

# Duterte as misogynist fascist: A discourse analysis of Duterte's misogynist criticisms against women

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## Abstract

This paper is an attempt to explain the cultural and political consequences of President Duterte's misogynistic microassaults against women in his public speeches and personal behaviors that brazenly demean women. Employing critical discourse analysis on relevant material found in online sources covering the period from the precampaign to the year 2018 (the second year of Duterte's presidency), this study will explore how Duterte's microassaults against strong women who dare stand up against his hypermasculine power serve to further consolidate his fascist power while instilling among the population the traditional sex-roles assigned to women such as passivity, obedience, and docility.

Keywords: Duterte, Fascism, Misogyny, Hypermasculine, Macho

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According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum, the Philippines remains the top country in Asia in terms of closing the gender gap. The report shows that the Philippines has closed 78 percent of its overall gender gap, garnering a score of 0.781 (down by 1.8 percentage points from .799 in 2019) (Philippine Commission on Women, 2021). With this, it ranked 16th out of 153 countries with the narrowest gap between men and women, dropping by eight notches from its place last year. But in terms of political empowerment of women it fell from rank 13 to rank 29 from 2019 to 2020 respectively (Philippine Commission on Women, 2021). The data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) state that the country is doing well in terms of gender equality in education. Overall, while twice as many girls aged between 6 and 11 are out of school, only 1 percent of girls in the Philippines were out of school (Orante, 2016).

It must be pointed out that the rise in women's consciousness about their oppression is also attributable to the strong presence of progressive movements, especially among the ranks of women (Aguilar, 1994–1995; Aquino, 1993; Medel-Annonuevo, 1990–1991).

Yet despite these positive trends of women being empowered, a sizeable portion of our society remains misogynistic and holds beliefs that denigrate women (David et al., 2018). Scholars on Filipino gender and sexuality values generally agree that this persistence of stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes among Filipinos, even among women, has to do with the impact and legacy of Western colonialism beginning with the Hispanization and Christianization of Filipinos (Sobritchea, 1996; Bautista, 1977; Leyson, 2004; Mananzan, 1987; Aguja, 2013). Historic forces and ethnic and class division among women contribute to the persistence of these practices. Even in the university setting, women found it harder to compete with men for key positions (Bautista, 1991, 1992).

This persistence of misogynistic attitudes and beliefs about women has recently come to the fore with the open and flagrant hypermasculine gestures, personal statements, and unapologetic polemics of firebrand President Rodrigo Duterte against women. Insofar as Duterte represents the high point of male power in country's political structure, Duterte is in the position to use and activate these beliefs and structures to further reproduce and legitimize the domination of women even beyond his conscious and wilful intentions (Pano & Gocoscosim, 2018; Go, 2019). Sexism and misogyny are often unknown to individuals who hold have such attitudes and orientation (Manne, 2017).

In passing, it must be noted that women in Philippine politics have been active in the twentieth century (Aguilar, 1990). These engagements

include the struggle for the right of suffrage, resistance to martial law and its authoritarian rule, resistance and mobilization against military bases, organizing women in the workplace, and promotion of alternative political participation (Aquino, 1993). Today we might add the mobilization of women to campaign for greater equality and opposing the current regime's unashamed misogyny. There has never been a President that has created a strong opposition from women except for Duterte (Heydarian, 2018; Pano & Gocoscosim, 2018). Duterte had violated many protocols and proprieties in public about women and this has created a strong opposition among women as individuals and as organized groups, notably the Babae Ako [I Am a Woman] (see Pano & Gacoscosim, 2018). This is an ill-timed period in our nation's history when, according to international benchmarks, political empowerment of women remains the widest globally.

It is also interesting to note how the "macho" president, and his supporters can claim this, supported women's rights while he was mayor of Davao City yet now publicly denigrates women as a popular president (Heydarian, 2018). This "positive sexism" in the form of benevolent patriarchy (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005) will be explored in this study. This paper will not be an exploration of the political process that are involved in the deployment of misogyny. Rather, this paper is concerned mainly with the meanings of Duterte's actuations, pronouncement, and the underlying unstated beliefs about women and men. It seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What political purposes do Duterte's hypermasculine statements serve?
2. What are the cultural implications of Duterte's misogynistic rants against his women critics?

To answer these questions, the current study will comb through relevant online news and resources to present a coherent account of Duterte's views and attitudes about women. This study does not assume that Duterte's actuations and pronouncement make a coherent system of discourse about women. What it wants to present is the underlying themes and issues that make this discourse more or less a consistent narrative, without needing to resolve its textual contradictions.

### **Naming the Enemy: Patriarchy**

Patriarchy, as the system of male dominance by which men as a group acquire and maintain power over women as a group," has its origins in the shift of early societies to larger scale agriculture, property ownership, and urbanization (Leacock, 1983; Lerner, 1986). Feminist historians note that

“patriarchal systems arose at a particular time in human history with the change from food gathering and gardening to plow agriculture, private and holding, urbanization, and class stratification” (Ruether, 2007, p. 1105).

Today, patriarchy is used by both feminist and non-feminist scholars to denote both the institutional and discursive practices that define the roles and behaviors of women (Ferguson, 1989).<sup>1</sup> Patriarchy, while controversial among feminists and critics, its existence, and reach should be acknowledged to provide a better understanding of the systematic oppression and domination of women that encompasses social relations, power, and hierarchy based on gender identity (Walby, 1989).

Recently, Carol Gilligan and David Richards (2009) traced the history of the epic battle between democracy and patriarchy in the birth of the Roman Empire. Browsing through early Roman Empire and Church history, they argue that patriarchy is what was responsible for the imperial despotism that led to conquests of other lands.

In the Philippine context, patriarchal beliefs and practices are reproduced mainly through cultural representations in pedagogical practices (Patajo-Legasto, 1991). Carol Sobritchea (2004) summarizes the pervasive system of patriarchy:

The sites of patriarchal power are many. The culture, politics, and history of women's subordination are inscribed in discourse, in written and oral texts, in communication, and in myths, material artifacts, and symbols. They are embedded in cultural representations of the self, the body, of identity, sexual orientation, the community, the state, and others institutions. (p. 15)

The system of patriarchy is the enabling environment that socializes men to display and follow the hypermasculine script and dispositions. For Donald L. Mosher and Michael Sirkin (1984), who developed the inventory of hypermasculinity, hypermasculinity is just a subset of the concept of “macho.” Hypermasculinity involves three constellations: calloused attitude toward women, the conception of violence as manly, and the view that danger is exciting (p. 152). When Duterte therefore performs his hypermasculine public rituals by unloading misogynistic remarks and macho cussing and inflammatory speeches, he unwittingly reproduces and reinforces these existing scripts and practices that oppress women. To study Duterte's misogynistic and sexist actuations, one has to describe “patriarchal structuring of gender relations” or the “ways in which male power is institutionalized within different sites of social relations in society” (Witz, 1992, p. 10).

