

## **The President's Monologues: Duterte's Rhetoric and Toxic Masculinities**

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*This study provides a preliminary analysis of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's displays and projections of masculinity by collating and analyzing his public remarks during his electoral campaign and the first three years of his presidency with the use of textual analysis. Given his position in Philippine politics and his prominence in mass media, Duterte's narratives, particularly towards gender and masculinity, call for thorough analysis. By examining Duterte's remarks through the lens of masculinity studies and framing it in theorizing on "precarious manhood," this study offers new insight and a fresh approach to decoding and understanding the context and underlying causes of his behavior - the results of which can, in turn, serve as a starting point for addressing its deeper origins and countering its harmful effects. Texts of Duterte's speeches and remarks were collected from official archives, supplemented by news reports. These texts were then read and interpreted along three key areas in masculinity studies: heteronormativity and gender and sexual scripts; homophobia and gender policing; and toxic masculinity. From this preliminary textual analysis, what emerges is a brand of masculinity that hews close to orthodox, traditional, or macho masculinity, marked by regular descents into toxic masculinity - one that calls for further study not just because of the volume of Duterte's remarks and the breadth of concepts in masculinity studies that can help decode them, but also because of this subject's considerable implications on politics and culture in the Philippines, now and in the years to come.*

Keywords: Duterte, textual analysis, masculinity studies

### **Introduction**

This study seeks to provide a preliminary analysis of how President Rodrigo Duterte displays and projects masculinity by collating and evaluating several key remarks he has made in his speeches. In his presidential campaign and in his tenure so far as the highest official in the Philippines, Duterte has displayed misogyny to a degree nearly unprecedented in Philippine politics - and the apparently considerable support such behavior has generated could perhaps indicate larger underlying problems as to how Philippine society views masculinity and gender issues. It is thus crucial to begin an objective conversation on the aspects and categories of masculinity that Duterte portrays and projects, which could then help illuminate the way forward in addressing these underlying issues.

This paper examines how Duterte, in his official statements and speeches, portrays and projects concepts in masculinity studies. At the same time, it draws on theorizing in masculinity studies to offer possible explanations for or interpretations of Duterte's remarks. It must be clear, however, that this study does not claim to provide authoritative interpretations of Duterte's own acts and pronouncements. This study does not claim to conclusively know the logic - if and where it exists - of Duterte's actions and his remarks. What it offers, instead, is simply a different reading of Duterte, which is just one of many other possible and plausible readings and interpretations. It offers a reading informed by the insights established in the field of masculinity studies - a different reading that might, however, help us gain new insights as we delve deeper into it.

This study illuminates both theory and practice in masculinity studies by holding them up together - thus grounding and elaborating on theory based on empirical analysis of political discourses.

This study cannot cover Duterte's entire repertoire of remarks, and studies with greater analytical depth and larger scope would be necessary, and of great help, in the future. In the meantime, however, it hopes to begin the conversation towards understanding - and, hopefully, ultimately countering - the negative effects of Duterte's behavior by seeking fresh insights through masculinity studies.

### **Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities**

This study draws on the Precarious Manhood theory developed by Bosson and Vandello in the field of social psychology to draw up its framework, along with other key concepts in Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities (Hearn, Pringle, Ruspini, and Pease, 2011). Vandello and Bosson (2013) argue that this conceptualization of manhood overlaps with preexisting theories of masculinity in psychology and sociology, and that the notion itself of manhood as a problematic and anxious status is not original, as it is a commonly held assumption by many researchers. Specifically, however, they found that manhood is a "precarious social status" ruled by three tenets: that it is elusive or hard-earned; that it is tenuous or easily lost; and that it requires action and public proof, as it is a status confirmed and conferred by others (p. 103). Thus, fears of "losing" their status of manhood lead to strict adherence and policing of gender roles; aversion to femininity and homophobia; greater risk-taking; aggression and violence; among others (Bosson and Vandello, 2011; Vandello and Bosson, 2013). To examine these behaviors or practices, this study will then also draw on the corresponding concepts as further developed and elaborated elsewhere in masculinity studies, such as heteronormativity and gender and sexual scripts; homophobia and the fag discourse; and hegemonic masculinity, hypermasculinity, toxic masculinity, and masculine bravado.

### **Methodology**

To analyze how Duterte displays and projects masculinity, the study's methodology makes use of secondary data, specifically the texts of Duterte's speeches over nearly three years of his presidency and the months leading to his election, with transcripts and translations collected from the official website of the Presidential Communications Operations Office and supplemented by excerpts and translations from news articles online. The study analyzes phrases, sentences, and paragraphs within these public statements and speeches, as well as the themes and topics used and emphasized therein, using textual analysis to offer a reading or interpretation rooted in masculinity studies.

