Contemporary Southeast Asia Vol. 38, No. 2 (2016), pp. 177–208 DOI: 10.1355/cs38-2a
 ISSN 0129-797X print / ISSN 1793-284X electronic

Roundtable: The 2016 Philippine Presidential Election

Political tsunami may be cliché, but it is difficult to find a more suitable metaphor to describe the stunning election victory of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines presidential election on 9 May 2016. An unconventional politician from the country's southernmost island of Mindanao, whose crude comments and antics throughout the campaign courted considerable controversy, was the consummate outsider. Yet, on a platform largely devoted to improving law and order by employing draconian measures, weeding out corrupt officials and improving the lives of impoverished Filipinos who make up the bulk of the country's 100 million people, Duterte secured 39 per cent of the vote and demolished the other, rather lacklustre candidates who all hailed from elite political families. Not since the toppling of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 had Philippine politics looked so transformative — and so infused with uncertainty and potential dangers.

The editors of *Contemporary Southeast Asia* asked a group of leading political scientists and economists to examine how the election was fought, and what the result means for Philippine politics, the economy and the country's foreign relations over the next six years. Ramon Casiple kicks off the Roundtable by describing how the "Duterte phenomenon" represents a push back against the elite's capture of politics since the fall of Marcos. Duncan McCargo provides an eyewitness account of the colourful (in more ways than one) election campaign and explains the key ingredients of Duterte's victory. In their contribution, Ed Aspinall, Michael Davidson, Alan Hicken and Meredith Weiss explore the durability of patronage politics in the Philippines and the vital role political machines play in election outcomes. Bernardo Villegas and George Manzano go on to assess the prospects for economic growth in the Philippines and to discuss some of the economic policies Duterte may pursue. In

the final article, Aileen Baviera looks at the central foreign policy challenges facing the new President as tensions continue to rise in the South China Sea, and the acute dilemmas this poses for the Philippines in its relations with Washington and Beijing.

Taken together, these articles provide readers with an illuminating glimpse of the man, who, with his cantankerous personality and no-nonsense demeanour peppered with crass humour, singlehandedly heralded a sea change in Philippine politics. The election of Rodrigo Duterte signals the return of strongman leadership in domestic politics and foreign policy. In Duterte's own words, "For every profanity, there's a story behind it. People should go beyond my cussing." The authors of this Roundtable have kicked off the Duterte story, with the modest expectation for others to forge ahead with their critical analysis of the Duterte Presidency.

Ian Storey, Editor
Mustafa Izzuddin, Associate Editor

The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon

RAMON C. CASIPLE

Rodrigo Duterte, Jr., mayor of the southern Mindanao city of Davao, was proclaimed winner of the 9 May 2016 presidential election and assumes office as the 16th president of the Republic of the Philippines. In the process he bested the vice-president, two senators and a former senator and a key figure in the Aquino administration.

Duterte is the first provincial official to be elected to the highest political post in the country. He did it in a convincing manner, garnering more than 16 million votes or 39 per cent of the 42.5 million total votes cast in the presidential elections. In contrast, the administration and ruling Liberal Party candidate Manuel Roxas II only received 23.4 per cent of the total votes cast, a far second place.[1]

The Duterte Win Ends the Era of Post-Marcos Democracy

Duterte's overwhelming victory came exactly thirty years after the EDSA (so named after the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue in Manila) "People Power" revolution toppled the dictatorship of President Ferdinand Marcos and brought Corazon Aquino to power. The 1986 uprising mandated the establishment of the revolutionary Aquino government despite Marcos' attempt to proclaim himself as president based on fraudulent results of the 1986 snap elections.

RAMON C. CASIPLE is the Executive Director of the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (Iper), Manila. Postal address: 54-C Mapagkawanggawa St., Teachers Village, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1101; email: Moncasiple@Gmail.com.

Aquino set aside Marcos' 1973 Constitution and issued her own, self-written Freedom constitution. She later consolidated power through the enactment of the 1987 Constitution that was ratified by the people in a plebiscite. The latter became the foundation of the Philippine political system for the next thirty years.

The 1987 Constitution remained in its original form despite repeated attempts by succeeding administrations to revise it or amend its provisions. Benigno Aquino III, the outgoing president and Cory Aquino's only son, flatly refused to even consider changing it despite proposals coming from his own party, the Liberal Party.

Duterte made changing to a federal system from the present unitary system the centrepiece reform of his campaign. To be sure, this can only be done through a revision of the Constitution. To this end, he has already indicated that he will convene a constitutional convention to craft a new federal constitution. In doing so, Duterte has signalled that the political system needs, at a minimum, further refinements, and, at the most, restructuring. A constitutional convention — as opposed to a constituent assembly heretofore proposed by past presidents — will bring constitutional change closer to the people. In effect, this will either cure the defects of the post-Marcos democracy or replace it entirely. At any rate, people's participation will ensure that the next political system adheres more closely to their interests.

The Aquinos' Legacy of Elite Democracy

The vote for Duterte can be considered a protest vote. In essence, it is a vote against the way the post-EDSA governance favoured the political and economic elite over the interests of ordinary Filipinos. The latter, of course, carried the whole weight of the anti-Marcos struggle and, even in EDSA, tipped the balance that ended the Marcos dictatorship.

Corazon Aquino and subsequent administrations consistently favoured the elite.[2] The anti-Marcos elite dominated the government, except for some concessions to the moderate Left and known Left personalities. Some on the Left were later removed due to pressures from the Right or when they stood firm on issues of social reforms and popular democracy.[3]

For political scientists, the essential weakness of the post-Marcos democracy was the elite capture of political power. Paul Hutchcroft once argued that the Marcos dictatorship only gave way to an "elitist" democracy supporting "booty capitalism".[4] Walden Bello went so far as to characterize the post-Marcos Philippines as

a "failed democratic state".[5] The persistent internal conflicts have also been attributed to the failure of the "People Power" political order to encompass the demands of the constituencies of the rebellions.

The machinery of the Marcos dictatorship was not dismantled; nor were Marcos' henchmen ever convicted, including those military officers accused of massive human rights violations. Many of them were allowed to join government without clearing their names or making reparations. Eventually, even the Marcos family was allowed to return and rebuild their political machinery.

The 2016 presidential and vice-presidential elections reflect this elite capture of political power. Of the five presidential candidates, only Duterte had no substantive political link to the national political elite. Of the six vice-presidential candidates, all were members or backed by various factions of the elite, including candidate Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., namesake and son of the late dictator.

There was a sense of frustration and disappointment towards the elite among those who voted for Duterte. Even the votes for Senator Grace Poe, a political neophyte, can be interpreted as a vote for change and reform. Moreover, the second Aquino administration is seen to have squandered the clear reform mandate given to it, and failed to build an inclusive democracy that benefits ordinary Filipinos.

In a way, the people have rejected EDSA and its elitist democracy. The Duterte victory signals a historic shift in Philippine politics, towards a more inclusive democracy.

