indicator scores plummeting between 1998 and 2000.

Figure 2: Governance Indicators for the Philippines 1996-2017



Source: Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) database, (full dataset, excel), World Bank
<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home>

The pro-administration slate did well in mid-term elections in May 2013, but thereafter, the government was rocked by setbacks. Figure 2, for instance, shows economic growth tapering off in 2014 and 2015 compared to 2013, while Figure 3 reveals a steady deterioration in scores for five out of six key governance indicators between 2014 and the 2016. From July 2013, for instance, the government became enmeshed in scandal around the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), one of a number of ‘pork-barrel’ mechanisms whereby the President shares state resources with elected politicians to secure their support, and in November 2013, the Supreme Court declared the PDAF unconstitutional, damaging the government’s anti-corruption credentials.

On 7 November 2013, tragedy struck when Typhoon Haiyan, the largest in the country’s history, hit the Eastern Philippines, killing an estimated 6,000 people and displacing tens of thousands. The government quickly became embroiled in conflicts with anti-administration local government officials and the central government was soon pilloried for a slow and ineffective response. There was some respite in 2014, especially when the government concluded a peace deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in March, providing for a revised devolved administration in Muslim Mindanao, but that success

evaporated in January 2015 when 44 government troops were killed in clashes in Mindanao,⁵ and the government was forced to halt the passage of the *Bangsa Moro* Basic Law amid political instability in parts of the island. The President's personal handling of the national traumas of November 2013 and January 2015, and his apparent lack of personal empathy for the victims, damaged his reputation. Public opinion polls as late as January 2016 indicated popular support for the administration (Hegina 2016), but setbacks on a number of fronts, including crime, urban traffic and pollution, and unrest in Mindanao, gave the Presidency an air of instability and inertia, emboldening opposition politicians mobilising for the 2016 elections and hindering the passage of legislation in Congress which might have helped it.

4. Donor-Supported Reform Coalition (DSRC) Initiatives in the Philippines 2010-2016

This changing political landscape exerted a significant influence on donor-supported reform coalitions established to ride the waves of reform promised by Aquino's Presidential campaign. Between 2004 and 2016, four distinct donor-supported reform coalition (DSRC) initiatives were established in the Philippines (see Table 2 below), of which two are considered here.⁶ The first of the four, the USAID-funded Economic Policy Reform and Advocacy (ERPA) Project (2004-2007), combined elements of first and second generation strategy, focusing on economic reform but working primarily through academic institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs), rather than the private sector, and supported the formal reform agenda of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration (CODE-NGO 2007). Phase 1 of the USAID-funded The Arangkada Philippines Project (TAPP) was primarily first generation in nature, focusing on economic reform and on state-private sector alliances but with less CSO participation than the earlier ERPA Project (USAID 2017).⁷ Both programmes focused on economic reform and encouraged broad-based and inclusive growth, promoting research and reform in areas such as financial market development, regulatory quality, fiscal management, tax administration, and local government financial planning.

⁵ Elite paramilitary troops attached to the Philippine National Police Special Action Force.

⁶ Figure 4 is limited to initiatives focused on the mobilisation of reform coalitions and excludes related programmes such as the Policy Reform Programme (2006-2008) and the Economic Growth Hubs, Infrastructure and Competiveness project (2009-2012), both funded by USAID and implemented by Asia Foundation.

⁷ See also <https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/partnership-growth-pfg/tapp>

Table 2: Donor-Supported Reform Coalition (DSRC) Initiatives in the Philippines 2004-2016

DSRC Initiative	Duration	Main funder	Main Implementing Agency
Economic Policy Reform and Advocacy (EPRA) Project	2004-2008	USAID	Ateneo de Manila University
The Coalitions for Change (CfC) programme (first phase)	2011-2018	AusAid/Australian Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT)	Asia Foundation
The Arangkada Philippines Project (TAPP)(first phase)	2012-2016	USAID	American Chamber of Commerce (Philippines) Foundation
Supporting Reform Coalitions and Inclusive Institutions for Sustainable Change in the Philippines (SRCP) programme	2015-2016	World Bank (WB)/ Australian Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT)	Joint WB-DFAT-Government of the Philippines team

