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PHILIPPINES: THREE YEARS UNDER RODRIGO DUTERTE

President Rodrigo Duterte is at the halfway mark of his six-year term of office, which was marked by his very own brand of pragmatic populism that commentators have christened “Dutertism” or “Dutertismo”¹.

On June 30, 2016, the former mayor of the southern city of Davao took over from the disillusionment that characterized much of the previous administration of Benigno Aquino III, the son of democracy icons Benigno and Corazon Aquino, whose government earned international goodwill but had few significant achievements and thus fell short of the public’s expectations. Determined to make high-impact changes and significant reforms, Duterte has wisely used his political capital to pass major social legislation and execute public works projects that could be completed, even it partially, within his term.

Duterte thus remains wildly popular despite local and international condemnation of his bloody war on drugs, which has resulted, officially, in more than 5,000 deaths; as well as his attacks on the Catholic Church, authoritarian tendencies and a crackdown on critics and the opposition.

This paper will trace the developments in the first half of Duterte’s term, particularly the accomplishments that have sustained his popularity. Duterte’s popularity is showing no signs of abating. If the midterm elections in May 2019 for half of the Philippine Senate and the entire House of Representatives, as well as a new set of local government officials, is taken as a referendum on his rule, then Duterte has a stronger mandate through the end of his six-year term of office in 2022. Most of his allies won in the congressional elections and are expected

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¹ J. Nery, (2018, November 27), “The rot at the core is Dutertismo”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Retrieved from <https://opinion.inquirer.net/117746/the-rot-at-the-core-is-dutertismo>.

to expand their majorities, while the political opposition's Senate ticket, aligned with Aquino III, was shut out².

Major legislative accomplishments, 2016-2019

The bicameral Philippine Congress has been largely compliant under Duterte, ticking off major items in the President's legislative agenda such as an initial package of tax reforms, free college tuition, and free healthcare.

This is because, while the Philippine presidential-bicameral system of government was patterned after the American model, the president is able to wield significantly more power as well as weaken constitutional checks and balances through Executive appointments and an upper hand in the entire budget process³ from the drafting of the appropriations bill to disbursement of funds.

Allies have also been able to limit the damage of congressional investigations to Duterte and his immediate family. For instance, a Senate "Blue Ribbon" committee investigation exonerated Duterte, his son Paolo (the vice mayor of Davao City), and son in law Manases Carpio of allegations of links to smuggling activities, including illegal drugs⁴. Sen. Richard Gordon, chairman of the Blue Ribbon Committee, a powerful committee that can issue subpoenas and recommend graft cases, has often sided with the Dutertes. Gordon's allies, including his son, have been appointed to the Subic Bay free port zone, a major industrial and investment area, where the senator once served as chairman⁵.

The House of Representatives, the larger of the two chambers of Congress, has traditionally been a rubberstamp of whoever occupies the Malacañan presidential palace. Duterte's control over the House was ensured with the election of his close friend, Davao del Norte Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez, as speaker. In July 2018, Alvarez

² C. V. Esguerra, (2019, May 12). "Duterte rule seen to get boost from midterm polls", ABS-CBNNews.com, Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/12/19/duterte-rule-seen-to-get-boost-from-midterm-polls>.

³ R. D. Holmes, (2019), "Congressional oversight: The power of the purse, presidential prerogatives, and pork barrel", in R.U. Mendoza and D.G. Timberman, Budget reform the Philippines: Making the budget a tool for national transformation (p. 78), The Asia Foundation: Mandaluyong City.

⁴ K. C. Alvarez, (2017, August 31), "Gordon on being criticized over shabu probe: 'Do I owe Duterte anything?"; GMA News Online, Retrieved from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/624070/gordon-on-being-criticized-over-shabu-probe-do-i-owe-duterte-anything/story/>; C. Elemia, (2017a, September 19). "No proof linking Davao Group to P6.4-billion shabu shipment – Gordon", Rappler, Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/182692-gordon-ends-senate-probe-smuggled-shabu-davao-group>.

