

Populism, Patriarchy, Protest: Feminist Issues, Responses, and Actors During the First Three Years of the Duterte Administration

Rowena A. Laguilles-Timog

ABSTRACT

The rise of populist leaders, such as Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, is one of the recent challenges to feminist movements. Feminist response in the country, which has a long and continuing history of strong feminist movements, is therefore inevitable. This paper is thus interested in the feminist protests during the first half of Duterte's term of office, aiming to draw insights into his populism as it connects to patriarchy.

To answer this, a sample of feminist protest against events and issues connected to the Duterte administration between 2016 and 2019 in the Philippines were thematically analyzed. The following types of feminist issues were observed: public remarks and behavioral displays, major policies and their impacts, and political decisions. Meanwhile, protests came in the following forms: formal statements or speeches; demonstrations, rallies, and marches; and then campaigns, legal actions, direct assistance to affected communities.

Finally, actors ranged from private citizens, government officials, and groups varying from independent organizations to large networks.

The data point to patriarchy as the substance of the Duterte administration and populism as the style, distinguishable but inextricable from each other. Feminist protests, actors, and the issues they raise effectively provide counter-narratives to both patriarchal assumptions and populist rhetoric. However, the paper posits that the current political moment should be considered a learning opportunity for the feminist movement as it reveals the fragility of feminist gains over the years, as well as takes note of a new character of the feminist movement.

The rise of populist leaders is one of the recent challenges to feminist movements across the world, pushing their gains back and creating new issues of concern. In the United States, Donald Trump, who has been president since 2016, reinstated the “global gag rule,” or the withdrawal of funding support for any health organization offering abortion services (*Associated Press*, 2017). Meanwhile in Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, elected as president in 2019, had been criticized by tribal women for his “genocidal policies” that destroy the Amazon, promote large-scale mining, and threaten the life of indigenous peoples (*Agence France-Presse*, 2019). In the Philippines, we have Rodrigo Duterte, president since 2016.

This paper takes off from the connectedness of populism and patriarchy. As an ideology, populism is understood as a belief; as a discursive style, it is considered as language or rhetoric; and as a political strategy, it is regarded as a guide to making and carrying out political decisions. But at its core, populism is characterized by the promotion of a distinction between the interests of the majority of the population and the few powerful elite, with a strong leader speaking—or claiming to speak—for the people (Gidron & Bonikowski, 2013).

Such central focus on a singular opposition between the masses and the elites, however, tends towards the assumption of homogeneity

of either group; and this could mean the neglect of other issues of inequality. In fact, appealing to the masses may mean taking advantage of existing power structures—such as patriarchy—and as a result reinforcing them. Opposition to the populist leaders is furthermore easily drowned out as they take cover in the assumption that they are speaking for the masses. They take this as license, for instance, to exhibit misogyny. As Juego (2018) observes:

A distinctive characteristic of populism is its capacity for catch-all politics and cross-class alliances which, in turn, have a divide-and-rule effect among possible opposition groups... They choose to be unconstrained by the norms of political correctness, and this enables them to publicly express popular beliefs and opinions, such as machismo and sexism, that are held deep in the psyche of many people. (p. 6)

Duterte's leadership style fits common definitions of a populist, and how it links with patriarchy. According to Quintos-Deles (2018), this is characterized by: 1) the polarization between "the masses" and "the elite," the former of which he claims to be a part; 2) a projection of himself as an "outsider" to the established order of elite politicians since he is from Mindanao and despite himself being part of a political family in Davao; 3) the creation of a crisis that becomes the rationale for a flagship program such as the War on Drugs; 4) a projection as a "strongman" in the way he claims to be able to solve long-standing problems such as traffic and corruption; 5) exhibiting "bad manners and defiance of protocols"; and 6) the extensive use of social media in promoting these narratives (pp. 3-4). Other authors echo these observations, emphasizing his "adversarial and divisive political style," (Mendoza, 2018); "crass politics" (Curato & Ong, 2018); and "performative violence" (McCoy, 2017). The significance of Duterte's populism where gender is concerned has also been the focus of a few authors, pointing out his display and thus promotion of masculinity from the orthodox towards the toxic (Evangelista, 2017; Alqaseer, 2019) as well as on the negative impact of populism on gender equality in the Philippines

(Quintos-Deles, 2018). A common emphasis is on his public remarks that objectify women but which are often claimed to merely be jokes that are meant to bring laughter to and entertain the public (Mercado, 2019). Another critique falls on the blindness of his policies to women, such as his War on Drugs which has incurred an estimated 30,000 deaths (Ramos, 2019) and in which women as direct victims or surviving wives, mothers, and grandmothers are gravely affected.

PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

To paraphrase Jaggar (1988), where there is oppression, there is resistance; and the abovementioned manifestations of patriarchy in the context of populist leadership have indeed been met with feminist responses that reiterate calls for social transformation. Again on the global arena, Greta Thunberg easily comes to mind, as one courageous voice that urged international action regarding climate change (Gajanan, 2019). “A Day Without Women” also made history with the simultaneous mass protest actions in multiple countries, highlighting the various continuing issues women face (Topping, 2017). And of course, the #MeToo campaign has swept the internet, engaging women from all walks of life and all parts of the globe (Powell, 2017), attesting to the continuing demand to end gender-based violence.

Feminist protest alongside the rise of Duterte’s populism is inevitable in the Philippines, a country that has a long and continuing history of a strong feminist movement. For instance, women’s roles as warriors, spies, and healers in national liberation movements during the Spanish, Japanese, and American occupations have been established in literature (Ofreneo, Narciso-Apuan, & Estrada-Claudio, 1997; Santos, 2004). Their significant roles in organized resistance against Ferdinand Marcos’ Martial Law are also documented, with the particular rise of feminist organizations or women’s committees in larger social movements also stressed (Ofreneo et al., 1997; Sobritchea, 2004). Post-EDSA or People Power Revolution in 1986, feminist organizations have become even more numerous, notably more focused on specific human rights and development areas, and many of them are still present today. For example, Pambansang Tagapag-ugnay

ng mga Manggagawa sa Bahay (PATAMABA), formed in 1989, is a national organization of women homeworkers; while Likhaan Center for Women's Health, Inc., formed in 1995, is a grassroots-based non-government organization focusing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Markedly during the 1990s as well was the push for government engagement in the feminist agenda more than before, a highlight of which was the creation of the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, a 30-year plan crafted as early as 1995.

This paper is interested in the feminist protests during Duterte's term of office, aiming to draw insights into Duterte's populism as it connects to patriarchy. Particularly, its objectives are to: 1) Document the feminist protests—and the issues and actors behind them—during Duterte's first three years in office; and 2) analyze the implications of these protests on the dynamics between patriarchy and populism under Duterte.

To answer this, a sample of feminist acts of protest against issues or events linked with the Duterte administration between 2016 and 2019 in the Philippines were thematically analyzed. As an exploratory study, this paper considers as “protest” any verbal expression or physical demonstration of objection or disagreement that is made public—whether online or in real life. This paper also broadly accepts as “feminist” any act that either comes from feminist individuals and women's organizations or that at least highlights the gender aspect in a given issue or event.

Data were gathered from key online news reports, given their abundance, availability, and timeliness. Google News was used as the search engine, for purposes of efficiency, to minimize selection bias, and given the free access it provides. In finding the write ups on protests by women and/or that highlight gender issues on events related to Duterte, the words “Duterte,” “women,” and “gender” were used as the search filters. The search was further limited to write ups published from May 1, 2016 to May 31, 2019, which covers the first half of Duterte's presidency. This captures a substantial part of Duterte's leadership, while providing a manageable time frame for the researcher to work through.

A total of 84 news articles were included in the study, which come from local newspapers published online such as *The Inquirer* and *Philippine Star*; online newspapers such as *Rappler*, *Interaksyon*, and *CNN*

Life; and international newspapers such as *The Straits Times* and *Al Jazeera*. They were then organized chronologically, and the following information extracted and encoded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet: 1) motivating event/issue, 2) action—type and description, 3) actor—individual or group, and 4) role of social media, if any. Some articles mention several actors, responses, and/or issues at once, and thus the tally of observations for each may exceed the total number of articles reviewed. Other details were also noted when available, such as how the motivating event/issue was framed by the individual or group; the key message, goal, or purpose of the response; and the relationship/s among varied actors on a common motivating event. From here, trends and themes relevant to the research questions were analyzed.

FINDINGS

In a span of 37 months from May 2016 to May 2019, news articles reflected three major types of issues behind feminist protests: Duterte's public remarks and behavioral displays (45), his major policies and their impacts (29), and his political decisions (or lack thereof) regarding or causing controversial issues (20).

