Beyond Strategic Maneuvering: Embodied Storytelling as Duterte's Form of Argumentation

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ABSTRACT

What underscores the appeal of Duterte's rhetoric? What is Duterte's form of argumentation, and what are its functions and limitations? How can Duterte's rhetorical performance inform political campaign discourse in the future? This paper aims to answer these questions through a rhetorical analysis of President Rodrigo Duterte's performance in the televised presidential town hall debate of April 2016, co-hosted by television giant ABS-CBN. There is a need to study Duterte's rhetoric in the debate to show which among his promises were fulfilled and abandoned. Strategic maneuvering, a framework developed to analyze presidential debates, highlights Duterte's promises in the debate with its focus on lines of argument (logos). However, this paper posits that Duterte's rhetoric is not primarily based on logos, and there is a need to spotlight his use of ethos and pathos (appeals to credibility and emotions). I argue that Duterte capitalized on embodied storytelling—a humanizing rhetoric that demystifies the presidency. Through embodied storytelling, Duterte constantly used his identity as a source of narratives that resonate with the public. I explain how Duterte's storytelling functions, where it draws its currency and its pitfalls. Finally, I propose rhetorical considerations for future political campaign discourse through factors such as embodiment, identification, resonance, and cultivation.

Keywords: embodied storytelling, presidential debates, Rodrigo Duterte, strategic maneuvering

As the oldest democracy in Asia, the Philippines is no stranger to the democratic process of elections and the exercise of the right to vote (Regilme 220). As Paul Hutchcroft states, "no country in Asia has more experience with democratic institutions than the Philippines" (142). An indicator of the Philippines' democratic practice can be seen in its multiparty system and presidential form of government. The country's multiparty system does not limit the number of qualified candidates who can run for the presidency. Moreover, in a presidential form of government, the leader is also directly elected by the people (Thompson, *The Philippine Presidency* 325–330).

In order to win the elections, candidates running for national office engage in campaigning. According to Karen Sanders, the electoral cycle is composed of three phases: pre-election, election, and post-election (25). The pre-election phase involves planning, training, and research. The election phase includes campaigns, actual voting, and vote counting. Finally, the post-election phase aims to assess or review the strategies used. Campaign strategies and tactics vary depending on the phase of the electoral cycle. In the Philippines, the Commission on Elections is the government-sanctioned body tasked to oversee the whole electoral cycle. The Comelec promulgates rules on campaigning, voting, and proclaiming winners after the elections (Commission on Elections).

In relation to the pre-election phase, the Comelec allows ninety (90) days for a presidential campaign. Since it is impossible for candidates to meet and interact with all potential voters during the campaign, those who aspire for national elective posts such as the presidency invest in television advertising. Unfortunately, political television advertising has airtime restrictions and exorbitant costs (Gloria et al. 25).

In the 2016 presidential elections, the Comelec enacted another provision in the Fair Elections Act—the airing of a series of televised presidential debates. The Comelec partnered with three private-owned television stations to host a series of presidential debates. This was in accordance with the provision in the Fair Elections Act or Republic Act 9006, signed in February 2001, which states that the Comelec "may require national television and radio networks to sponsor at least three national debates among presidential candidates and at least one national debate among vice-presidential candidates" (Esmaquel, "Presidential debates"). Then Comelec Chair Andres Bautista stated that the debate aims to "veer away from personality politics and toward more issues and platform-based politics" (Esmaquel, "Presidential debates").

The debates meant that the candidates had the additional burden to woo voters through reason, logic, and argumentation, rather than simply relying on star power and popularity. The debates were also supposed to equalize the playing field as a medium that is free for all candidates, regardless of a candidate's political machinery or campaign. In terms of what can be expected in a televised debate, a certain level of spontaneity and interactivity absent in the candidate's campaign rallies or TV ads is also supposed to preview a candidate's rationality, communicative style, and habits of mind (Jamieson and Birdsell 43).

The Comelec's series of debates were held in three different locations (Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, and Pangasinan), representing the island groups of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao of the Philippine archipelago. The Comelec also determined the format, questions, and topics. There were five presidential candidates who squared off.

Each candidate held either an appointive or elective position prior to running for the presidency—former Vice President Jejomar Binay, Senator Grace Poe, the late Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, former Interior Secretary Mar Roxas, and former Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

This study aims to contribute to the scant literature on Philippine presidential debates by looking into Rodrigo Duterte's rhetorical performance in the presidential town hall debate of 2016. Duterte's rise to the presidency was attributed to the middle class (Teehankee 70), a kind of support from people who are afraid that their economic gains will be threatened by problems of drugs and criminality (Teehankee and Thompson 127). From a communication or rhetorical standpoint, Duterte's victory in the elections can also be the product of his appeals in mainstream and social media and his image-building strategies.

The discursive constructions in Duterte's rhetoric have been the subject of various studies about Duterte's presidential speeches (Chua and Labiste 1), remarks and interviews as reported in news frames (Ismail et al. 1), campaign operations through Facebook pages maintained by his supporters (Sinpeng et al. 1), and the public reception of Duterte's pronouncements (Montiel et al. 521). Instead of focusing on presidential speeches, interviews, and online engagement (comments and posts) by Duterte's supporters as texts for analysis, I am using the debate platform to get to the heart of Duterte's rhetorical strategies. Despite numerous hours of preparation and rehearsals, debates are only partially controlled by the candidates. Understanding a candidate's rhetorical performance is thus better achieved when it is neither entirely scripted (or crafted by speechwriters as in his State of the Nation Address), framed by the media (news reports), or constructed by his supporters (Facebook pages).

Approaches to studying Duterte's speeches and statements have also relied on frameworks such as rhetorical analysis focused on elements such as speaker, content and context, audience, medium, and response (Chua and Labiste 1); discourse analysis with attention to the relationship of knowledge and power (Lanuza 36); and analysis of crisis response and image repair strategies (Ismail et al. 1). My analysis diverges from these studies by using strategic maneuvering as a framework for political argumentation. As an analytical tool, strategic maneuvering has been specifically developed for studying candidate strategies—lines of arguments, audience adaptation, and presentational strategies—in televised debates. My goal is to show how Duterte's rhetorical performance exemplifies and transcends the forms of strategic maneuvering.

My analysis is thus guided by three related questions: What underscores the appeal of Duterte's rhetoric? What is Duterte's form of argumentation, and what are its functions and limitations? How can his argumentation style guide future campaign strategies and practices of discourse-making? Through a look at Duterte's performance in the town hall debate, this paper argues that Duterte's rhetoric is a form of performance that does not merely mobilize appeals to reason, argument, or policy. As I will show, Duterte also used appeals to personal credibility as a way to develop a relationship with the audience.

