

THESIS ABSTRACT
DEFENDING POPULARITY AMIDTS
INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM

This research goal was to analyze the impact of the political decision making on populist policies towards Duterte's popularity in his country and Duterte's image in international community. This research also aimed to enrich the studies of politics in the Philippine, particularly the strategy of war against drug.

This research used qualitative approach from secondary resources by collecting credible data from journals, news, books, websites, or any other things which supported this research through secondary data. Qualitative approach is a general way of thinking about conducting qualitative research. It describes, either explicitly or implicitly, the purpose of the qualitative research, the role of the researcher(s), the stages of research, and the method of data analysis. Meanwhile secondary data is research data that has previously been gathered and can be accessed by researchers. Qualitative approach is a general way of thinking about qualitative research. This defines, whether explicitly or implicitly, the objective of qualitative research, the position of the researcher(s), the stage(s) of research and the process of data analysis. Meanwhile, secondary data is research data that has already been collected and can be accessed by researchers.

Keyword: Duterte, Controversial, Policy, War on Drugs.

BACKGROUND

Over the last 50 years, major political turning points in the Philippines have shown a transition from authoritarianism to an ostensible process of democratization. The country was under the tyranny of Ferdinand Marcos during 1972 and 1986. Sustained by martial law, this era of authoritarianism brought about a consolidation of state power within the hands of the rulers themselves and the plundering of national wealth for the Marcos family and their corporate associates. The weak economy of the country and the murder of Benigno Aquino further aggravated Filipino frustration. In an effort to regain support among the people, Marcos held an early presidential election on 7 February 1986, facing Corazon Aquino, a strong and powerful opposition. It exploded into the so-called bloodless revolution. February 25, 1986 was a major national activity etched in the hearts and minds of every Filipino. This part of Philippine history gives a strong sense of pride, particularly because other nations have tried to emulate what the Filipinos have shown to the world about the true power of democracy. The "People-Power Movement" of 1986 put an end to the autocratic system headed by Marcos. This was accompanied by the formation of the so-called "EDSA Republic." The real liberation of democracy was illustrated in EDSA (abbreviated from Epifanio de los Santos Avenue) by its successful attempts to overthrow a dictator by a non-tolerant display of violence and bloodshed (Philippine History, 2018). The new republic was marked by the hegemony of another class of ruling elites, headed by President Corazon Cory Aquino (who came from a wealthy landowner's family, Benigno Aquino's widow), and underpinned by a new constitution that enshrined the political principles and institutions of liberal democracy. In other words, the Republic of EDSA has resulted in the return of the hegemony of a specific section of the political elites. It

created an illusion of democracy by, inter alia, holding regular elections and allegedly reimposing checks and balances between branches of government.

Five candidates advanced for the presidential election. They were Jejomar Binay, Miriam Defensor Santiago, Rodrigo Duterte, Grace Poe and Manual Roxas II. The winner would replace Benigno Aquino III and sit in the presidency for six years. Based on a survey conducted by the Standard Poll, Duterte occupied the first position that is favored by the public who will come out as a winner. Approximately 32.4 percent of residents claimed to choose the Davao Mayor to become the next Philippine leader.

DUTERTE'S CONTROVERSIAL DRUGS POLICY

Duterte prepared a 'watch list' after becoming president. The local policemen and elected officials gathered drug suspicions ' names. There were 600,000 to 1 million names in Duterte's multiple reports, including a total of 6,000 police officials, 5,000 local leaders and 23 mayors (New York Times, 2017). The "Operation Knock & Plead" (OplanTokhang) has targeted most of the people on this list and resulted in 687,000 people being transferred to police throughout the state, A further pressure on the already strained criminal justice system. Those who do not give up are more likely to be extra-judicially executed. Many of the people who surrender were made to sign a promise to stay away from drugs. Many of those who give up are required to sign a drug-free form. The form he signed, as stated by a man who was methamphetamine addicted and gave up the day Duterte took office, the form he signed said: "If you're caught the first, second and third time, there are warnings and conditions. If you're caught a fourth time, we'll have nothing to do with whatever happens to you" (Johnson & Fernquest, 2018). CNN reported (as quoted on Virgin News, 2016), two months after Duterte took presidential office, more than 450 people killed in this drug war policy.