Most common among these are Duterte's remarks and displays that are inarguably sexist or downright misogynistic. In the first year, these included his catcalling of *GMA News* reporter Mariz Umali during a press conference, remarking how he ogled at Vice President Leni Robredo during cabinet meetings, encouraging soldiers to rape women during the Marawi siege, and commenting on the rape-slay of Australian nun Jacqueline Hamil:

Son of a bitch, what a waste. I was thinking that they raped her and lined up. I was angry because she was raped, that's one thing. But she was so beautiful, the mayor should have been first, what a waste. (*The Straits Times*, 2016)

On his second year, these included his remark of offering of 42 virgins to attract tourists, advising soldiers to shoot female rebels they encounter in the vagina, eating a candy with its wrapper as a metaphor for the undesirability of condom use, his pronouncement that he will never

appoint a woman as Chief Justice, and his congratulations to potential rapists of Miss Universe contestants:

What I don't like are kids (being raped.) You can mess with, maybe Miss Universe. Maybe I will even congratulate you for having the balls to rape somebody when you know you are going to die [for your crime]. (*Al Jazeera*, 2017)

And on his third year, his remarks and displays that elicited protests from feminists included kissing the Filipina migrant worker in a press conference in South Korea, citing beautiful women as the reason behind the high number of rape cases in Davao City, and his proud confession of having molested a house help in his teens, insisting his sexist remarks are a matter of freedom of expression, and spewing harassment at Bohol Mayor Tita Baja-Gallantes:

[Y]ou are truly beautiful. If it were me, why would I ever break up with you? I will really grab and hold on to your panty if you try to leave, even until the garter snaps. (Roxas, 2019)

Feminists have furthermore protested administration-backed plans of reviving the death penalty, proposals of lowering the age of criminal liability, the counterinsurgency campaign, the War on Drugs, and resulting rampant killings. Women's groups and social movements also continue to take issue with inadequate social services, job insecurity, low wages, and inflation—which have yet to be addressed or have actually worsened—that particularly affect women.

Lastly, among the most controversial political decisions throughout his first three years of presidency for which feminists raised red flags are the burial of Ferdinand Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani in 2016; the attacks on Senator Leila de Lima since 2016, on former Department of Education Secretary Patricia Licuanan and former Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales in 2017, and on former Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno in 2018; the filing of cases against Maria Ressa and *Rappler* since 2017; and the continuing intimidation and deaths of other journalists and activists, among them women.

Feminist responses have similarly been varied. Most common among these are statements whether formal statements, speeches, in interviews, or in public discussions (31); followed by demonstrations, rallies, and marches (20); and then by campaigns (7), legal actions (6), direct assistance to affected communities (3), and others such as persistence (2) or resignation (1).

Statements are usually issued right after Duterte also makes his sexist and misogynistic remarks, serving as rebuttal as well as reminder for the president to act as the head of the state who is supposed to uphold women's rights. For instance, as early as 2016, Senator Risa Hontiveros, in response to Duterte's remarks about Hamil, said, "Rape is not and is never a joke" (*Rappler*, 2016). Such verbal responses may have been from interviews, such as of journalist and women's rights advocate Ana P. Santos on Duterte's rape remark in July 2017 (*Al Jazeera*, 2017); in the context of public fora, such as from Dr. Nathalie Africa Verceles, Director of the UP Center for Women's and Gender Studies during the forum "Misogyny and Authoritarianism: Duterte's War on Women" in March 2018 (Jimenez-David, 2018); or written statements, such as the one issued by the Commission on Human Rights in January 2019, particularly by spokesperson Atty. Jacqueline Ann de Guia, on Duterte's confession on having molested their house help (Ayalin, 2019).

Demonstrations, rallies, and marches usually coincide with local or international events such as the Commemoration of the EDSA Revolution, Women's Month, Labor Day, Independence Day, the State of the Nation Address, and International Human Rights Day. There have been a number of street protests, however, which were convened particularly to raise issues with a recent pronouncement by Duterte, such as the mass protest in 2016 upon the announcement of Marcos' burial (McKirby, 2016). Campaigns were also launched as a response to the mounting attacks against women. Most notable was #BabaeAko, launched in June of 2018, which initially encouraged women to post videos pledging that they will fight back against the (re)normalization of misogyny. #EveryWoman, #Enough, and #BantayBastos were also among the organized efforts launched online. The use of social media, however, extended to being platforms of statements, news sharing, event invitations, and online

discussions. A total of 11 responses were observed to have been launched through social media—six campaigns and five statements/calls to action.