The two focus DSRC initiatives here, the Coalitions for Change (CfC) programme and the Supporting Reform Coalitions and Inclusive Institutions for Sustainable Change in the Philippines (SRCP) programme, are more characteristically second generation reform coalitions. Both were committed to both extra-economic, including political, reform, and to state-CSO collaboration, designed to weaken the political stranglehold of dominant coalitions and traditional elite and business interests on the political process. Like TAPP, each was centred on the Aquino administration and aimed to institutionalise its reform agenda and, in the case of the CfC, to leverage specific strategic opportunities where they arose.

The first of these, the CfC programme, was originally conceived by USAID. AusAid assumed control, however, and launched the CfC in 2011, primarily as a transformational replacement for the Philippine-Australia Community Assistance Programme (PACAP), a 24-year civil society support programme. The election of Aquino, however, created what AusAid viewed as a radical new enabling environment, allowing for ‘a more transformative agenda’ (AusAid 2011: pp 6-8 & iv.). The programme was originally scheduled to run for 10 years, over two phases (2011-2015 and 2016-2020). The first, however, ran for six and a half years, ending in mid-2018, and costing approximately AUD 33.5m (US\$ 23m or UK£

18.8m).⁸. CfC continued to a second phase (CfC2) in July 2018, although this article only examines its record to mid-2016 and the election of Rodrigo Duterte.⁹ AusAid, previously a semi-autonomous agency of the Australian government, was absorbed into the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) from 2013, losing its distinct identity, so references to organizations and to relevant documents in the text and notes below reflect this change.

The CfC programme is rooted in an explicitly political rather than a primarily economic conceptualization of reform. According to AusAid, for instance,

CfC is a governance programme, which targets specific funds and technical support to civil society-government partnerships in order to address challenges and constraints in supply-side accountability and responsiveness (AusAid 2011: 19).

Although primarily a civil society support programme, it focuses on possibilities for new forms of state-civil society cooperation and explicitly embraces the TWP approach through the novel ‘development entrepreneurship’ approach in which it has been instrumental. ‘The Aquino campaign for President’, according to AusAid,

had notable support from civil society and a number of key Cabinet members came from CSO backgrounds. The first months of the Aquino administration has demonstrated a willingness to engage with CSOs on critical issues (e.g. decentralisation, transparency in expenditure, social protection) which suggests the enabling environment for the proposed Coalitions for Change [is positive] (AusAid 2011: 6).

To capitalise, AusAid sought to make ‘strategically-identified transformational investments’ in pursuit of ‘targeted change’ and wider impact (AusAid 2011:15). To this end, the programme focussed on three main objectives: the establishment of effective government-civil society coalitions; the production of evidence-based analysis to support programme development; and the enhancement of capacity among reform coalition participants (AusAid 2011: vi). AusAid viewed the programme as ‘ambitious’, ‘inherently risky’ and dependent in no small part on opportunistic ‘luck’ (Ibid: 48).

The CfC was based on a substantive theory of change (ToC), based on AusAid/DFAT’s significant country expertise, not least, its 24 years of experience with the

⁸ ‘CfC grants and various forms of support and technical assistance to CfC partners’ consumed AUD 21m. The CfC was the major component of a wider DFAT-Asia Foundation partnership. I have attributed 70% of the cost of the partnership Program Support Unit (AUD 1.8m) and partnership operating costs (AUD 10.7m) to the CfC (DFAT 2018: 5).

⁹ For a fuller assessment, see John Sidel, *Coalitions for Change in the Philippines: legacies, linkages, lessons* (forthcoming).