In this study, the misogyny of Duterte will be framed within the wider existing patriarchal system that is rooted in prevailing of religio-feudal values of Philippine society (Feliciano, 1996; Mananzan, 1997; Pecson-Hernandez, 1996). This patriarchal system is weaponized and deployed by Duterte to govern and police a citizenry that is obedient to his fascist rule. Ultimately such fascist rule which hypermasculinizes the state extols the conventional male virtues of the President and his paternal horde while feminizing the norms for women so they can be compelled to obey their traditional roles. This is trait is common among the so-called populist authoritarian leaders like Jean-Marie Le Pen of France, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Donald Trump of United States, Narendra Modi of India, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia (Giroux, 2019; Kellner, 2019; Heydarian, 2018; Norris, 2016; Powell et al., 2018). The ascendancy of these authoritarian populist leaders according to widely held consensus among scholars is a “global trend for ‘strong leaders’ whose political project combines neoliberal restoration with majoritarian appeal and is based on large electoral victories” (Norris, 2016). Missing in this dominant analysis is the role of hypermasculinity of these leaders. This study hopes to contribute modestly to this literature by focusing on the misogynistic character of Duterte’s fascist rule. While a body of literature has grown rapidly around Duterte’s fascist rule, or the most often used label “authoritarian populism” (Curato, 2017; Heydarian, 2018), there is a scarcity of literature linking his fascist rule with misogyny, hypermasculinity, and machismo (Pano & Gacoscosim, 2018; Evangelista, 2017).

### **Linking Patriarchy, Misogyny, and Sexism**

Kate Manne (2017) rightly argues, “misogyny ought to be understood as the system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women’s subordination and to uphold male dominance” (p. 33). She further argues, “misogyny is primarily a property of social systems or environments, in which women will tend to face hostility of various kinds because they are women in a man’s world (i.e., a patriarchy), who are held to be failing to live up to patriarchal standards.” The misogyny of Duterte is not just a case of “one bad apple” but of an entire system. The full force of misogyny is employed by Duterte and his cliques when women become unruly in their snooping eyes.

Meanwhile, sexism is more pervasive than misogyny. Michele Paludi (1999) defines it as, “the selectively unjustified negative behavior against women or men as members of a social category. It is particularly used to denote discrimination against girls and women” (p. 1292). Manne (2017) delineates clearly the difference between sexism and misogyny:

Overall, sexism and misogyny share a common purpose—to maintain or restore a patriarchal social order. But sexism purports to merely be being reasonable; misogyny gets nasty and tries to force the issue. Sexism is hence to bad science as misogyny is to moralism. Sexism wears a lab coat; misogyny goes on witch hunts. (p. 80)

In this sense, while misogyny has a hostile flavor to it, “sexism should be understood primarily as the ‘justificatory’ branch of a patriarchal order, which consists in ideology that has the overall function of *rationalizing* and *justifying* patriarchal social relations” (Manne, 2017, p. 79). Hypermasculinity, of course, is the psycho-corporeal embodiment of these male munitions.

### **Misogynist Fascism**

In this study, the term “fascism,” a controversial and hotly contested concept today among social scientists, is used sparingly. It follows the lead of Roger Griffin (1991) who employs the Weberian notion of the ideal type to avoid the absolutist definition of fascism. This is very similar to “foundational” analysis of fascism offered by Roger Eatwell (2017). The most telling symptom of fascist politics is division. It aims to separate a population into an “us” and a “them.” A second generic component of fascism is that its foundations are in irrational drives. As Griffin (1991) states, “[d]espite rationalizations of the fascist world-view by appeals to historical, cultural, religious or scientific ‘facts,’ its affective power is rooted in irrational drives and mythical assumptions” (p. 15). Henry Giroux (2019) summarizes Paxton’s classic study of fascism by enumerating its characteristics:

[A]n open assault on democracy, the call for a strongman, a contempt for human weakness, an obsession with hypermasculinity, an aggressive militarism, an appeal to national greatness, a disdain for the feminine, an investment in the language of cultural decline, the disparaging of human rights, the suppression of dissent, a propensity for violence, disdain for intellectuals, a hatred of reason, and fantasies of racial superiority and eliminationist policies aimed at social cleansing. (p. 68)

This explains the rabidity of many supporters of the current administration who see in Duterte a mythic father-authority figure who can save Philippine society from social decay (Bello, 2021). Neofascism is rooted in the regenerative mythic narrative which asserts that things

will be reborn and all past sins will be excised through mass mobilization. Today, neofascism creates, not just a cult of the leader just like in classical European fascism, but also the worship of the market and anti-communist rhetoric (Kitchen, 1976).

Prescinding from this foundational definition of fascism, this study prefers the label “fascist” to describe Duterte’s rule based on the analysis of National Democratic Front and other scholars. It lists four characteristics that are unique to Duterte’s fascist rule: (1) populist but anti-people personality; (2) memorializing the past tyrant and fascist figures (Ferdinand Marcos and his ilk, and their revisionist followers); (3) rising state impunity and extrajudicial killings; and (4) heightened attacks against Leftist and progressive individuals and organizations (Allejo, 2019, cf. Bello, 2021; Nicolas, 2019).

Among this list, this study will add the misogynistic attack of Duterte and his administration against “strong women” who stand against his rule and criticize his policies. Misogyny is not just a supplement to Duterte’s brand of fascism but an essential part of it. Duterte’s misogynistic attacks against “strong women leaders” are further hyped up by his hypermasculine performative acts, pronouncements, and public demeanor. To label Duterte’s rule as misogynist fascism is to recognize the validity of interpretation of the radical Philippine Left while equally acknowledging the validity of the criticisms raised by advocates of women’s right in our country. The emphasis of this paper however tilts heavily toward the “misogynistic” side rather than on the “fascist” side.

## **Methodology**

To study the hypermasculine trait of Duterte and how he, wittingly or unwittingly, reinforces dominant misogynistic and sexist “order of discourse” prevailing in Philippine society, this paper will employ critical discourse analysis of the news and commentaries found in relevant online sources and websites. To make the overall analysis manageable, the period that will be covered will be from the precampaign period to the year 2018 (second year of Duterte’s presidency). For this is the time frame when Duterte’s notorious drug war drew a lot of criticisms both here and abroad. Simultaneously, this is also the period when Duterte displayed his most rabid attack against his women critics while publicly flaunting his macho image. To gather the online news and articles, the study initially searched for the following terms through Google: “Duterte and women,” “Duterte and misogyny,” “Duterte and sexism.” The search results were explored individually including articles and essays. Then the issues/themes to be analyzed were initially selected based on the time frame of the study (2016–2018) and the initial search



results. Once the issues/themes were selected, they were explored and analyzed separately. Cross-checking multiple sources using the Google search engine was done for each issue/theme. The most comprehensive online news coverage both local and international with links to multimedia sites (YouTube and official media outfits) were carefully selected. This is to ensure the quotes in the articles were not selective and were placed in a wider context. This also enabled the researcher to check with the recorded videos of speeches. The point, however, is not to simply analyze the text but to situate them in specific social practice or “discursive event” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138).