Among the legal actions taken by various individuals and groups were complaints in the Philippine Commission on Human Rights against Duterte, such as in 2016 by organizations including WomanHealth Philippines, Kasarinlan para sa Kalayaan, Sentro ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas, Labor Education and Research Network, and Sagip-Ilog Pilipinas (*The Straits Times*, 2016); several petitions in the Supreme Court to nullify or declare as unconstitutional the Martial Law in Mindanao by various lawmakers and private individuals in 2017 (Reformina, 2017); submission of “letters of allegation” to UN Special Rapporteurs Agnes Callamard on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions and Michael Forst on Human Rights Defenders in 2017 by Karapatan (*Interaksyon*, 2017); and a case against Duterte in the International People’s Tribunal in 2018 by GABRIELA, Bayan Muna, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Migrante, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, and Rise Up for Life and for Rights for various killings and human rights violations (Marquez, 2018).

Also worth mentioning are efforts to directly assist victims of the Drug War, such as Manlaban, which offers legal aid (Espina-Varona, 2017); the persistence of *Rappler* and particularly Maria Ressa despite being under attack especially online (Ellis-Petersen, 2018); and the resignation of Samira Gutoc-Tomawis from the Bangsamoro Transition Committee upon Duterte’s declaration of Martial Law in Mindanao and his remarks encouraging soldiers to rape women during the Marawi siege (Ranada, 2017b).

The 84 news reports gathered for this paper also showed a variety of actors behind these responses. Generally, they can be categorized as individuals or groups. There were a total of 41 instances when individuals responded to events, of which 23 came from private citizens and the other 18 came from government officials. Meanwhile, instances when the responses came from groups, whether private or government, can be broken down into those from multiple organizations not necessarily part of a network (28), individual organizations (16), coalitions (10), advocacy networks or alliances (7), and issue-based formations (2).

Private citizens include journalists, artists, professors and researchers, women from corporate organizations as well as women from local

communities. For instance, visual artist and women's rights advocate Nikki Luna had expressed her concern over Duterte's misogyny in an interview in 2017: "[Duterte] has his own Women's Code in Davao. Why boast about that when you don't actually practice it yourself? It doesn't make sense. You're a political leader. You're supposed to set a moral standard for the rest" (Ranada, 2017a). As for government officials, one instance was in 2016, when several lawmakers including Senators Grace Poe, Nancy Binay, and even Cynthia Villar had signified their opposition to the showing of a sex video, allegedly of Senator De Lima, in Congress and in public (Elemia, 2019).

Different individual groups as well as women's coalitions simultaneously responded to the same issue or gathered for the same event as well. For the International Human Rights Day of 2016, for instance, different groups held demonstrations for human rights issues, among which are the harassment of women, in different parts of the country (Lozada, 2016). For the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in 2017, several groups including Katutubong Lilak, Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, and larger networks such as iDefend, also held a protest rally in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources particularly for large-scale mining operations in Mindanao that affected local communities (Ballaran, 2017). With the increased intensity of the War on Drugs by 2018, groups such as Center for Women's Resources (CWR) and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP) have also raised issue particularly with the practice of "palit-puri" or exchanging drug arrests for sexual favors among the police (Patag, 2018).

Responses have also come from formations offering direct service to communities, such as Manlaban. In a forum in 2018, the group of lawyers highlighted the plight of widows and mothers of victims of the War on Drugs (Lopez, 2018). Alliances and networks are also notable, especially those that were formed during Duterte's presidency and in response to his continued demonstrations of sexism and misogyny. Among them are EveryWoman, whose formation in 2017 was prompted by the slut shaming of Senator De Lima, which they raised as an alarming level of power play: "If you've done this to a senator, you can do it to 'EveryWoman'" (Raymond, 2017).

INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSION

Patriarchy as Substance and Populism as Style

The protests reflect issues that can be appreciated in two ways. First, as used in the discussion above, Duterte's leadership style is an issue: the very fact that he speaks and acts crudely, and that dissenters or critics were particularly being threatened or attacked. These are clear manifestations of populism, whose characterization by related literature includes "crass politics," (Curato & Ong, 2018) and "adversarial and divisive political style" (Mendoza, 2018). Secondly, the issues can be appreciated in terms of their substance. Across the aforementioned actions on the part of Duterte or his administration are displays of sexism and misogyny—actions that violate women—which are manifestations of patriarchy. His anti-poor and neoliberal policies despite a populist rhetoric (Mendoza, 2018), as well as his "performative violence" (McCoy, 2017), also gain nuanced significance through a gender lens, such as when their impacts on women and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI+) persons are considered.

