

Just Kidding? Examining OFWs' responses to Duterte's jokes and their perceptions of women's safety under his leadership

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ABSTRACT

The road to presidency of Rodrigo “Digong” Duterte has been particularly challenging for Filipino women and feminist organizations. Since the 2016 elections, he has been drawing local and international criticisms for his misogynistic remarks on women which are frequently disguised as jokes. This paper contributes to sociological and feminist literature on gender and populism in two ways. First, by examining the gendered responses of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to Duterte's scandalous jokes; and second, by presenting OFW's perceptions of women's safety under Duterte's leadership. Using Fine's (1983) work on the social context of humor acceptance and Frye's (1983) conceptualization of women's double bind, I analyze ten in-depth interviews with OFWs in Singapore and propose a set of four responses to Duterte's misogynistic jokes. The first response is that the jokes are unbelievable, second is that they

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are embarrassing, third is that they are typical, and lastly is that they are forgivable. The interviews revealed that some OFWs are not even familiar with Duterte's jokes due to their busy work schedules. They initially do not believe that the jokes came from him when it was first discussed with them. Meanwhile, those who know about the criticisms Duterte is receiving for those jokes are embarrassed because of how it negatively affects the collective moral reputation of Filipinos. Towards the conclusion, I reveal stark differences in the responses of male and female OFW participants. Males defended how typical the jokes are in Philippine context while females posited that the jokes are forgivable but should still be hidden from the public. Overall, I argue that Duterte's misogynistic jokes are deemed as unnecessary but tolerable by OFWs. This response is intimately linked to how, as I show in this article, OFWs perceive better prospects for women's safety in Duterte's administration. They expect a safe space for women, drawing inspiration from socio-political developments in Davao City and Singapore. These OFW perspectives and aspirations, in turn, are influenced by both their current geographic location and social position as precarious migrant workers in an illiberal yet safe society.

Keywords: OFWs, Rodrigo Duterte, Philippines, Singapore, misogyny

INTRODUCTION

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Duterte admitted to having two girlfriends whom he meets up with from time to time just for "short time" sex. In a campaign sortie in Luzon, he forcibly kissed women supporters in the lips saying that it is harmless and a source of his happiness. In a different campaign occasion, he spoke about an Australian missionary who was raped and killed in a prison riot in Davao City. He said that as the Mayor that time, he should have been the first to rape the woman. Towards the end of the campaign period, he called his daughter a drama queen after she claimed that she is a rape survivor. Post-elections, he wolf-whistled a female journalist on a nationally televised press conference and

also admitted ogling at the Vice President's legs during meetings because of her short skirts. After imposing martial law in Mindanao, he gave a speech in a military camp and told the troops that they could rape up to three women each. In a speech to Filipino diplomats, he talked about how raping kids are unacceptable but raping a Miss Universe means having balls. The list of Duterte's misogynistic remarks is long and he has been drawing local and international criticisms for it.

In spite of the abovementioned controversial remarks, around 600,000 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) showed their support for Duterte by organizing almost 160 campaign chapters globally (Ranada, 2016). Although the numbers of the campaign chapters overseas may be hard to independently verify, the evidence of OFW support for him is apparent in Duterte's landslide victory of 72% among overseas absentee voters (Cook & Salazar, 2016). Furthermore, the 2016 elections recorded the highest turnout for overseas absentee voting over the past nine years according to the Commission on Elections (ABS-CBN News, 2016; Rappler, 2016). Cook and Salazar (2016) also reported that Duterte certainly benefitted from growing overseas votes and further explained that OFWs are in an "influential position to shape their families' and immediate social networks' voting choices" (p. 7). The same work also showed that the top five countries with the highest OFW voters are the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hong Kong, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore. There is however not enough evidence to show if the votes for Duterte by those in the Philippines increased because of the encouragement by OFW family members.