Discourse analysis in this study refers to “what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language... to do things in the world” (Johnstone, 2002, p. 3). Discourse analysis looks at the connection between people’s knowledge as expressed in language and how they use this linguistic knowledge to define and interpret the situation. But beyond this “usual” definition of discourse analysis, the term “critical” must be added. It refers to the uncovering of the political and power relations that inform and constitute the way discourses circulate and how people use them to negotiate their status and position (van Dijk, 2008).

Following Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak (1997), this study will emphasize the basic principles for critical discourse analysis which underlie many of the studies done in this area: social and political issues are constructed and reflected in discourse; power relations are negotiated and performed through discourse; discourse both reflects and reproduces social relations; ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse in a definite social context.

Following these principles, this study will first explore how the issue of women and their role in the political structure are reflected and delimited by Duterte’s statements and proclamations. These concrete communicative actions, following Fairclough (1993) are treated as “discursive events” or texts embedded in social practice. Second, it will explore how Duterte positions women in his discourses to fit them forcibly into the existing mold of patriarchal system. Third, the study will show how Duterte’s pronouncements and hypermasculine behaviors constitute an “interdiscursive” regime that reproduces and reinforces existing system of gender inequality, violence, and repression. Fourth, an emphasis will also be put on the ways in which sexism and misogyny are not only reflected in the discourses of Duterte, but, also, how they further deepen and reinforce the fascist character of his rule by turning the state into a strong “father” while simultaneously feminizing its citizenry to become passive and subservient to the state. Overall, the analysis of this study will provide a glimpse into

the “order of discourse” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138) or the totality of the discursive practices that such discursive events create.

### **Scope and Limitations**

Firstly, this study will explore the expressions of hypermasculinity and sexism of the “macho” Duterte and how he uses his political power to confront “strong” women who defy his machismo and go against his policies. To strengthen the analysis of this study, it will also probe the misogynistic tirades of Duterte against his male critics whom he characterizes as effeminate and gay. Also, it will explore how our society and people view such hypermasculine actuations of the President as expressed strongly in his misogynistic posturing.

Secondly, this study will employ the term “fascism,” even if it is controversial and contested among its interpreters, to best characterize the political ideology of Duterte’s presidency and style of leadership. The mention and use of “misogynistic fascism,” no matter how vaguely theorized and defined in this study, is necessary to provide an initial framework to link misogyny, hypermasculinity, and the rule of a “strong man.” Hence the nature of Duterte’s fascist rule will not be elaborated on in this study. It will only be discussed obliquely in relation to its coupling with Duterte’s microassaults against his women critics. The present study’s main focus is on the misogyny of Duterte as amplified by his hypermasculine public posturing and how it reinforces and strengthens his fascist rule. Another full-blown paper is called for to lay bare the fundamental structure of misogynistic fascism.

Finally, the critical analysis offered in this paper does not purport to provide “the” only valid way of interpreting Duterte’s public pronouncements against women for the first two years of his presidency. Needless to say, the analysis in this paper draws its inspiration from the large body of feminist literature on sexism, misogyny, and hypermasculinity in relation to political power. The major contribution of this paper is the exploration of the linkage between the public image of macho President and the way this misogynistic posturing is used to sustain his “strong man” rule. Hence the concept of “misogynistic fascism” is used in this study to encapsulate the coupling of populist authoritarianism and misogyny under the political persona of Duterte. The strength and weakness of this perspective is subject to contestation. But this follows the basic principle of critical discourse analysis: that interpretation of meanings, discursive or nondiscursive, should be based on the experiences and perspectives of the dominated group (van Dijk, 2008, p. 6). In this study, this refers to women targeted by Duterte. Critical discourse analysis uncovers the subtle and hidden power

relations established through discourses (Fairclough, 2010, p. 7). It has the emancipatory intent to show the illegitimacy of the dominant power configurations while aiding the dominated with the knowledge to construct counterdiscourses and resistance. Hence, critical discourse analysis is the most appropriate framework that the author deems worth utilizing to accomplish the objectives of this study.

### **Joking about Rape**

Sexist humor has been defined as humor that denigrates, demeans, stereotypes, oppresses, or objectifies women (Mallet et al., 2016). Studies on sexist humor in public are quite consistent in showing how they produce disparaging effects on the subjects of such jokes (Ford & Furguson, 2004). Moreover, they often create higher tolerance for the existence of hostile sexist practices for the receivers (Ford & Furguson, 2004). Scholars argue that people with sexist prejudice usually repress their prejudice until such a time that they can express it in a context that will not invite reprisals.

This empirical trend can be gleaned in Duterte's public pronouncements. On April 12 campaign rally at the Amoranto Sports Complex in Quezon City, Duterte made the following joke:

Nirape nila lahat ng mga babae so 'yung unang asolte, kasi nag retreat sila, naiwan yung ginawan ilang cover, ang isa doon yung lay minister na Australyana. Tsk, problema na ito. Pag labas, e di binalot. Tiningnan ko yung mukha, 'tangina parang artista sa America na maganda. Putang ina, sayang ito. Ang nagpasok sa isip ko, nirape nila, pinag pilahan nila doon. Nagalit ako kasi nirape, oo isa rin 'yun . Pero napakaganda, dapat ang mayor muna ang mauna. Sayang. (Ranada, 2016a).

[All the women were raped so during the first assault, because they retreated, the bodies they used as a cover, one of them was the corpse of the Australian woman layminister. Tsk, this is a problem. When the bodies were brought out, they were wrapped. I looked at her face, son of a bitch, she looks like a beautiful American actress. Son of a bitch, what a waste. What came to mind was, they raped her, they lined up. I was angry because she was raped, that's one thing. But she was so beautiful, the mayor should have been first. What a waste.]

The incident Duterte was referring to is the 1989 hostage-taking by Felipe Pugoy, an inmate of the Davao City Police Office (Ranada, 2016a). Pugoy had taken hostage some missionaries who had visited the DCPO to preach to the inmates. One of the missionaries was an Australian woman named Jacqueline Hamill. According to an August 16, 1989 story in the *Chicago Tribune*, Hamill and four other hostages were among the 20 people killed in the hostage drama in Davao City. The *Chicago Tribune* story reported that Hamill was «raped and had her throat slashed» by a gang inside the jail during the hostage taking (Ranada, 2016a). Two days later, Duterte finally issued public apology for his rape joke. It did not include a direct apology to the late rape victim, who was the subject of his joke. He dismissed these criticisms by appealing to the coarse language of “street culture.”