Textual analysis is a form of qualitative analysis that looks beyond the explicit content of media and focuses on its underlying ideological and cultural assumptions or the micro level functions and processes that construct reality socially (Fürsich, 2009; Pälli, Tienari, and Vaara, 2012). According to Hawkins (2017), it involves understanding the language, symbols, and pictures in texts to learn how people make sense of and communicate life and life experiences. In this case, texts may be books, photos, advertisements, interviews, performances, social media, film, television, and historical artifacts (Hawkins, 2017); or, as McKee puts it, anything we make meaning from (McKee, 2003). Any cultural object conveying a message can be textually analyzed (Scott, 2006); and, often, these messages in fact indicate cultural values, beliefs, and norms (Hawkins, 2017).

The method opens up analysis not just of latent meaning in a text, but also its implicit patterns, assumptions, and omissions (Fürsich, 2009).

Fürsich (2009) notes that this method was found to be particularly useful by researchers studying media content. In the turn away from traditional quantitative content analysis, the qualitative method offered by textual analysis is seen not as a collection and examination of data, but as a reading - a term which, as Fürsich emphasizes, highlights the interpretive position of the researcher (Fürsich, 2009). Pälli, Tienari, and Vaara (2012) explain that content analysis sees texts simply as “expressions of content;” textual analysis, on the other hand, sees text as “meaning potential,” from which actual meanings in context can emerge. The method allows the researcher to locate meanings in texts - for instance in analyzing how it promotes certain points of view, and how language casts those viewpoints as legitimate and self-evident while marginalizing alternative views (Pälli, Tienari, and Vaara, 2012). Because it is “interpretive by nature,” however, researchers must understand that there are varieties of interpretations for any given text (Hawkins, 2017).

McKee (2003) admits, however, that textual analysis can be seen as unscientific, as it does not produce quantitative knowledge, and its methodology is not iterable. McKee (2003) also cautions that “readings” or “interpretations” of texts will vary widely - answers to the same question will vary from researcher to researcher, and even researchers with the same set of texts will not have the same answers. But as Hawkins (2017) emphasizes, the key point of poststructuralist textual analysis is that multiple readings of the same text exist; the goal is not to find one correct way to interpret, but instead to find a reasonable interpretation that is based on the text’s clues and that is supported by the text itself.

In undertaking its textual analysis, the study will analyze the remarks it gathered to examine how Duterte adheres to and insists on heteronormativity and gender and sexual scripts; engages in homophobia and the fag discourse; and aspires to hegemonic masculinity and displays hypermasculinity, toxic masculinity, and masculine bravado, which it sees as all emerging from Precarious Manhood. These remarks are also read and explained along with the context in which they were made. This follows the basic process outlined by McKee (2003) for textual analysis: determining the research question, locating the necessary texts, and studying the context.

Pälli, Tienari, and Vaara (2012) also note that the sample for textual analysis can vary widely depending on the study; it can be a very large or a very small number of texts, but the actual analysis usually focuses only on either representative or revealing texts. As Fürsich (2009) explains, this method usually results in strategically selected and presented portions of analyzed text that serve as evidence for the overall argument. The time frame of the study covers relevant remarks from Duterte’s earliest campaign pronouncements from the end of November 2015 until his latest relevant remarks at the time of writing, which is April 2018, as well as additional remarks made until early January 2019, when the study and its data were updated. This covers a total of 45 relevant remarks or texts that were located. From this total population of 45, 26 representative or revealing remarks were chosen to demonstrate and illustrate theories and concepts, as will be seen in the discussion that follows.

## Discussion

### A. Only Mistresses Allowed: Duterte, Heteronormativity, and Gender and Sexual Scripts

Ingraham (1999) defines heteronormativity as the view that “heterosexuality is the standard for legitimate and expected social and sexual relations” (p.17). As the lone default and the norm, heteronormativity decrees that heterosexuality must be adopted regardless of personal sexual preferences. Such a view necessitates the existence of fixed binary gender roles that are complementary, innate, and natural - even though Ingraham notes that heterosexuality framed as good sexual expression in opposition to homosexuality, and even biological sex construed as polar opposition between male and female, are not naturally occurring, but are instead the product of social constructs, thus reflecting less the natural state of things and more the dominant system of meaning in place. Being constructed instead of naturally occurring, heterosexuality requires learning and maintenance through social practices and systems of gender policing or oppression in order to keep “proper” manhood and womanhood in place.

“Learning” and “maintenance” is facilitated by various institutions within society such as religion, the state, medicine, and law (Ingraham, 2005). This can be illustrated, for instance, in the Church’s condemnation of same sex unions; the State’s laws on adultery and concubinage; family values; teachings in school; and other cultural values. All these contribute to the perpetuation of the heterosexual default, which then covers how an entire society perceives gender and sexuality.

Here, Duterte’s response to calls for the legalization of same sex marriage reveals how he subscribes to heteronormativity:

*“Wala nang gender, because you can be he or she...’yan ang kultura nila. Kayo lang. ‘Di ‘yan puwede sa amin, Katoliko kami (There’s no gender, because you can be or she...that’s their culture. That’s only for them. That can’t be applied to us, we’re Catholics). And there is the Civil Code, which is you can only marry a woman for me, and for woman to marry a man. ‘Yan ang batas natin...Dalawang brother-in-law ko gay. May mga pinsan ako na gay, wala akong ano, pero kung saan ka pinuwesto ng Diyos, diyan ka lang. (That’s the law in the Philippines...I have two brothers-in-law who are gay. I have cousins who are gay, I have nothing against them, but you have to stick to where God placed you.)” (Rappler, 2017)*

Duterte discusses sex and gender as something God-given, and thus fixed and innate. Furthermore, Duterte appeals to institutions such as the Church and the law in justifying his position to likewise reject same sex marriage and uphold the heterosexual default. Note that he does this while also occupying a leading position within an institution himself, since he currently serves as head of state and government.