Appreciating patriarchy as substance and populism as style also affirms and expands analyses of Duterte's masculine performance. In addition to his masculinity being hegemonic and toxic (Evangelista, 2017; Alqaseer, 2019), it furthermore entails the objectification of women in order to contrast with and affirm himself as the subject and thus validating himself as the rightful leader, the strongman. Patriarchy is thus simply integral, even crucial, to his brand of populism: not only do patriarchal structures enable him to appeal to the masses, these also serve as the very context where being a "strongman" gains meaning in the first place.

The consistency in the presence of feminist issues points to patriarchal values as also being a fixture in Duterte's populism. In the period of research—May 2016 to May 2019—there was at least one new issue almost every month. Sexist and misogynist slurs and deliberate actions just seem to overflow from him. However, these always manifest in the context of the different characteristics of his style, such as his authoritarianism (e.g., masculine performance) or projection of himself

as an outsider (e.g., charging his misogynistic jokes to local, non-elite culture), making it hard to pinpoint where style ends and substance begins. And so while it is helpful to distinguish patriarchy as substance and populism as style to analyze the issues that feminist protests raise in the current administration, in reality the two are inextricable.

Disproving Patriarchal Assumptions, Discrediting Populist Rhetoric

Observable from the data is how, in Weedon's (1987) words, "In patriarchal discourse the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm which is male" (p. 2). The feminist protests themselves, however, subvert the very narratives about gender that Duterte's masculine performance entails. The actors discussed above reject the narrative of women as sex objects as well as of women's inability for leadership by demonstrating just the opposite: women working together and leading protests, speaking out, and asserting their rights. The issues raised also serve to denormalize sexism and misogyny by framing the same as problems that need to be addressed, and thus challenging any normalizing or desensitizing effects of Duterte's sexist and misogynist remarks and acts. The protests above also rightfully contradict underlying biological determinism or binary assumptions about gender in the first place. Advocating for policies for protection against Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)-based discrimination or of the equal right to decent jobs and living wages, for instance, demands policymakers as well as the public to confront their misconceptions about gender.

As the protests in themselves counter dominant narratives about women and gender, they also serve to discredit the populist rhetoric. Any claims about representing "the masses" are challenged as contradictions between rhetoric and realities are surfaced, such as with killings related to the War on Drugs which mostly affect the poor. In fact, the reality of heterogeneity among "the masses" is brought up, such as when women and LGBTQI+ persons are emphasized as experiencing poverty in particular ways. Authoritarianism as necessary and acceptable as a leadership style is similarly discredited, as political decisions are pointed out as self-serving (e.g., attacks on women leaders); as dominant

perspectives are invalidated (e.g., justifying sexist/misogynist remarks as part of freedom of expression); and with the very act of dissent, of holding the administration to account, and of citing human rights standards and democratic processes. The polarization of society also loses ground as a variety of struggles (e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality) as well as the intersection of identities (e.g. woman, worker, indigenous people [IP], low-income) come to light; and as unity or solidarity across groups and social movements become apparent.

A Learning Opportunity for the Feminist Movement

Duterte's populism must be acknowledged as a learning opportunity for feminists and supporters of the feminist agenda as it reveals the fragility of what feminist transformations have achieved.

It is well worth keeping in mind that the Philippines is considered advanced when it comes to gender, for instance ranking 8th in the World Economic Forum's Gender Global Gender Gap report (*ABS-CBN News*, 2018). Inarguably, the country is progressive in terms of pro-women laws. For instance, it has the Anti-Rape Law, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Law, and the Magna Carta of Women (MCW). Through the MCW, gender mainstreaming is now mandated in all government agencies and offices. And while other topics such as divorce and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) are still met with resistance in the policy arena, the fact that it has now become part of public discussions merit an acknowledgment that there is some progress in terms of cultural change as well. "Women's empowerment," "gender equality," and "feminism" have also become widely acknowledged and used concepts today. Some celebrities have even called themselves "feminist," or have expressed support for same-sex marriage and even the right to safe abortion. Popular commercial product brands have even used these ideas to sell their products, which says much about its acceptability to the general public.