I was belittling their manhood.... ‘Mas nauna pa kamosa mayor’ was not a slur but a slang. Street slang; it was a Tagalog slang for everybody. Minamaliit ko ‘yung tao, na parang sino kayo na pa-rape-rape, putangina ‘nyo.... As a matter of fact because of the rape, I killed the 16 rapists. Ako ‘yung nauna. Look. When I said I give the orders to shoot to kill, what else would you make? (Ranada, 2016b, para. 5)

[I was belittling their manhood.... ‘You did it ahead of the mayor’ was not a slur but a slang. Street slang; it was a Tagalog slang for everybody. I belittled them, like saying, who are you to rape? You sons of bitches.... As a matter of fact, because of the rape, I killed the 16 rapists. I was first. Look. When I said I give the orders to shoot to kill, what else would you make?]

In this specific discursive event, what Duterte is at pains to point out is the issue is not about rape. It is all about his power (as a mayor) and his status (macho male). He claims he should be the “first” among the machos. The common criminals cannot have the privilege to rape. Only the powerful and the Primal Father should be given the privilege to rape. In this context, Duterte’s public statement demonstrates how masculinity is associated with power and privilege. His statement reproduces the “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 1995) or the dominant definition of what it means to be male which downplays the violence of sexual assault against women.

The second retort of Duterte is to appeal to “salitang kanto” (coarse street-corner slang). Detaching rape from his power tripping and asserting of his political privilege cannot easily be done even framing it within the coarse street-corner language or salitang kanto. Because street language is

also the site of male dominance. The same applies to the claim that Bisayan language, which Duterte employs to make fun of women, is colloquially brash and aggressive (Evangelista, 2017). This rhetorical innuendo of Duterte will be very common among his apologists and even in some women's quarters who champion the "benevolent sexism" of the former mayor of Davao. Some pointed out that it is a "Visayan" thing, a regionalist or ethno-geographical trait. But rape is rape regardless of geography. Cultural relativity and linguistic diversity cannot absolve Duterte of his sexist joke especially in the context of the election campaign.

Of course, this controversial incident did not deter him from his campaign. As reported in online news:

He repeated what he said over the weekend, that he didn't care if the controversy would affect his presidential bid. "I bind myself with what I do. If it is not acceptable to cultured people, let it be. If it would mean my defeat in the election, so be it." (Espina, 2016, page or para?)

His blistering retort establishes his macho image beyond what is publicly acceptable behavior. These unapologetic statements mark his "macho" image—undeterred, strong willed, unbending, relentless, unbreakable. His speech acts contribute to the "discursive order" that defines masculine tenacity as more important than moral scruples demanded in the public spaces.

"In my utter anger – gutter language'yan eh, *salitang kanto – nung binuksan ko, 'O eto,' galit ako nun nagsasalita. 'Ang ganda-ganda pa mukhang artistang galing America. Putang ina, naunahan pa ako, Patayin mo lahat,'*" he said, recounting the incident.

"I am willing to lose the presidency. Do not make me apologize for something which I did *na talagang* (which was really) it was called for at the moment.... *Putangina, nandoon ako sa dugo*, you want me to be courteous all the time?" he told media.

"If it brings me down, let it bring me down. If it brings me up to the presidency, then well and good. I will serve you but I will not as a matter of honor apologize for (it)." (Ranada, 2016b, page or para. 7)

After her father made fun of a woman missionary who was raped, and her father under fire for joking about rape, Sara Duterte-Carpio, the

daughter of the running President, revealed she was a rape victim herself. As a dutiful daughter, Sarah said in her Instagram post: “Not a joke. I am a rape victim. But I will still vote for President Rodrigo Duterte” (Andolong, 2016, para. 10), her post said. In this public repartee between the father and the daughter, Duterte described his daughter’s public pronouncement in jest as rumbling of a “drama queen.” This is how CNN reported Duterte’s remarks:

In a forum at the University of Philippines-Visayas in Iloilo on Tuesday (April 19), the mayor called his daughter a “drama queen” who carries guns with her even in her younger years.

*“Sabi totoo bang na-rape siya? Naku, drama queen Inday,”* Duterte said. [Did she say it’s true that she was raped? Inday is a drama queen.] (Andolong, 2016, para. 8)

In this discursive event, clearly, Duterte dismisses her daughter’s “me-too” rhetoric by applying an equally misogynistic idiom on his daughter: “drama queen.” Duterte summarily dismissed the serious claim of her daughter: Sara was never raped. She was just making up the story. Misogyny works by punishing women who deviate or refuse to toe the line imposed by men, especially by fathers against their undutiful daughters. In this discursive context, Duterte made it clear he is in complete control of his wayward daughter and he does not need her support to win the election.

The following day Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Amanda Gorely remarked, “[r]ape and murder should never be joked about or trivialized.” “Violence against women and girls is unacceptable anytime, anywhere,” Gorely added, without explicitly referring to Duterte (Esmaguél III, 2016). The leading presidential candidate then responded as a macho patriot: “Stay out, Australian government, stay out” (Esmaguél III, 2016a).



**Figure 1.** Gabriela to Duterte: Apologize, rape is no laughing matter. (Tupaz, 2016)



In this instance, Duterte's hypermasculine patriotism talked down a female foreign diplomat's reproach. Duterte used the defense of national sovereignty to advance his populism based "on safety and security" (Tatcho, 2020, p. 42) and fused it with male chauvinism to defend himself from political criticisms.

As a "strong man," Duterte adamantly refused to apologize:

My publicist in Davao prepared a statement of apology and I said I will not read it because it is wrong. I was not insulting the Australian woman. I was derogating the act of rape. For me, it's a slang. (Esmaque III, 2016, para. 9)

Again, Duterte used the shield of "street culture" to exculpate himself from the public criticisms. By appealing to "street culture," Duterte appeals to the dominant hypermasculine order of discourse shared among ordinary Filipino masses especially the men. As a populist, Duterte hopes to get the sympathy of the ordinary Filipino people whom he assumes share the same values.

### **But...How Was It in Davao?**

Many supporters of Duterte, including his female supporters, point to Duterte's support for women empowerment during his stint as mayor in Davao. Interestingly, while Davao City has an ordinance against violence against women and children (VAWC) aside from the national law, it is also one of the cities with the highest number of rape cases (Orante, 2016). According to the Philippine National Police's (PNP) data on index crimes from 2010 to 2015, Davao City had the second most number of rape cases at 843. Quezon City had the highest at 1,122, while Manila was third with 746. To explain this glaring contradiction, Duterte cracked another rape joke:

They said there are many rape cases in Davao," the president said. "As long as there are many beautiful women, there will be more rape cases. (Villamor, 2018)

Harry Roque, who by this time had replaced former Salvador Panelo as Presidential spokesperson, tried to limit the fallout from the president's comments, suggesting he was not a misogynist because he had appointed several women to key positions in his government. The *New York Times* section on Asia Pacific reported:

I don't think we should give too much weight on what the president says by way of a joke," Mr. Roque said, adding that

residents of the southern Philippines tended to be less easily offended than their compatriots in the capital.