Towards A Populist Democracy

Duterte's rough and irreverent manners have no precedent in the Philippines' presidential contests. He has attacked all hitherto sacrosanct institutions and belittled his opponents. He has cussed his male opponents, the elite, the Aquino administration, the media, human rights and pro-women activism, Manila's traffic problems, members of the diplomatic corps, and, yes, even the Pope in this predominantly Catholic nation. But his supporters loved it. They revelled in the bringing down of political icons and there was a hint of rebellion against the present order as imposed by governmental institutions. There was, of course, the unrest over their worsening livelihoods over the past thirty years, an indictment of the anti-poverty promises of EDSA.

To be sure, the anti-Aquino factions of the elite have tried to co-opt or ride on this wave of discontent. Vice-President Jejomar Binay, in his presidential campaign, harped on the fact that he wanted the prosperity of Makati City — the country's financial centre and his political bailiwick — to be enjoyed by the rest of the country. Senator Poe emphasized that "no one should be left behind" in the quest for the country's economic development. Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago had her own set of anti-poverty reforms such as reducing unemployment and underemployment, raising minimum wages, lowering taxes for the poor and establishing national industries to reduce the number of Filipinos from seeking overseas jobs.

However, it was Duterte who struck the right chords in this season of discontent. He boldly proposed a radical change — especially the promise of federalism and stringent law and order measures — and that this change was "coming". According to him, bringing down government to the level of the people, finally solving the existing internal conflicts involving the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), cracking down on corruption, and aggressively maintaining law and order will ultimately level the playing field and bring in foreign investment. This in turn will lead to development and economic growth, thereby creating the conditions for inclusive prosperity for all.

This populist message proved highly attractive to many of the voters; and they voted for him by a landslide margin.

The People's Mandate

What exactly is the mandate of the Duterte presidency? Most opinions revolve around his controversial solution to the law and order problem, particularly the drug abuse problem, in "three to six months". He proposed for law enforcement agents to pursue notorious criminals, especially drug lords and drug pushers, call on them to surrender and, if they resisted surrender shoot them.

This may be interpreted in a literal sense, and for many critics, it is the basis for judging his administration. They point to the many possibilities of abuse and human rights violations that may occur because of this proposal. His supporters however see this as a demonstration of firm political will — pointing to past administrations' failure to tackle crime.

Of course, the more contextual and broader interpretation is the one that sees Duterte promising to deliver meaningful results within this timeframe. It should also be understood not only in terms of solving the country's crime problem but also in undertaking key social reforms within the campaign slogan of "Change is Coming".

The first and most significant reform he proposed is the institutionalization of a federal state, possibly with a parliamentary system. This may be done through a constitutional convention. The intent is to bring government nearer to the localities and enhance people's participation in government.

There is a definite rejection of the elite democracy model hitherto existing in the post-Marcos period. There is also the expectation of quick results in uplifting the quality of lives of ordinary Filipinos, especially the poor. The people who voted for Duterte also expect him to use the full force of the law in going after criminals, and to have a firm political will in pushing through reform measures.

Duterte may have only 39 per cent of the votes in the official count, but the same sentiments have been expressed by those who voted for Senator Poe, another political outsider who campaigned on a platform which emphasized that "no one should be left behind". She garnered more than 21 per cent of the votes.

Whether Duterte succeeds or fails, the people have taken a bold step forward, in the process redefining the terms of reference for building democracy. The mandate for change is supported by nearly two out of three Filipino voters.

Duterte as a Challenge to the Political Elite

The political and economic elite class may try to co-opt the administration of President Duterte or resist any weakening of their privileged status, and may contest radical reforms every step of the way. On the other hand, the elite may also sue for a historic compromise amidst popular pressure. In this case, the proposed charter change will become an important process to realize the compromise.

Co-optation will essentially result in the preservation of the *status quo*. There may be some cosmetic reforms but these will not address the current inequalities and powerlessness regnant in society. The Duterte administration in this scenario — while starting with a bang — will end with a proverbial whimper.

Elite resistance to change is a given. If the Duterte administration fulfills its promise to undertake social change, then resistance may take the form of parliamentary challenges, including moves to impeach the president, parliamentary blocking manoeuvres, or media and street protests. However, in the setting of a fragile Philippine democracy, violent forms of elite resistance cannot be discounted either.

The way out proposed by the new Duterte government is a constitutional process of forging a new social contract. The constitutional convention is meant to enshrine an inclusive democracy based on federalism. To be sure, the details of this proposal have yet to be fleshed out and the concept of federalism will provoke much discussion. However, the process itself is seen as key to the elite acceptance of the reality of its exclusive claim to power and economic resources on the one hand, and the imperative for changing the rules of society to be equitable to lesser classes on the other.

The end of the post-Marcos elite democracy puts President Duterte in the role of a transition president. His challenge to the elite political class is to accept the inevitability of change and adapt to it. The unsaid threat is to be left behind in the wake of the change that he said "is coming".

NOTES

1 "Final Results: 2016 Presidential and Vice Presidential Canvass", available at <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/787867/philippine-elections-final-results-2016-congressional-canvass-presidential-vice-president-race>.

2 Walden Bello, "The Global Crisis of Legitimacy of Liberal Democracy", available at <http://www.waldenbello.org/the-global-crisis-of-legitimacy-of-liberal-democracy/>.

3 "Aquino, Under Pressure, Removes Her Closest Adviser", *New York* Times, 18 September 1987, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/18/world/aquino-under-pressure-removes-her-closest-adviser.html>.

4 Paul Hutchcroft uses the term "booty capitalism" to describe the predatory behaviour of the oligarchy in the Philippines, especially in the Marcos years. See Paul Hutchcroft, *Booty Capitalism: The Politics of Banking in the Philippines* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

5 Walden Bello, "Can the Philippines Handle Globalization?", *Business World*, 23 January 2005.

Duterte's Mediated Populism

DUNCAN McCARGO

Rodrigo Duterte's final *miting de avance* election rally in the capital's Luneta Park was a spectacular event, just two nights before the 9 May polls. Tens of thousands of supporters filled the venue, many sporting the controversial Davao mayor's red campaign colours; the sense of impending victory was palpable. Many had travelled all the way from Mindanao to take part. After a long series of warm-up acts such as songs from artists including the popular Mocha Girls, Duterte himself took to the podium, bragging about his libido and announcing to loud cheers that he would have the bodies of criminals thrown into nearby Manila Bay. As usual, the leading presidential candidate had little to say about policy specifics. Duterte's style was conversational and at times avuncular: his eighty-minute speech was delivered not from a podium, but standing on a crowded platform among a group of his allies and close supporters, like a local boss figure hanging out with his *barkada*, or gang.[1]

Despite — indeed partly because of — the ominous warnings sounded by incumbent President Benigno Aquino III, Duterte's vulgarity and plain-speaking struck a chord with voters across the socio-economic spectrum. The taxi drivers were no surprise, but I was taken aback to find that academic colleagues at the University of the Philippines, the doctor who treated me for a cough, and even self-styled human rights lawyers were cheering on a candidate whose major campaign themes comprised valorizing his own masculinity, and solving policy problems through extra-judicial killing.

DUNCAN MCCARGO is Professor of Political Science at the University of Leeds and a Visitor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Postal address: School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; email: d.j.mccargo@leeds.ac.uk.