President Duterte himself has also been actively pursuing OFW support since the conduct of this study in 2017. In February 2018, the president himself attended the wake of Joanna Demafelis, who was killed and then kept in a freezer by her employers in Kuwait. This was followed by a travel ban order to Kuwait, although it ended with a bilateral agreement between the Philippines and Kuwait for additional protection for OFWs. In November 2018, Duterte welcomed Jennifer Dalquez in Malacañang as she was saved from death row in UAE. In his 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA), he expressed his high regard for OFWs and proposed to have a separate department for them in view of the execution of an unnamed domestic Filipina helper in Saudi Arabia earlier

that year. When the killing of Jeanelyn Villavende in Kuwait happened in December 2019, the travel ban order to Kuwait was re-imposed but it lasted for only two months, as OFWs voiced out their concerns on their jobs. In early 2020, amid the coronavirus pandemic and clamor of OFWs online, Duterte scrapped the 3% mandatory premiums that were required by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth). All these show that Duterte values the support from OFWs and wishes to maintain, if not further strengthen, the relationship he has with them. However, at the same time, Duterte has also been continuously dropping sexist remarks and jokes that have been unpleasant to the public and even the international community (see Lanuza, 2020; Parmanand, 2020).

As Duterte's remarks are criticized globally, it is crucial to know how OFWs think about their transnational position vis-à-vis being a Duterte supporter. Dubbed as "the greatest workers of the world" and the country's "greatest export" by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (Serquiña, 2016) and as "the ideal immigrant" by other nations (Gardiner Barber, 2008), OFWs are conscious of the moral collective identity that are expected of them. The family-oriented character of OFWs is seen in support practices among siblings (Aguilar, 2013) and in the mother's mediating role on OFW fathers and children relations (Yeung, 2013). Also part of the supposed public image of OFWs is their hardworking and adaptive character (Polanco, 2017) that makes them more attractive to foreign employers. These literature show that OFWs have a shared awareness that judgements on how they behave overseas will reflect on the OFW population and even the entire country. I will also show in this study how OFWs are particularly careful even with the jokes they express publicly. So how do OFWs respond to a situation wherein the highest official of the land gets criticized internationally for joking about raping a dead woman or shooting rebel women in the vagina?

This paper aims to (1) examine the gendered responses of OFWs to Duterte's misogynistic jokes and (2) present their perceptions of women's safety under Duterte's leadership. The next section will present theoretical groundings that will be employed in this paper and then a discussion on the methodologies. The last two sections will be composed of the presentation of analysis and conclusions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GENDERED FUNCTIONS OF SEXIST AND MISOGYNISTIC HUMOR

Before further exploring this topic, it is helpful to distinguish between sexism and misogyny, two words often interchangeably used when scrutinizing jokes about women. Sexism can be generally defined as the discrimination based on sex or gender, which happens most of the time to women and girls, but often extends to transgender people. Misogyny, on the other hand, is hatred for women which can be seen in blatant acts of sexism, harassment, or violence. Misogyny is a broader term that signals greater danger for women, while sexism, which includes enforcement of gender stereotypes, plays a part in it. In the context of this paper, Manne's (2018) argument that misogyny also controls and punishes women who challenge patriarchal relations will be drawn upon. The remarks or jokes by Duterte mentioned in the first section can therefore be classified as misogynistic humor as it ridicules and threatens a specific target group—women. Women from different walks of life are targets—from girlfriend(s), rape victims, Miss Universe, to even his own daughter. He has attacked female journalists working in the male-dominated media industry and even Maria Leonor Robredo, the Vice President of the Philippines.

Studies in psychology have shown that delivering sexist and misogynistic messages through jokes make it easier for men to release their suppressed prejudices against women. However, it causes women to have difficulty in initiating confrontations about the hidden messages of the said jokes (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Mallett, Ford, & Woodzicka, 2016). Sex roles are also analyzed in several classical studies such as the work of Davis and Farina (1970) about communicating sexual interest through humor. In the study, they found that males prefer to laugh more at sexual jokes delivered by those they perceive as attractive females. The delivery of a joke and the laughter on it implies an acceptance of whatever the joker has to offer to an audience or to an individual being communicated with.

While gender is a huge consideration, social context is another factor being looked into by sociologists. In the classic study of Fine

(1982) about boys in preadolescent life and their engagement with sexual jokes, he found the important role of humor in the establishment of a social group and the competence of an individual about sexual knowledge. Fine also explained how such humor functions as a provider of space for boys to express their ignorance about sex. In this study, an extended version of Fine's argument will be employed as the participants are no longer in the preadolescent life stage. I posit that male OFWs engage with sexual jokes because they adjust to the space where they currently reside. As the OFW population in Singapore is dominated by females (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2018), males use humor in order to not be fully sexually offensive and hence remain in the social group of mixed sex.