In another instance, Duterte drums up the polar opposition between the female and the male, and suggests that it would only be natural to limit and allocate roles and positions based on gender:

*“[Women are] unlike men, kami suntukan, bakbakan, barilan. We grew up in a sort of mindset na sometimes prone to violence. Itong mga babae, mga prim and proper man yan, isang tingin lang sa nanay, tunaw na ‘yan. Tapos gawin mong pulis? Hindi sa wala akong bilib. I believe in the woman, their competence and capability, pero hindi lahat sa buhay dapat. (Women are unlike men. We engage in brawls, shootings.*

*We grew up with a mindset that is sometimes prone to violence. Women are prim and proper. With just one look of their mothers, they will melt. And you will make them cops? It's not that I don't trust them. I believe in the woman, their competence and capability, but not in all aspects of life.)" (ABS-CBN News, 2018)*

Heteronormative values define and differentiate the good from the bad, the desirable from the undesirable, though not uniformly; for example, it is acceptable - if not customary - for men to be more sexually aggressive than women, while the same trait in women is often derided or even condemned. As Landgraf and von Treskow (2016) point out, heteronormativity dominates social norms, leading to the reinforcement of "asymmetric" or sexist strategies and expectations. Men receive societal and sexual rewards for being sexually assertive, speaking openly about their sexual desires, and initiating or provoking sexual behavior, while women are rewarded for using passive, less visible, reactive, or "alluring" strategies, objectifying themselves and being objectified in the process (Landgraf and von Treskow, 2016). Because the social evaluation of sexual conduct is unequal, heterosexual norms for sexual activity and approach assign men a visibly initiating role, while the role of women is to be more reserved, careful, selective, and to limit sexual conduct (Landgraf and von Treskow, 2016).

For instance, here, in describing his affair with a girlfriend, Duterte lays down the natural roles expected of a man and woman in engaging in heterosexual relations and publicly discussing sexual relations:

*"Tatal ano naman ang biyahe natin sa buhay nating dalawa? Sunduin kita doon sa boarding house mo, pasok tayo ng motel, short time lang naman... Noong matanda na ako, short time, kasi napaka-short na talaga ang panahon ko. Pagkatapos ng isang kilat 'yun na 'yun. No more. (What trips do we take anyway? I just pick you up at your boarding house, we go inside a motel, it's only 'short time'... When I got old, I could do 'short time' only because I have such a short time left. After one erection, that's it.)" (Rappler, 2015)*

Duterte appears to ascribe a passive and docile sexual role to his girlfriend; as someone to be picked up and, for lack of a better term, "used" for a short time, and then brought home. Also note that the same remarks, when said in the same manner by a woman, will be received with derision or even condemnation in a heteronormative society, and will run counter to roles designating men as naturally more sexually aggressive, and more open about that aggression.

Heteronormativity is also perpetuated by the enactment of gender through gender scripts. Simon and Gagnon (as cited in Parker and Aggleton, 2007) describe a gender script as a metaphor for how social behavior is produced; individuals perform according to the script they learned, and act according to the role society assigned them. As such, gender and sexual scripts are social constructs; they are not inherent in individuals. These scripts function less as algorithms and more as guides. Simon and Gagnon (as cited in Parker and Aggleton, 2007) note that these may be altered by individuals according to their preferences or tastes, and an individual's performance of a script may vary depending on interpretation - subject, of course, to varying limitations.

Here, Duterte appears to offer his own interpretation of a man's part of the gender script when it comes to sexist behavior:

*"Ibigay mo na lang sa akin. Presidente ako. Sabihan na agad ng iba diyan 'sexist.' Sinong sexist? Sinong ayaw ng magandang babae? Minsan yun ang nawala eh, hindi ka na makabiro ng magandang babae. (Just give her to me, I'm the President. They'll say that it's sexist. Who's sexist? Who doesn't like beautiful women? Sometimes that's what's missing. You can't joke about beautiful women.)" (PCOO, 2017b)*

In defending himself against accusations of sexism, Duterte paints his behavior as something normal - if not inevitable - given the innate natural attraction of men towards women, as dictated by gender scripts.

In many cases, society dictates how men and women should act based solely on their sex. Thus, gender and sexual scripts tend to adhere to and reinforce stereotypes, while limiting what a man or woman can and should do. For instance, most gender scripts dictate that men should be providers while women should be caregivers; or that men should initiate sexual advances while women should act like they are not interested.