Across town at Plaza Miranda — scene of the notorious August 1971 political rally bombing in which nine people were killed, setting in train a narrative that provided Ferdinand Marcos with a convenient pretext to declare martial law the following year — one-time front-runner Senator Grace Poe addressed a much smaller crowd.[2] The feisty adopted daughter of popular movie actor Fernando Poe, she topped the 2013 Senate polls, drawing on the same core demographic that had propelled Joseph Estrada into the presidency in 1998: the urban poor. But Poe's presidential campaign was dogged by questions about her nationality (she had been a naturalized US citizen) and residency in the Philippines; amid rumours that she was a front for certain vested interests, her popularity plunged in the final weeks of the campaign, as Duterte's lead grew.

By the time I reached the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City, the Mar Roxas Liberal Party rally was already over — much like his doomed candidacy.[3] Aquino's motorcade passed me on the other side of EDSA; the President, himself the son of late president Cory Aquino, had strongly championed his 2010 rival to succeed him. Former Interior Secretary Mar Roxas was the son of Gerard Roxas, a prominent politician injured at Plaza Miranda, and the grandson of former President Manuel Roxas (1946–48). But sharing his last name with a major Manila boulevard was not entirely an electoral asset for Roxas, who found himself labelled as an elite *trapo* (traditional politician) who lacked the common touch, and whose stage presence was distinctly underwhelming.

I had flown to Manila directly from Seoul, where I was taking part in a workshop on "Mediated Populism" across Asia. For four days, we had compared a set of phenomena that could be found from Tunisia to Turkey, and from Hong Kong to Pakistan, including: the rise of "anti-politician" political candidates; the declining relevance of conventional political parties and campaigning; the centrality of TV-hyped super-sized personalities; the exploitation of voters' fears and resentments; and the merger of election rallies and protest movements with media "events" and mass spectacles. Duterte's Philippine presidential election triumph perfectly epitomized many of these trends.

The 2016 campaign came on the back of three less than stellar presidencies. Joseph Estrada (1998–2001), popular with the masses but despised by the elite and the educated middle class, had been driven from the presidency following a fresh wave of "People Power" that paved the way for a de facto military coup. Like Estrada, his

successor Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001–10) left office severely tarnished by allegations of corruption. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (2010–16) is legendary for his attention to detail: when he spoke at Columbia University in September 2014, he took question after question from the floor, an aide passing him statistics and data summaries on every topic raised by the audience from a wheeled briefcase-turned-filing-cabinet.[4] But despite presiding over a growing economy, Aquino failed to have his flagship Bangsamoro Basic Law passed by Congress, and so leaves Malacanang Palace with a mixed legacy.

Like previous elections, the 2016 Philippine presidential race was driven largely by competing narratives: whose story could best captivate the imagination of voters? In 2010, Aquino had won a surprise victory, deploying the narrative of building upon his recently-deceased mother's legacy. Cory's own presidency had been forged through her story of personal suffering under Marcos, following the assassination of her husband Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino II in 1983, on the tarmac of the Manila airport that now bears his name.

Duterte's main slogan was "Change is Coming" — but this was no Obama-like evocation of the audacity of hope. The word "Change" was invariably paired on Duterte posters with a clenched fist, more resembling a threat than a promise. Other slogans included the rousing "Go, Go!" the idealistic "One Voice, One Nation" and the more ambiguous Tagalog "Tapang at Malasakit" (courage and devotion) — all accompanied by the ubiquitous fist. A huge billboard endorsement from a Protestant sect read: "The Kingdom of Jesus Christ supports Duterte on fight against drugs, criminality and corruption. Guard our VOTES, Guard our FUTURE". Days before the election, Duterte was also endorsed by the influential Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) sect, courted by all major candidates in the belief that INC's 1.7 million voting members would cast their ballots en bloc. By contrast, elements of the dominant Catholic Church were strongly opposed to Duterte — allowing him to claim he was challenging the prevailing order.

Duterte won over many swing voters with his straightforward, no-holds barred performance in televised debates. His "change" and "courage" image was that of a fearless pugilist, single-handedly taking on the forces of darkness. This narrative drew on the Davao mayor's reported links to vigilante groups credited with killing dozens or even hundreds of drug-dealers.[5] While Duterte's responses to

questions about vigilante connections were ambiguous and contradictory, he clearly relished his reputation as a ruthless anti-crime candidate. But while Duterte talked equally tough on corruption, he became embroiled in controversy on the subject of his own bank accounts.[6]

At the core of Duterte's image were two closely interwoven themes: authenticity and masculinity. His authenticity was a challenge to the high-class backgrounds of both incumbent Aquino, and Aquino's anointed candidate Roxas. Duterte delighted in code-switching between Tagalog and English; the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* dubbed him the "trash-talking mayor" for his constant swearing in both languages. Duterte did not hesitate to curse anyone and everyone — even Pope Francis, whom he called a "son of a whore".[7] He flaunted his crudity as a marker of his maleness, boasting of his womanizing,[8] claiming that he wished he had raped an Australian missionary,[9] and after the election catcalled a female reporter at a press conference.[10]

His "One Voice, One Nation" slogan referred to Duterte's background as a Manila outsider, with a twenty-year career as mayor of Davao, the Philippines' third largest city. In the classic mode of the anti-politician politician, Duterte sought to distance himself from the discredited politics of the capital city, exploiting voter frustration with the country's dysfunctional Senate and Congress, and disappointment with recent presidents. Many of those I met in the week before the election were quick to head off criticism of their pro-Duterte leanings: "We tried presidents who were schooled, intelligent but we are still in the same situation"; "It's not that I really like him, but…."; "At a time like this, we really need a good dose of …". Such comments reflected a growing nostalgia for the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86), especially the supposedly disciplined "heyday" of martial law, now viewed by many — quite erroneously — as a period of economic prosperity and social harmony.

This Marcos nostalgia was also seen in the tightly fought vice-presidential race. The Philippines has an unusual electoral system in which voters select the president and the vice-president separately, with the result that mortal political enemies may win office together. In 2016, Duterte's ostensible running mate Alan Cayetano, who had played a key role in persuading the Davao mayor to join the presidential race, was soon marginalized: poster campaigns all over the country urged voters to pick Bongbong Marcos, son of the late president, to serve alongside Duterte. Bongbong's election would have symbolized the political rehabilitation of the Marcos dynasty,

and paved the way for a contested re-writing of modern Philippine political history.

Duterte won the 2016 presidential election with 16,601,997 votes — just over 39 per cent of the popular vote. Roxas and Poe polled over 9 million votes each, while almost 7 million went to two minor candidates, incumbent Vice-President Jejomar Binay (5.4 million) and long-time Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (1.5 million). Had Binay and Santiago dropped out, the result would have looked rather different; had Roxas and Poe also been willing to join forces at an early stage, as Aquino had urged in the final days of the election, Duterte might even have lost: far more people voted against him than for him.