The other framework that will be engaged in this study is by Frye (1983) and his conceptualization of double bind, wherein women are tied to options that penalize them either way. If a sexist joke is delivered, she can play the role of a killjoy by not laughing and calling out the joker. Or she can be a supporter of the group that humiliates women by doing otherwise. In both situations, her social group will have a negative reaction towards her. Double bind is therefore utilized in this study as the everyday lives of women OFWs include engagement first to their employers who sometimes ask questions and also make fun of the remarks by Duterte, and second to fellow male OFWs who also occasionally bring up the same remarks when they hang out during weekends. The engagements of male OFWs are quite different as the nature of their work does not require them to reside in the homes of their employers but rather stay in dormitories or in their own shared apartments with fellow workers.

The consideration of both social and geographic context and the double bind situation of women in analyzing responses to misogynistic jokes are central in this paper. I suggest that OFWs are in an interesting yet perplexing physical and political position that is worth studying because as I will show in this study, they are exposed to critical discussions on his crass politics either with their employers or fellow workers, which "works well in today's mediatized cultures... as well as broader cultures of violence and sexism" (Curato, 2017a, p. 5).

FEMINIST METHODOLOGY: INTERVIEWING OFWS IN SINGAPORE

Out of the eight million OFWs, more than five and a half percent can be found in Singapore (PSA, 2017). As previously mentioned, Singapore is in the top five countries with the highest number of Filipino overseas voters. Every Sunday, OFWs can be found along Lucky Plaza in Orchard Road. Some of their activities include attending mass in the morning then spending the rest of the afternoon hanging out in karaoke bars, public parks, and sports facilities. Using Lefebvre's representational space and Scott's weapon of the weak, Cornelio (2008) argued that the transformation and occupation of Lucky Plaza by OFWs for eating and other mundane activities like singing, laughing, celebrating together, are not just for monopolized relaxation. Rather it should be seen as a collective action that expresses OFWs solidarity albeit being in a marginal position against establishment owners.

With the said occupation of space, this research is based on structured interviews conducted in two other places that Filipinos and other migrant workers also spend their weekends: Chinese Garden and Boon Lay Bus Interchange waiting area. The areas are chosen to further diversify locations of research projects conducted about OFWs in Singapore which are mostly based in Lucky Plaza (Wong, 1998; Yeoh, 1998, and Zhang, 2005). Three consecutive Sundays of April 2017 were spent looking for potential participants and conducting the interviews using snowball sampling. The criteria for the participants are simple, they must first have a valid working pass and second have supported and voted for Duterte. Participants were found initially as they hang out together and speak Tagalog to each other. I approached them and introduced myself as a graduate student conducting research about Duterte's remarks on women as televised and criticized in different news channels.

The process of approaching the OFWs, the initial conversations, and interview proper are done in Tagalog. There was difficulty in finding initial participants because some were not willing to talk about politics (or Duterte's jokes) for fear that their work permits might be revoked. Others were also not comfortable in having their responses audio recorded. I ended up with ten participants with an equal number of males and

females, but only two females and one male allowed audio recording. The participants knew each other and the last few interviews were done smoothly because the others had explained that the questions were easy to answer and they also gave the assurance that it will not affect their work in any way. For the rest who did not allow recording, note-taking was maximized during and after the interview itself. Each interview lasted for about 45 to 60 minutes. One participant asked to take a photo of the interview guide because she wants to validate my identity as a researcher or student; while two others jokingly asked if I am a journalist who will give away their identity to local media, which will make them “trending” on Facebook.

During the third Sunday, after the last interview, I was able to spend extra time with four of the participants as they invited me to have snacks with them. We exchanged stories about our families back home and they expressed interest in meeting other Filipino students too. In attempting to put into practice feminist research, I also shared my ideas about the questions I posed during the interview. Following this, I gave them copies of my calling cards in case they would want to keep in touch. The neutralization of hierarchical power relations (DeVault, 1996; DeVault & Gross, 2012; Oakley, 1981) is reflected as I gave them the option to have a visit at my university or to have food sometime in my apartment. None of them contacted me for any catch up sessions, but two added me on social media. I interpret this as the participants’ way of conveying their trust but at the same time putting boundaries on how they would want to acknowledge me.