PACAP. This ToC set out the key concepts of the programme, the programme rationale, a multi-step process to the realisation of programme objectives and additional processes outside of programme objectives. This marked it out as a radical and ambitious governance programme, promoting ‘transformational change’ (AusAid 2011: 19-20). ‘The program’, according to AusAid, did ‘not aim to address voice, capability, accountability and responsiveness constraints in wide society. Rather it offers an approach to enhancement of government which could be replicated beyond Program coalitions and the lifetime of the program’ (Ibid: 20). At the heart of the ToC, therefore, was an admirable strategic focus and a concern for replicability and for scaling-up.

The programme, and the associated approach, recorded some notable successes in its first few years. Sidel (2014), for instance, captures two notable ones: firstly, an excise duty (‘Sin tax’) reform to raise tax revenue for public goods and services and, secondly, the re-registration of voters in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) to reduce electoral fraud. Two ‘advocacy coalitions’, Action for Economic Reform (AER) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, helped secure these respective reforms (Sidel 2014). An AusAid evaluation in 2014 viewed the CfC in positive terms, emphasising its success in ‘achieving leverage’ and through its innovative approach of moving from ‘transactional to transformational’ partnerships and exploiting ‘strategic opportunism’ (DFAT 2014: 4 & 6). The review pointed to six CfC successes between 2011 and 2014. In addition to the two explored in Sidel (2014), others concerned school congestion, local government investment in road construction, security sector reform and the inclusion of people with disabilities in electoral campaigns, based on work by a number of reform coalitions including the Children’s Education First Coalition and *Bantay Bayanihan*, a network promoting civil society engagement with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (DFAT 2014: 8-9).

Of these CfC successes (see Table 3, below), the most significant was the passage of the Tobacco and Alcohol Excise Tax Restructuring Act (popularly known as the Sin Tax Reform Law) in 2012.¹⁰ The passage of the act cut smoking and improved health outcomes;¹¹

¹⁰ The excise duty reform noted above and explored in Sidel (2014).

¹¹ It reduced the incidence of smoking from 29% in 2012 to 25% in 2015 (DFAT 2018:12).

Table 3: Main Coalitions for Change (CfC) Reform Successes 2010-2016

Reform	Date of Reform	Reform Coalition	Nature of Reform
Tobacco and Alcohol Excise Tax Restructuring Act (Sin Tax)	Approved by Congress, December 2012	Action for Economic Reform (AER)	Increase in excise duties on tobacco and alcohol consumer products, with resultant tax revenues funded health care provision for the poor and reduced tobacco consumption.
Election Service Reform Act 2016	Signed into law in April 2016	Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE)	Reduced political pressure on, and better conditions for, teachers serving as Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs). Ordinary citizens empowered to become BEIs.
Re-registration of voters in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	Ten-day voter registration drive in July 2012 led by the Election Registration Board	Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting	Cleaned-up voter registers reduced electoral fraud and undermined corrupt practices by established political clans, enabling other political interests to compete more effectively.
Revised School Room Construction Protocols	Successful pilot province in Pampanga province with regional Dept of Education staff 2011-13	Children's Education First Coalition	Revised procurement process: Larger classrooms, reduced class-rooms-to-land-quantum (i.e. less cramming of small classrooms into small land parcels).
Local government investment in road construction	Successful pilot project in the provinces of Bohol, Guimaras & Surigao del Norte 2011-13	City-based Chambers of Commerce in the three provinces	Road construction and maintenance protocols linked more closely to analysis of economic growth potential in relevant cities or localities.
Security Sector reform (revisions to the Internal Peace and Security Plan of the Armed Forces of the Philippines)(AFP)	From late 2011	<i>Bantay Bayanihan</i> , a network promoting civil society engagement with the Armed Forces of the Philippines	National-level civil society organizations work with local organizations to facilitate regular dialogue between local communities and the armed forces
Enhanced inclusion of people with disabilities (PWDs) in election campaigns	From 2012	Fully-Abled Nation (FAN)	Promotion of accessible polling places & electoral registration of more PWDs

Sources: Sidel 2014, DFAT 2014, CfC (2017).