In 2019, the Liberal Party asked the Commission on Elections if a debate could be staged for senatorial candidates. If debates are to be a regular activity in national campaigns, following the lead of the 2016 series, then debating and argumentation strategies must be analyzed to see whether and how they foster intelligent discussion among candidates to help voters make informed decisions. If debates fall short of this ideal, analyzing rhetoric as a performance still provides a case study that can critique strategies that carry implications and lessons for future campaign messaging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section opens with a discussion of Duterte's public persona prior to and during his presidency. Second, I look at political debates, their functions and purposes, as my object of analysis in this study. Finally, I explain the framework of strategic maneuvering.

Duterte's Public Persona

Unlike his opponents who were elected Senator and Vice-President prior to the 2016 presidential elections, Rodrigo Duterte built his entire political career on local government. Duterte served as mayor of Davao City from 1988 to 2016 in non-consecutive terms. His leadership of Davao was instrumental to his ascent to the presidency because of "performative violence" (McCoy 44). The concept of "performative violence" refers to the process in which Philippine presidents rely on the coercive power of the state and its apparatus to control its citizens. Presidents no longer just rely on the armed forces or provincial power holders, they also use localized violence (militia, vigilantes, the Davao Death squad linked to Duterte) for control. It is against this backdrop that Duterte's "brutal social policy" and "blunt defiance of world order" must be understood (11).

Walden Bello takes the logic further by outlining characteristics of fascism where Duterte "easily fits the bill":

> (a) a charismatic individual with strong inclinations toward authoritarian rule who (b) derives his strength from a heated multi-class base, (c) is engaged in and supports the systematic and massive violation of basic human, civil, and political rights, and (d) proposes a political project that contradicts the fundamental values and aims of liberal democracy or social democracy. (78)

When Duterte assumed the presidency in June 2016, he ordered the killing of suspected drug users and pushers to fulfill his campaign promise to rid the country of the drug problem and the crime it (allegedly) feeds. During his first six months in office, "the tally for Duterte's drug war reached seven thousand bodies dumped on the streets—sometimes with a crude cardboard sign reading 'Pusher ako' (I am a pusher)" (McCoy 39). In 2019, there have been "20,322 killings by both vigilantes and policemen in the war on drugs" (Buan).

Duterte has also withdrawn the country's membership in the International Criminal Court in light of the death toll in his war on drugs, jailed an opposition senator on fabricated charges, allowed the burial of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos at the Philippine Heroes' Cemetery, and threatened to close the Philippines' largest television network he claims was biased against his campaign. For Cleve Arguelles, Duterte has battled the triumphalist narrative of the EDSA people power uprising that deposed Ferdinand Marcos and seized the opportunity to refocus public memories of EDSA as the failure of post-authoritarian presidents to institute inclusive growth and reforms in the Philippines' "democratization project" (280–281).

On the international front, Alfred McCoy claims that Duterte's "mix of machismo and nationalism seems typical of the current crop of anti-globalization populists" (11). Duterte's anti-colonial rhetoric against the United States has been more pronounced when he cancelled the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) that allowed joint military exercises between the US and the Philippines.[1] He has also chosen to work more cooperatively with China on economic and territorial issues. Duterte played on "subliminal popular resentments toward America" as he is able to "extract resources from Beijing" (McCoy 12).

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Duterte ran for president on a crime-busting platform animating a politics of hope and anxiety (Curato, "Flirting" 147). Duterte's politics of hope (that he can solve crime and violence in the country) drew currency from his use of politics of fear (showing that crime, violence, and conflict are the dangerous "other") (147). Duterte also played on the hero archetype, a savior or messiah, who can save the country from the dangerous "other" (147). In his rhetoric, Duterte emphasized punishments at all costs over rehabilitation as a way to deal with drugs and criminality.

What has kept Duterte popular despite his inflammatory statements against human rights and diplomacy? Anna Cristina Pertierra argued that Duterte is a beneficiary of a political culture where "both media figures and politicians evoke positive versions of vertical relationships to generate followings that are easily translated between the screen and the ballot box" (221). Pertierra notes that Duterte's case is one of "televisual populism" where emotional connections are forged with the people through television, conflict, and melodrama (228). But what kind of a televisual populist is Duterte? Nicole Curato and Jonathan Ong noted that "Duterte offered a stark contrast to earlier styles due to his particular performance of 'authenticity' that resonated with reality television and social media vernaculars that converge around 'really real' moments" (123). Duterte's supposed "authenticity" is exemplified when he cursed the Pope for causing traffic in Manila, called out the Catholic Church's hypocrisy, and said that he should have "gone first" when a beautiful Australian missionary was raped in Davao City. Duterte's persona, however, is just one of the many factors that might have worked in his favor during the elections.

Presidential Debates

According to Mark Thompson, the "increasing urbanization and the spread of the popular media made it easier to appeal directly to voters" ("Populism" 9). As various forms of voter mobilization emerged, candidates running for national office—especially the presidency—increasingly engaged in activities and practices to boost their popularity (Hedman, *Beyond Machine* 330). The victory of former Philippine President Joseph Ejercito Estrada or "Erap," as he is popularly known by the masses, signified how personalities transitioned to the world of politics through star appeal, entertainment, and forging a mass-mediated connection with the electorate (Hedman, *The Spectre* 5).

In the Philippines, the most common form of political campaigning is television advertising (Gloria et al. 56). TV ads can complement the news environment either by supporting positive frames about candidates or attacking a candidate's opponents (82). The 2016 series of televised presidential debates was a welcome addition to the various ways candidates mobilize popular support. Despite their loopholes, the Comelec claimed that the series of debates in 2016 was touted as an innovation allowing citizen engagement through social media ("COMELEC to share"). The importance of debates in the context of political campaigns in the Philippines is two-fold. Debates can preview a presidency and have implications for democracy.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David Birdsell argue that debates "expand on the information in news and ads" (123). Following this argument, debates provide a venue for candidates to explain their issue positions in the news or reinforce

the image they project in their TV ads. Sanders claims that debates also have the advantage of being able to test a candidate's wit, spontaneity, and grace under pressure (23). Although presidential candidates have a hand in how they will be represented in their TV ads, they do not have such control when they join debates (Jamieson and Birdsell 65). Because of this, candidates also rehearse and employ various strategies (Sanders 23).