In the closely fought vice-presidential contest, Bongbong Marcos took an early lead, but was ultimately defeated by around a quarter of a million votes. The victor was Leni Robredo, a congresswoman, social activist and lawyer whose politician husband had been killed in a 2010 plane crash. She made headlines on 8 May by making the ten-hour road trip to vote in her home province by public bus — her own compelling statement of authenticity and humility.[11] Robredo proved far more attractive to voters than her erstwhile running mate Mar Roxas, and is well-placed for a future presidential bid. But Duterte and Robredo held entirely separate inauguration ceremonies. The president only grudgingly and belatedly appointed his vice-president to a cabinet post overseeing housing issues — having initially indicated he would instead include Marcos in his cabinet.

The 2016 Philippine presidential elections came thirty years after the "People Power" movement that toppled the authoritarian Marcos regime. The debates about that much-analyzed episode continue to this day: was 1986 a lasting and progressive political transition; or simply the restoration of what the late Benedict Anderson famously called "cacique democracy", in which a small number of elite families controlled the Philippines like a "well-run casino"?[12] The Duterte victory, like that of Estrada in 1998, demonstrates that Philippine electoral politics are now extremely dynamic and unpredictable. In an era of mediated populism, the candidate with the best-told narrative is well-placed to win media attention, and ultimately voter support. Roxas, the *trapo* with no compelling personal story, was never in with a serious chance. The heroes of the hour were Robredo, who came across as authentic and caring; and above all Duterte, with his image as the tough outsider intent upon implementing change. Whether these narratives will survive their transition to Malacanang Palace remains to be seen.

NOTES

The author would like to thank the University of the Philippines, Diliman, and the Asian Center for inviting him to act as a World Expert Series Lecturer from 2 to 10 May 2016; and Tessa Guazon, Joefe Santarita, and Junior Sevilla for their hospitality.

1 "Rodrigo Duterte's Speech During His Miting De Avance", available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2ujrIjHSaM>.

2 "Grace Poe Miting De Avance", available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK4NQnrJdZM>. Poe's speech starts at 3.40.

3 "Mar Roxas Miting De Avance", available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9Zk4YSv3Ws>. Roxas begins speaking at 3.27.

4 The author moderated this event on 23 September 2014.

5 See Floyd Whaley, "Rodrigo Duterte's Talk of Killing Criminals Raises Fears in Philippines"*, New York Times,* 17 May 2016, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/18/world/asia/rodrigo-duterte-philippines.html?_r=0>.

6 See Reynaldo Santos, "Duterte SALNS Don't Match Alleged Bank Accounts", *Rappler*, 29 April 2016, available at <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/131167-rodrigo-duterte-bank-accounts-saln>.

7 A video compilation of Duterte's campaign crudities is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=letTTl_KT0Q>.

8 Pia Ranada, "Rodrigo Duterte: Yes, I'm a Womanizer", Rappler.com, 30 November 2015, available at <http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/114416-rodrigo-duterte-womanizer>.

9 "Rodrigo Duterte: Philippines Presidential Candidate Hits Back as Rape Remark Sparks Fury", ABC News.com, 18 April 2016, available at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-04-18/rodrigo-duterte-hits-back-back-as-rape-remark-sparks-fury/7333532>.

10 "Duterte Catcall GMA News Reporter Mariz Umali", available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MLGdL6w2ag>.

11 "DJ Yap, Leni Went Back the Way She Came, By Bus", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 9 May 2016.

12 Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams", *New Left Review* I, no. 169 (May–June 1988).

Local Machines and Vote Brokerage in the Philippines

EDWARD ASPINALL, MICHAEL W. DAVIDSON, ALLEN HICKEN AND MEREDITH L. WEISS

The 2016 general election in the Philippines attracted global attention for the man who won the presidency: Rodrigo Duterte. The tough talking mayor and former Congressional representative from Davao City hesitated before joining the race, but then became an

Edward Aspinall is a Professor of Politics at the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, The Australian National University. Postal address: Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University, ACT O200, Australia; email: edward.aspinall@anu.edu.au.

Michael W. Davidson is a PhD candidate in Political Science at the University of California, San Diego. Postal address: University of California, San Diego, Department of Political Science, Social Sciences Building 301, 9500 Gilman Drive, #0521, La Jolla, CA 92093-0521, United States; email: mwdavidson@ucsd.edu.

Allen Hicken is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan. Postal address: Department of Political Science, University of Michigan, 5700 Haven Hall, 505 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045, United States; email: ahicken@umich.edu.

Meredith L. Weiss is a Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University at Albany, State University of New York. Postal address: Department of Political Science, Rockefeller College, Milne Hall, University at Albany, State University of New York 135 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12222, United States; email: mweiss@albany.edu.

indomitable force in the weeks before the elections on 9 May. Duterte's meteoric rise, and the race for the presidency generally, helped mask the electoral drama that unfolds every three years at the local level and upon which national candidates so desperately depend.

As part of a multi-country investigation into clientelist networks and patronage flows in the context of electoral politics across Southeast Asia, the authors travelled throughout the Philippines to study the elections from a grassroots level. Joining our effort were members of a team of forty-five researchers, distributed across a roughly representative set of congressional districts nationwide.[1] Our researchers interviewed candidates, campaign staff and vote-brokers (termed locally *liders*); observed campaign events; and scrutinized both messages and gifts distributed. The aim of the project was to develop a coherent sense not only of how campaigns worked on the ground, but also how that ground varied (or not) across areas and communities.

Accordingly, our discussion in this article is pitched towards what local candidates and their teams did before and during the campaign. Duterte is an exemplary case: his tightly knit local machine, centred around him as mayor, is a common political pattern in the Philippines — what is unusual is merely how far that machine propelled him. Local electoral dynamics shed light on two key dimensions of Philippine elections: the nature of political alliances and machines, and the role of money in greasing the wheels of those machines and steering voters' loyalties and votes.

Political Alliances and Machinery

Our starting point was Davao City, Duterte's home base. The most startling feature of local politics in Davao was that virtually everyone supported Duterte, regardless of the presidential candidate or party with which they were formally allied. As candidate for mayor, Duterte had curated a (successful) local party, Hugpong sa Tawong Lungsod, complete with a slate of candidates for the city council. His efforts to root out crime (however brutally) and clamp down on corruption, together with local pride at the prospect of the first-ever president from Mindanao, combined to produce extraordinarily zealous support for Duterte among locals. Duterte's place at the apex of a unified, loyal local machine carried him upward, with his national-party berth under Partido Demokratiko Pilipino–Lakas ng Bayan (PDP–Laban) being mere expedience.

Yet, Duterte's popularity did not necessarily translate into support for other candidates from his party. Nationally, his vice-presidential running mate, Senator Peter Cayetano, was a distant third in the polling. Locally, while candidates in many areas were eager to capitalize on Duterte's popularity, his coat-tails proved somewhat limited outside of his home city of Davao. Just a couple of hours north of Davao, in Compostela Valley, voter support for Duterte was strong and he handily won the province. Yet, his popularity could not trump the local political machines mobilizing votes for local candidates on other tickets. Machines affiliated with the local dynasties and the ruling Liberal Party swept the races for governor, vice-governor, congress, and the bulk of municipal and provincial board seats.