“They’re not O.K. with rape jokes,” Mr. Roque said, “but let’s just say that perhaps the standard of what is offensive and what is not offensive is more liberal in the south. (Villamor, 2018, para. 6)

The BabaeAko Movement (stylized as #BabaeAko), which started out as an online campaign in May 2018—composed of journalists, activists, former Cabinet member, and lawmakers—reacted to these glaring sexist remarks by strongly asserting: “This country does not deserve a president who willfully breaks our laws and encourages others to do the same, because his notion of power stops at coercive force” (Villamor, 2018, para. 6). This reaction from the BabaeAko Movement exposes the contradiction in Duterte’s “embodied storytelling” style of public speaking where his “benevolent sexism” is negated by his current “hostile sexism” (Tatcho, 2020). In so doing, they mount a counterdiscourse to Duterte’s hypermasculine order of discourse.

### **Catcalling as Microaggression**

Scholars argue that people with sexist prejudice usually repress their prejudice until such a time that they can express it in a context that will not invite reprisals. Duterte seems to be an exception. While vowing to implement the law with an iron fist, President-elect Rodrigo Duterte broke an ordinance in his own city when he catcalled broadcast journalist Mariz Umali during a press conference on Tuesday, May 31 (Esmaguél III, 2016).

Davao City Ordinance No. 5004 classifies the following as sexual harassment: “Cursing, whistling, or calling a woman in public with words having dirty connotations or implications which tend to ridicule, humiliate, or embarrass the woman such as “*puta* (prostitute), ‘boring,’ *peste* (pest), etc” (Esmaguél, II, 2016).

The ordinance defines sexual harassment as “a form of misconduct involving an act or a series of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature, made directly, indirectly, or impliedly” (Esmaguél, II, 2016b). The law was approved by Duterte himself and City Councilor Nilo Abellera on October 14, 1997. Sexual harassment can be punished under Republic Act 7877, or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, and the provisions of the Revised Penal Code on Acts of Lasciviousness.



In defense of Duterte's hypermasculine behavior, Salvador Panelo, then the Presidential Spokesperson, explained that if Duterte whistles, it means he is fond of the person.

"Ibig sabihin, mahal ka niyan, kaya ka binibiro. Hindi po isang pambabastos 'yon," he said. (Esmaquel, II, 2016, para. 9)

[That means he loves you, that's why he's joking with you. That's not a form of disrespect.]

Panelo, like his macho president, makes a patronizing image of women as if the president's unacknowledged sexist behaviors are uplifting for the status of women. Duterte, Panelo, and like-minded men expect women to be flattered and honored by converting hostile sexism toward benevolent sexism.

What Duterte is doing with impunity are microaggressions, or to be more exact, gender microaggressions: these occur frequently and they devalue women's contributions, objectify them as sex objects, dismiss their accomplishments, and limit their effectiveness in social, educational, employment, and professional settings (Sue, 2010).

Put-downs of women reinforce systemic aggression. And when they are expressed in discursive events, they constitute symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2013) As Sue (2010) argued, "[m]icroaggressions have the secondary but devastating effect of denying equal access and opportunity in education, employment, and health care. While seemingly minimal in nature, the harm they produce operates on a systemic and macro level" (p. 16). Such "hostile sexism" serves as a whip to put women in their proper traditional places while concomitantly strengthening male political dominance. If the macho President can get away with it, then it must be acceptable. President Duterte is a man. And all men should be like Duterte.

## **Microassaulting Strong and Powerful Women**

Related to microaggressions of Duterte are microassaults directed against women in power. His hypermasculine tirades against Sis. Patricia Fox, the Australian missionary whom he accused of meddling with domestic politics, and the detained Senator Leila de Lima, constitute microassaults:

Microassaults are conscious, deliberate, and either subtle or explicit racial, gender, or sexual - orientation biased attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors that are communicated to marginalized groups through environmental cues, verbalizations, or behaviors. They are meant to attack the group identity of the person or to hurt/harm the intended victim through name -

calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions. (Miller & Garran, 2008; Nelson, 2006).

The intent of these messages is to threaten, intimidate, and make the individuals or groups feel unwanted and unsafe because they are inferior, subhuman, and lesser beings that do not belong on the same levels as others in this society.

Duterte also threatened to slap another woman human rights advocate, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard, if she will investigate the Philippines' war on drugs (Ranada, 2017). Duterte did not only threaten to physically assault Callamard, he also boldly threatened to assault the Chair of International Criminal Court Chair, Fatou Bom Bensouda, a Gambian lawyer and international criminal law prosecutor, with racist overtones:

Ngunit para sa akin para parangalan ang mga patawag/ utos nito at niyan --- at yung maliit na babae doon, isang itim na nagpapahayag na simulan nila ang kanilang imbestigasyon. Sabi ko, 'P \*\*\*\*\* i \*\*, kung makita kita, sasampalin kita.' At talagang sasaktan ko siya (Ambassador). Maniwala ka, sasampal ako ng isang babae. Sino ka ba para magbanta sa akin?... Ano ang iyong katuturan? Mayroon kang isang korte. Ito ay isang likha ng European Union. (Vera Files, 2018 ).<sup>2</sup>

[But for me, to acknowledge those that call out/ to order this and that---and that small girl over there, a sinister call to begin the investigation. I told them, "son of a bitch, if I ever see you, I'll slap your face." And I will really hurt her (Ambassador). Trust me, I will slap a woman. Who are you to threaten me?...What is it that you want? You have your court. That is just a creation of the European Union.]

Duterte's foul-mouthed microassaults against his women critics and calling his male political arch-enemies as homosexuals are flagrant demonstrations of his habitual misogynist public outbursts. They represent an extreme form of adherence to the hypermasculine gender roles that encompass calloused sexual attitudes toward women and beliefs that danger is exciting and violence is manly (Reidy et al., 2009). Hypermasculine roles are accentuated when men experience the violation of their traditional gender roles. Duterte and his apologists busk in microassaults because "perpetrators may engage in a microassault when they feel relatively safe, such as being in the presence of people who share their beliefs and attitudes

or knowing that they can get away with their offensive words and deeds. Safety often relies on the inaction of others in the face of biased actions” (Sue, 2010, p. 30). For Derald Wing Sue (2010):

Many people who privately hold notions of minority inferiority will only display their biased attitudes when they lose control. Microinsults are characterized by interpersonal or environmental communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person’s racial, gender, or sexual orientation, heritage, or identity. They are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group.” (2010, p. 30)

Sexism can operate at an overt conscious level or at a covert and less conscious one (Swim & Cohen, 1997). According to feminist scholars, gender microaggressions, as part of sexism, occur frequently and they devalue their contributions, objectify them as sex objects, dismiss their accomplishments, and limit their effectiveness in social, educational, employment, and professional settings. Duterte invokes the myth of meritocracy in this discursive event to hide his microassaults against strong women. His stereotyping of women simply adds to the patriarchal order of discourse that pathologizes the feminine gender roles.