Here Duterte outlines the difference between male and female gender scripts when it comes to public service and government work:

*"Even sabihin mo mga bright 'yang babae, yung lahat nasa political horizon - you're better off with young people. Ayaw ko talaga ng babae. Gusto ko lalaki kasi marami akong utos. Suddenly, I will tell you you go to Marawi because nobody is supervising there. Mapapagawa ko ba 'yan sa babae, pasubuin? Ako, nasanay ako sa lalaki. Pero [pwede] yung mga position na hindi naman kailangan, tourism. (Even if you say women are bright, all of those in the political horizon - you're better off with young people. I really don't want to appoint women. I want men because I have a lot of orders. Can I make a woman do that, jump in? I got used to working with men. But they can be appointed to positions that aren't necessary, like tourism.)" (Rappler, 2018)*

He does the same when it comes to having affairs:

*"Balita namin babaero ka.' Tama, tama talaga. (They are telling me that they heard I am a womanizer. That is true. That is very true.)" (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2015)*

While he readily admits to and is even proud of being "a womanizer," he can, and does, often on the same breath, condemn the same behavior in women, such as in his following remarks, made on separate occasions, on opposition Senator Leila de Lima:

*"An immoral woman, insofar as the driver's wife is concerned, it's adultery...Here's a woman who funded a house of a lover and yet we don't see any complaint about it." (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2016a)*

*"She was not only screwing her driver, she was screwing the nation." (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2016c)*

Here, Duterte accomplishes two things: he raises his “credibility” as a man with his ready admission to womanizing, while establishing his strength and superiority by undermining a woman who, in another arena, occupies a position of power.

For men, following the gender script requires building masculine capital. It is a form of cultural capital that gives men the necessary “masculine” skills and cultural competence to achieve legitimacy and social recognition as respected men (Vasquez del Aguila, 2014). According to Vasquez del Aguila (2014), building a man’s masculine capital includes exhibiting masculinity through certain behaviors such as sexual expertise, drinking, and athletic interests; a man’s ‘masculine capital’ is considered his asset or credential that he invests in for him to become a real man.

Duterte is seen to engage in an attempt to build his masculine capital by boasting of having many wives:

*“I have no money but I have many wives. You said that you need money to have so many wives. My wives are all rich just like the Speaker Alvarez...This is a world of hypocrisy. Sino bang walang babae dito? (Who here doesn't have a mistress?)” (PCOO, 2017c)*

He proffers a fantasy of being provided for by his rich mistresses - instead of the other way around - thereby establishing his superiority over, among others, the male members of his audience, which included government officials and city mayors. At the same time, he establishes that having a mistress is something normal - perhaps even required - for men to be respected. At the time, Duterte was defending his key ally, then-House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, who had just come under fire over an alleged affair (GMA News Online, 2017a).

Despite the strong emphasis on heteronormativity, homosociality still plays a key role in how men view and engage with women. As Flood (2008) argues, “male-male peer relations have a profound influence on some men’s heterosexual involvement” (p.339). Homosociality profoundly shapes male storytelling. It provides a safe space for men to make sense of their sexual and gender lives; it emphasizes “masculine credentials;” it facilitates access to sexual markets; it helps men face powerful women; it provides men an “audience” for male “boasting;” and reinforces male bonding, for instance in homosocial “teamwork” for their heterosexual pursuits (Flood, 2008).

As often happens in homosocial bonding, Duterte happily flashes his “masculine credentials,” and sets the tone of the conversation as an open space for “male boasting.” He encourages heterosexual relations as a key component of homosocial bonding, which at the same time includes competition:

*“Hindi pwedeng magdala ng asawa. Kabit lang. Para mas maganda ang labanan. (You can't bring wives. Only mistresses are allowed. So the competition will be more interesting.)” (PCOO, 2017d)*

Notice his framing of his offer for soldiers to vacation abroad: he says that only their mistresses are allowed to accompany them so that the competition will be better and much more interesting. He frames the offered vacation, which is arguably a venue not just for homosocial bonding but also for relaxing, as a “competition.”

Majors and Billson (1992) defined “cool pose” as a ritualized masculine identity that entails “behaviors, scripts, physical posturing, impression management, and carefully crafted performances that deliver a single, critical message: pride, strength, and control” (p.4). The “cool pose” is necessary in such attempts to raise masculine capital; it is something men have to do to prove their masculinity and project prowess. To gain masculine capital, one must not care about gaining masculine capital - or at least believably project such an appearance. One must readily take risks and not show any sign of weakness or emotion (Majors and Billson, 1992).

In the quote below, Duterte seems to strike the “cool pose” by taking the threat of imprisonment casually and even eagerly with his flippant and cavalier disposition. At the same time, he references his womanizing and even asks for more women, further building his masculine capital:

*“Pati ‘yan gusto nila ako ipakulong. Kung bigyan ba nila ako ng limang babae kasama ko doon, ‘di putang ina, bukas lilipad na ako. Saan ba ‘yang presohan na ‘yan? (They want me jailed. Well, if they give me five women there...son of a bitch, I’ll fly there tomorrow. Where is this jail?)” (PCOO, 2018a)*

#### B. I Don’t Want To Be Gay Again: Homophobia, and Gender Policing

Gender policing is the enforcement of cultural expectations of what forms of masculine and feminine expression are appropriate or normal (Payne and Smith, 2016). A key example here is the “fag discourse,” a concept explored by Pascoe (2005). According to Pascoe (2005), the fag discourse is a form of gender policing used mostly by men to police themselves and others into acceptably masculine identities. It involves the rejection of the fag identity and the confirmation of masculinity or enforcing dominance over women; it is not directed to homosexuals but to “fag categories” (Pascoe, 2005).