Duterte is emblematic of a pattern of local electoral politics that recurs across the Philippines: the mayor-centred machine. Explained a city administrator (and former city counsellor) in the Central Visayas: "If you have a strong mayor, you have a strong party." Typically, such machines will be organized under the banner of a local faction or party — often aligned with a national party. Frequently it is a local dynasty, or some alliance of families, that forms the backbone of such a machine. Local machines will often endorse candidates for national positions from the same party with which they are aligned, and those candidates and/or that party, in turn, may contribute campaign resources in exchange for access to the mayoral candidate's brokerage network. However, party affiliation provides few formal benefits beyond the ability to assign official witnesses at polling stations, and the campaign apparatus on the ground is loyal above all to the local patron. Indeed, local factions will often jump ship to align with a winning presidential candidate or member of Congress who can help direct projects towards the municipality. Some candidates we interviewed struggled to recall what party they had been aligned with even one election ago.

The bones of the local campaign team are networks of *liders*, well-connected local residents, arrayed in pyramidal fashion from the mayor or mayoral candidate at the top, down to the sub-*barangay* (district), or neighbourhood (*purok*) level. The lowest-level brokers take care of door-to-door canvassing; each is generally responsible for a handful of homes of relatives, neighbours or other close acquaintances. Their task is to identify likely supporters, talk up the merits of their candidates, sometimes urge voters also to support a slate of candidates (sometimes from a single party, sometimes not),

and, as polling day nears, dispense payments, usually affixed to sample ballots, to encourage turnout and "correct" voting. The size of these teams may run to the thousands, depending on the size and population density of the constituency in question.

The emphasis on in-person outreach helps to explain the primacy of local patrons and candidates. A congressional candidate, let alone a "presidentiable" one, could not hope to reach all voters by relying on a campaign structure that is organized in a centralized fashion — thus, alliances with local machines are essential. These brokerage teams are kept alive by personalized patronage. Explained a campaign manager in southern Luzon, a good patron cultivates his *liders* carefully, focusing on "KBL" (*Kasal*, *Binyag* and *Libing*): marriage, christening and interment. As he put it: "The bottom line is financial, you have to help them financially." By the same token, a *lider* who proves untrustworthy and fails to deliver votes will lose out on post-election employment or other benefits provided by the local government — hence, a promising local candidate can build a team with reason to stay loyal.

Their dependence on the local candidate's team renders provincial or national candidates vulnerable. Explained that same campaign manager: "Your machinery boils down to the relationships you have cultivated over the years." Thus, while a candidate may promise a higher-level patron that his or her *liders* will urge voters to support candidates higher up on the ticket, the latter candidates "know deep in their heart that won't happen" because the real concern of the local candidates and *liders* is their local races.

Money as Catalyst

While *liders* are bound to candidates or campaign organizers by memories of past assistance or promises of future employment or other benefits, the average voter cannot be expected to share the same connection to the machine. Here money enters the picture. Vote-buying — the distribution of cash payments to voters — is a long-established part of elections in the Philippines. We found that it was all but ubiquitous in 2016, with amounts paid per voter varying from token payments as low as 20 pesos (US$0.42) by local council candidates, to a high of 5,000 pesos (US$106) for a full slate in a booming tourist area. Members of our broader research team found a sharp increase in the magnitude of these payments when compared to previous elections. (This may be one unintended result of the introduction of electronic voting in 2010: some candidates

have apparently diverted part of the resources they used to expend on electoral fraud towards vote-buying.)

The source of funds for campaigning, including for vote-buying, corresponds to the organizational core of most campaigns: typically, the money comes from some combination of candidates for House of Representatives, governor and mayor. Candidates lower on the ballot may have the resources and will to supplement collective vote-buying efforts with small payments of their own, but they largely piggyback on the effort of their allies farther up the ticket. Candidates with national constituencies rarely contribute to these local efforts to buy votes, but local candidates expect rewards from their presidential candidate, should he or she win. This phenomenon helps explain the cascade of endorsements that came to Duterte in the final week of the campaign when his polling numbers remained strong. For example, Iglesia Ni Cristo, a church known for strong block voting, and the powerful local party, Cebu One, both endorsed Duterte as polling day approached.

Both candidates and voters view vote-buying as essential to campaigning. Voters may be loyal to certain local candidates (more than to parties), whether on the basis of shared ethnic status, close family ties, track record, or a sense that he or she is simply a good person. But money can tilt the balance.

To some extent, payments to voters serve as what we have elsewhere characterized as an "entry ticket": the amount one must distribute to be taken seriously as a viable candidate.[2] Candidates may prefer to forgo payments, but if they refuse while their competitors engage in this practice, they risk being seen as uncompetitive or ungenerous. Many of the small payments we observed, for instance, from candidates for local councils, undoubtedly served that purpose: to signal that they were serious contenders and to remind voters to mark their individual names on the ballot. This reading helps to explain why the candidates and campaign staff we met all insisted they pay their core supporters first, and sometimes the most; swing voters come next, if resources permit, followed last by "special ops" (either to lure support or discourage turnout) among opponents' core supporters. Later payments, sometimes in a second wave after initial distributions by both or all sides, constitute more clear-cut vote-buying: those payments are intended to woo or confirm support from voters possibly wavering in the face of a contender's generosity.

The timing of payments likewise confirms their vote-buying purpose. *Liders* (or where trust is an issue, sometimes candidates

themselves) distribute payments in the final two or three days before polling. Huge amounts of cash are carried around in that brief period. Machines with the wherewithal to do so enlist the aid of local police, thugs, or even New People's Army guerrillas, either to protect their side or to raid, rob, or betray their opponents as they make their rounds.

Our researchers reported record frequencies of vote-buying during the 2016 election cycle — the vast majority of which were distributed by mayoral candidates and their teams. This observation confirms what we heard and saw time and again over the course of the campaign: that Philippine politics is first and foremost a local affair, something Duterte's rapid ascent demonstrates. While national level outcomes are clearly significant, to see the roots of those results, we need to keep our eyes to the ground.

NOTES

[1] The team's full findings will be published in the form of an edited volume, matching earlier volumes produced as part of our comparative research. See *Electoral Dynamics in Malaysia: Findings from the Grassroots*, edited by Meredith L. Weiss (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013) and *Electoral Dynamics in Indonesia: Money Politics, Patronage and Clientelism at the Grassroots*, edited by Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2016). The research on which this article draws was jointly organized by the Australian National University, Canberra, and De La Salle University, Manila, with primary funding from the Australian Research Council (DP140103114).

[2] Edward Aspinall, Michael Davidson, Allen Hicken and Meredith Weiss, "Inducement or Entry Ticket? Broker Networks and Vote Buying in Indonesia", paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, 3–6 September 2015.

Prospects for the Philippine Economy under the Duterte Presidency

BERNARDO M. VILLEGAS and GEORGE N. MANZANO

President-elect Rodrigo Duterte is an enigma. Considered as an "outsider" in the current political structure, with meager electoral machinery at his disposal, he nevertheless confounded critics with a landslide victory on 9 May 2016. Unlike the other presidential candidates, Duterte's campaign was short on concrete economic policies, but long on areas that touched a sensitive chord with the citizenry: stamping out corruption; restoring peace and order; eliminating drugs (which he considers as the scourge of society); and exercising decisive leadership. Now that the electoral dust has settled, it is time to examine what type of economic order one might expect from a Duterte presidency.