it raised tax revenue and funded health care provision for the poor;¹² and it undermined special interests in the tobacco and alcohol industries.¹³ At the heart of this success was a reform coalition, Action for Economic Reform (AER), which liaised with supportive cabinet members in the administration and with political parties in Congress and brought together a range of medical and health organizations, while also working closely with industry lobbies keen to agree a compromise which limited their losses (Sidel 2014: 12-13).¹⁴ Reform successes achieved later in the programme and to mid-2016 were more modest, including land purchases for school construction, improved land titling for schools and enhanced electoral participation by people with disabilities (DFAT 2018a: 12-13). A notable success, however, was the passage of the Election Service Reform Act (ESRA) 2016, relieving political pressure on teachers obliged to serve as Board of Election Inspectors BEIs (for instance, via the teacher appointment process) and empowering others to serve as BEIs (See Figure 5). In addition to active funding, capacity-building and other support to reform coalitions, the CfC also funded research on ‘development entrepreneurship’ and its application in the Philippines, through its *Working Politically in Practice Series*, its *CfC Research Paper Series*, and its *CfC Reform Stories* series.¹⁵

Appraising the CfC at the end of its first phase, an independent review regarded it as a ‘success’ and as ‘doing well’ (DFAT 2018a: 9, 1 & 20). The CfC, it noted, ‘has deservedly won considerable interest and attention from the *thinking and working politically* community’ (Ibid: 2) (emphasis from the original) but it also pointed to the difficulty of establishing precise relationships between cause and effect:

While there is little doubt as to the CfC’s achievements, it has difficulty robustly describing its contribution to complex multi-factorial, policy processes – instead erring towards bold assertions of causation (of higher level social and economic outcomes) (Ibid: 2).

¹² According to the World Bank, it nearly doubled ‘the Department of Health’s budget in its first year of implementation and [financed] the extension of fully subsidised health insurance to the poorest 40% of the population’ (Kaiser *et al* 2016: 1).

¹³ In particular, the 2012 law tackled a concentration of market power in the tobacco industry arising from the 2010 merger of Fortune Tobacco and Philip Morris Philippines, providing the new entity with control over 90% of domestic tobacco production (Ibid: 23-24). It undermined the interests of the group through new taxes which reduced tobacco consumption.

¹⁴ Other CSOs involved included Tobacco Free Kids, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the International Union Against Tobacco and Lung Disease and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Kaiser *et al* 2016: xiv)

¹⁵ See <https://asiafoundation.org/tag/coalitions-for-change/> for details. Key publications, some co-produced with the DLP, include Booth (2014), Faustino & Booth (2014) and Sidel (2014 & 2017).

Significantly, however, the 2018 review fails to assess the change of government in 2016 and the changes to the Aquino-era ‘enabling environment’ which provided the essential basis for the programme, nor the loss of momentum in the 2014-2016 period. The review also fails to explore the consequences for CfC of AusAid’s absorption into DFAT from 2013, and the loss of AusAid staff, depriving DFAT of significant development expertise, and harming the momentum of its programmes. Distinct limits to thinking politically thus remain evident in donor organizations, even in those most committed to the TWP approach. The challenge here is further illustrated by a book-length study of the Sin Tax Reform Law by a World Bank team which seeks to reconcile ‘technical analysis with political realities’ (Kaiser *et al* 2016: 6). The study briefly acknowledges the role of reform coalitions and civil society involvement (Ibid: xiii-xiv, 1, 15 & 45-46) but gives significant credit for the reform to the World Bank and emphasises the role of technical analysis in the passage and implementation of the legislation.¹⁶

As this suggests, the World Bank has some way to go in embracing the TWP, an argument supported by the case of the Supporting Reform Coalitions and Inclusive Institutions for Sustainable Change in the Philippines (SRCP) programme. Established in mid-2015, the SRCP represented a tactical response to the rising threat that the pro-administration slate in the 2016 Presidential and Congressional elections would lose and that the smooth working relationship between the Aquino administration and key donor institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, would be irretrievably harmed. A temporary, short-term programme delivered over less than 12 months, the SRCP was regarded by the Bank as a ‘substantial’ risk, and at US\$ 1m (World Bank 2015b), its budget was much smaller than that of the CfC, although spent over a more concentrated period of time. Nevertheless, it was a radical and significant DSRC initiative.