Approximately 5,000 drug addicts and drug addicts have been killed since President Rodrigo Duterte started the anti-drug war two years ago, according to the government's drug enforcement spokesperson, despite persistent foreign criticisms the efforts show no signs of slowing down. In the meantime, there has been continued strong support for Duterte policies across the country, with 88 percent of Philippines expressing support for the continuing drug war. Interestingly, 73 percent of those surveyed believe that extrajudicial killings are taking place, which indicates that many are in favor of

Duterte's efforts to combat drogues, even if it means going beyond the law. Duterte has defied international calls for a halt to murder and dismissed his proposals as "weak" on violence and ignoring the situation. Duterte's killing on national TV has repeatedly been protested by human rights activists who have come to the communities to collect information about the victims. It is surprising that human rights calls on Duterte to put an end to the killings have proved entirely inefficient. He has repeatedly stated that Duterte, who previously stated that he 'does not give shit on human rights,' claims that threatening narcotics dealers with murder is no crime. As many say, the Philippine legislators have slashed the Commission's budget for human rights (CHR) to just 1.000 pesos (about \$20) per year in a move that represents the direct response of human rights criticisms. 119 legislators supported the move and resisted it only by 32, showing how much support Duterte has in his own state (SSDP, 2017).

Duterte was operating on a "crime tough" platform that focused on a plan to offer bounties to drug lords, who were dead or alive. He vowed famously that during his early six months as a fugitive, he would kill 100,000 criminals and, when he took office, urged Filipino people to go on the streets and kill suspected drug users and dealers, offering legal protection and incentives for those who did so. A number of groups have reported deaths in the area of 12,000, an estimate that Duterte and police dismiss as misleading, including the Human Rights Watch. According to Derrick Carreon, spokesperson for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, about 158,424 drug personalities have been arrested so far in the national campaign confirming the death toll of 4,948 people to date. More than 500 government officials and nearly 60 police and soldiers were arrested on suspicion of drug connections. Despite international condemnation and two

cases brought against Duterte by the International Criminal Court in Hague, he described the drug war as a victory. Duterte recently called on the Filipinos to fight corruption as well as to step up the fight against drug trafficking, saying that corruption and lack of effective legislation, such as the death penalty for drug offenders, have been working against them.

Throughout the campaign, Duterte vowed to create the same system and rules that he used for the Philippines in the City of Davao, where he has been mayor since 1988. He truly recognized that, in general, crime and drug lords in particular, he would not be gentle and that his Presidency could become violent. That sort of blunt language, however, did not stop the people from voting for Duterte. In contrast to that, the majority of society unexpectedly saw him as the only presidential candidate (Panarina, 2017). However, the way in which the Philippine government informed the public of the drug problem perpetuates various misunderstandings which undermine efforts to effectively and sustainably resolve the problem of the drugs. Duterte, for instance, frequently confuses all groups of patients of all kinds-pushers, dependents, and casual consumers-and lumps them all together as perpetrators of violence despite the fact that only a small fraction of the use of drugs is troublesome (Channel News Asia, 2017).

Duterte has begun to change public policies since taking office in ways that might have a major impact on the future. His anti-drug killing spree has gone wild with the country's already lax rule of law and prompted the International Criminal Court to conduct an investigation. The number of deaths was estimated at around 7,000 by the end of the first year of government (June 2017). This year it has risen between 12,000 and 20,000,

the police saying just killed 4,000 people and the rest have been declared executed by extrajudicial means (Putzel, 2018).

The war on drugs has been widely supported in the Philippines from all walks of life. Duterte's approval rating was approximately 86 per cent, the national survey of Pulse Asia Research on presidential success and ratings carried out between September 25 and October 1. Even by some people who are concerned about these deaths, they support him in his stand on other topics as president. For example, the economic agenda is fairly scalable and focuses on economic inequality (Council on Foreign Relations, 2016). Duterte, speaking to Filipino's alarm about widespread drug use, was elected president on his promise to solve the drug problem in the country. Nevertheless, his plan, based on fear and law enforcement, was apparently false. Some said the drug war is spectacular, but its success was questionable, and official numbers are difficult to achieve. Despite promoting good will, Duterte's emphasis on prioritizing a punishing rather than rehabilitative approach to addiction proves to be short-sighted (New York Times, 2018).