⁵ C. Elemia, (2017b, September 28), "Duterte's pick for new SBMA chief is Gordon's 'protégé'", Rappler, Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/inside-track/183396-wilma-amy-eisma-gordon-protege-staff-sbma>.

was ousted by a faction of pro-Duterte lawmakers also loyal to Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the former president.

Despite the change, the Duterte legislative agenda remained intact as Arroyo had vowed to support it⁶. Arroyo, who was put under “hospital arrest” by Duterte’s predecessor Benigno Aquino III, regained her freedom through a legal maneuver that was not opposed by state prosecutors at the Philippines’ special anti-graft court.

There are five major legislative accomplishments under the first half of Duterte’s term: the first package of tax reforms, dubbed Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion or the “Train” Law; the Free College Tuition Law; the Universal Healthcare Law; the Rice Tariffication Law, and the Bangsamoro Organic Law that granted wider autonomy to Muslims in the southern island of Mindanao. These represent significant changes in the social, economic and political spheres.

The Train Law. Congress passed the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion or the “Train” Law⁷ in December 2017, described by the Department of Finance as the first major comprehensive tax reform since 1997 when the New Internal Revenue Code was passed.

The Train Law exempted all minimum wage earners from paying personal income taxes, and brought down tax rates for most individual taxpayers. To raise revenues, however, excise taxes on fuel were raised, while excise taxes were imposed on sugar-sweetened beverages. The Train Law also took away preferential tax perks given to expatriate executives and their Filipino counterparts in multinational corporations’ regional headquarters in Manila, despite protests and warnings of a decline in investments in business process outsourcing, a key sector of the economy.

The Train Law was estimated to raise P181.4 billion in tax revenues in 2019⁸. The revenues are meant to be spent on the so-called “Build, Build, Build” Program, the centerpiece economic program of the Duterte administration that aims to spend P8 trillion over a six-year period to upgrade the Philippines’ crumbling infrastructure and achieve a higher ratio of infrastructure spending to GDP of

⁶ C. Gonzales, (2018, July 24), “Arroyo vows to ‘carry out’ Duterte’s legislative agenda”, *Inquirer.net*, Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1013658/arroyo-vows-to-carry-out-dutertes-legislative-agenda>.

⁷ Republic Act No. 10963, Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion, Retrieved from <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2017/12dec/20171219-RA-10963-RRD.pdf>.

⁸ B. O. de Vera, (2019, February 12), “BIR to collect P79.012 billion under TRAIN Act in 2019”, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Retrieved from <https://business.inquirer.net/264935/bir-tax-collection-target-for-2019>.

more than 5 percent, from less than 2 percent previously⁹. Some of these projects will be discussed in the succeeding section of this paper.

Free College Tuition Law. Duterte has begun the country's turn toward a more socialized system of public services with the passage of Republic Act 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. According to the Department of Budget and Management, the Tertiary Education Subsidy or TES provision of the law was given funding of P27 billion in the 2019 budget from P16 billion in 2018.

The TES scheme allows students in both public and private higher education institutions to get allowances for room and board, transportation, books, and school supplies. Students in private universities and colleges may get vouchers to pay for a portion of their tuition. The law also provides assistance to students with disabilities, and graduates of courses requiring board examinations.

Universal Healthcare Law. The biggest legislative accomplishment is the Universal Healthcare (UHC) Law¹⁰. In the Philippines, health expenditures are mostly out-of-pocket, and a major illness in the family could cause financial ruin and poverty. Under the UHC Law, all Filipinos will be enrolled in the existing Philippine Health Insurance Corp. or PhilHealth¹¹.

On top of members' contributions to PhilHealth, the UHC Law will obtain funding from the regular budget of the Department of Health, an increase in taxes on "sin" products or tobacco and liquor, and subsidies from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. The UHC Law is a landmark piece of legislation as it continues the country's shift to a socialized system of public services by drastically expanding the government's role in the provision of healthcare.

⁹ ABS-CBN News, (2019a, March 5), 28 ,Build, Build' Build' projects finished by 2022: official, Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/03/05/19/28-build-build-build-projects-finished-by-2022-official>; B. Diokno, (2017), Keynote Address: Re-thinking Infrastructure Building: Infrastructure and Construction Forum, Retrieved from <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php/secretary-s-corner/speeches/list-of-speeches/257-keynote-address-of-secretary-benjamin-diokno-during-the-re-thinking-infrastructure-building-infrastructure-and-construction-forum>.