Debates are also important as they preview a possible presidency for the audience (Greenberg 9). A candidate's promises and statements in a debate are very telling because they reveal how a potential president communicates, his/her thought processes, and the goals by which the success of a president's term can be judged (Jamieson and Birdsell 75). Ideally, debates affect democracy when they provide a venue for the audience to "conduct informed, uncensored public discussion of ideas" (Coleman 1), allow the audience to compare and assess the candidates' platforms, and enable the public to participate in civil and political affairs crucial to a well-functioning democracy (Greenberg 15).

In the United States, debates have become "obligatory performances" since 1984 (Birdsell 165). The scholarship on televised debates in the US has focused on the effects of watching debates on the audience, the role of participants or candidates in the debates, and the media coverage of the said events (Birdsell 166). A televised presidential debate, however, is better viewed as a "joint appearance or face-to-face encounter" because it does not follow the rules of debate and forensics (Perloff 367). According to Richard Perloff, televised presidential debates do not involve a single proposition debated by two sides that equally advance and rebut arguments, and an adjudicator who decides the winner through a reasonable assessment of the arguments and rebuttals (367).

Outside the US, televised presidential debates were used to "stage democracy" or as a site of "theatrical performance" where candidates and the media were complicit in projecting images of peace and unity amidst the ethnic and political cleavages in Kenya (Moss and O'Hare 78–79). In Taiwan, debate discourse was analyzed as it relates to the election outcome and the country's "democratization process" (Cheng 19). Focusing on the audience of the debates rather than the event itself or the discourse of the candidates, Hansoo Lee and Jae-Mook Lee found that in the 2012 Korea presidential election, audiences "who view more televised debates are more likely to search for information and discuss political issues with others" (334).

While debates have advantages both for the candidates and the audience, debates have not been very common as a platform for campaigning and discussion of issues in the Philippines.

Usually, media outlets and civic groups organize and hold their own debates for presidential and senatorial candidates (Esmaquel, "Presidential debates"). However, candidates often refuse to participate in these events for fear of "public scrutiny" (Esmaquel, "Presidential debates"). In relation to the audience of the debates, Professor of Sociology Randy David laments that "in the world of politics, performance in debates seldom figures as a deciding factor in electoral outcomes."

According to David, "audiences watch these debates selectively, mainly to confirm images they have already formed in their minds." This implies that audiences do not watch debates to be persuaded but to solidify support for candidates they already favor. It is in this context that I regard Duterte's appearance in the debate as a rhetorical performance rather than a deliberative or dialectical engagement. As I argue, the key is to understand Duterte's rhetoric in the debate not as an attempt to articulate detailed policy to meet the standards of argumentation and rebuttal. Rather, Duterte engages in a form of "argumentation" that does not inform or persuade through reason or argument (logos) but appeals to personal credibility (ethos) and the audience (pathos).

Political Argumentation and Strategic Maneuvering

In the context of televised presidential debates, political argumentation is a process distinct from forensics or academic and competitive debating. David Zarefsky (2008) outlines the following characteristics of political argumentation: (1) lack of time limits as political argumentation is also affected by the nature of public controversy with "lengthy and indeterminate arguments," (2) having no clear terminus where arguments are not easily resolved but just become less compelling or people find them less useful in relation to other worldviews, (3) having a heterogeneous audience occupying multiple and contradictory points so the best one can do is "assume that the audience will share general understandings and beliefs that characterize a political culture," and (4) is open access where use of language is tailored to the audience (319–320).

Zarefsky posits that political argumentation "undoubtedly depends upon strategic maneuvering" (318). Strategic maneuvering has to do with the ways candidates in presidential debates navigate the demands of political argumentation (Eemeren and Houtlosser 84). Three broad categories of strategic maneuvering include (1) lines of arguments used and chosen by candidates or the topical potential, (2) how one adapts the arguments to the audiences' demands, beliefs, and commitments, and (3) the style of one's presentation as they relate to organization, clarity, use of figures of speech, and rhetorical devices (Eemeren and Houtlosser 85).

Strategic maneuvering as a framework has been used in the context of US presidential and vice-presidential debates such as in the 2008 Obama-McCain debates where clash strategies and the influence of debate format were examined (Morris and Johnson 301) and in the 2004 Bush-Kerry and 2012 Biden-Ryan debates, where arguments made by candidates nonverbally were regarded as forms of strategic maneuvering (Weger et al. 1). While strategic maneuvering was developed as a pragma-dialectical approach which posits that debating aims to resolve differences reasonably and cooperatively (Eemeren 1; Eemeren and Grootendorst 3), I am following Zarefsky's lead in understanding argumentation from a rhetorical perspective where consensus is not always reached by participants and various strategies are deployed for persuasion.

For purposes of this study, I collapsed Zarefsky's types of strategic maneuvering to lines of argument because elements such as "changing the subject, modifying the relevant audience, appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions, reframing the argument, using condensation symbols, employing the locus of the irreparable, and using figures and tropes argumentatively" (318) inevitably converge to construct topics advanced by a candidate. Candidates engage lines of argument in a debate through a cluster of statements, which are also considered themes.

The use of strategic maneuvering as a framework also avoids the attention of discourse and critical discourse analyses to language features, structures, and meaning that might reveal and posit the presence of ideology in discourse. Strategic maneuvering is more concerned with the pragmatics of discourse-making without any assumptions about hidden structures of meaning and power. I must caution, however, that strategic maneuvering has limitations that this study wishes to address. First, it is a framework that is centered on verbal and textual elements of candidate messaging (logos) at the expense of considerations about the history of the rhetor (ethos) and effect on audience (pathos). In my analysis, I will also discuss the rhetorical appeals of ethos and pathos (aside from logos) and how they impinge on each other.

METHOD AND OBJECT OF STUDY

Rhetorical analysis "involves the study of the ways in which we attempt to persuade or influence in our discursive and textual practices" (Edwards and Nicoll 105). Duterte's debate performance is an instance of rhetoric that is part of a larger discourse and social practice in his presidency. Rhetorical analysis is appropriate for this study as it "provides a method for identifying how arguments are constructed to persuade audiences to accept and support particular constructions of reality, truth, and courses of action" (Winston 161).

I conducted a rhetorical analysis of the video of the third and final debate in the 2016 PiliPinas debate series. The said debate, uploaded on YouTube, used the town hall format and is the longest in the series of debates. Held in April 2016, the debate had the biggest viewership and greatest social media engagement in the PiliPinas debate series ("COMELEC to Share"). It lasted for 305 minutes and 15 seconds with advertisements and pre/post-debate analyses by commentators ("PiliPinas Debates 2016").