The first major point to resolve is where to position Duterte on the political spectrum, as this will influence his economic policies. Prior to the elections, presidential candidate Duterte shocked members of the Makati Business Club — a forum composed of senior executives of the leading business corporations in the Philippines

Bernardo M. Villegas is Professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific and Visiting Professor of IESE Business School in Barcelona.

George N. Manzano is an Assistant Professor of the School of Economics at the University of Asia and the Pacific. Postal address: University of Asia and the Pacific, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, the Philippines; email: bernardo.villegas@uap.asia and george.manzano@uap.asia.

— with a rambling speech replete with expletives, but with little content about the economic policy that he would follow if elected as president.[1] During the campaign, he referred to himself as a "socialist".

How real this "socialist" streak is could be revealed through an examination of Duterte's accomplishments when he was mayor of Davao City. Davao entrepreneurs waxed lyrical about how business friendly their mayor of some twenty years had been. He not only transformed one of the most violent cities in the country into a very peaceful community with low crime rates, but he also significantly improved the business climate by shortening the time for securing all types of business permits, getting rid of corruption in the bureaucracy and significantly improving the city's infrastructure. Thus, his many years of experience of respecting market forces and the human rights of individual economic initiative contrast markedly with Duterte constantly referring to himself as a "socialist".

Given his track record, Duterte was in truth and in deed not a socialist but a social democrat along the lines of the social market economy of the former Federal Republic of Germany. As Carlos Dominguez III, the presumptive secretary of finance under the Duterte administration, announced the eight-point economic agenda that Duterte intends to pursue, it became clearer that Duterte is far from being a socialist.[2] He has no intention of nationalizing strategic industries, distributing private lands to small farmers, or increasing substantially both the fiscal deficit and national debt of the government, as did the most recent socialist governments of Greece, Venezuela, Brazil and up to recently Argentina, bankrupting their nations and drastically increasing the misery of the poor in their respective countries. On the contrary, Duterte wants to continue implementing the very prudent macroeconomics policies of his predecessor, President Benigno Aquino III, which leftists are referring to derisively as "neo-liberal". Duterte wants to remove the restrictive economic provisions in the 1987 Constitution in order to attract more foreign direct investments. He also wants to involve more private participation in the construction of infrastructure projects by removing bottlenecks in the implementation of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme, an arrangement for funding and managing a public infrastructure project between a government unit and the private sector. These are all market friendly policies that are far removed from conventional leftist economic sentiments.

Duterte, however, does not believe in the absolute monopoly of the market. Very faithful to the principles of a social market

economy, he firmly believes that the government has to be strongly interventionist in areas where the market fails. The state must be responsible for keeping peace and order, administering justice, constructing public works and delivering social services especially to the poor. In essence, Duterte wants to focus on establishing the necessary conditions for sustainable social and economic progress. He wants to pursue a genuine agricultural development strategy that will depart from the simplistic approach of land redistribution. Furthermore, he wants to focus on providing support services to the small farmers who have been the beneficiaries of the first phase of agrarian reform introduced by former President Corazon Aquino. In addition, Duterte wants to address bottlenecks in land administration and management systems. This can be interpreted as a desire to enable small farmers to either lease their farms or even sell them outright to those who can make more productive use of them (whether corporations or cooperatives). He intends to improve the income tax system to make it more progressive. For instance, his election platform called for lowering taxes for the most harassed tax payers, the middle class or those who are earning less than P200,000 (US$4,350) annually.

Because of his genuine concern for the poorest of the poor, he will not hesitate to continue a programme that dates back to the administration of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and further expanded under President Benigno Aquino III: the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) which he intends to expand and improve as an instrument to keep children, especially in rural areas, longer in the school system. He acknowledges that the best service the government can give to the poorest of the poor is to provide their children with free access to quality basic education and to tertiary education that is relevant to the needs of private employers. In this first pronouncement about his economic agenda, Duterte is striking the desirable balance between respecting market forces in which private initiatives effectively achieve income and employment objectives of the economy and addressing the requirements of inclusive growth through decisive implementation of government policies, programmes and projects. As someone who "has been copying since he was in grade school" (to quote one of his many jokes during the campaign trail), the president-elect would do well to copy the examples of the tiger economies of the last century, i.e. Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. The GDPs of these economies grew at 12 per cent annually for more than a decade

because they allowed market forces to operate side by side with strong government intervention.

The Duterte administration is starting off on a good foundation. The Philippine economy, which has grown by an average of 6.6 per cent over the past four years, continues to be in a favourable position to continue expanding for a number of reasons. First, Duterte is fortunate that whatever he does, he can already be assured of a continuation of the 6 to 7 per cent annual GDP growth that has prevailed since 2012. Among the guaranteed engines of growth on which he can depend are the close to US$30 billion of remittances sent back to the Philippines by the more than 10 million overseas Filipino workers — growing annually at 3 to 5 per cent — and the US$25 billion of earnings of the Information Technology-Business Process Management (IT-BPM) sector which is growing at 15 to 18 per cent.[3] These earnings in the hands of 100 million people are stimulating a consumption-led growth of the economy, not the least of which results from some 40 million Filipinos travelling all over the archipelago as domestic tourists. Second, with a highly qualified economic team, the next administration can be expected to improve on the implementation of much needed infrastructure projects (at least 5 per cent of GDP) and the delivery of social services to the poor. To illustrate, of the fifty-three infrastructure projects in the pipeline under the PPP, only twelve have been awarded, towards the end of the Aquino administration. Thus, there is a great deal of catch up to do in terms of infrastructure development particularly in the fields of transportation, energy and water, needed to sustain economic growth as the Philippine gears to move towards an investment led growth in the coming years. As mentioned earlier, there is a distinct emphasis in Duterte's economic programme that favours infrastructure development to promote agricultural productivity, such as farm-to-market roads, irrigation systems and food terminals in key production areas.

There is also a clear preference for channelling more developmental resources to Mindanao, the region where Duterte hails from. Despite its vast natural resources, Mindanao has eleven of the twenty poorest provinces in the country. The long running separatist conflict in the region, together with lagging infrastructure spending, have combined to sap needed investment resources. Indeed, by boosting infrastructure in Mindanao, the region can be placed in a better position to export higher valued agricultural products to the rest of Southeast Asia. Duterte's election platform called for promoting connectivity with ASEAN by enhancing shipping links between South Mindanao and North Sulawesi, and the establishment of several economic zones in Zamboanga, the south Mindanao growth corridor

of General Santos and the Davao Gulf, in addition to building a railway system through the region. Existing subregional cooperation arrangements, such as the Brunei Darussalam–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippine East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), could be utilized as Mindanao's gateway to the wider ASEAN market. In addition, Mindanao can look forward to an increase in exports of bananas, pineapples and other high-value crops if Duterte is able to improve relations with China which were greatly strained during the Aquino administration over the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. Lastly, during the presidential campaign, Duterte lamented the relatively low allocation of government budget for the developmental needs of Mindanao. Given the president-elect's support for a shift to federalism as a government structure, Mindanao can expect an increasing share of developmental resources.