The rationale for the programme derives from the World Bank’s ‘Country Partnership Strategy’ for 2015-2018, dated May 2014 and covering the final two years of the Aquino administration. ‘After nearly four years in office’, it notes, ‘there is a general perception that the president has done well’ (World Bank 2014: 12). But the Bank also notes ‘[a]dverse public perceptions about the quality of government spending and governance at both national and local level’ and continuing concerns about poor governance as an impediment to

¹⁶ Likewise, a Preface to the book by the World Bank Country Director makes no reference to civil society participation in the reform initiative.

inclusive growth and poverty reduction (Ibid: 21-22 & 19).¹⁷ The Bank, however, was directly implicated in these adverse perceptions since some of them applied to the government's innovative Conditional Cash Transfer and National Community Driven Development programmes, both funded by the Bank.

In response, and without mentioning the looming 2016 elections, The World Bank argued that

The government's institutional and governance reform objectives are complex and require a medium- to longer-term implementation horizon. The [World Bank] will place a strong emphasis on building constituencies for reform...' (Ibid: viii).

Explaining this rationale in more operational terms, the Bank added that

The government has asked the [Bank] to help develop a sharper understanding of the country's complex development challenges and then to support the piloting of innovative solutions (World Bank 2014: 19).

The key vehicle to deliver on this commitment, the SRCP, was originally conceived as a component of a wider Philippines Programmatic Governance Reform Program 'designed to put the country onto a new trajectory, away from patronage politics and corruption and towards good governance and inclusive growth' (World Bank 2015a), plans for which were subsequently abandoned. The SRCP component, however, was launched in July 2015, tasked with 'helping the public understand governance principles behind...successful government programs' and helping 'to mobilize broad public support for [this] campaign', including a Governance Fair (run by the *Galing Pook* Foundation), a Youth Forum and a Good Governance Forum, aided by a multi-media political communication strategy.

Funded through the Australia-World Bank Philippines Development Trust Fund, the programme was run by a joint World Bank-DFAT-Government of the Philippines team. It worked, in turn, through four external partners: a political communications firm (Ace, Saatchi & Saatchi) and three 'coalition-building partners', each tasked with leading reform coalitions in one of the three main regions of the Philippines: the REID Foundation (Luzon), the Ateneo School of Government/G-Watch (Visayas) and the Institute for Autonomy and Governance (Mindanao)(World Bank 2015a).¹⁸ In turn, coalition building partners worked through regional coalitions partners, including *Kusog Mindanao* (in Mindanao), *KOMPRES* (*Koalisyon ng Mammamayan para sa Reporma*/People Power Volunteers for Reform)(in the Visayas)

¹⁷ The Bank was directly implicated in these adverse perceptions since some of them applied to the government's innovative Conditional Cash Transfer and National Community Driven Development programs, both funded by the Bank.

¹⁸ All three were experienced participants in Philippine DSRC initiatives.

and CODE-NGO (the Caucus of Development NGO Networks)(in Luzon). They also worked closely with 19 Knowledge for Development Communities (KDCs) spread throughout the Philippines, linking ‘schools, policy and research institutions ...that work[ed] in partnership with the World Bank to promote knowledge sharing and citizen engagement about development issues’ (World Bank 2016). In government, the programme drew on support from cabinet ministers, including Florencio Abad (Secretary of the Department of Budget Management), Ramon Jimenez (Transport) and Corazon Soliman (Social Work and Community Development)(World Bank 2015a).¹⁹

Like the CfC, the SRCP was based on an explicit theory of change. Influenced by analysis for the World Bank Philippines (and a briefing to the Aquino cabinet) by the British political economist James Robinson in 2012, it specified a process of ‘transformational change’ to ‘put the country on an irreversible path of inclusive growth’, based on the efforts of a ‘broad reform coalition’ (World Bank 2015b: 3-4). The mismatch between these high-order objectives and both the length and budget of the programme, however, deprived the ToC of analytical or operational substance, at least once it became detached from the larger Philippines Programmatic Governance Reform Program. In that sense, it was inferior to the CfC’s theory of change.