The “fag category” is an identity that can temporarily be attached to an individual in a given social space or interaction due to his “unmasculine” behavior, regardless of sexual orientation. Being “unmasculine” ranges from being stupid or incompetent, dancing, caring too much about one’s physical appearance, being too emotional, to expressing sexual or platonic interest in other men, among others. Strictly speaking, this is not homophobia; it is, instead, a gendered and racialized homophobia that functions as a salve to men’s anxieties, fears, and discomforts (Pascoe, 2005).

Here Duterte deploys the “fag category” to discredit his critics:

*“Ito namang isa (Roxas), ako raw ay diktador, pala-away, mainitin ang ulo. Kaya ka walang sumusunod sa gobyerno ninyo, kasi ikaw, bakla ka. (Now, this Roxas said I was a dictator, that I like picking fights, that I’m a hothead. You know why no one follows you in government? It’s because you’re gay.)” (ABS-CBN, 2016)*

In attaching the fag category to a political opponent during the 2016 presidential elections, Duterte does not necessarily ascribe a sexual orientation to his opponent. He points instead to a supposed weakness in Roxas’ leadership, and the latter’s seeming rejection of traits like the willingness to pick fights and being a hothead. His comments indicate that he considers these “unmasculine.” The same is true for his comments on United States Ambassador Philip Goldberg, who had earlier criticized Duterte’s controversial remarks on rape during the presidential campaign:



*“Kausap namin si Kerry. Okay naman siya kasi nag-away kami ng ambassador niya, ‘yung ambassador, ‘yung bakla. Putang ina, buwisit ako diyan. Naaasar ako sa bakla na yan... nakiki-alam sa eleksyon. (We were talking to Kerry. He’s okay but I had an argument with their ambassador, that gay. Son of bitch, he really annoys me. He’s interfering in elections.)” (Rappler, 2016b)*

The word bakla (gay) itself is dynamic, and the assignment of the category is situational; it can be used to describe males engaging in any sort of behavior that may be considered non-masculine, which in itself could vary. It features heavily in joking relationships between males, and Pascoe (2005) points to literature noting how it helps manage anxiety and discomfort among males. The mechanics are akin to “hot potato,” where insults are traded in an attempt to deflect and avoid being the last to hold the fag category. As mentioned, the fag category is gendered homophobia. However, it does not connote the same meaning as “gay” used as a slur. Pascoe (2005) notes that boys in his study actively avoid directing it as an insult towards their homosexual peers; “gay” can be masculine, but “fag,” as its direct opposite, cannot. Here Pascoe (2005) cites Wilchins, who coined the phrase the “Eminem Exception”—because, according to the rapper, he calls people “faggot” not on account of their sexual orientation, but because they are “weak” and “unmanly.” Pascoe (2005) also emphasizes that invoking the fag discourse creates separation from it; as such, the boy who invokes a fag is not a fag. This is readily apparent in jesting imitations of the category; the joke ends with a quick return to masculinity, with the assurance that the category is indeed laughable. See the dynamism of the word at play in this example:

*“Sabi ng mga kalaban ko, imposible raw. Kasi bayot kayo. (My opponents say it’s impossible. That’s only because they’re gay.)” (Rappler, 2016a)*

Duterte made these remarks in response to critics saying that his repeated promise to end crime, drugs, and corruption in six months is not feasible. Note that his use of “gay” as a slur had nothing to do with sexual orientation, but instead emanates from his perception that such a stance denotes weakness on the part of his critics. Duterte, however, also displays homophobia:

*“E tatal hiwalay man ako sa asawa ko and there are conjugal visits allowed in the Muntinlupa. You may want to visit me. Girls only. Walang...baka kasi pagpasok doon na — mahirap iyan. Ay kasi bakla na ako noon eh. Ayokong mabakla ngayon. (Anyway, I’m divorced. And there are conjugal visits in Muntinlupa. You may want to visit me. But girls only. If I go inside there...well, that’s difficult. I already became gay then. I don’t want to become gay now.)” (PCOO, 2016a)*

Duterte invokes being gay in the past as a joke, but says he does not want to repeat the experience - affirming his masculinity while simultaneously highlighting the undesirability of being so. Duterte does the same in his following remarks; he “confesses” to being gay, then quickly returns to masculinity by saying it is a joke, thus highlighting that such a sexual orientation deserves laughter and derision:

*“The makeup artists—I was acting gay and I told them, “Para kang nag bakla bakla niyan. Bakla talaga ako. (You’re acting gay. You know what, I’m really gay.)” And they believed me [laughter]. You keep on saying that I’m gay. I’ll be very handsome if I am. Wouldn’t you like that?” (PCOO, 2017e)*

Homophobia and the fag discourse also figure in bullying - although the latter, in its extreme form, is a form of hypermasculinity, which will be tackled in greater detail in the succeeding section. Flouri and Buchanan in Kahn (2009) define bullying as “repeated unprovoked aggressive behavior in which the perpetrator is more powerful than the person or persons being attacked.” They further note the difficulty in estimating the real state of bullying given its various forms and the hesitation of boys to report incidents, especially when with their peers.

