

## FOREWORD

The proposal to produce a special issue of the *Review of Women's Studies* (RWS) focused on the intersection of patriarchy and populist politics in the Philippine context, to be guest edited by Veronica L. Gregorio and Cleve V. Arguelles, was first broached to us by Veronica. We were instantly enthused by the possibility of providing young Filipino scholars the space and opportunity to bring this cutting-edge project to fruition. Veronica and Cleve are well-placed to do this, coming as they do from the disciplines of sociology, gender studies, and political science. Both are also not unknown to us, as they are joint recipients of a research grant from the UP Center for Women's and Gender Studies (UPCWGS), Nathalie was the reader of Veronica's masteral thesis at the UP Department of Women and Development Studies, and an article based on the thesis was published in *RWS* Volume 28.

A vital concern was whether they would be able to manage such an ambitious undertaking given that they are currently PhD students based in different parts of the world—Veronica in Singapore and Cleve in Australia. It was the recognition by our millennial guest editors that they could harness the power of information and communications technology which allowed them to audaciously believe that they could put together an issue with contributors and referees from various countries whilst being in separate locations themselves. That we must have faith in the ideas, passions, and capabilities of young people, and that with enough support and latitude they will deliver, was unequivocally affirmed.

Understanding populist realities requires diverse analytical and interpretative frames. This issue is refreshingly dominated by incisive and novel interdisciplinary thinking by young academics from the fields

of political science, gender studies, sociology, anthropology, development studies, and the arts. Unrestrained by concerns of rigidly staying within their areas of study, they expand into new territories of inter and trans-disciplinary knowledge. We are honored and grateful that they have trusted the *RWS* as a venue for their work, and we underscore our continuing commitment to provide emerging scholars a ready space for the amplification of their voices.

We write this amidst the still raging COVID-19 pandemic, and it is populist leaders worldwide who have proven ineffectual in managing the generalized health, social, and economic crisis it has generated. In more ordinary times, women have borne the brunt of populist leadership, suffering further discrimination, marginalization, and oppression in the various societal spheres. The dire effects of gender norms and asymmetrical gender relations on women are heightened in the context of any pandemic, as manifested in the intensification of their reproductive burdens, increasing incidence of gender-based violence, loss of income and employment, and reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services. Populist regimes have not adequately addressed these issues, and they will continue to be detrimental to the health, well-being, and safety of women and girls worldwide, crisis or no crisis.

The rapid geographical spread of the virus is forcing us to venture outside of traditional thinking in our efforts to curtail it and mitigate its impacts. The new pathways of knowing and understanding being explored by younger scholars and artists have much to offer, as we navigate the abrupt changes in our social landscape and address the issues emerging from them.

This project began with a leap of faith, and it is with pride and pleasure that the UPCWGS presents this *Review of Women's Studies* Special Issue on Gender and Populism.

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