The SRCP was political, but not a good example of the TWP in practice. Partisan intervention in domestic political processes by the World Bank Group is contrary to its Terms of Agreement (Johnston & Kpundeh 2002: 1). On the surface, however, the SRCP looks like a partisan intervention in the electoral system of a sovereign nation. The programme Concept Note, for instance, explains the electoral cycle in the Philippines and the significance of the forthcoming 2016 elections. ‘It is against this political setting’, it notes,

that the case for sustaining change and its outcome – inclusive growth – needs to be made and a process of coalition-building...supported. Policy volatility undermines this process and risks throwing the country back into political opportunism and rent-seeking behaviour, reinforcing the vicious circle of extractive political and economic institutions which have held the country back for so long (World Bank 2015b).

‘Political volatility’, in this context, largely meant the possible defeat of a pro-administration slate.

Sensitive to allegations of direct interference in the 2016 election campaign, and to the risk of mixed messages from the range of programme partners, Bank staff prepared a

¹⁹ Abad and Soliman were experienced civil society activists, heavily committed to state-civil society collaboration.

primer, ‘Tough Questions and Answers’, to help them speak with one voice.²⁰ An excerpt below covers two possible questions and two suggested answers:

Q: Even if the Bank does not intend, is not the Bank concerned that the campaign may give an unfair advantage to [pro administration] candidates in the national elections in 2016?

A: Good governance should be everyone’s concern. It should be widely discussed in the public. It should stay at the top of the development agenda in the Philippines and it is important that people realize it’s their right and responsibility to demand honest, transparent government that puts their interest first, responds to their needs, and advances change for growth and prosperity.

Q: Is the campaign another Bank sponsored propaganda to mislead Filipino people?

A: The Good Governance campaign is not just a communications campaign but a grassroots movement of the people who are committed to good governance, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction. This campaign is about bringing together Filipino people, building a sense of common purpose, and creating positive change for the country’s future. (World Bank 2015c).

This example suggests that the programme was disingenuous or misleading in at least two respects. First, ‘good governance’ discourse was at the heart of the campaigns of many pro-administration candidates and the SRCP lent dog-whistle support to their partisan or party-political efforts. Secondly, at heart a top-down, supply-driven DSRC initiative, the SRCP programme was far from a spontaneous ‘grassroots movement of the people’.

How did the World Bank evaluate the SRCP? The Bank’s ‘performance and learning review’ of its Philippine programmes 2015-2019 is very circumspect. It notes that ‘dialogue with civil society’, and ‘with stakeholder groups’, ‘has provided valuable perspective on country development issues and on World Bank...partnership in the Philippines’ (World Bank 2017: 7), but it makes no reference to a ‘reform agenda’ nor to ‘reform coalitions’, reflecting the different policy priorities of the Duterte administration. On the post-Aquino political environment, it notes that

the election of President Rodrigo Duterte...marked an important political transition. Grounded in a strong electoral mandate, the government is aiming to leverage the solid position of the Philippine economy to scale up public investment for poverty reduction, job creation and economic growth. While inclusive growth and poverty reduction remain at the center of the Philippine development agenda, the government has proposed new approaches for attaining objectives (Ibid: 1).

²⁰ Influenced, in turn, by a ‘deep dive on good governance’ discussion document (World Bank 2016d).

To translate: reform agendas and reform coalitions are no longer components of the World Bank's partnership with the Government of the Philippines. The SRCP has been quietly forgotten as the Bank recalibrates its relationship with the new administration.