The town hall debate included the standard segments of opening and closing statements. As there were a total of five candidates, a face-off round was also added to allow two candidates to question and respond to each other. Finally, there was a "fast talk" round where each candidate was asked rapid-fire, categorical questions. The statements I chose to highlight in the analysis are Duterte's opening and closing statements and his responses to questions from the audience and moderators. I have excluded Duterte's responses in the face-off and "fast-talk" rounds because the segments were designed to elicit only snippets of information and the candidates had no opportunity to explain their answers.

As the sole researcher, I watched the debate three times for validation, coded and transcribed Duterte's responses to the questions, and arrived at dominant themes or lines of argument. I translated and included Duterte's actual statements in the debates to support and illustrate my analysis. The quotations I included in my analysis were translated verbatim. No unnecessary words were omitted to capture Duterte's speaking style. After describing Duterte's rhetorical strategies, I analyzed whether strategic maneuvering as a framework captures Duterte's form of argumentation. I then present the argument that Duterte's form of argumentation goes beyond the lines of arguments as a major element of strategic maneuvering. While I primarily focused on the town hall debate of April 2016, some of my comments include examples outside the debates, also noting what happened to some of Duterte's promises.

ANALYSIS

The immediate and broader context preceding Duterte's participation in the 2016 presidential campaign saw the then ruling party, Liberal Party, endorse Mar Roxas as the standard-bearer. Roxas inherited a legacy of macro-economic development that was largely unfelt by the poor under the "Daang Matuwid" ("Straight Path") reformist platform of the Liberal Party. The botched handling of the Mamasapano clash in 2015 that killed members of the police force is also seen as one of the administration's major blunders.

Other issues like the slow government response to Typhoon Haiyan/Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013, worsening traffic in Metro Manila, and the "bullet planting" ("tanim-bala") extortion scheme that became controversial in 2015 also add to the list of examples of the Aquino administration's supposed incompetence. These events provided an opening for Duterte to run on a crime-busting platform based on the promise of swift and decisive action. It is not surprising then that a major theme in Duterte's rhetoric in the debate harps on political will and expediency, presenting a counterpoint to the perceived ineptness of the Aquino administration.

Given the foregoing context, the succeeding analysis is divided into four sections: a) Duterte's strategic maneuvering in the debates that details his lines of argument, b) going beyond strategic maneuvering by spotlighting embodied storytelling as Duterte's form of argumentation, c) illustrating the pitfalls of embodied storytelling, and d) outlining lessons about Duterte's rhetorical strategies that can guide future practices in discourse-making.

DUTERTE'S STRATEGIC MANEUVERING IN THE DEBATES

In this section, I will first describe Duterte's lines of argument which drew from a mix of populist and nationalist narratives and are characterized by the appeal to expediency and the politics of "I will."

Mixed Narrative of Populism and Nationalism

Duterte drew on two narratives in the debates—nationalism and populism. Nationalism emphasizes identity, nationhood, and sovereignty or independence from a colonial legacy (Teehankee 74). Populism is about championing the poor through equity (Thompson, "Bloodied Democracy" 43). Duterte's populism, however, banks on safety and security rather than equity for the masses. It must be noted that both narratives of populism and nationalism are mutually reinforcing. The emphasis on the Filipino people's interests can be construed as a nationalist discourse. Similarly, calls for independence as a nationalist position also speaks of protecting the interest of the masses or citizens. To illustrate the mixed narrative argumentation of Duterte, consider his opening statement in the third debate:

> I am presenting myself as a candidate for the presidency. You have seen me in public, how I behave, and you have heard my blunders of words. And, you know, we have our faults. I have many in my life. But one thing I can assure you as I have done before, and which I am up to, I said, if you just listen to my effetes [sic], my curses and my, you know, bad words, look at my back, so you'll see there the Filipino on bended knees, hungry and

very mad at this country for doing nothing. I would like to correct certain injustices in this government. But I can assure you, that it will be a clean government and you will have a peaceful country. And of course, I said, drugs, which is my main target, I hope to suppress them to the end.

In the opening statement, Duterte acknowledged his "blunders" and "faults" which his opponents and critics were quick to point out during the campaign and even in the first and second presidential debates. However, Duterte did not merely admit to his weaknesses. Rather, he framed them as representing something else—a Filipino who is "very mad at this country for doing nothing." This can be interpreted as Duterte's claim to represent a Filipino citizen neglected by the system. Duterte projects a voice for the poor and powerless, an instantiation of a nationalist discourse. The depth of such discourse, however, is another story.

While the latter part of Duterte's opening statement can be read as oriented towards reform ("I would like to correct certain injustices in this government...But I can assure you, that it will be a clean government and you will have a peaceful country"), he did not emphasize accountability and personal sacrifice to solve problems of the country unlike the "good governance" narrative of reformist candidates. Rather, Duterte made a promise on behalf of the masses through the key issue of peace and order. Another indication of the mixed nationalist and populist narratives Duterte drew from is his response to the question of one audience member in the debate. Their exchange went as follows:

> Question: For all of you who want to become the next president of the Philippines, what can you do to help the plight of Filipino fishermen who are driven away by the Chinese Coastguard [in the South China/West Philippine Sea]?

> Duterte: We should know where we stand right now. We have submitted ourselves to an arbitration. Like a court, international. And we have submitted our papers and documents, or claim. On the other hand, China has insisted sovereignty and does not want to submit to jurisdiction [of the International Court of Justice or ICJ]. But anyway, whether they submit or not [to ICJ jurisdiction], the court or the arbitration court can go on and hear the case. Now, if we win and China does not recognize the court ruling, I will not go to war. The two other distinguished speakers said, "I will go to China." If they don't, then I will ask the navy to bring me to the nearest boundary in Spratly Scarborough. I will get on a jet ski, carrying the Philippine flag and I will go to their airport and plant the flag, and I will say "this is ours and do what you want with me." It has long been my ambition to be a hero.

Duterte's response to the issue of the Philippine-China maritime dispute elicited cheers and laughter. It was the sole question in the debate about Philippine relations with other countries, and it was an issue debated along nationalist lines both in China and the Philippines. In his response to the question about the maritime dispute between the Philippines and China, Duterte used the symbolism of the Philippine flag to assert the country's sovereignty and rights over the disputed territory.