¹⁰ Republic Act. No. 11223, An Act Instituting Universal Health Care for all Filipinos, Prescribing Reforms in the Health Care System, and Appropriating Funds Therefor, Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2019/02/20/republic-act-no-11223/>.

¹¹ World Health Organization (2019, March 14), UHC Act in the Philippines: a new dawn for health care, Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/philippines/news/feature-stories/detail/uhc-act-in-the-philippines-a-new-dawn-for-health-care>.

Rice Tariffication Law. Duterte's signature on the Rice Tariffication Law¹² is a clear exercise of political will, having effectively ended decades of protection accorded to Filipino rice farmers. The Rice Tariffication Law has long been a recommendation of many economists, including those from the government think-tank, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies¹³, to end costly state subsidies on rice, the staple of the Philippines. It was also imperative given the Philippines' long-standing commitment to the World Trade Organization (WTO) to dismantle quantitative restrictions (quotas) on rice. Without the removal of quotas, the Philippines would have been subjected to compensation claims from other rice-producing nations.

Under the old scheme of quantitative restrictions, the government set a lower tariff for rice imports within a minimum access volume (MAV), which is the quota. This was set at 805,000 metric tons in 2018. Outside of the quota, the tariff is 35 percent for members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Economic Community, and 50 percent for the rest of the world. The Rice Tariffication Law signed by Duterte in January 2019 imposes a 25-percent tariff on imports from the Asean Economic Community and 35 percent elsewhere.

As a consolation to rice farmers, the Rice Tariffication Law provided for a P10-billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund for "safety nets" and direct productivity support.

Finally, the law dismantles the monopoly on rice importation held by the state-owned National Food Authority (NFA). A heavily losing government corporation, the NFA pursued a double mandate, to sell rice at subsidized prices to consumers and buy the rice output of Filipino farmers at support prices. The law also removed all licensing and regulatory powers exercised by the NFA, which means anyone can now import rice as long as the basic sanitary and phytosanitary standards imposed by the Department of Agriculture are complied with.

The objective is to bring down prices of rice after nine-year highs in inflation seen in 2018. The liberalization of rice importation, aside from subjecting Filipino farmers to foreign competition, however exposes the country to fluctuations in the world market.

¹² Republic Act. No. 11203, An Act Liberalizing the Importation, Exportation and Trading of Rice, Lifting for the Purpose the Quantitative Import Restriction on Rice, and for other Purposes, Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2019/03/05/implementing-rules-and-regulations-of-republic-act-no-11203/>.

¹³ R. M. Briones, I. M. Galang, L. A. Tolin, (2017), "Quantitative restriction on rice imports: Issues and alternatives", PIDS Policy Notes, March 2017.

Bangsamoro Organic Law. The Bangsamoro Organic Law or BOL¹⁴ essentially expands the powers of the failed Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which has been replaced by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao or BARMM. The difference is that the BARMM in practice will function as a substate, with its own titular leader and chief minister (similar to Malaysian states), and a parliamentary system of government. It will have a huge block grant (subsidy) from the national government estimated at P60 billion, or 5 percent of internal revenues, control over natural resources including minerals, and authority to put up free port zones, among others¹⁵.

The BOL is the product of a 2014 peace agreement between the Aquino government and the rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) led by Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim. The deal, continued by Duterte, involves giving the MILF a headstart in controlling the BARMM. Prior to open elections in 2022, an 80-man Bangsamoro Transition Authority will govern the BARMM, with 41 members nominated by the MILF and 39 by the government.

A plebiscite in January 2019 covering the original ARMM territory ratified the BOL despite the strong objection of Sulu, one out of five provinces in the region (the others are Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan and Tawi-Tawi). The area of the ARMM was expanded to include Cotabato City, now the capital of the BARMM, and 63 predominantly Muslim villages in North Cotabato province.