These of course do not mean that work is done for feminists in the Philippines. In fact, feminists themselves highlight the gaps. The 2015 review of the Beijing Platform for Action by feminist people's organizations, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations, which provided

a gender situationer in the country, for instance, underscores how much work needs to be done to turn policy gains into actual and consistent changes in women's lives, especially the most marginalized (Ofreneo & Illo, 2015). For amid the observable progress remain gender gaps in labor force participation, employment, and income; the abuse of women and children; the sexual objectification of women and girls in mass media; the overrepresentation of women in dirty, demeaning, and dangerous work abroad; trafficking of women and girls; and unwanted teenage pregnancy—among others. New forms of women's oppression were also noted, such as cyber-violence against women (VAW), that need to be addressed. Duterte's populism takes off from such proofs of opposition to ongoing feminist transformations.

Feminists in a Web, on the Web

The variety of individuals and groups surfacing and acting on feminist issues underscore *feminism as a verb*; to paraphrase Basin and Khan (1986), what defines someone as feminist is not just their recognition of feminist issues but responding to these issues. Many took action—to speak out, go to the streets, seek justice in courts, and help others deal with various issues—even while not all of them identified as feminists; or even when the connection of some of them to the feminist movement was not emphasized; or even in cases when actors' connection to another is in the context of responding to urgent issues that they find significant whether from the personal (as direct targets, as women susceptible to attacks) to the socio-political (in terms of policy advocacy and activism) perspectives, rather than a single, overarching directive.

Notably, too, there are different levels at which social media played a role in the responses: as sources of information for motivating events; as venue for responses per se—posting statements, counters to fake news, invitation to events and discussions; and most markedly for launching networks and campaigns such as EveryWoman, #BabaeAko, #Enough, and Bantay Bastos. These efforts are quite significant, given how the internet has been consistently cited as a determinant to Duterte's win and popularity. Many have looked into the role of Facebook, for instance, in studying and manipulating its Filipino users' voting patterns to the advantage of Duterte

(Etter, 2017). There are also accounts of troll armies, or people hired to promote certain politically motivated (mis)information and cyber-attack anyone who critiques or opposes Duterte (Etter, 2017). The lack of regulation—or any accountability measure—on these kinds of activities, a concern that similarly underpins online attacks including cyber-VAW—has been a consistent challenge confronting feminists everywhere. Hashtag campaigns and other feminist responses to sexism and misogyny in the time of Duterte are thus not only necessary but crucial, given the increasing role of the internet in social realities. Estrada-Claudio's (2014) concept of "warrior princess avatars" is helpful for feminists in this regard, and one that can help explain the importance of the aforementioned online feminist responses. At a time when the internet has become an increasingly prominent battlefield for truth-claiming and meaning-making, feminists are in a position to challenge hegemonic discourses as internet users themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

Feminist protests during Duterte's first three years in office show how strong the resistance is against his leadership and the patriarchy that validates as well as reinforces it. Individuals and organizations, verbally or through actions, continuously demand the president's accountability with every sexist and misogynistic pronouncement or act and, in the process, assert their place with the people whose interests must be protected.

This study being exploratory, further research is recommended to establish a more nuanced examination of the protests in terms of their types, forms, modes, and venues; and to further analyze the feminist protests in the context of larger political networks and social movements.

The variety of responses, however, readily underscore that the problem lies beyond one person or political style. What is crucial is the understanding that Duterte or his populism alone is not the problem, but the patriarchal system that manifests in our development agenda, laws, policy implementation, institutional mechanisms, the home, and even popular culture.

Such experiences with systematic power (Boux, 2016) seem to be what holds together the various feminist responses so far—for despite many

of these actions being independent or separate, they come together as what they are at their core: protests against patriarchy in the context of populism. Whether as direct targets, as were Senator De Lima and Ressa; as indirect victims as were the surviving wives and mothers of those killed because of the War on Drugs; as women who felt unsafe with every sexist and misogynist pronouncement; or as part of a culture where feminist transformations are revealed to be fragile—the individuals and groups behind these responses have experienced the many wires that make up the metaphorical birdcage (Frye, 1983).

Encouragingly, the diversity of responses and actors highlight a nuanced appreciation of populism as we currently experience it in the country. As individuals and groups go through different channels from the internet to conference halls and from the streets to the courts; as they raise issues in various events from pronouncements to political moves and policies; and as they respond as fluid units that seem to explore and exhaust all possible points and forms of resistance—they reveal the many feminist means and ends in resisting this rising site of patriarchy. Rightfully, these feminist responses run contradictory to the authoritarian and misogynist nature of populist leadership. No one individual or group sets a specific agenda for all, demands a single strategy, or insists on a unified timeline for achieving change; and yet actions abound and relentlessly, capturing intimate, personal resistances as much as broader visions of a transformed society.