Duterte shows such behavior in lobbing insults against Commission on Human Rights Chair Chito Gascon, who, while appointed as chief of a Constitutional Commission, practically wields vastly less power compared to a sitting, elected President - something he repeatedly does, often without direct provocation, as in this case:

*“Yan ang mahirap—eh ito si Gascon, ilang araw na puro teen, teenagers, aka --- parang pedophile kang putang ina ka. Bakit ka mahilig masyado sa teenager? Are you? Nagdududa tuloy ako eh. Bakla ka o pedophile ka? Yan lang nakatutok ka. (That’s what’s difficult. This Gascon, for so many days, it’s all teen, teenagers, the son of a bitch is like a pedophile. Why do you like teenagers so much? I’m starting to doubt you. Are you gay, are you a pedophile? That’s all you’re looking at.)” (PCOO, 2017a)*

His accusation seems to accord equivalence to being gay and being a pedophile. And whether true or otherwise, such accusations simultaneously serve to devalue the concerns raised by Gascon by attacking his gender and sexuality.

### C. Cannibalism, with a Dash of Salt and a Splash of Vinegar: Toxic Masculinity

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) defined hegemonic masculinity as the embodiment of “the currently most honored way of being a man” (p. 832). It is not a category or archetype; it simply pertains to whatever masculinity is atop the hierarchy of masculinities, which may differ across varying contexts. As such, it simultaneously sets down subordinate forms of masculinity, while also legitimizing the subordination of women. Hegemonic masculinity does not mean that an overwhelming percentage of men project this type of masculinity; only a minority of men fall under this category. However, it has normative power because even if a given man does not fall into this category, he positions himself in relation to it. This results in something akin to a code of ideal behavior, which then perpetuates the hierarchy. As Kupers (2005) notes, most men tend to veer away from the hegemonic norm - but simultaneously, they worry that others will deem them unmanly for such deviations from the ideal. While it connotes power, it does not mean violence. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) add that it primarily means ascendancy “through culture, institutions, and persuasions” (p. 832).

Understanding hegemonic masculinity is crucial in exploring one category of masculinity that this study explores: that of orthodox, traditional, or “macho” masculinity. Anderson (2005) argues that men who subscribe to orthodox masculinity do so in an attempt to “approximate” hegemonic masculinity, adding that this is done “largely by devaluing women and gay men” (p.338) though this also extends to less powerful men. Thus, the male identity is constructed based on the rejection of femininity and homosexuality. In addition, this form of masculinity also calls for risk taking and values the tolerance of pain. It emphasizes competitiveness and is overly conscious of power relations among men. Homophobia is not tolerated, but men exercise dominance over other men through the stigma of homosexuality.

Here, Duterte, in remarks made during his campaign for the presidency, aspires to approximate hegemonic masculinity by devaluing women, and highlights his readiness to take risks by issuing a remark that could have been damaging to his electoral campaign. In this quote, Duterte makes light of a heinous - and notably gendered - crime: the rape of Jacqueline Hamill, an Australian missionary, during a hostage crisis in Davao in the late 1980s:

*"Tiningnan ko yung mukha, 'tangina parang artista sa Amerika na maganda. Putangina, sayang ito. Ang nagpasok sa isip ko, nirape nila, pinagpilahang nila doon. Nagalit ako kasi nirape, oo isa rin 'yun. Pero napakaganda, dapat ang mayor muna ang mauna. Sayang. (I looked at her face. She was like a beautiful American actress. Son of a bitch, what a waste. I thought, they raped her, they lined up to rape her. I was angry that she was raped. That was one thing. But she was really beautiful. The mayor should have gone first. What a waste.)" (Rappler, 2016)*

Duterte stresses the idea that he "must go first," and that any beautiful woman is rightfully his. He no longer sees her as a victim of crime, but instead, as an object of desire, thus devaluing the woman - which usually emerges when men try to approximate hegemonic masculinity.

Another means through which men attempt to approximate hegemonic masculinity is hypermasculinity. Bengtsson (2016) notes that hypermasculinity "is based on an exaggerated and unique combination of values traditionally found in hegemonic masculinity" (p. 424). He adds that the frame of hypermasculinity is grounded on "a shared understanding of a masculinity that builds on assumed male superiority, overt sexuality, and a willingness to engage in violence" (Bengtson, 2016, p. 424). Scharer in Kahn (2009) characterizes hypermasculinity as "the idealization of stereotypically masculine or macho traits," which, naturally, involves rejecting traits antithetical to machismo - similar to how Connell described dominant masculinity, often exhibited in violence towards others, both men and women. Mosher and Sirkin (1984), in an early study attempting to measure hypermasculinity, defined the concept as a "macho personality" and outlined three components forming the "macho personality constellation": calloused sex attitudes towards women, a conception of violence as manly, and a view of danger as exciting (p. 151).

