

Acceptance speech of Mr. Jurel K. Yap

Good afternoon, everyone!

On behalf of my coauthors, former Dean and Professor of the Ateneo School of Government Dr Ronald U. Mendoza, and Dr Daniel Davis, we are truly honored to receive this recognition from the Office of the Vice President for Higher Education, the Office of the Assistant Vice President for Research, Creative Work, and Innovation, and the ASOG Outstanding Scholarly Work committee. Thank you for this incredible honor and acknowledgment of our work.

This research sparked to life when Dr. Daniel Davis of the University of Virginia joined us at ASOG as a visiting PhD researcher before the pandemic. What began as casual conversations transformed into this collaborative paper. Daniel, your willingness to share your dissertation data and join us as co-author made all the difference – we are deeply grateful. I'll never forget that midnight Zoom presentation to Professor Daniel Gingerich and the University of Virginia Quantitative Collaborative during lockdown. Their insightful feedback shaped our analysis in crucial ways.

What excites me most about our work is how we harnessed hundreds of thousands of public procurement contracts, all of which are public data, to uncover troubling patterns - the link between the concentration of political power and corruption risk in public procurement across Philippine provinces. This research offers policymakers concrete evidence that addressing the concentration of power isn't just about political fairness – it's essential for minimizing corruption risk and promoting meaningful development and reform. We hope this work contributes to strengthening democratic institutions both in the Philippines.

Beyond the Philippines, the findings speak to critical challenges faced across developing democracies worldwide. The study highlights how corruption thrives within evolving political institutions that enable political power concentration to flourish – through abuse of term limits, weak party systems, and diminished checks and balances.

Thank you again for this recognition that affirms the importance of these partnerships and data in research.

Jurel K. Yap

Non-Resident Research Fellow, Ateneo Policy Center, Ateneo School of Government
PhD Candidate, Griffith University, Australia