Duterte capitalized on the spectacle of nationalism (planting a Philippine flag in China, proclaiming Philippine ownership of the disputed territory, and dying a hero). He added to this narrative a populist mix by stating that he will not commit the lives of Filipino soldiers in the event of war with China, assuming that China will not honor the IJC ruling on the South China/West Philippine Sea. This nationalist sentiment converged with a populist narrative as he built an image of a protector. Consider the following statement:

> We have to establish the legitimacy of our claim. We need the document that states that we won in the arbitration. And then, we demand China to empty the place [West Philippine Sea/South China Sea]. We own that exclusive economic zone. So if America does not help us in the event of war, that will be a massacre. I will not commit the lives of Filipino soldiers. So I will go there myself. Why waste time?

While Duterte talked about policy and legal protocol, he concluded his responses with his politics of "I will." In Duterte's response, he recognized that the relationship between the Philippines and the United States, but he also noted that the latter may not always be behind the country. Duterte's solution was then to offer himself ("I will go there [China] myself") instead of sacrificing the lives of Filipino soldiers in the event of war or confrontation with China. These statements combined nationalist fervor and populist appeals, as Duterte tried to show his resolve to assert the country's rights and protect its people at the same time. As seen in recent events, however, Duterte has cooperated with China in ways that some argue are not beneficial to the Philippines. In April 2017, Duterte also cancelled plans of planting the Philippine flag in the disputed island in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea), citing "our friendship with China, and because we value your friendship" as the reason (Esmaquel, "Duterte cancels").

Appeal to Expediency and Politics of "I will"

Duterte's populist and nationalist narratives were also enforced through the use of the appeal to expediency that previews a personalistic leadership style or the politics of "I will" (Curato, "Politics of Anxiety" 105). This can be illustrated through

Duterte's responses to at least three issues raised in the debates—the worsening traffic in the Philippine capital of Metro Manila, ending labor contractualization or how to guarantee security of tenure to Filipino workers, and providing healthcare to the poor. Duterte's appeal to expediency was based on his self-imposed deadlines in proposing to solve deep-seated problems. In his response to the question of how he would end labor contractualization in the Philippines, Duterte said:

> The moment I assume the presidency, contractualization will stop. They have to stop it . . . We spend so much money of government and people, young people are studying at TESDA [Technical Education and Skills Development Authority]. Then they apply and they are accepted as electrician, carpenter. The problem here is, after six months, because companies don't want to pay for bonuses and even the 13th month pay [they let go of their employees]. Because if they [employees] reach one year, they have to be paid. That has to stop because our workers cannot acquire the skills that they learned . . . and even [if] you go abroad . . . Our people, the young people cannot ever, ever acquire the experience and the enterprise to really be an electrician because they are underemployed or work menial jobs abroad. So that is an injustice committed against the people of the Republic of the Philippines. I will not allow that as President of this country.

The first statement in Duterte's response ("the moment I assume the presidency, contractualization will stop") can be construed a deadline. Duterte implied that he recognized the need for urgency and that he had an immediate solution to the problem. Notice that in his response, Duterte explained the issue of labor contractualization in a nutshell and why such problem exists. While the explanation, translated to English, may itself be unclear and inarticulate, his conclusion tied back to the image he wants to build—a candidate who will not allow injustice unto his countrymen. With regard to the steps he would take to put an end to unfair labor practices, Duterte said "I will call all, mostly, the majority, Liberal Congressman, you pass this bill immediately. I will tell the Senate, "I need it the first week of my administration." That's it. I will tell them to do it. That's the president ordering everybody."

The statement is another example of how Duterte banked on his political will to enforce policies and legislation. Notice how even in this response, he used the word "immediately" and the statement "I need it first week of my administration" as part of the appeal to expediency. Voters who are tired of the bureaucratic red tape find Duterte's rhetoric of immediate and swift action appealing. Halfway through his term, however, labor contractualization still remains a threat to a Filipino workers'

security of tenure. In fact in 2019, Duterte vetoed the bill that guarantees security of tenure to Filipino workers (Ranada).

On the issue of worsening traffic in the Philippine capital of Metro Manila, Duterte also gave himself a time frame. He combined this time frame with simple shortcuts that are not rooted in policy:

> There is no silver bullet and magic to solve the traffic problem now. And the six years that's given to the president—and maybe I would take about a year or two to improve. One mass rapid transit, light rail transit and build another as suggested by—I will copy from Madam Santiago. We have to build new railways, the fastest and where, maybe along Pasig River . . . But just the same, I have to improve the present situation.

While Duterte made concessions ("there is no silver bullet and magic to solve the traffic problem now"), he still left a time frame by which people can judge the fulfillment of his promises ("I would take about a year or two to improve the traffic situation"). Moreover, Duterte openly admitted that he is willing to "copy" the plans of his opponents ("I will copy from Madam Santiago"). This is another example of how Duterte resorted to shortcuts in the interest of expediency. He used the same shortcut in his closing statement in the third debate when he said that he's used to "copying" (cheating) since "Grade 1" (referring to grade school) anyway. Today, however, the traffic situation in Metro Manila, the nation's capital, remains the same.

Another shortcut Duterte used is the politics of "I will." Consider the following exchange between Duterte and an audience member:

> Question: Our place lacks doctors, equipment, and medicines. Many were sick and eventually died like my father. He would still be alive today if I knew someone who could help. Does someone still need to suffer before . . . [inaudible]

> Duterte: It would be a good idea if you can place one doctor per barangay and he acts as the physician of that barangay [village]. Now, if it's a tertiary—if it's just an—if it needs hospitalization, operation, they can always bring—I have 911 [hotline]. It's free. Call 911 and people will be brought to the hospital and I pay. I will pay.

While he had suggested the need for one doctor per village especially in rural areas, this did not materialize as healthcare continues to be inaccessible to Filipinos living in far-flung areas. Instead, what is operational to this day is the 911 hotline "for quick response and emergency assistance to people in distress" (Talabong). Duterte's statement showed a personalistic style of leadership where he is willing to solve the problem himself. His 911 hotline is also an example of a shortcut.

This is one of the ways Duterte established rapport with the audience and framed his relationship with the public—as someone the people can run to in times of need. The politics of "I will" is another shortcut because it places Duterte at the center of intervention. His argument was bound by his claims of what he thinks he can personally and individually do.