Armed with a strong electoral mandate, Duterte has an abundance of political capital to push through his eight-point economic agenda. While the main thrusts of his economic platform have been articulated, much yet needs to be done to firm up the required policies and programmes to substantiate his agenda. Yet, it is in the next phase, after drawing up plans and policies that Duterte is expected to make a telling difference in contrast to the previous administration, particularly in the area of infrastructure development. Expectations are high that he will implement the economic programme given his emphasis on the following areas: timely implementation of policies; prioritizing the agricultural sector; and developing regions outside the capital, particularly Mindanao. Given this scenario, the prospects are encouraging for the Philippines to continue robust GDP growth over the next six years at rates matching those of India, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, and the poverty incidence being cut from its present 25 per cent to less than 10 per cent. Unlike Brazil and Russia, the Philippines will give a very good name to emerging markets.

NOTES

1 "Duterte 'Lacked Substance' in Makati Business Forum", *Rappler*, 27 April 2016, available at <http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/131017-duterte-makati-business-forum>.

2 "Duterte Team Unveils 8-point Economic Plan", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 13 May 2016. The eight-point economic agenda was subsequently expanded to include two more points: promoting science, technology and creative arts; and strengthening the implementation of the reproductive health law.

3 Jomari, Mercado, "The Philippine IT-BPM Industry Overview", presentation at the US Investment Roadshow by IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, 19 October 2015.

President Duterte's Foreign Policy Challenges

AILEEN BAVIERA

On 30 June 2016, Rodrigo Duterte took office as the 16th president of Asia's oldest republic. Duterte's political experience covers over two decades as mayor of Davao City — the third most populous city in the Philippines — several years as assistant city prosecutor and three years as a congressman. However, none of these positions can be considered adequate preparation to deal with the challenges the country now faces in its foreign relations.

His predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, pursued a proactive foreign policy, the centrepiece of which was the promotion of the Philippines' maritime interests and sovereign rights in the South China Sea. Aquino was responding to China's growing assertiveness in the disputed waters, particularly the stationing of coast guard vessels at Scarborough Shoal, a rocky outcrop over which there was a tense standoff between the two countries in 2012 which resulted in China's seizure of the shoal. Filipino fishermen were subsequently denied access to the valuable fishing grounds around Scarborough Shoal.

Aquino, and his Secretary of Foreign Affairs Albert del Rosario, mounted a major challenge to China by filing a case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague. The legal submission sought affirmation of Manila's rights in its claimed exclusive economic zone (EEZ), thereby invalidating China's expansive but unclarified claims indicated by the so-called nine-dash line which appears on

Aileen Baviera is Professor at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines. Postal address: HW 204-A, GT-Toyota Asian Cultural Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines; email: aileen.baviera@up.edu.ph.

official Chinese maps. The arbitration panel established by the PCA delivered its ruling on July 12, barely two weeks into the Duterte administration, and it was largely in Manila's favour, to China's great consternation. What Aquino had started was now left for Duterte to pursue. In addition to this legal manoeuvre, and a major campaign to draw international support for it, Aquino sought greater involvement by the United States through an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) that allows for the rotational presence of US troops and the construction of support facilities in selected Philippine defence facilities. Not surprisingly, China has said that it will reject any ruling from the arbitration panel — whose jurisdiction it refuses to accept — and has accused the United States (and other countries such as Japan) of "meddling" in the dispute.

This leaves President Duterte with two major foreign policy challenges: how to manage relations with China, now that the arbitration ruling has been announced; and defining what role the Philippines' security alliance with the United States should play as the next chapter unfolds in the South China Sea dispute.

As a candidate on the campaign trail, Duterte's initial statements on these issues were peppered with hyperbole, but provided early indications of his preference for a more open and pragmatic approach towards China. "I can talk more candidly with the Chinese than with Americans", he said.[1] Duterte remarked that he was open to engaging China in bilateral negotiations, pursuing joint development of resources, and that he would downplay the sovereignty question if China also stopped insisting on sovereignty.[2] It appeared that Duterte was considering a more practical approach, one that would allow China to play a role in developing the Philippine economy.

On the other hand, his mistrust of the United States is said to have arisen from a 2002 incident in Davao when as mayor, the US authorities spirited away an American undercover agent when local police tried to investigate a suspicious explosion at the man's hotel room. His wariness about the US may also partly relate to why he has leftists and former communists among his close associates, although they are but part of the wide political spectrum of his supporters. However, his resistance to intervention may be due to his own instinctively independent leadership style, as he has recently criticized not only the United States but also Australia and the UN when officials issued unfavourable responses to some of his off-colour utterances.[3] As Duterte's foreign secretary-designate Perfecto Yasay, Jr, put it: "The Philippines should not be a lackey of any nation."[4]

More significant, however, is that Duterte also appears to doubt the sincerity and reliability of the United States as an ally, insinuating that Washington had deliberately not been helpful in preventing China's construction of artificial islands within Philippine-claimed waters: "If America cared, it would have sent its aircraft carriers and missile frigates the moment China started reclaiming land in contested territory, but no such thing happened."[5] At the same time, he also acknowledges the importance the United States plays in maintaining the balance of power in Asia: "We can't fight a war with China because we don't have arms, so, we'll be forced to ask the help of the United States because that's the only force that has the capability to fight the Chinese, but we don't want to do that, that's why we're asking the Chinese not to make any trouble."[6]

Duterte had early on declared full support for the PCA arbitration case, but caused confusion when he started talking about pursuing bilateral talks with China. Subsequently, he clarified that he would wait for the results of the arbitration before pursuing any new bilateral initiatives towards China.[7] Now that the Philippines has scored a legal and moral victory against China, the pressure is on Duterte to translate what is seen as an unenforceable decision into the actual exercise of Philippine maritime rights in areas that China continues to dispute.

What might distinguish his position from that of the Aquino government is his notion that the Philippines does not want to ask Washington to intervene, whereas one of Aquino's priorities was to try to secure guarantees of US commitment to Philippine security. It is the realization of this security dilemma and security dependence, as well as counsel from senior advisers, that eventually led Duterte to adopt a more measured policy posture on the South China Sea dispute and on relations with China and the United States. So on the one hand, Duterte is open to direct talks with China while on the other hand he has also called for multilateral talks involving the claimant states, America, Japan and Australia.[8] Likewise, on EDCA he stated: "I have no problem with EDCA-sanctioned use of Philippine military bases by US troops because we don't have good external defense capabilities."[9]

Duterte's contradictory messages on an issue that has become so crucial not only to the Philippines but also to the geopolitics of the Asia-Pacific region has been unsettling for the United States and Japan, and presumably some countries in ASEAN who see the arbitration case alongside active support for the US military presence

as potential game changers in the management of their own relations with China and the United States. That said, the different messages and signals were indications of an incoming leadership trying to find a different way, a better way: between former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's perceived deference to China and his predecessor President Aquino's defiance of Beijing.