The conclusion below addresses the central hypothesis presented above. But the analysis here also provides answers to two subsidiary questions. In response to the first, can reform coalitions be imposed from the outside?, the case of the Philippines is instructive. Philippine CSOs lack access to significant government or philanthropic funding, and are highly dependent on user charges and membership fees, primarily aiding membership-based organizations (Clarke 2013: 119). Beyond the country's religious communities, CSOs are heavily dependent on foreign donor funding for innovative and non-core activities. Participants in the reform coalitions noted above relied on donor funding to varying extents, but all benefitted from the combination of funding, research support and technical support provided by donors (and intermediaries such as the Asia Foundation in the case of the CfC). In this context, donor support played a vital and galvanizing role in the campaigns of Philippine reform coalitions. This may point to an exogenous model of development and while it may appear that Philippine reform coalitions are heavily driven by external actors, it will take many decades for Philippine advocacy CSOs to develop reliable sources of domestic funding.

Section 2, above, also posed the question: to what extent should donors intervene in partisan political contests in borrower countries? Here again, the case of the Philippines is instructive. The SRCP clearly failed in its tacit objectives of contributing to the election of a continuity administration in the 2016 Presidential elections and securing continued electoral support for the reform agenda initiated by the Aquino government. But did it represent a partisan interference in the politics of a sovereign country? Each constituent organization of the World Bank Group has its own articles of agreement or by-rules but each is prohibited from political activity:

The Bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions and these considerations shall be weighed impartially.²¹

²¹ See, for instance, Article 4, Section 10, Articles of Agreement (AoA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2012); and Article 3, Section 9, AoA, International Finance Corporation (2012).

De facto, if not *de jure*, the SRCP fails this test. It represented a late, short-term and somewhat clumsy attempt to protect the Aquino administration's reform agenda beyond the 2016 elections and ultimately failed with the election of Duterte in May 2016. The larger CfC was partially successful, securing significant reform victories between 2011 and 2014, but losing momentum thereafter as the political environment deteriorated and the government's reform momentum dissipated. The fate of reform coalitions committed to macro political reform and to TWP, this demonstrates, is invariably tied up with the varying fortunes of ruling administrations and the wider political climate.

5. Conclusion

In May 2016, Rodrigo Duterte was elected President of the Philippines by a landslide, beating the pro-administration candidate, Manuel 'Mar' Roxas, by nine million votes. He won for many reasons, not least his charismatic and starkly oppositional stance to the incumbent administration, echoing the populist nationalism of peers around the world. As a traditional 'strong man', trumpeting a reputation for toughness, clarity and decisiveness during his 22 years as Mayor of Davao, Duterte revived a trope and style of rule recognisable to Filipinos from previous Presidents including Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) and Joseph Estrada (1998-2001) and welcomed back with popular enthusiasm. At heart, however, he mobilised a recalibrated dominant coalition by rallying political elements marginalised and antagonised by the Aquino administration, including traditional politicians and political families fearful for their bailiwicks, oligarchic business leaders wary of increased competition and left-wing revolutionaries alienated by neo-liberalism. Ironically, in view of the case-studies considered here, the political expression of this new dominant coalition, linking the Office of the President to politicians and parties in Congress, is the Coalition for Change (*Kilusang Pagbabago*) (Fonbuena 2016).

On the surface, this suggests a failure of the part of the three DSRC initiatives operational during the Aquino administration (See Figure 4, above): to sufficiently help institutionalise its reform agenda and to sufficiently weaken the established dominant coalitions. This is partially the case, with the argument here pointing to positive and negative outcomes. On a positive note, available evidence captures successful CfC reform initiatives, even if the exact chain of causation remains improperly understood. It is hard, however, to discern any lasting achievements of the SRCP, a programme which emphasised 'transactional', rather than 'transformational', relationships. This suggests that second-

generation reform coalitions are high-risk and may face low rates of strategic success because of the ‘wicked’ nature of the reform processes with which they contend.

