

Three Years of Authoritarian Rule Under Duterte: An Alternative Perspective

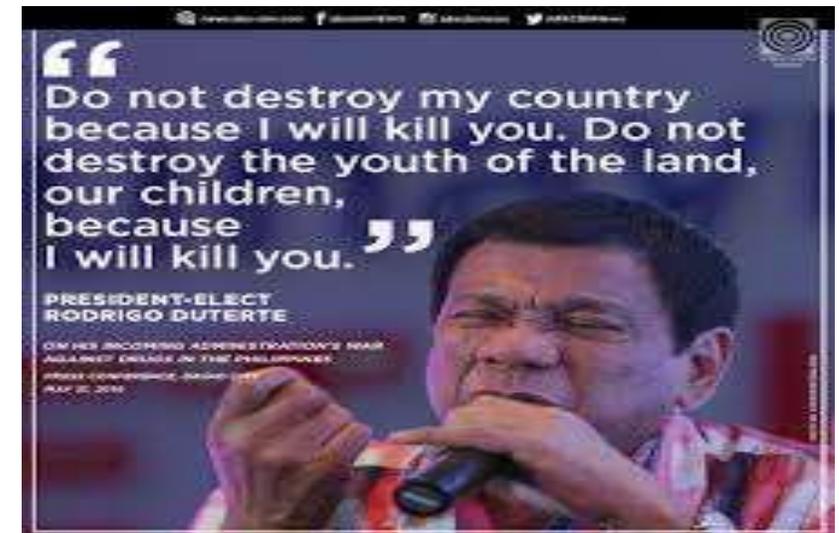
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Duterte and Strongman Rule

Why do authoritarian leaders thrive? There is a perceived social crises. Traditional elites and existing institutions are seen as ineffective. The strongman, backed up by an electoral mandate, presents himself as the nation's savior.



The Local Bases of Authoritarian Rule: Dynastic Families, Weak Liberal-Democratic Institutions, Strong Presidency

- A continuing tradition of dynastic family rule.
- Elections dominated by powerful, rich families.
- Political families in 18th Congress: Senate, 67%; House of Reps, 74%.
- Weak political parties.
- Weak liberal traditions and institutions.
- Overly strong presidency vis-à-vis Congress and the Judiciary.



Impact of Duterte's Strongman Rule



Simplistic approach to complex problems: illegal drugs, corruption, federalism, peace process, political dynasties.

Culture of violence and impunity: rejection of basic human rights and generally accepted international norms of civilized conduct.

Weakening of institutions of accountability: the Supreme Court, CHR, COA, Ombudsman, DOJ, etc.

Duterte Cronyism: Excessive reliance on Davao-based allies, frat brods, and the military

Public Opinion Surveys and Political Leadership

- Continued high public opinion ratings for Duterte.
- SWS: +68 net rating in June 2019 (Very Good).
- Pulse Asia: 85% Performance and Trust Ratings in June 2019.
- But more nuanced questions show low ratings for the administration.
- There is almost universal agreement (95%) that drug suspects be taken alive (SWS-December 2018).
- Two-thirds (2/3) believe that the police are involved in the illegal drug trade and also 2/3 think that the police are the ones doing the EJKs. (SWS-Dec. 2018).

Public Opinion Survey Results on the West Philippine Sea Conflict

- 93% of respondents say that the Phil regain control of the islands occupied by China in the WPS.
- 89% say it is not right for the gov't to leave China alone with its infrastructures in the disputed territories.
- 83% say it is right to bring the issue to int'l orgs such as the UN or ASEAN for peaceful negotiations.
- 84% say it is right to form alliances with other countries for the defense of our security in the WPS.

(SWS, 2nd Qtr, 2019)



The Challenges for the Next Three Years

- Building a broad coalition of progressive organizations and personalities and a more inclusive national political party for change.
- Identifying doable progressive reforms and legislation (such as electoral system reform, amendments to the Local Govt Code, end to ENDO, comprehensive FOI, Party List Law amendments, etc.)
- Resuming peace talks with the armed Left revolutionary movement.
- Maximizing the reach of existing laws on social services (universal health care and free public tertiary education) and pushing for new legislation on basic social services including public housing, mass transport, sustainable and secure employments through industrialization and modernization of agriculture, etc.