The study also briefly touches on issues of power relations, authority, knowledge formation, and researcher’s reflexivity—which are all important in feminist research (Harding, 2004; Hesse-Biber, 2007). In both the framework and methodology, lived realities that influence women’s views on politics and humor are articulated. The work also includes men’s perspectives on the jokes in view of its functions on women. More importantly, the research was conducted during the peak of Duterte’s popularity and at the same time that women’s groups were increasingly becoming critical of his misogynistic jokes. Providing alternative views of OFW sisters from abroad is necessary to nuance Filipino women’s

standpoint on the issue. The study exposes the factors (geographic location and social position) that bring in differences in women's perspectives. Identifying these can be useful on future research with women OFWs, even beyond Singapore. With the said emphasis on women's issues and by promoting the exploration on women's experiences, the feminist research agenda is advanced in this study.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS: VARIOUS RESPONSES TO DUTERTE'S JOKES

In this section, I enumerate the four responses of OFWs towards Duterte's jokes. The first response is that the jokes are unbelievable, second is that they are embarrassing, third is that they are actually typical, and lastly is that they can be easily forgiven.

Duterte's jokes as unbelievable

There are cases wherein OFWs are not familiar with the jokes delivered by Duterte due to their busy schedules at work. Marco from Iloilo defended, "when I call my family, we talk about what happened in their schools and at home. I don't want to talk about negative or stressful things." He knows that Duterte delivers controversial jokes but he did not bother to know the specific details. When I ran down the jokes one by one, he asked several times, "is that true?" "really?" and "maybe that is fake news." I received the same reaction from Aileen, a domestic helper of six years residing in Simei, in the eastern part of Singapore. She also explained her lack of knowledge about the jokes, "Sorry I am always busy with work and I use the internet only to talk to my family and to watch Korean dramas." She also thinks the jokes are unbelievable, especially the ones related to rape. Aileen and I even spent a few minutes searching for the videos online and watching them together for her to see that the statements were indeed delivered by Duterte himself.

Both Marco and Aileen did not laugh when I discussed the jokes with them, but they also did not express criticism towards Duterte. The reaction is more of disbelief followed by surprise upon confirming that the jokes were indeed delivered in public. The social context played a role

in the said response because both of them did not know the severity of the joke and they do not have a social space where it can be discussed with friends or relatives. Because the jokes were delivered months earlier before they knew about them, and we discussed the international and local responses by institutions towards the jokes, I presuppose that Marco and Aileen are surprised but at the same time also careful not to show their opinions on the jokes.

Duterte's jokes as embarrassing

It was revealed that embarrassment is felt when OFWs are asked about Duterte's jokes because they see them as a threat to the collective reputation of Filipinos. Monic who has been working as a domestic helper for 11 years shared that, "Sometimes I feel embarrassed (*nahihiya*) whenever my employer tries to ask me. But I think she is kind of conservative because she questions Duterte's womanizing...which for me, is wrong but it is none of our business." This is complemented by another female participant, Erika, from Ilocos Sur who just arrived in Singapore a year ago. She shared, "Fellow foreign workers ask us (*Filipinos*) about him but we cannot say much. It is just embarrassing (*nakakahiya*)...he is our leader and he gets popular through his jokes." Both of them worry that Filipinos abroad will be questioned by employers and peers about Duterte's jokes, and they will have to face them with embarrassment and clarify that "it is just a joke."

The participants find it challenging to defend Duterte's remarks. However, Kevin, a factory worker does so by saying, "That (on womanizing) is his personal life even if it is a joke or not, we are not in the position to judge him. No one is perfect, right? In short, he is also a human being." Instead of being critical, he problematically forwards that womanizing is part of being (hu)man. In relation to this, I have observed that male participants are more vocal in justifying Duterte's jokes, may it be about ogling or kissing other women publicly. This brings us to the third form of OFW response which is the typicality of such jokes in the Philippines.