Here Duterte personifies the macho personality outlined by Mosher and Sirkin:

*"Order bag-o ni mayor. Di lang daw mo patyon. Pusilon lang mo sa bisong arong—' Og wa na ma'y bisong, wa na ma'y silbi. (There's a new order coming from Mayor. We won't kill you. We will just shoot your vagina, so that - if there is no vagina, it would be useless.)" (PCOO, 2018b)*

He encourages violence and displays calloused sex attitudes towards women - equating their worth to their vagina. He does the same thing in the following remarks he made while addressing the Philippine military:

*"Pag naka-rape ka ng tatlo, aminin ko na akin iyon. (If you rape three women, I'll say I did it.)" (GMA News Online, 2017b)*

Note how he establishes male superiority and normalizes gendered violence within an already gendered arena of conflict and war, while also perhaps establishing his own superiority over his immediate male audience, among others, by framing the "invitation" to rape with the offer of a free pass for soldiers committing the crime. After all, such an authority to "allow" or "absolve" these rapes implies that Duterte possesses immense power and superiority. This also employs overt sexuality and signals a willingness to engage in violence, which, as mentioned earlier, are key aspects of hypermasculinity.

Kupers (2005) notes that toxic masculinity is constructed of aspects of hegemonic masculinity that “foster domination...and are, thus, socially destructive” (p. 717). This includes misogyny, homophobia, greed, and violent domination, among others (Kupers, 2005, p.717). In explaining toxic masculinity, Haider (2016) draws on literature explaining how violence has become constitutive of masculinity, with inherently violent, and notably gendered, arenas like conflict, war, and militarism emerging as proving grounds where one affirms and asserts one’s masculinity. Haider (2016) further notes that in a patriarchal system, violence functions in two ways: as male guardianship - of women, the family, or the nation - and as policing and enforcing the patriarchal order. When this violence is challenged, it produces disillusionment with the established system of power and with the violence in this system. Haider (2016) then notes that inherently violent masculinity turns toxic when disillusion with violence arises—whether due to its lack of availability, or the fact that violence does not always yield the desired result.

Here Duterte emphasizes the centrality of violence in constructing identity:

*“Ang narinig ninyo, ‘yang extrajudicial killing sa Davao. (You’ve just heard about the extrajudicial killing in Davao). Look at Davao now. I invested a lot. Lives? Yes. You have to kill to make your city peaceful.” (PCOO, 2018c)*

In saying that killings are necessary to make a city peaceful, and that lives taken by extrajudicial killings are “investments,” he establishes his belief that the propensity or capacity for violence is desirable in leaders.

Haider (2016) then characterizes the rage resulting from violence, which he terms “the praxis of toxic masculinities” (p. 559). Rage is inherently unsustainable, so it manifests in flashes. It adds a “death drive” to the energy and potency that violence already brings to the equation - a death drive that obliterates the line between good and evil, dismissing ethics entirely. Having been humiliated and demeaned by the system of power in place, a man takes action, which he believes to be a cleansing force; in doing so, he is indifferent to what is destroyed in the process. As Haider (2016) sums it, “[this] recasting of violence is an explosion of the will to destroy” (p.561).

This seems to be particularly evident in Duterte’s handling of the Marawi siege. Months prior to the siege of Marawi by the Maute terror group, Duterte already spoke of intelligence indicating plans to attack the city and responded by challenging the armed group to go ahead and carry out its plans:

*“They said that they will go down upon Marawi to burn the place. And I said, ‘Go ahead, do it.’” (MindaNews, 2016)*

In the aftermath of the attack, instead of addressing the possibility that his boasts might have been instrumental in goading the terrorist group into attacking the city, Duterte doubled down on the violent rhetoric. Here Duterte displays textbook toxic masculinity. As head of state and commander in chief, he has under his command the military and the police, which are the main instruments of what Weber (1919) described as the state’s monopoly on violence or the legitimate use of physical force - and he made full use of them. Despite this, military efforts to retake the city were slow - leading to a possible disillusionment when the use of violence did not immediately yield the desired result. In its wake, he expressed readiness to “carpet-bomb” the city, saying he will “flatten the place” if necessary - signaling that he will tolerate pain and injury, even that of countless civilians, to end the siege:

*"As early as last year, it was already difficult to enter Marawi...You don't invade it with men. You really crush it with bombs...I will not put the soldiers at high risk. If I have to bomb the... if I have to flatten the place, I will do it. And I will take full responsibility for it...I will order the bombing...carpet already, carpet ah...I will really destroy everything...And I will really do that because I have a bigger responsibility and that is to the Republic of the Philippines." (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2017)*

Kimmel (2005) notes that the centrality of violence to the definition of masculinity predictably has significant and tangible effects on communities. Such violence is institutionalized by the emphasis of male entitlement to power; the formative function of violence in the transition to manhood; the conduct of male socialization as a socialization into the legitimacy of violence, which is accepted as a form of communication between men and against women; the status of violence as something that is rewarded and never punished; the gender gap and inequality in public and political participation, especially given that most public interaction is between men, and not between men and women or among women; the systematic separation of boys and girls at an early age; and the establishment, especially in most Western societies, of the "fierce and handsome warrior" as the ideal for manhood.