REFERENCES

- ABS CBN News. (2018, December 19). Philippines is world's 8th best in gender equality, top in Asia: Report. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/19/18/philippines-is-worlds-8th-best-in-gender-equality-top-in-asia-report>
- Agence France-Presse (AFP). (2019, August 13). Brazil tribal women protest Bolsonaro's 'genocidal policies.' *Yahoo News*. Retrieved from <https://news.yahoo.com/brazil-tribal-women-protest-bolsonaros-genocidal-policies-154010183.html>

- Al Jazeera. (2017, July 15). Duterte draws criticism for 'Miss Universe' rape joke. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/duterte-draws-criticism-universe-rape-joke-170715143514184.html>
- Alqaseer, S. C. (2019). Duterte monologues: Decoding the president through content analysis using key concepts of masculinity studies. Unpublished manuscript.
- Associated Press (AP). (2017, January 24). Trump expands anti-abortion ban to all U.S. global health aid. *CBS News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-expands-anti-abortion-ban-to-all-us-global-health-aid/>
- Ayalin, A. (2019, January 4). Duterte told to refrain from making remarks about maid abuse. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/04/19/duterte-told-to-refrain-from-making-remarks-about-maid-abuse>
- Ballaran, J. (2017, November 25). Women's group holds rally at DENR; denounces 'disrespectful gov't.' *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/947569/womens-group-holds-rally-at-denr-denounces-disrespectful-govt-womens-rights-katutubong-lilak-indigenous-people-denr-duterte-violence>
- Batliwala, S. (2012). *Changing their worlds: Concepts and practices of women's movements* (2nd ed.). Toronto: AWID.
- Bhasin, K., & Khan, N. (1986). Some questions on feminism and its relevance in South Asia. *Kali for Women*. India: Kali for Women.
- Curato, N., & Ong, J. C. (2018). Who laughs at a rape joke? Illiberal responsiveness in Rodrigo Duterte's Philippines. *Ethical Responsiveness and the Politics of Difference*, 65, 1-13.
- Elemia, C. (2019, September 29). Showing of alleged De Lima video 'illegal, misogynistic.' *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/147640-grace-poe-risa-hontiveros-nancy-binay-back-de-lima-sex-video>
- Ellis-Petersen, H. (2018, March 12). The woman taking on Duterte in a press freedom fight in the Philippines. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/12/maria-ressa-rappler-rodrigo-duterte-woman-press-freedom-in-the-philippines>
- Espina-Varona, I. (2017, November 2). Lawyers launch 'Manlaban' to fight EJKs. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/02/17/lawyers-launch-manlaban-to-fight-ejks>

- Estrada-Claudio, S. (2014, September). Warrior princess avatars: Feminists engage social media. *ASEAN, Asia-Pacific and global trends in women's studies: Women connecting communities and claiming spaces in the digital era*. Paper presented at the International Symposium of the Asian Association of Women's Studies, University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), Los Baños, Laguna. Retrieved from http://isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1725:warrior-princess-avatars-feminists-engage-social-media&catid=212:women-and-media&Itemid=469
- Etter, L. (2017, December 7). What happens when the government uses Facebook as a weapon? *Bloomberg Businessweek*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-12-07/how-rodrido-duterte-turned-facebook-into-a-weapon-with-a-little-help-from-facebook>
- Evangelista, J. A. G. (2017). Queering Rodrigo Duterte. In N. Curato (Ed.), *A Duterte reader: Critical essays on Rodrigo Duterte's early presidency* (pp. 251-262). Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Frye, M. (1983). *The politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory*. New York: Crossing Press.
- Gajanan, M. (2019, September 23). 'You have stolen my dreams and my childhood': Greta Thunberg gives powerful speech at UN Climate Summit. *Time*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5684216/greta-thunberg-un-climate-action-summit-climate-speech/>
- Gidron, N., & Bonikowski, B. (2013). *Varieties of populism: Literature review and research agenda* (Working Paper Series No. 13-0004). Cambridge: Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.
- Interaksyon. (2017, December 2). Rights group files more EJK complaints vs Duterte with UN experts. Retrieved from <http://www.interaksyon.com/breaking-news/2017/12/02/111374/rights-group-files-more-ejk-complaints-vs-duterte-with-un-experts/>
- Jaggard, A. M. (1988). *Feminist politics and human nature*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Jimenez-David, R. (2018, May 18). Talking misogyny. *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/113022/talking-misogyny>
- Juego, B. (2018). Nationalism that violates the dignity of human beings deserves condemnation. *Perspectives*, 7, 4-8
- Lopez, E. (2018, March 10). Women 'fighting': Widows, mothers of drug war casualties come together. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/197731-women-widows-mothers-fight-drug-war-killed>