It may be anticipated that under Duterte, the Philippines may revert to a hedging strategy against China, in contrast to Aquino who had edged too close to a balancing/containment policy. This is perhaps best exemplified by Duterte's statement that he would allow two or more years for the international arbitration to make a difference in resolving the maritime disputes, but that if these "don't bear fruit" he will resort to bilateral talks with Beijing.[10] In the meantime, creating a more positive political atmosphere in bilateral relations with China can allow both sides to embark on major infrastructure and investment projects, as well as other forms of cooperation that may help restore mutual trust and confidence.

China has already signalled that it welcomes the new government. On 16 May, China's Ambassador to the Philippines, Zhao Jianhua, was among the first foreign diplomat to personally congratulate Duterte, and in Beijing the Foreign Ministry stated that:

> China attaches importance to the relationship with the Philippines and is willing to properly deal with disputes with the new Philippine government and bring bilateral ties back to the track of sound and steady growth. We hope the new Philippine government can team up with China to this end, sharing the same attitude and aspiration.[11]

In what is being intepreted as a goodwill gesture to the incoming government, following Duterte's election victory, China's coast guard stopped harassing and intimidating Filipino fishermen around Scarborough Shoal, an issue that Duterte had raised with the Chinese ambassador during a meeting between the two men.

Not to be outdone, on 17 May US President Barack Obama was the first head of state to phone Duterte personally to convey his congratulations. According to the White House, Obama praised the Philippines' vibrant democracy and highlighted the values that underpin the two country's "thriving alliance", including "democracy, human rights, rule of law, and inclusive economic growth". The two leaders were said to have affirmed interest in the continuous growth of relations.[12] According to Duterte, "I assured him that we will continue with our mutual interests and that we

are allied with the Western (world)" on the South China Sea, but warned that if "there's no wind to move the sail, I might opt to go bilateral".[13] Two weeks later, when reporters asked if he would push for bilateral talks with China, Duterte replied: "We have this pact with the West, but I want everybody to know that we will be charting a course of our own…It will not be dependent on America. And it will be a line that is not intended to please anybody but the Filipino interest."[14]

Other personal factors may also lead Duterte to adopt a more pragmatic approach towards the South China Sea dispute. The first is that Duterte is keen to cultivate his image as a hands-on problem solver who demonstrates political will and does not fear change. The second is his reputed concern for the welfare of the lowly and poor, which might make assistance to overseas Filipino workers (another major foreign policy goal of successive governments in the Philippines) and the welfare of fishermen a bigger priority than advancing the country's sovereignty claims in the South China Sea. The third factor is his belief in working for peace and reconciliation as demonstrated by his plan to resume high-level peace talks with the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front. As Duterte's media chief Peter Lavina explained: "Mr. Duterte further believes that any military conflict involving the Philippines over the West Philippine Sea should not happen as it will derail Philippine economic growth."[15]

In a recent interview, incoming Foreign Secretary Yasay spoke at length about what may be expected from a Duterte foreign policy. He highlighted the need for continuity in policy, and for policy to be governed by the Constitution, although some changes are to be expected in how certain problems in foreign policymaking are addressed. He underscored that justice, fairness, freedom and democracy are principles that will guide how policy is implemented. In relation to China, he noted: "We must exhaust everything we can to make sure that as neighbors, we would live together in peaceful co-existence and probably be even proactive in performing such joint ventures for our mutual interest."[16]

Clearly, however, Duterte's foreign policy will not only depend on his personal preferences and inclinations, but like his predecessors will be defined by other internal and external factors. Among these are the political constraints of the Philippines being relatively weak in military capability. His foreign policy will also be impacted by widely held perceptions of a "China

threat" among ordinary Filipinos, as well as concerns over the credibility and sustainability of the US pivot to Asia. Crucial will be how China's attitudes towards the Philippines — and Southeast Asia more broadly — evolve in the near future, as China itself attempts to manage the contradiction between its assertions of territorial sovereignty and maritime interests on the one hand, and its major new diplomatic strategies such as the One Belt One Road initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank on the other hand. Whether the post-arbitration situation will see a China that is more accommodating of the Philippines' and other neighbouring states' maritime interests, or one that is even more adamant in its territorial assertions, will define Duterte's next moves.

NOTES

1 "Duterte Warns China: Buildup to Prompt US Bases' Return in PH", *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* 15 April 2015, available at <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/686909/duterte-warns-china-buildup-to-prompt-us-bases-return-in-ph>.

2 "Duterte Clarifies China Tack", *The Standard*, 17 April 2016.

3 "Duterte Says He May Cut US, Australia Ties", Rappler.com, 21 April 2015, available at <http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/130271-duterte-cut-ties-australia-us>.

4 "Philippines Won't be a Lackey to Anyone: Incoming Foreign Minister", Reuters, 1 June 2015, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-philippines-idUSKCN0YN4PJ>.

5 "Duterte Says America Will Never Die for PH", *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* 2 August 2015, available at <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/126835/duterte-to-military-attaches-ph-not-out-for-war-china-should-just-let-us-fish-in-seas>.

6 "Duterte Warns China: Buildup to Prompt US Bases' Return in PH", *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* 21 April 2015, available at <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/686909/duterte-warns-china-buildup-to-prompt-us-bases-return-in-ph>.

7 "Obama, Duterte Affirm Alliance", *The Philippine Star,* 19 May 2015, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/05/19/1584747/obama-duterte-affirm-alliance>.

8 Beijing has rejected this proposal. See "Work with Beijing on Maritime Spats, China Urges New Govt", *Straits Times*, 11 May 2015, available at <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/work-with-beijing-on-maritime-spats-china-urges-new-govt>.

9 "Duterte in Favor of Continuing EDCA", *Philippine Star,* 26 May 2015, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/05/26/1587112/duterte-favor-continuing-edca>.

10 "Manila 'May Change Its Stance on Sea Dispute'", *China Daily*, 10 May 2016, available at <http://china.org.cn/world/2016-05/10/content_38417703.htm>.

[11] "China Congratulates Presumptive President-elect Duterte", YouTube video uploaded by INQUIRER.net, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrwOcuCzGNA>. The quotation is the subtitle translation of the statement given by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei.

[12] "Readout of the President's Call with President-elect Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines", Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 17 May 2015, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/05/17/readout-presidents-call-president-elect-rodrigo-duterte-philippines>.

[13] "Duterte Tells Obama He is Open to Bilateral Talks with China", *Philippine Star*, 18 May 2016, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/05/18/1584655/duterte-tells-obama-he-open-bilateral-talks-china>.

[14] "Duterte Says Won't Rely on US, Vows Independent Course on West PHL Sea Row", *GMA News*, 30 May 2016, available at <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/568310/news/nation/duterte-says-won-t-rely-on-us-vows-independent-course-on-west-phl-sea-row>.

[15] "Duterte Says He Supports Arbitration Case vs China", *Philippine Star*, 14 April 2016, available at <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/04/14/1572780/duterte-says-he-supports-arbitration-case-vs-china>.

[16] "Yasay to China: Join Us in Resolving Sea Row", Rappler.com, 8 June 2016, available at <http://www.rappler.com/nation/135795-perfecto-yasay-china-message-west-philippine-sea>.