DOMESTICS AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICS AGAINST DUTERTE'S POLICY

The intensified drug war waged by the Duterte administration has attracted criticism, not only from domestic institutions, but also from international organizations, including the UN. While human rights organizations and legislators have spoken out against violence, Duterte has been quite active in not making the legislature either supervise or prosecute the war. In the meantime, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has voiced its concern about the surge in killings of suspected drug figures, noting that it is "not in line with the current provisions of international drug treaties" (Rappler, 2016).

Domestic and international attention was immediately drawn to the war on drugs. Senator Leila de Lima has tabled a bill calling for an investigation into the killing of drug dealers, backed by the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Unfortunately, its opposition in February led to her arrest on suspicion of collecting money from drug traffickers. Many see de Lima as the Duterte administration's first political prisoner. She remained a vocal critic even in prison of the Duterte government and was also awarded Liberty International's highest human rights award. In addition, The Duterte Government has been called upon by an increasing number of UN Member States and civil society groups, both inside and outside the Philippines, to stop the killings, but Duterte has dismissed all criticism. In September, his government refused the request of the UN Human Rights Council to take action on the killings. Some have hypothesized that Duterte's response could expel the International Body from the Philippines, a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (SSDP, 2017).

The number of people from the "war on drugs" of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is rising every day. Although not the first national leader to tolerate violence and extrajudicial executions in the name of combating illicit drugs, Duterte would be wise to learn from history in Southeast Asia what is going on, and what has already caused more than 3,000 casualties under Duterte's rule, that contributes to strong international condemnation.

Both police operations have led to the loss of offenders or suspected criminals to avoid detentions or summary executions. Drug pushers and users willingly surrender in great numbers to the police and demand a toll on the already overcrowded country's prison system. There are not enough facilities of drug rehabilitation to accommodate many of them. In contrast to dominant domestic media, Duterte's war drug glossed Time Magazine reporting and became the names of top journals like The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Guardian. Internationally, in contrast to other nations with supposedly worse political circumstances, such as in Venezuela and the southern Sudan, there is a perceptible sensationalism in the portrayal of the Philippines. Duterte's reaction to foreign criticism is exacerbating this poor image. If international institutions and western leaders criticized the government of Duterte for allegedly condoning the assassinations that took place, Duterte usually retaliate its double standards and hypocrisy. For starters, Duterte chided the UN for its failures in handling the Middle East and Africa crisis (Untalan, 2016).

The Philippines has been embroiled in its worst human rights crisis since Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s, President Duterte. Initiated in June 2016 after taking office, his "war on drugs" claimed the lives of an

estimated 12,000 mostly poor urban residents, including children. In February 2018, the International Criminal Court (ICC) started a preliminary investigation into the notorious crackdown on narcotics trafficking, which, according to the police, has left almost 5,000 suspects dead in shootings during drug raids since Mr. D took office. ICC's investigation resulted in Philippines' withdrawal from International rights treaty (The Strait Times, 2018).

Duterte has blamed the West from the beginning of his term in office for his accusation of "war on drugs," allegedly involving extrajudicial killings. He firmly supported the "principle of non-intervention in internal affairs," justifying his anti-narcotics drive. He demanded full respect of the sovereignty of the country and right to establish the best drug elimination approach. Such arguments have culminated in Duterte's verbal reproaches of the US, the EU, and the UN, that he treated to a large extent as colonial bullies who have put on a sovereign nation their expectations and principles. His disgust for such 'foreign interference' contributed to his decision last March to withdraw the Philippines from the ICC. The declaration of a first investigation into the suspected crime against humanity committed by the president and his officials during the war on drugs in the country prompted him to resign (Taiwan News, 2018).

A group of U.N. rights experts called for an independent investigation on violations in the Philippines, including alleged extrajudicial killings during the government war on drugs, to be carried out by the Human Rights Council. "The scope and nature of the study violations" requested an extensive investigation in a statement co-signed by 11 independent experts, not linked to the United Nations (The Globe Post, 2019).