### **The Homophobic President**

In 2015, the then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte guested in *Gandang Gabi, Vice* which aired on Sunday night, July 12 on ABS-CBN. Rappler on July 13, 2015 reported:

He also said that if his son was homosexual, he would still accept him for who he is. Everyone should “respect...human dignity because all humans are created by God,” Duterte said.

“(Same-sex marriage) *It’s good...everyone deserves to be happy ... Kahit sa mga dormitoryo noon, ayoko talaga yung mga bakla na niloloko.* I was the first to give a statement sa Davao when [party list] Laddad was denied registration,” Duterte added.

[It’s good...everyone deserves to be happy...Even in our dormitories before, I [did] not want to see the homosexuals being bullied. I was the first to give a statement *sa Davao*

when Ladlad [party list] was denied registration.] (Duterte backs same-sex marriage on Vice Ganda show, 2015)

It is well-known that Duterte supports gay marriage and women's reproductive rights (Ressa, 2015). Yet in March, 2017, when Duterte was speaking before the Filipino community in Myanmar on a two-day official visit, he rejected the same sex union based on Filipino religious culture and law:

“Wala nang gender, because you can be he or she...’yan ang kultura nila. Kayo lang. ‘Di ‘yan puwede sa amin, Katoliko kami. At there is the Civil Code, which is you can only marry a woman for me, and for woman to marry a man. ‘Yan ang batas natin,” the President said on Sunday, March 19. (“Duterte rejects same-sex marriage for PH,” 2017, para 5)

[There's no gender, because you can be or she...that's their culture. That's only for them. That can't be applied to us, we're Catholics. And there is the Civil Code, which is you can only marry a woman for me, and for woman to marry a man. That's the law in the Philippines.]

On July 3, 2018, he again changed his view by rejecting same-sex marriage and opting instead for civil union (Macairan & Romero, 2018). While Duterte was vacillating on his position, he was very sure about the homosexual identity of his male critics. Referring to Senator Antonio Trillanes, one of his staunchest political foes, Duterte claimed the senator is gay. The *New York Times* even reported the claim of Duterte that he was once “gay” (Gutierrez & Jett, 2019). This embellished admission of course is just another ploy to boost his macho image: he was cured by beautiful women.

President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines said at an event in Tokyo that he had “cured” himself of homosexuality with the help of “beautiful women.” (“Rodrigo Duterte says he ‘cured’ himself from being gay,” 2019, para. 6).

Filipino LGBTQ group, Bahaghari (Rainbow), denounced Duterte's habit of calling his opponents “gay” as a slur.” These statements, like his perverted and offensive comments on women, cannot be taken lightly or dismissed merely as jokes as they translate into inaction and further neglect of the LGBTQ+ community,” the group wrote on Facebook (Fitzsimons & Ortiz, 2019).

Another critic of Duterte's human rights abuse is Chito Gascon, Chair of Commission on Human Rights. When Gascon and CHR criticized the way the government deals with minors who are being killed in Duterte's infamous war on drugs operation, Duterte became furious and said,

"Itong si Gascon, ilang araw ng puro teenager, teenager, teenager, parang pedophile. Bakla ka or pedophile ka? Iyan lang nakatutok ka," Duterte said in a press conference in Davao City. ("Duterte tells Gascon: 'You are so fixated on the deaths of young males,'" 2017)

GMA News Online had this banner: "Duterte to CHR chair Gascon: 'Di ko alam kung bakla ka...sampalin talaga kita'" (Macas, 2017, para. 6). As in the case of his misogynist attacks against women, Duterte also uses his hypermasculine posturing to berate the masculinity of other men who defy his policies. Duterte's discursive homophobia may not necessarily be a direct attack against homosexuality per se but the flipside of his denigration of the feminine role that threatens hypermasculine values and attitudes (Parrott et al., 2002; Pattel et al., 1995).

### **The Alpha Male**

In his campaign period, Duterte already showed his male bravado. In a concert in November 29, 2015 in Taguig City during the Presidential campaign period, he said:

Kung sabihin ninyo, 'Ano bang credentials mo? Ano bang pakita mo sa Pilipinas, Duterte? Balita naming babaero ka.' Tama. May asawa ako, may pangalawang asawa ako. (Ranada, 2015, para. 5)

[If you ask me, 'What are your credentials? What can you show the Philippines? We heard you are a womanizer.' That's correct. I have a wife, I have a second wife.]

Then he freely disclosed his personal life. Aside from his two wives, he claimed he had two girlfriends.

Dalawa ang girlfriend ko. Gusto niyo ako maging presidente? Kailangan niyo malaman ang pagkatao ko. (Ranada, 2015, para. 5)

[I have two girlfriends. You want me for president? You need to know who I really am.]

The younger of the two works in the cosmetics department of a mall in Davao City. The other is a cashier. Of her he said, “Medyo matanda na pero mas maganda.” (Ranada, 2015, para. 10)

[A bit older but she’s more beautiful].

Duterte anticipated his critics who might use his womanizing against him by confessing he does not spend public money for his girlfriends. So, he rents P1,500 worth of boarding house. Rappler’s report is worth quoting in full:

Duterte also said his younger girlfriend wanted him to get her a secondhand car from Honda since he’s close to the owner of the Davao City branch.

But the mayor thumbed down the request: “Sabi ko ‘wag na. Tatalano naman ang biyahe natin sa buhay nating dalawa? Sunduin kita doon sa boarding house mo, pasok tayo ng motel, short time lang naman.” (Ranada, 2015, para. 15)

[I said, no more. What are the trips we take anyway? I just pick you up from your boarding house, we go inside a motel, it’s only ‘short time.’]

Duterte elaborated further, saying that at 70 years old, he can no longer perform as well in bed.

Noon nung bata pa ako, overnight, medyo magastos yun. Noong matanda na ako, short time, kasi napaka-short natalaga ang panahon ko. Pagkatapos ng isang kilat ‘yun na ‘yun. No more. Kung walang Viagra, hirap pa. (Ranada, 2015, para. 15)

When I was young, I could do overnight, which is more expensive. When I got old, I could do ‘short time’ only because I have such a short time left. After one erection, that’s it. No more. Without Viagra, it’s even more difficult.]