Appeal of the Politics of "I will"

Duterte's politics of "I will" gained traction against the comparison with politicians who are perceived as "all talk, no execution." This can be seen in comments by Duterte supporters during the campaign claiming that it is better to have a president who talks tough but gets the job done instead of someone who may be tactful but incompetent. It is implicit in this claim that Duterte's speech or words are "mere rhetoric" and that "actions still speak louder than words." The politics of "I will" also works to suggest the efficiency and accessibility of an on-the-ground action by a top-level official, as opposed to a reliance on an inept bureaucracy or procedural quagmire which many Filipinos are too familiar with and have increasingly become weary of. Duterte's personalistic leadership style also fits well in patronage-driven politics in the Philippines where a politician develops relationship with the voters.

Duterte's ethos is that of an everyman, built on the humanizing rhetoric of the ordinary, vernacular, and humorous—a point I go back to in my discussion below. Duterte was also pro-Marcos, anti-Aquino. As mentioned, Duterte seized the Aquino administration's blunders as an opportunity to provide a counterpoint. Pro-Marcos voters certainly approve of Duterte as the latter has expressed admiration for Ferdinand Marcos on various occasions. Finally, Duterte's sustained popularity can be explained by the way he activated publics that have been excluded from highbrow political talk; re-energized segments of the population in Visayas and Mindanao divorced from the affairs of imperial Manila; and found supporters among voters in urban centers who bear the brunt of worsening traffic in the metro, the lack of security of tenure in their contractual jobs, and the threat to their lives and livelihood due to growing crime.

While Duterte's promises were unmatched by actions and policies (ensuring security of tenure and standing up to China in the territorial dispute), his popularity continues to surge because of ethos (his perceived credibility) and pathos (relationship with the governed). Aristotle's work on classical rhetoric defines logos as the "appeal to reason," ethos as the appeal to "the authority or character of the speaker," and pathos as the "appeal to emotions of the audience" (Martin 58). So what exemplifies the configuration of Duterte's appeals to reason, credibility, and emotion? I argue that Duterte capitalized on embodied storytelling as a form of argumentation built on ethos (identity of speaker) and pathos (relationship with audience).

Strategic maneuvering is not concerned with issues such as a rhetor's credibility going into the debates and factors that might make audiences receptive to speakers. Ethos and pathos are thus important to consider in a political campaign where who you are and how you are perceived are equally (if not more) important than what you say. By positing that embodied storytelling is Duterte's form of argumentation, I look at Duterte's rhetorical performance holistically by moving beyond strategic maneuvering's overinvestment in lines of argument.

BEYOND STRATEGIC MANEUVERING: EMBODIED STORYTELLING

By embodied storytelling, I am referring to the ways in which Duterte capitalizes on his identity as a source of narratives that resonate with audiences. Embodied storytelling functions in three ways as Duterte's form of argumentation. First, it generates content by placing Duterte at the center of intervention in his use of populist and nationalist narratives. Second, it blurs the line between the message and messenger through the complementarity of Duterte's ethos and logos. Finally, it constructs a relationship between the rhetor/speaker and audience or the public. These factors contribute to the appeal of Duterte's rhetoric.

First, embodied storytelling has made Duterte the main character in the populist and nationalist narratives I outlined above through the politics of "I will" ("I will not commit the lives of Filipino soldiers," "I will go there [China] myself" and "plant the Philippine flag"). Duterte's identity was also crucial as a source of narrative as he harped on his political will to solve the country's problems or claimed that he offers "leadership" and as opposed to "only platforms." As a Mindanaoan, Duterte argued that addressing the "historical injustice" in Mindanao is key to the region's development. Other candidates cannot be seen as more credible on issues such as autonomy, insurgency, and development in Mindanao because Duterte has served as mayor of Davao for the longest time and is the first president to hail from the region. Second, Duterte's embodied storytelling also blurs the line between the message and messenger. This can be seen in Duterte's insistence that if he says that he will eradicate crime in six months, then "I will do it." The use of his identity closes the argument. Duterte is at once the arguer and the argument, the candidate making promises and actor to fulfill the promises, the rhetor and the problem solver. Duterte's message cannot be divorced from his identity because crude and crass language also attaches as his "brand" or "signature style."

Any candidate who appropriates the way Duterte talks tough will thus sound less convincing because it is a style that attaches only to Duterte's ethos and is expressed through his message. At least on the issue of peace and order, Duterte

has shown himself or was perceived to be the most credible in his claim to have transformed Davao as one of the safest cities in the Philippines. This is not to say that Duterte always puts his money where his mouth is. The point is that messages are invested in the persona of the messenger. It is thus important to establish a credible or an authoritative identity to make people receptive to a speaker's message.

Finally, Duterte's embodied storytelling establishes a relationship with the audience through a humanizing rhetoric that is personal; informal; and uses anecdotes, the vernacular, and humor. While the purpose of Duterte's embodied storytelling is to inform and persuade the audience of his character, it also works to allow the audience to identify with Duterte through resonant themes of simplicity (Duterte dressed casually in the town hall debate unlike his opponents who stuck to party colors and signature outfits), eschewing complexity (Duterte acting as storyteller rather than a debater/orator), and channeling popular sentiment (by attacking administration bets that no other candidate dared to do).

In his closing statement in the town hall debate, Duterte's rhetoric is a soft sell compared to that of his opponents ("I don't have anything to brag about" and "I never did any greatness"). These statements humanize Duterte as a candidate, a rhetoric that can resonate with audiences who find Roxas and Santiago out of touch, perceive Poe as scripted and rehearsed, or find Binay trite and traditional. Duterte pulled off the trick of populists like Joseph Estrada and Fernando Poe Jr. to show that he is not "above anyone of us" but is rather "just like us." It is in this vein that Duterte can be seen as speaking the language of the masses. While Duterte is not an original in this regard, he is also different for speaking in ways unrestricted by political correctness and the requirements of diplomacy.

In the debate, Duterte mentioned his weaknesses ("I'm a very impatient man", "People say I'm a murderer, maybe I am") and his supposed lack of interest in power ("if I say I'll do it I'll really do it, even at the expense of . . . honor or the prestige, or the presidency"). These statements show a form of embodiment based on admission and equivocation. Admitting that he is a "very impatient man," Duterte previews his potential conduct and approach once in office. No other candidate in the debate admitted to a compromising weakness. The other candidates reminded the audience of criticisms about themselves only to rebut the same (Poe's inexperience, failures of "Daang Matuwid," and corruption charges against Binay).