Citing the work of social anthropologists Signe Howell and Roy Willis, Kimmel (2005) further notes that violence tends to be high and masculinity and femininity tend to be very differentiated in societies where masculine bravado - the repression and denial of fear - is a defining feature of masculinity. Reichert (2004) highlights the common definition of bravado as an "ostentatious display of courage or boldness" or "action intended to intimidate," and notes that it is a common construct in the identity of boys, with "signifiers of masculinity" - such as acting brave, being unafraid, and posturing threateningly - given emphasis (p. 107). He describes it as "an outward look," or "a style for being male" that values - and penalizes the lack of -bravery, the inclination towards competition, risk-taking, aggressive self-assertion, and seeking dominance (Reichert, 2004, p.107).

Here Duterte compares himself to Hitler to signal the scale of the violence he is willing and able to commit:

*"Hitler massacred three million Jews. Now there is three million, there's three million drug addicts. There are. I'd be happy to slaughter them." (PCOO, 2016b)*

He normalizes, legitimizes, and possibly inspires violence with statements such as these. He also makes repeated admissions to committing murder and calls on his supporters to arm themselves and kill drug users. One such instance was when he promised to reward violence, made barely a month after he was elected:

*"Kayong nandiyan sa neighborhood ninyo (Those among you in your respective neighborhoods), please feel free to call us, the police, or do it yourself if you have the gun — you have my support... [if he resists] you can kill him. Shoot him and I'll give you a medal." (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2016b)*

Addressing Islamic State terrorists, whom he warned not to enter the country, Duterte postures threateningly and ostentatiously projects "bravery" of exaggerated - and even absurd - proportions:

*"O, galitin mo ako. [inaudible] Abrihan nako imong tiyan, kuoton ko yang iyong atay. Isawsaw ko na sa suka og asin [inaudible] sa inyong atubangan. Ganun ako magalit sa mga tao ngayon. (Go on, make me angry. I'll cut your stomach open and take your liver. I'll dip it in vinegar and salt in front of you. That's how I get angry at people nowadays)." (PCOO, 2017f)*

## **Conclusion**

Violence has been the currency of Duterte's presidential campaign, especially targeted towards drug users, and he has continued using the same over his first three years in office.

Duterte currently occupies the most powerful political position in the country. Given the implications of such a position - such as control and supervision over the military and most agencies of government, norm-setting power particularly over other politicians, and the ability to command daily mass media coverage, among others - his behavior, particularly towards gender and masculinity, calls for thorough analysis. Unpacking his remarks through the lens of masculinity studies will be helpful in uncovering what he really means by what he says, and in understanding the context and underlying causes of his behavior. This can then illuminate the way forward in countering the possibly harmful effects of such behavior.

From this analysis, Duterte illustrates a form of toxic masculinity that deludes the boundaries between public and domestic patriarchy. It is also important to note the pluralities in his narratives, and the contradictions that have arisen in his identity over the course of his rise to power. It can be argued that he was marginalized in the sense that he is from Davao and not from so-called Imperial Manila, which is largely the homestead of high-profile national politicians, but in the space of a year or so, he has risen to power as the country's top politician. He was low-profile as a local mayor, but is now a regular fixture in daily mass media. Such pluralities and such contradictions, especially in how their effects manifest in his projections of masculinity, warrants further examination.

This article has focused on three key areas in masculinity studies - heteronormativity and gender and sexual scripts, homophobia and gender policing, and toxic masculinity - and the interplay between related concepts that may be used to unpack Duterte's remarks. More areas and concepts may also be ripe for exploration in further studies. The study does not cover, for instance, his numerous speeches touching explicitly on misogyny and rape culture. In addition, the cultural context is also important in analyzing Duterte's remarks. The construction of masculinity in the Philippines, particularly the identification or characterization of the hegemonic man in Philippine culture, may be crucial in such an analysis - lending a richer lens through which future studies may explore how Duterte portrays himself and the contexts in which he says what he says. For instance, from preliminary evidence, he appears to speak more about mistresses and is more likely to make sexual jokes in front of other men, particularly those in military or police service. Lastly, and this, perhaps, is most crucial, it is necessary to study how all these affect other men - in positions of power, particularly in the arena of politics and public service, and the man on the street. Anecdotal evidence already shows that a considerable number of politicians have indeed followed Duterte's lead in the way they speak and conduct themselves. How do these normalize misogyny and perpetuate oppressive structures of gender hierarchies in society? In the meantime, this study aims to simply be a helpful resource in starting these discussions. As in all things, any real and lasting solution begins only with a richer and deeper understanding of the problem at hand - and this study hopes that the reading it offers can represent a concrete step, however small, towards this direction.

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