Of the CfC successes captured in Figure 5, above, the first three (excise duty reform, election service reform and regional voter registration) constitute macro-political reforms which constrained the interests of local or national power elites and broadened access to political power. Others are more accurately described as micro-political reforms, in the absence of evidence of scaling-up through national policy or legislative initiatives. This suggests that the two DRSC initiatives considered here induced limited but distinct macro-political reform. The election of the pro-administration (pro-Aquino) candidate in 2016 may well have helped to embed and build upon them but the government’s reform agenda was knocked off course, by contingent events, including Typhoon Haiyan and episodic conflict in Mindanao and an oppositional candidate elected. This directs attention to the hypothesised chain of causation proposed above:

Reform coalitions (V1) induce initial macro-political reforms (V2) which, along with extraneous and contingent events (V3), influence and are influenced by the wider macro-political reform agenda of the government (V4) and its electoral fate (V5).

The analysis here suggests that examining the link between reform coalition activities and initial macro or micro political reforms (<V1 > V2>), does not explain reform success or failure, not least because macro (and micro) political reforms are embedded in a wider political context. Instead, the argument here suggests, the case of DSRC initiatives in the Philippines 2010-2016 confirms the validity and utility of an expanded chain of causation which accounts for contingent events, for a government’s wider reform agenda, and for its electoral fortunes (in ‘natural’ states or developing countries characterised by electoral democracy). The fortunes of the two DSRC initiatives considered here closely correspond with the changing fortunes of the Aquino administration. The CfC, for instance, achieved notable success between 2010 and 2013 when the Aquino administration was performing well, but the relatively poor records of the CfC and the SRCP after 2014 corresponds with the declining fortunes of the administration. This suggests that reform coalitions focussed on macro-political reform are remarkably vulnerable to contingent events. This may seem an obvious point, but the positive focus on ‘strategic opportunism’ (in the CfC at least) may need to be balanced by strategic retreat or refocus where political events necessitate it.

Beyond the confirmation of the tentative hypothesis here, what lessons does the case of the Philippines suggest? Through texts such as Asia Foundation (2011), Faustino (2012), Booth (2014), Faustino & Booth (2014), Sidel (2014), Kaiser *et al* (2016), Sidel (2017), and

Schweisfurth *et al* (2018), the case of the Philippines has contributed disproportionately to the evolving literature on reform coalitions, on TWP and on the macro-political reform approach to ‘good governance’. But there is little agreement or consensus among these texts. Some focus on economic reform, others on political reform; some on state-business and others state-civil society collaboration. Some view institutions in the form of reform coalitions as critically important while others view normative systems such as ‘development entrepreneurs’, or the education of individual leaders, as critical to reform success. At least one continues to see technical analysis as determinant, and reform coalitions as subsidiary.

In the context of this debate, and against Kaiser *et al* (2016), the argument here supports the macro-political approach to ‘good governance’. Reform coalitions remain relatively new organizational forms in the Philippines and hold significant future potential, even in the context of the Duterte administration, where issues such as redistributive land reform, marginalised under the Aquino administration, can now be tackled (Sidel 2017; Tadem 2018). The 2017 confirmation of Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Election Service Reform Act (CfC 2017) also suggests reform continuity under Duterte, although restrictions on water companies suggest a partial reversal of water privatization reforms (Jiao & Yap 2019). The CfC and TAPP have also been extended since Duterte’s election. The work of NWW noted in Section 2, above, however, highlights gaps in the analytical and operational approaches behind DSRC initiatives in the Philippines. First, CfC and SRCP documentation includes explicit theories of change, specifying distinct political pathways to reform (as recommended by Grindle 2017), but neither includes analysis of entrenched dominant coalitions in the Philippines, nor of their adaptation to the novel circumstances of the Aquino administration.²² Second, although working through contracted intermediaries and formal partners, each was flexible and broadly-focussed with respect to the specific reform coalitions with which it engaged. This allowed for the ‘strategic opportunism’, so central to the CfC, yet it also deprived the programmes of conceptual focus and large organizational partners with coherent forms, established networks and political muscle (for instance, large or mass organizations). Rather than question the approach, however, these criticisms serve primarily to underline the central importance of both the operational TWP approach and the more academic macro-political reform approach and their

²² Perhaps because such analysis might appear unduly partisan.

role in the analysis of reform coalitions and related initiatives and to flag up methodological challenges (and opportunities).

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