Meanwhile, Duterte's equivocation is seen in his statements about being a "murderer." While Duterte did not categorically admit or deny his involvement with extrajudicial killings or ordering the killings of civilians via the Davao Death Squad (DDS), he nonetheless reframed these killings and executions as operating "in the

interest of the country." This equivocation invites the audience to maintain a certain level of skepticism about the truth of his statements or examine their commitment or loyalty to Duterte. What can be surmised, however, is that some voters chose Duterte despite, or maybe because of, the knowledge that he is willing to "wipe out" criminals. Duterte acting as a vigilante himself is an open secret. Duterte may thus represent the thoughts and feelings of voters that may sound inappropriate when articulated but nonetheless lie beneath the surface (e.g., keeping streets safe even if it amounted to killing). Trust in Duterte, therefore, may lie in the way he embodies his rhetoric ("People say I'm a murderer, maybe I am"; "If I say I'll do it I'll really do it, even at the expense of...honor or the prestige, or the presidency").

By openly admitting his weaknesses and equivocating on his involvement with vigilante killings, Duterte demystified the presidency. Viewed charitably, Duterte has expanded what can be said in political discourse by "telling it as it is"—calling out the Catholic Church's abuses and directing attention to the "hypocrisy" of international bodies such as the United Nations. However, Duterte's embodied storytelling has also shown that a president can be "unpresidential," rationalizing his infamous rape joke by telling Poe in the debate that "you are you and I am I" and, on various occasions, mouthing expletives at people who draw his ire which are covered in the evening news. While Duterte did not curse anyone in the debate, he was nonetheless confrontational toward Roxas. Consider the following exchange:

> Duterte: I do not believe you. You have made so many promises in your term in government but you gave nothing to the people. All talk, announcement. No implementation. And if there is one, it's all corruption.

> Roxas: Mayor Duterte, I dare you. If I show you evidence of people, names, hospitals we helped and built in Davao City, are you going to back off? The problem is, if you don't believe the actual facts, you will ignore them. This is the truth so let's not fool our countrymen that nothing has been done and accomplished. Truth is the basis of any leadership.

> Duterte: Well, this is a nationwide problem. The people of the Philippines are listening. Is this guy [Roxas] telling the truth? If you really are telling the truth and the Filipinos believe that you should be the next president of the Philippines, then why are you last in the rating [lagging behind in the polls]?

> Roxas: It's very simple. Filipinos can really see your attitude, Mayor Duterte, that you are not worthy. That's why on May 9th, the straight, decent, and worthy will win—no other than Mar Roxas.

> Duterte: Susmaryosep! [Filipino contraction of the words Jesus, Mary, and Joseph equivalent to the expression *Oh my God*!]

This exchange captures how Duterte's embodied storytelling operates—there is a compelling problem (drugs destroying the country, or Mar Roxas/the Liberal Party are crooks and the scapegoat for the crisis); Duterte is the savior and redeemer in the story ("I can/I will"); audiences can identify with this story (they cheer and laugh at Duterte's rape joke or that Roxas lags behind in the polls). This structure provides a steady source of narrative for Duterte as he mobilizes the appeal of ethos and pathos that substitute for logos. While other politicians may also use embodied storytelling as a strategy, how it works and its consequences will depend on the ethos or whether the rhetor/speaker is perceived as credible.

PITFALLS OF EMBODIED STORYTELLING

As with any rhetorical strategy and performance, embodied storytelling has its share of criticisms. Duterte's use of populist and nationalist narratives identifies shared emotions with the audience and expresses feelings of unity with the people or pride in the nation. While arguments can be cast as stories and vice versa, a closer look at Duterte's statements in the debate that build populist and nationalist narratives shows how reason-giving is wanting in Duterte's embodied storytelling. Duterte neither argued policy or ways to defend the Philippines against China, nor provided a platform detailing the ways he intends to execute his promises. Similarly, Duterte's appeal to expediency, recourse to shortcuts, and politics of "I will" spruced up his credibility/image and appealed to people's emotions rather than outlined an argument.

Embodied storytelling fits perfectly in the celebrity culture in Philippine politics glittered with soundbites and spectacle. Mainstream media have the tendency to focus on conflict and controversy at the expense of elevating the quality of public discourse. In this environment, stories and narratives gain currency especially when they are about a prominent figure whose speech and actions sell publicly and are received widely. Duterte's attacks on Mar Roxas, expletives directed at personalities, and simplistic solutions to problems capture media attention for how they break the norms and expectations that inhere in the presidency. The (unwitting) complicity between the media and politicians who court each other's attention can thus affect the quality of political discourse consumed by focusing on sleazy over meaningful details.

Duterte's form of argument based on audience rapport and personal credibility must also be understood against the backdrop of Philippine political campaigns that privilege personality as opposed to platform, patronage over policy. While it is ideal to have all politicians talk about concrete policy and feasible solutions, this is not the default in Philippine politics where leaders would much rather develop a relationship with those they govern rather than engage in compelling debate. Duterte's embodied storytelling, a strategy that can be viewed by some as "authentic," was not developed in a vacuum. It operates in a context where voters themselves consider sincerity, likeability, personality, and popularity of their leaders over measures and factors that constitute competent leadership.

Duterte's unfiltered articulation of thoughts and emotions is also seen as a source of his authenticity, a mark of a leader who is able to speak his mind—the more direct, straightforward, swift and decisive, the more honest and useful. This supports a case for Duterte telling stories not just for narration's sake but also because the stories he shares are rooted in who he is, the way he speaks, and how/what he really thinks. Among Duterte's supporters, it is therefore common to rationalize and defend Duterte along the lines of "that's how he (Duterte) really is" or "I'd rather have a foul-mouthed president than a polite, inept one." This is a notion, however, that must be carefully interrogated with the benefit of hindsight. Was Duterte's rhetoric all for naught or was it indeed constitutive of action?

Duterte's embodied storytelling works when he sees to it that his promises are fulfilled. However, Duterte's stories are for naught when the public clamors for clear and transparent action, yet what they get is a president rambling on national television even as his signature speaking style is never lost. In other words, embodied storytelling loses its luster when it is inappropriately used in a context where a standard for reason and a higher standard for action are demanded. As Duterte's embodied storytelling is built on his credibility, it will become less effective when weighed against the demands of accountability. The classic and perpetual question to ask, therefore, is whether and how Duterte continues to bridge the chasm between his rhetoric/speech and his action/policy.

Embodied storytelling works when speech and action are indistinguishable ("I do as I say" and vice versa). It fails when they are contradictory (when Duterte's promises and policies are not met with the avowed action). A crucial thing to consider as well is whether people will see the contradictions because as I mentioned, embodied storytelling also develops a relationship between the rhetor and audience. Will a difference between Duterte's rhetoric and action be interpreted as Duterte flip-flopping on policy or will it be selectively ignored because of belief and loyalty to a persona?