- Lozada, D. (2016, December 11). Thousands protest across PH vs Duterte's 'worsening human rights record'. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/155164-thousands-protest-duterte-worsening-human-rights-record>
- Marquez, C. (2018, September 20). International people's tribunal finds Duterte guilty of human rights violations. *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1034523/international-peoples-tribunal-finds-duterte-guilty-of-human-rights-violations>
- McCoy, A. W. (2017). Global populism: A lineage of Filipino strongmen from Quezon to Marcos and Duterte. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, 32(1-2), 7-54.
- McKirby, E. (2016, August 14). Not a hero: Hundreds protest burial plan for former Filipino dictator. *CNN World*. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/14/asia/philippines-marcos-burial-protest/index.html>
- Mendoza, R. U. (2018). Unmasking Duterte's populism: Populist rhetoric versus policies in the Philippines. *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*. Retrieved from https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=39baa4c5-70d0-74b2-320a-66301ea411a7&groupId=252038
- Mercado, N. A. (2019, May 27). Duterte's rape jokes meant 'to make people laugh'—Panelo. *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1123481/dutertes-rape-jokes-meant-to-make-people-laugh-panelo>
- Ofreneo, R., Narciso-Apuan, V., & Estrada-Claudio, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Feminist theories and movements*. Quezon City: UPOU and UP CSWCD.
- Ofreneo, R., & Illo, J. (Eds.). (2015). Philippine NGO Beijing +20 report. *Review of Women's Studies*, 25 (1 & 2).
- Patag, K. J. (2018, November 5). Albayalde: 'Unfair' to claim 'palit-puri' scheme rampant in PNP. *PhilStar*. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/11/05/1866061/albayalde-unfair-claim-palit-puri-scheme-rampant-ppnp>
- Powell, C. (2017, December 15). How #MeToo has spread like wildfire around the world. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from <https://www.newsweek.com/how-metoo-has-spread-wildfire-around-world-749171>
- Quintos-Deles, T. (2018). Manifestations of populism and its impact on gender equality: The case of the Philippines. Unpublished manuscript.

- Ramos, M. S. (2019, October 31). Prayer vigil held for EJK victims. *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1183879/prayer-vigil-held-for-ejk-victims>
- Ranada, P. (2017a, March 17). Duterte, the ‘benevolent sexist’? *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/163736-duterte-women-empowerment-sexist>
- Ranada, P. (2017b, May 31). Bangsamoro member resigns over Duterte rape joke, martial law. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/171473-samira-gutoc-tomawis-bangsamoro-resignation>
- Rappler. (2016, May 10). Next 6 years challenging—Hontiveros. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/132572-hontiveros-next-6-years-challenging>
- Raymond, J. (2017, May 4). Filipino women are key in resistance to Duterte. *TruthDig*. Retrieved from <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/filipino-women-are-key-in-resistance-to-duterte/>
- Reformina, I. (2017, June 9). 4 female Marawi residents ask SC to nullify martial law. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/09/17/4-female-marawi-residents-ask-sc-to-nullify-martial-law>
- Roxas, P.A. (2019, May). Gutoc to Duterte: ‘Stop encouraging abuse, disrespect to women.’ *Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1116465/gutoc-to-duterte-stop-encouraging-abuse-disrespect-to-women>
- Santos, A. F. (2004). Do women really hold up half the sky? In C. I. Sobritchea (Ed.), *Selected readings in women’s studies* (pp. 23-41). Seoul: Ewha Woman’s University.
- Sobritchea, C. I. (2004). The second wave of the women’s movement in the Philippines. In C. I. Sobritchea (Ed.), *Selected readings in women’s studies* (pp. 43-65). Seoul: Ewha Woman’s University.
- The Straits Times. (2016, May 25). Duterte’s rape comment violates women’s rights, says Philippines human rights body. Retrieved from <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/dutertes-rape-comment-violates-womens-rights-says-philippines-human-rights-body>
- Topping, A. (2017, March 8). International Women’s Day: Women close schools, occupy farms and go on strike. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/08/international-womens-day-women-close-schools-occupy-farms-and-go-on-strike>
- Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.