He further bragged his macho image by saying that after getting elected into the Palace he will not stop from entertaining women.

“Buksan ko ang libro ng Malacañang. Kung may magagandang naghihintay diyan sa labas, buksan ko ‘yung pinto ng kwarto ko,” he said. (Ranada, 2015, para. 16)

[I will open all the books of Malacañang. If there are beautiful women waiting outside, I will open the door to my room.]

Mere joke or simple expression of coarse street language, or both, these discursive events are calculated by Duterte to rally the ordinary masses around him by embracing the unstated but dominant patriarchal and sexist order of discourse prevailing among the people.

### **What's in a Kiss?**

On June 3, 2018, the newspapers and social media were flooded with the following banner:

Duterte kissed OFW Bea Kim on the lips onstage during a gathering of Filipinos based in South Korea on Sunday, June 3 (Elemia & Cepeda, 2018).

The following Day Gabriela issued a statement:

“Gabriela views President Duterte’s recent kissing of a migrant Filipina during his meet-and-greet with Filipino OFWs in South Korea as the disgusting theatrics of a misogynist president who feels entitled to demean, humiliate, or disrespect women according to his whim,” said the party in a statement on Monday, June 4. (Cepeda, 2018)

Expected, Duterte reacted in arrogantly dismissive manner:

“We enjoyed it. It was a showbiz [thing] and everybody enjoyed it,” Duterte told reporters upon his arrival back in Manila.

“I do not do it in public if there is malice.”

“That is my style. Find your own style. There is nothing wrong in a simple kiss – you cause an uproar. They are just jealous,” (“It’s a showbiz thing’: Philippines leader Duterte dismisses misogynist claims after stage kiss,” 2018, para 6).

Duterte justified the sexual harassment intent of this televised spectacle by appealing to its surreal meaning. He negated the very definition of sexual harassment by appealing to the woman’s “consent,” thereby, making flirtations of public officials in public morally and legally acceptable. This discursive event reinforces further his fascist rule by indirectly conveying

to the people that the powerful father can get away with anything even with inappropriate public behavior.

### **Will The Real Women Here Please Stand Up...**

Ninotchka Rosca (2018) rightly observes, “Overt machismo and its brother-in-arms, misogyny, are among the recurrent themes of Duterte’s governance, with special animosity toward educated women in positions of power” (p. 71). Several high-profile women were targeted by Duterte for criticizing his war on drugs: Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales, whose office he harassed and threatened; Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno, who was impeached as Supreme Court Chief Justice; Senator Leila de Lima, who was jailed on drug-related crimes; Maria Ressa, head of Rappler, the online news site Duterte derides as a “fake news outlet” and which is now charged with violating the Constitution, and Loida Nicolas Lewis, the Filipino-American philanthropist whom he has accused of funding efforts to destabilize the government (Reyes, 2018).<sup>3</sup>

Duterte even targeted foreign missionaries specifically Sister Patricia Fox, 71, who has worked with the rural poor and ethnic groups in the country for 28 years without making any waves (citation?). She was thus served with a deportation order after an investigation ordered by Duterte (Sherwell, 2018). Duterte continued his microassaults against strong women when on May 16, the president said that the next ombudsman “could not be [a] politician, especially not a woman” (Madarang, 2018, para. 5). But Duterte reserved his most vitriolic sexist remarks against the female members of the New People’s Army, the armed wing of the Philippine Communist Party.

“Tell the soldiers, ‘There’s a new order coming from the mayor,’” the president said in a speech, recalling a directive he said he had given when he was mayor of Davao City: “We will not kill you. We will just shoot you in the vagina.” (Villamor, 2018, para9)

Mr. Duterte made the remarks in a speech to former rebels last week, but the comments went largely unreported because he was speaking in his native Visayan language.

Many radical women’s group observed that Duterte’s misogyny emboldened people to become more misogynist (Go, 2019). “I believe na lumalala [ang misogyny]. Noon meron pang pretension. Kahit sila ay feudal at very patriarchal, very conventional, hindi yun prino-pronounce. Napakaburara ngayon,” said Center for Women Resources Executive Director Mary Joan Guan (Bartolome, 2018, para. 5). For Jean Franco (as cited in



David, 2018), a political scientist, Duterte's misogyny is connected with his rhetorical style that seeks to win public approval and popularity while demeaning women publicly for retaliating against his misogynistic outbursts. Nathalie Africa Verceles, director of the University of the Philippines' (UP) Women and Gender Studies, said that the regularity Duterte's anti-women statements is already alarming (Times of News, 2018).

A. Rolando Andrade's (1992) analysis of machismo based on Latin American culture best describes this belligerent attitude of Duterte toward his women critics. "Machismo" can be defined as the driving force of a conqueror or a man with fondness for combat.

These "macho" men believe that through aggressive activity they can display their courage, valor, honor, strength and virility. At the same time a neutral observer would be able to depict in these men intransigence, a stubborn streak that makes them think they are the only ones right and that there is only one way of doing things, their way. Through this process the *macho* can feel superior and secure but always wanting more because by his attitude and behavior he is encouraged to demand more power and dominate those within a given territory. (p. 34).

Such great macho in history are the likes of Alexander the Great, Attila the Hun, Adolf Hitler, and the Ayatollah Khomeini. Duterte represents the Filipino version of macho "siga" (bully). It is not surprising therefore that Duterte should aspire to be Hitler-like or he admires the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos:

"If Germany had Hitler, the Philippines would have ...," he said, pausing and pointing to himself. "You know my victims. I would like (them) to be all criminals to finish the problem of my country and save the next generation from perdition." (Lema & Mogato, 2016, para 10)

According to Belinda Aquino (1994), there is a strong female authority tradition in Philippine history but it has not penetrated the larger space of our political life so as to challenge male dominance. Duterte's misogynistic attacks against strong women leaders are thus a push-back against this tradition.

"[Women are] unlike men, kami suntukan, bakbakan, barilan. We grew up in a sort of mindset na sometimes prone to violence," Duterte said in a speech during the

inauguration of the Davao River Bridge at Carlos P. Garcia Highway in Davao City. (Placido, 2018, para. 5)

[Women are unlike men. We engage in brawls, shootings. We grew up with a mindset that is sometimes prone to violence.]

Itong mga babae, mga prim and proper man yan, isang tingin lang sa nanay, tunaw na ‘yan. Tapos gawin mong pulis? Hindi sa wala akong bilib. I believe in the woman, their competence and capability, pero hindi lahat sa buhay dapat. (Placido, 2018, para. 8)

[Women are prim and proper. With just one look of their mothers, they will melt. And you will make them cops? It’s not that I don’t trust them. I believe in the woman, their competence and capability, but not in all aspects of life.]