RHETORIC AS AN EMBODIED PERFORMANCE: LESSONS THAT CAN BE LEARNED

I initiated my analysis of Duterte's rhetoric in the town hall debate using the framework of strategic maneuvering where I showed that Duterte capitalized on the use of populist and nationalist narratives, the appeal to expediency, shortcuts, and the politics of "I will" as lines of argument. Using these descriptions as the springboard, I argued that Duterte employed another form of "argument" that is not based on pure reason—embodied storytelling that banks on the appeals of ethos and pathos and its pitfalls. In this final section of the analysis, I will outline lessons that can guide future rhetorical strategies or practices of discourse-making through the concepts of embodiment, identification, resonance, and cultivation.

Embodiment

Unlike his predecessors who seemed to merely deploy rhetoric, Duterte "performed" rhetoric through embodiment. Duterte did not mind political correctness, spoke in a manner unrestrained by strictures of diplomacy, and perhaps unwittingly, demystified the presidency. By embodiment, I am suggesting two possibilities— that Duterte styled himself to appear a certain way (in the sense of performing) and that he is acting naturally, unfiltered, and unrehearsed. His being foul-mouthed and refusal to stick to the script (literally in his state of the nation addresses and press conferences) show the possibility that authenticity (or a semblance thereof) always attaches to his performance. The question is what this supposed authenticity is good for and what its consequences are.

Duterte's assent to the presidency also animates a lively discussion on the strategy of the politician-as-storyteller versus the politician-as-debater/orator. While I do not endorse the view that Duterte is an original among politicians dubbed as "storytellers," I argued that Duterte's rhetoric is one that is unique for its tensions and contradictions—shocking yet winnable, violent but resonant, and impolite but popular. There is therefore a need for nuance in understanding Duterte's rhetoric. I offered the concept of embodied storytelling to suggest that Duterte uses identity as a source of stories that resonate with audiences. The success of its use depends on whether the identity at the center of the narrative is perceived by the audience as trustworthy and whether rhetoric and messages become realities through action and policy.

Identification

Duterte capitalized on embodied storytelling by claiming personal authority and tapping into audiences' pent up frustrations, anxieties, and hope. There is a difference

when politicians persuade as opposed to when voters identify with politicians. When politicians persuade, the communication is top-down and often hard sell ("vote for me"). When audiences identify, there is potential for communication "from below" or a groundswell of support from voters themselves, regardless of whether the politician is deliberately attempting to persuade. When the support for a politician is due to identification, more votes can be garnered as people join the bandwagon based on the perception of grassroots support for a candidate.

The affordances of social media have also allowed more participatory forms of communication from the voters themselves. While social media platforms can be manipulated by politicians to create the impression of grassroots support (a process known as astroturfing), social media also democratized access to communication. People are no longer just consuming messages from politicians via traditional media (print, TV, and radio) but creating their own messages. To achieve identification, politicians employ resonance as an organizing principle in their campaign communication. A politician must be relatable. His/her values, image, and policy must complement voter beliefs, attitudes, and priorities.

Resonance

A resonant campaign message will depend on the preceding political order and situation that a future president will inherit. In Duterte's case, the criticisms against the Liberal Party for its handling of the Mamasapano clash and "tanim-bala" extortion scheme, among others, set the stage for a crime-busting platform heralded by Duterte. Political narratives are also received variably over time. Estrada's populism worked in 1998, but not when Binay employed a similar narrative in 2016. Benigno Aquino Jr.'s reformist agenda through "Daang Matuwid" worked in 2010, but did not carry Roxas to victory. Using the right narrative at the right time is then part of the complex formula to electoral success.

Cultivation

In relation to resonance and identification, Duterte's rhetorical performance is also characterized by cultivation. Duterte's ethos was not created in a vacuum or merely months prior to running for the presidency in 2016. Duterte "the strongman"—a rhetorical construction (assemblage of words, visuals, symbols, and representation)—is a reputation which originated from his stint in local government as the tough-talking, motorcycle-riding mayor of Davao with links to vigilante killings or the Davao Death Squad. Duterte's rise is therefore not ahistorical. It would be well worth a presidential candidate's time then to have a carefully cultivated image prior to the elections.

CONCLUSION

I initially sought to investigate Duterte's lines of argument through a framework of political argumentation developed in the liberal democracy of the United States. Using Duterte's rhetorical performance in the Philippine town hall debate as a case, I argued that candidates like Duterte mobilize other forms of argument. I offered embodied storytelling as Duterte's form of argumentation built on the rhetorical appeals of ethos and pathos along with his use of populist and nationalist narratives, appeal to expediency, resort to shortcut, and the politics of "I will."

Now four years through his term, Duterte continues to engage in embodied storytelling with mixed consequences—what was once touted as refreshing during the campaign because of a semblance of authenticity has now, in the context of the pandemic, more forcefully drawn the ire of citizens demanding detailed policy and concrete action. A rhetorical performance must therefore be continuously interrogated through time, going beyond a single event. I also listed implications of Duterte's strategies to future discourse-making. These include considerations about the use of identification, resonance, and cultivation.

As I have indicated, some of Duterte's promises in the town hall debate were abandoned. Future studies can thus more explicitly compare Duterte's promises with his actual performance in office. Jamieson noted that "following their lead, we should probe and publicize both what presidential debaters reveal and conceal, when they reliably forecast a presidency and when what we see in debates is not what we get in office" (93). The larger implications of promise-making practices to democratic and deliberative decision-making must be analyzed because presidential rhetoric has its origins even before one assumes office.

One must also note the limitations of televised debates. A town hall debate is supposed to encourage interaction between candidates and the audience. However, in the 2016 presidential town hall debate, the audiences were not given the opportunity to challenge and seek clarification from the candidates. Future debates can therefore limit the number of topics or issues to be discussed. There should be more focus on debatable policies and issues (e.g., whether the Philippines should adopt federalism and on what grounds, or whether the death penalty should be reinstated for drug-related crimes). Finally, Zarefsky's framework is focused on the content of arguments. Studies of Philippine presidential debates must continue to look beyond frameworks such as strategic maneuvering that may not account for rhetorical performances built on ethos and pathos. Developing rhetorical frameworks foregrounding the country's sociopolitical milieu can be a productive endeavor in the study political campaign discourse in the Philippines.

NOTE

1. In a letter issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs to the US Embassy, the termination of the VFA was suspended "in light of political and other developments in the region" ("Philippines Backtracks").

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