Duterte, however, still has to address grumblings of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the original rebel group from which the MILF broke away in the late 1970s, and which felt shut out from the negotiations between the government and the MILF. The ARMM was in fact set up under a 1996 final peace agreement between the government and the MNLF. It is understood that some of the seats in the Bangsamoro Transition Authority will be given to MNLF members. Duterte is looking at resolving this through the proposed shift to a federal system of government, which could allow the creation of another autonomous region in Mindanao. The BARMM could serve as a template for a federal system, a major campaign promise of President Duterte that has yet to be fulfilled¹⁶.

Duterte also has yet to make peace with communist rebels who have been waging a Maoist rebellion for half a century. Duterte has officially terminated

¹⁴ Republic Act. No. 11054, The Bangsamoro Organic Law, Retrieved from <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/07jul/20180727-RA-11054-RRD.pdf>.

¹⁵ ABS-CBN News, (2019b, January 20), KEY FACTS: Plebiscite on the Bangsamoro Organic Law, Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/01/20/19/key-facts-plebiscite-on-the-bangsamoro-organic-law>.

¹⁶ C. Elemia, (2019, March 21), “Duterte: Misuari threatened war if federalism doesn’t happen”, Rappler, Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/226261-duterte-says-misuari-threatened-war-federalism-does-not-happen>.

peace talks and declared the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, terrorist organizations in late 2017. This was because communist rebels had carried out a series of attacks on government troops despite ongoing negotiations. The peace talks were being mediated by the Norwegian government¹⁷.

Major infrastructure projects of the Duterte administration

The Duterte administration's initial focus on waging a deadly war against illegal drugs and crime prevented it from fulfilling other campaign promises, notably the need to ease the daily traffic gridlock in Metro Manila (the National Capital Region) and other major urban centers. The Duterte government has since gotten its act together, launching a few, high-impact infrastructure projects that could become operational, at least partially, before the President's term ends in 2022. Some of these projects include:

Multi-modal transport terminals. The public transport system in the Philippines is chaotic. There is no central coach station and city buses mix up with provincial buses, clogging the main arteries of Metro Manila. Ownership is fragmented and therefore there are many bus stations, and buses pick up passengers wherever they please. One of the solutions proposed is the setting up of integrated multimodal transport terminals.

It began with the opening of the P2-billion Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange or PITX in southern Metro Manila in November 2018¹⁸. The objective is to decongest Metro Manila traffic by forcing provincial buses to stop at the PITX and let passengers from the provinces to transfer to city buses or other transport options, and vice versa. Implementation is still in the initial stages and many kinks are still being ironed out.

If implemented properly, integrated terminals will put order into the public transport system and help ease traffic in the metropolis. There is a move, by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (the government agency that serves as a coordination body for the 17 cities of the capital region), to remove all bus terminals on the main thoroughfare, Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, to help ease traffic.

¹⁷ A. D. B. Romero, (2019, March 22), "Duterte cancels talks with Reds permanently", The Philippine Star, Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/03/22/1903647/duterte-cancels-talks-reds-permanently>.

¹⁸ Department of Transportation (2018, November 6), PITX, PHL's first landport, now open to the public (press release), Retrieved from <http://www.dotr.gov.ph/55-dotrnews/652-pitx-phl-s-first-landport-now-open-to-the-public.html>.

Metro Manila Subway Project. The more exciting project is the Metro Manila Subway Project, which will be a first in the Philippines. About 70 percent of the \$7-billion funding needed for the first phase of the subway project will come from the Japanese government through a concessional loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency or JICA, and the rest from the Philippine government¹⁹.

The \$7-billion first phase involves the construction of an underground, 33-kilometer railway composed of 14 stations, using Japanese tunneling technology. It is expected to be completed by 2025. It will begin at Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City in northern Metro Manila, and end at the Food Terminal Inc. Complex in Taguig City and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in the south.

To make sure the Duterte government gets credit for the subway project, the Department of Transportation is aiming to finish three stations in Quezon City-Mindanao-Quirino Highway, Tandang Sora and North Avenue-by 2022.