The Philippine National Police and their officers have regularly committed extrajudicial killings of drug suspects who have falsely claimed to be self-defense, according to human rights surveys. Police use weapons, spend weapons, and packages of drugs on victims' bodies to engage them in drug activity. Masked gunmen who took part in the killings seemed to be working closely with the police, raising doubts about the government's argument that most of the murders were carried out by guards or rival drug gangs.

Pro-Duterte lawmakers, in 2017, tried in an apparent retribution for their attempts to check the anti-drogue drive the removal of budget support for the Official Human Rights Commission. Faced with the growing international criticism, the Duterte administration has taken the "alternative fact" strategy of rejecting substantiated coverage of high death tolls linked to the "drug war" by human rights and media organizations (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Duterte has also been 'accused' on intimidating national press and has forced an attempt to silence journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York based non-profit organization also condemned the legal charges to journalists against his policy, calling them 'a direct assault on press freedom in the Philippines' (the Guardian, 2018). Duterte's pressure on media organizations critical of his administration has drawn condemnation from International Human Rights groups. The government's move has sparked an international outcry. The moves by the Duterte's administration come as the country prepares for the midterm elections, in which congressional and senate seats will be up for grabs (Nikkei Asian Review, 2018). In response to the international critics, Duterte withdrew the Philippines from international rights

treaty. Duterte vowed that ICC is being utilized as a political tool against the Philippines and he added that the deaths were the result of police defending themselves, which is a justifying circumstance under Philippines' criminal law (The Straits Times, 2018).

The Duterte administration has grown to include criticism and political enemies in its "war on drugs." In an apparent retribution for leading a Senate investigation into drug war killings, Senator Leila de Lima has been behind bars since February 2017, in the name of politically-motivated charges against her. Duterte strongly condemned and threatened to dismantle the Commission on Human Rights. He repeatedly made a profanity-laden mockery over her failed efforts to secure an official visit to the Philippines for UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Agnes Callelamard (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Duterte remains invincible despite the criticism. The most recent Social Wetter Station survey showed that 74 percent of respondents were satisfied with their efforts to uphold the rights of the government in their drugs campaign. Whether or not Duterte's drug war condones state-sponsored assassinations is doubtful, ongoing investigations and media debates have caused people to study the history of past presidents' extrajudicial assassinations. There were questions about how much these debates could encourage or deter murder, but they definitely made the world feel the presence that was once overlooked by those who support violence as a way to restore order in democracy (Untalan, 2016).

He defended it aggressively, particularly against foreign critics and organizations which, he claimed, do not care about his state. Duterte's drug war is his own policy initiative. But this furious defense will, in the long run, actually jeopardize his position. Duterte must consider

increasing successful, softer best practices like the city of Bogota to achieve "drug free" status through multi-sector partnership and community recovery with zero deaths. (Channel News Asia, 2017). He also has to pay serious attention to the appeal of 300 NGOs who wrote to the UN calling for immediate action to stop violence and restore the rule of law (Virgin News, 2016), otherwise it will imply negative impact on his presidential perpetuity.

DUTERTE'S POPULIST POLICY AS THE INDIRECT LEGITIMATION FOR HIS POLICY OF WAR AGAINST DRUGS

Duterte has chipped away with temerity and disdain at the country's democratic institutions, but in the stormy, sometimes chaotic politics, where rulers have been traditionally shattered by violent street protests, he is only speaking about succession this early in his term. Not only has it exposed Philippine democracy's hollow nature, it has also placed the country on an unavoidable road, apparently, to a thoroughly authoritarian rule. Duterte does not seem to care about massive criticism by international institutions because, in politics, he relies initially on his own people who see him, not as a dictator, but rather as an unusual reformist who, although he does not stand by unconventional methodology, wants to change rather than maintain status quo in the Philippines. Such policies and commitment contribute to the popularity of Duterte among his people behind the indecisive political actions of the former presidents (Panarina, 2017).

In unleashing a series of reforms Duterte wasted no time. He started to call mayors and local officials accused of drug activity from fighting drug gangs, including politicians. An April 2018 poll conducted by Pulse Asia Research, an

independent pollster, reported that Duterte's campaign against drugs is his major achievement. Nevertheless, many other critical laws or orders passed under the watch of Duterte are strongly supported by both legislative chambers (Gulf News, 2018).

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