Duterte's jokes as typical

The interview participants had different ways of showing how Duterte's jokes are typical in the Philippines. There are those who compare it to Singapore, like Ramon, who hails from Mindoro: "I think that (wolf-whistling towards women) should not be seen as a big issue. People do that every day but, of course, not here in Singapore. But in the Philippines, that is normal. Maybe she is really beautiful. Whistling is just an expression that you see someone beautiful." Others express the typicality in relation to Pinoy humor. Daniel who has been in a refinery for two years tells me that "We Pinoys can understand the jokes but when it reaches an international audience, they take it too seriously!" as he refers to the rape joke on Miss Universe which was delivered in front of diplomats.

While all the participants answered in a serious manner, one managed to turn his thought into a sexual joke, "Maybe her [Vice President] knees are light colored because her husband is dead! Joke, joke! Please don't be mad... Maybe she is the only woman in the meeting so she became the center of attention. But nothing was done to harm her, so I think it should not be an issue," says Gilbert from Samar. This form of response that defends the typicality in the local context is found among male OFWs which echoes the study on male adolescents and their expression of ideas through humor. Fine (1980) explains in his work that "joking and teasing is an indicator that parties are having a good time" and this is demonstrated by Gilbert in the context that it is our second time to meet during the interview. The assumption is that jokes can break the ice and make people more comfortable with each other.

Duterte's jokes as forgivable

The last form of response is found among female OFWs. According to Grace, a newly settled OFW of three months, "I am also a woman. For me, it is not okay that you will tell the public that you have another woman. Especially if you have children. What will they feel?" which is similar to what Jona who is also a domestic helper said, "If there is an important meeting, it would be better for her [Vice President] to not wear

short skirts. You know, the eyes of men are sinful. They cannot control looking at women's legs." They see womanizing and ogling as something that is wrong, they however agree that it is just part of being man. In short, it is forgivable but better to be just a hidden narrative.

As discussed in the above literature, women are put in a difficult position whenever sexist jokes are delivered. In the case of Grace and Jona, they opt to forgive Duterte about the jokes but they prefer if he will just keep quiet about his misogynistic ideas instead of sharing it with the public. Why is it forgivable? The superiority theory on humor states that jokes as attacks on groups or individuals are done by those who want to assert their superiority (Duncan, 1985; Gruner, 2000).

The status roles of Duterte as president and of Grace and Jona for this matter show the relationship wherein women do not have much of a choice but to let the jokes slide because the one who delivered it is the country's leader. I will further argue that women OFWs have the tendency to propose an alternative, "to hide the story" because they are designated as kin keepers (Rosenthal, 1985). The Philippines as a society, with Duterte as the symbolic father (Evangelista, 2017), is expected to manage family stories and secrets. Exposing the jokes on womanizing thus "troubles the smooth façade of ordinary family life" (Smart, 2011, p. 551) and renders Filipino society open to moral questioning.

PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S SAFETY UNDER DUTERTE'S LEADERSHIP

Duterte's campaign team showcased Davao as one of the most progressive and orderly cities in the country in terms of handling gender and development (GAD) issues. In 1997, the city council passed the City Ordinance 5004 known as the Women Development Code of Davao. Consequently, the council established the Integrated Gender and Development Division, Barangay Council for Women, and Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Task Force. Since the formation of VAWC Task Force in 2005, there was an increase in reporting from women and the city council is proud to say that the culture of silence among VAWC survivors is disappearing (GAD Division, 2016). The local

government also created a Reproductive Health and Wellness Center for “reproductive health education, counselling and other services, including accessible alternatives for family planning, to clients most especially the indigents” even before a national reproductive health law was passed in 2012 (GAD Division, 2016; Manlupig, 2015).

Among other issues, prostitution in Davao is treated as a public health issue so sex workers are provided free sexually transmitted infection screenings and other related services. Police cannot arrest them for public solicitation and they are less likely to rely upon, and ultimately be exploited, by pimps (Domingo, 2016; Whaley, 2016). Childcare assistance for working parents on the other hand has been provided through the Child Minding Centers since 1998. The centers, supported by legal, social, and health services, promote “right to decent work, as it enables women to balance family responsibilities and work obligations” (PCW, 2015). Davao City as Exhibit A offered hope, peace, and change for the country (Curato, 2017b). With all these policies and programs being implemented effectively and also publicized by the Davaoeña women themselves from social media to news interviews, it is not surprising that women from Filipino women in Luzon, the Visayas, and abroad desire the benefits their sisters in Davao enjoy.