Duterte constructs women’s role in his hypermasculine order of discourse, thus: they cannot be as good leaders as men. Men are strong, have powerful endurance, and can quickly implement programs. Responding to the criticisms, Duterte said he still trusts the capabilities and competence of women, but that there are certain tasks that are not suitable for them.

### **The Peak of Misogyny: Commodification of Women**

President Rodrigo Duterte made yet another joke when he said the Philippines would “offer 42 virgins” to those who would visit the country, according to his spokesperson (ABS-CBN, 2018, para. 8). Duterte made the remark before Indian and Filipino businessmen in India while criticizing the “totally bankrupt” ideology of the Islamic State-terrorists who laid siege on Marawi City last year. Speaking to Indian and Filipino businessmen, Duterte said that Islamic State extremists lure followers with the promise of “42 virgins” in heaven. Then the misogynistic joke began:

“The come-on is that if you die a martyr, you go to heaven with 42 virgins waiting for you. If I could just make it a come-on also for those who’d like to go to my country,” he said.

Duterte, a son of a Maranao woman, said that ISIS do not have monopoly of making promises about virgins.

“And I said, one of the most is promising virgins when you go to heaven. I’d like to have the virgins here, not in heaven.

God may not allow it,” the chief executive, a self-confessed womanizer, said. (Cabico, 2018, para. 5)

The following day, Spokesperson Harry Roque tried to deflect the criticisms against Duterte by claiming the President, as always, was only joking (“Duterte’s ‘42 virgins’ remark,” 2018).

Finally, we have now come full circle in looking at the totality of Duterte’s hypermasculine and misogynistic order of discourse. After belittling women’s capabilities, making fun of rape, catcalling female journalists, threatening his female critics, and accusing his male staunch critics as homosexuals, Duterte is now selling women in exchange for foreign investment.

## **Conclusion**

Rather than merely concluding that Duterte uses his male chauvinist communicative actions to advance his interests and win popular support, or that Duterte is a simply a fascist or a popular dictator who indirectly insults women to prove his power and popularity, it is more apposite to argue that Duterte does not exist in the two parallel modes: as a fascist leader and as a strong misogynist leader. He is both. And he uses both discursive registers to create an order of discourse to maintain his power and silence his critics especially women, and to some extent his male adversaries. Following a Marxist rendering of intersectionality (Bohrer, 2018), it is better to describe Duterte’s authoritarian rule with misogynist twist as “interwoven” (p. 25).

When threatened by strong women who oppose his policies and criticize his style of leadership, Duterte deploys his misogynistic cussing and hypermasculine rhetorical skills, as explained by Kate Mann, not only to silence them, but to denigrate their identities as women. At the same time, these discursive events performed and broadcast publicly enable Duterte to regain and defend his hypermasculinity by realigning it with the prevailing Filipino semifeudal values and patriarchal attitudes (Carian & Sobotka, 2018). Duterte’s linguistic performance expressed through microassaults and microaggressions directed against his women critics enable him to strengthen his fascist rule by disciplining these unruly women. Such discursive events are not just for entertainment purposes but forms of legitimation of hegemonic masculinity that resonate well with the dominant patriarchal practices prevailing among the masses who admire his coarse but natural yet unscripted masculinity just like in the case of Russian President Putin (Wood, 2016) and Donald Trump.

Following the analysis of Jongwoo Han and LHM Ling (1998) of authoritarian leadership in Singapore, Taiwan, and S. Korea, one can say that the misogynistic fascist communicative actions of Duterte

“hypermasculinizes the state,” which means that “the state shifts its identity from an internally oriented, managerial parent to externally pressured, competitive patriarch” (p. 65). Duterte’s hypermasculine misogynistic bravado rejects childlike dependency of the state and “the good Confucian daughter-wife” (Han and Ling 1998, p. 65) role, or in the case of the Philippines, a docile daughter or “Maria Clara” type of leadership; instead, it mobilizes the state “to undertake all the responsibilities and discipline of economic development” (p. 65). A “hypermasculinized” state results in a political culture and symbolically constructed world that glorifies aggression, achievement, control, competition, and power in the name of male-defined national reconstruction.

What Duterte accomplishes in his misogynistic communicative actions is the hypermasculinization of Philippine society—the ultimate aim of which is to sustain his power by aligning himself with the widely shared patriarchal order of discourse in Philippine society. Conversely, in the process Duterte is also able to hyperfeminize Philippine society by eulogizing and accentuating the traditional values associated with women such as being submissive, passive, and obedient. This is the net effect of misogynistic interdiscursive communicative actions of Duterte when he catcalls journalists, kisses alacritous women, berates his male critics as gay, and jokes about rape. They are all in the aid of hypermasculinizing his fascist rule.

Overall, this study has shown through the critical interdiscursive analysis of the public speeches and communicative actions of Duterte how these series of discursive events translate into the muffling, if not, suppression of dissent against the state. In this order of discourse created by Duterte and his defenders, those who criticize the government and its policies are lumped together with the incompetent, weak women, and effeminate men. While forms of dissent are allowed as free exercise of people’s democratic rights, they should be within the law set by the powerful but benevolent primal “father.” The “father” determines what discourses and counterdiscourses should circulate in the public sphere. To further broaden his hypermasculinized fascism, Duterte surrounded himself with a cabal of former military officials and generals, or the male horde, that resembles a military junta (Placido, 2018).

Under this misogynistic fascist order of discourse citizens are expected to be docile, obedient and passive subjects of state regulation. Everyone should obey the President who knows very well what he is doing, and thus, avoid criticizing the government (Rabino, 2020). In short, obey the “Father,” or else face the harsh consequences. But to this date women have proven themselves to be disobedient daughters. These rebellious women refuse to

be cajoled into the hypermasculinized fascist order of discourse constructed by Duterte and his defenders:

The people are rising up. And as history has proven many times over, the Filipino people can overcome tyranny and oppression – more certainly because women, who hold half the sky, are actively taking part in the resistance. (Pano & Gacoscosim, 2018, p. 90)

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Some feminists, of course, reject patriarchy as an historical myth(see Shibles, 1991). For a reconceptualization, see Foord and Gregson (1986).

<sup>2</sup> Vera Files (2018) fact-checked this claim of Duterte about ICC and the European Union in <https://verafil.es.org/articles/vera-files-check-fact-duterte-mali-ang-pahayag-na-eu-ang-lum>. Not in references. Place the URL in refences.

<sup>3</sup> The threats Duterte made against “strong women” who stood up against his misogynist fascist rule will not be elaborated in this paper especially those covered after 2018. This will include Duterte’s claim that Maria Ressa of Rappler is a fraud (CNN Philippines Staff, 2020); that Vice President Leni Robredo is just “grandstanding” (Esguerra, 2020); and that she is not fit to be a President (Aguillar, 2021).

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