In the last part of the interview, OFWs were asked, “how do you see the situation of women in the Philippines under Duterte’s administration?” Daniel responded, “My wife said that people in our barangay are scared to do silly things now. No more late drinking and loud karaoke songs. Women should not worry because Duterte will surely protect them from addicts, criminals, and rapists.” This is in the context of Duterte’s drug war campaign which by the time of interview is being actively implemented already. The drug war campaign has resulted in vigilante style killings of low-level drug suspects during police operations. In several instances, it is done by masked men in plain clothes but with “clear ties to security forces.” The killings are rampant in major cities in Metro Manila such as Manila, Quezon City, and Caloocan but also high in Cebu and Bulacan (Aldama, 2018; David, et al., 2018; Kine, 2017). Daniel is coming from the perspective of a father and husband who is far from his family, and hence supportive of the drug war because it can keep his children and wife safe from drug addicts.

Safety and protection—these are the most common words that are mentioned as OFWs answer the last question. The OFWs are confident that women, despite being the target of Duterte’s jokes, will be safe and protected from criminals under his leadership. There is also a visible aspiration to have a Davao-like or Singapore-like society, as shared by Aileen, “Maybe women will be safer... and men will be in danger if they harass women. I am not really sure because I am not there. But I believe curfew and strict laws will really help. I hope someday that we will be like Singapore.” While the liberal approach of Davao on women’s rights is highly popular, the existence of its own Davao Death Squad (DDS) cannot be ignored. More than what Ramon says about curfew and strict laws, the DDS instilled fear among residents through the targeted killings based on a list of crime offenders as compiled by the local officials and police. In the 2009 report, it was however noted that there are also cases of “mistaken identities, unfortunate bystanders, and relatives and friends of an apparent target” (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Safety from criminals can then also result in the opposite end which is death by collateral damage. Duterte himself even referred to innocent individuals and children as such (Holmes, 2016). When I brought up this issue on collateral damage in the interview, none of the OFWs seem worried. Monic just simply said that “If you are not doing anything (illegal), you will be okay.”

The support for the drug war campaign, although not directly stated by any of the interviewees, is apparent. They mentioned the disciplined behavior of Davaoeños in relation to what they also see and experience as they work for Singaporeans, and they spoke highly of the kind of leadership that made people exemplary law-abiding citizens. Erika, although embarrassed whenever Duterte’s jokes are being talked about, expressed her satisfaction on the strong stance of Duterte against drug users. “He scares them on his own! He does not rely on other people to scare those addicts,” says Erika before we finally ended the conversation. The prospects of OFWs for women under Duterte’s leadership are influenced by the popularity of Davao’s case as a safe space for women and of Singapore as an illiberal yet safe society (for more, see Chua, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS: DUTERTE'S JOKES AS UNNECESSARY BUT TOLERABLE

Duterte and the popular support for him continue to entice and at the same time outrage scholars and various women's groups. Current studies about him, the drug war policies, and brand of leadership are covered in the works of Curato (2017c), Deinla & Dressel (2019), Heydarian (2018), and Miller (2018). More relevant to this study is the work of Curato and Ong (2018) where they discussed Duterte's disengagement with the moral politics of the country's democratic elites. Through collaborative ethnographic approach, the authors collected narratives of poor people from disaster stricken Tacloban City about their perceptions on Duterte and the logics behind their support for him. They conclude with three points: first is that Duterte's selective responsiveness in favor of his constituents and against his critics paved the way for his electoral win. Second is that his show of power in responding towards institutions (such as the Commission on Human Rights [CHR]) exposed his tendency to be a fascist leader. Third is that his initially empowering responsiveness to the poor was converted to benefit his own illiberal purposes. In a similar vein, Arguelles (2019) studied the electoral motivations of Duterte supporters through political ethnography in an urban poor community in Quezon City. He found three important dimensions in the motivations of the Philippine populist publics to fit their own political aspirations. The three are namely representational, experiential, and action-oriented. The first dimension shows the breaking of relations between politicians and the public as the latter prefer better "genuine representation." The second dimension demands for the authenticity of the politician in creative and more relatable ways—from manners to jokes. The last dimension reveals the desire of the public to have "immediate action and claim swift justice."

In an attempt to extend the said works about Duterte from political to sociological and feminist lenses, I interviewed in this study a segment of the Filipino population that lives outside the Philippines: the OFWs. I examined the gendered responses of OFWs toward the remarks of Duterte and presented the prospects of OFWs for women in the Philippines under Duterte's leadership. As discussed in the previous sections, I found that there are four responses towards Duterte's misogynistic jokes. The first

response is that the jokes are unbelievable, second is that they are embarrassing, third is that they are actually typical, and lastly is that they can be easily forgiven. Interviews revealed that there are cases wherein OFWs are not familiar with the jokes delivered by Duterte due to their busy schedules at work. They initially do not believe when the jokes are discussed with them. Those who know about the criticisms are embarrassed because they see it as a threat to the collective reputation of Filipinos, especially to those like them who live outside the country.

A stark difference between male and female participants was also evident. Males answered by defending the typicality of the jokes in Philippine context while females posited that the jokes are forgivable but better to be just a hidden narrative. Analyzing the differences will bring us back to the forwarded framework and concept by Fine (1980, 1982, 1983) and Frye (1983). The use of humor to escape exclusion or condemnation due to full blown sexual remarks are seen in Gilbert's reiteration of "Joke, joke!" as we conduct the interview. Other male participants such as Ramon shrugged off the whistling but emphasized that it is because the context is the Philippines, not Singapore. The problematic notion of typicality of misogynistic humor is largely seen among male OFWs. On the contrary, for female OFWs as presented above, Monic, Erika, Jona, and Grace expressed embarrassment but at the same time are willing to let it go because moral identities of Filipinos are at risk. The double bind situation in the said contexts even extend to the home country as the concerns dwell into family-related issues such as womanizing. As a female researcher, I am not exempted from the said double bind. I responded to Gilbert by smiling awkwardly and asking what he means by the joke, to which he responded, "No, no, it is nothing" before ending the laughter. Despite me fully understanding that the joke is about the lack of sexual activity of Vice President Robredo, it was a difficult situation to escape and maneuver back again to the actual interview.

Overall, I argue that the jokes delivered by Duterte are deemed as unnecessary but tolerable by OFWs. The jokes are unnecessary because it does not contribute to any of the promises given during the campaign, but rather put in jeopardy the morals of Filipinos in the international arena. As OFWs, it is one of their major concerns—to be thought of as immoral

by their employers and co-workers. I posit that the jokes are however tolerable for OFWs because the president is the one delivering it. The social and political status is high and to drop a criticism might put the OFWs and their work at stake. The support for Duterte does not mean that OFWs promote his misogynistic humor. In the previous section, I also showed how OFWs see a safe space, Davao-like, and even Singapore-like society for women as promised by Duterte. It should be noted that the results resonate with the OFWs from Saudi Arabia who expressed support for Duterte's violent politics in exchange for a peaceful community as what they see in the ways that laws are implemented in the Middle East (Ranada, 2015). As argued, these perspectives and aspirations are influenced by both their current geographic location in Singapore and social position as OFW.

As I write the final form of this paper, three years have passed since the actual interviews. In that same period that the study was conducted, there have been two documented cases of drug war-related deaths of children of OFWs. One is Kian delos Reyes, whose mother Lorenza is a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia and the second is Raymart Siapo, whose mother Luzviminda is also a domestic helper in Kuwait. Their deaths have been called by the government as "collateral damage." When we talk about prospects of women under Duterte's leadership, this include the future of these two women: Lorenza and Luzviminda, mothers working thousands of miles from home to give a better future for their young children, only to return home to find their children brutally killed by the police in vigilante style. OFWs manage to tolerate Duterte's misogynistic jokes that put into question the moral identity of Filipinos abroad. The tolerance is done in exchange for the promise that his administration nonetheless brings safety for their families back home. However, as we have seen in the rapidly expanding roster of victims of the president's drug war, it seems that the promise was just another example of Duterte's many cruel jokes.

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