Bridge Projects. The Department of Public Works and Highways has begun a number of bridge projects crossing Pasig River in Metro Manila, designed to be completed within the Duterte administration. Among them, a new bridge connecting the Ortigas business district to the bustling Bonifacio Global City in Taguig; the expansion of the Estrella-Pantaleon Bridge connecting Mandaluyong City and the Rockwell business district in Makati; and a new bridge in Manila connecting the historic Intramuros district to the Binondo enclave of the Chinese-Filipino business community. The last two are funded by the Chinese government, as part of broadening economic ties between Manila and Beijing fostered by Duterte in lieu of pursuing the Philippines' claim over the disputed, resource-rich Spratly Islands in South China Sea²⁰.

Duterte remains immensely popular despite authoritarian tendencies

The foregoing executive and legislative accomplishments have sustained the popularity of President Rodrigo Duterte, despite negative international press on his war on drugs; his fiery diatribes against his critics, including Catholic clergy; and his crackdown on opposition figures.

¹⁹ Department of Finance (2018, March 25), Gov't eyes commercial development of Metro subway stations to help pay off JICA loan for project (press release), Retrieved from <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1006213>.

²⁰ Department of Public Works and Highways (2018, July 11), Villar: Estrella-Pantaleon Bridge, Binondo-Intramuros Bridge to start construction next week (press release), Retrieved from <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1010243>.

Since July 2016, a total of 5,176 “drug personalities” have been killed in anti-illegal drug raids conducted by authorities, although human rights groups claim the real number is more than double. Latest government figures also showed that 170,689 people have been arrested by police on illegal drug-related charges²¹.

Duterte has been ruthless on his critics. In December 2016 he removed Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo, a former lawmaker and the leader of the opposition, from her Cabinet post given to her initially as a gesture of unity. This was because Robredo publicly criticized Duterte’s decision to allow the burial of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos at the national heroes’ cemetery. The burial was at the request of the Marcos family, who donated to his presidential campaign. Former senator Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr., son of the late dictator, lost the 2016 vice-presidential contest to Robredo, and Duterte is sympathetic to Marcos Jr.’s election protest that is pending before the Supreme Court. Duterte also prefers Marcos Jr. over Robredo, even publicly saying he could not give up the presidency because the “incompetent” Robredo, not Marcos Jr., would be the successor²².

In February 2018, state prosecutors filed drug-related charges against another opposition critic, Sen. Leila de Lima, who condemned the drug war. De Lima continues to languish in detention, despite the shaky foundations of the drug cases against her, which relied on the questionable testimony of prison inmates. De Lima in fact led a crackdown on drugs at the national penitentiary when she was the justice secretary of the Aquino administration. She also pursued cases against ex-president Arroyo, who is a powerful Duterte ally.

The Supreme Court, in a historically unprecedented decision, kicked out Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno in May 2018, using a procedure normally used to disqualify court nominees for failure to meet legal requirements, upon the request of Duterte’s solicitor general. Sereno, who has been a member of the high court since 2010, was belatedly accused of incomplete wealth disclosures²³. If she was not kicked out by her very own colleagues, she would have been impeached by the Duterte-controlled House of Representatives.

In August 2018, Duterte revoked the amnesty granted by his predecessor Benigno Aquino III to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, after the solicitor general, Jose

²¹ D. J. Esguerra, (2019, February 28), “Gov’t: 72 killed in January 2019 drug ops; total hits 5,176,” *Inquirer.net*, Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1090666/govt-72-killed-in-january-2019-drug-ops-total-hits-5176>.

²² ABS-CBN News, (2018, July 10), Duterte calls Robredo ‘incompetent’, Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/10/18/duterte-calls-robredo-incompetent>.

²³ Ateneo de Manila University School of Law (2018), Quo Warranto Case Against CJ Sereno Digest: Supreme Court Decision, Retrieved from <https://www.ateneo.edu/sites/default/files/attached-files/Quo%20Warranto%20Decision.pdf>.

Calida, claimed a defect in Trillanes' amnesty application. Trillanes, a former navyman who led failed military uprisings against then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in 2003 and 2007, allegedly did not confess to his crimes²⁴. Trillanes is now facing revived charges of rebellion and coup d'état before the courts. This is perhaps the price to be paid by Trillanes after he accused Duterte and his family of hiding P2 billion in financial transactions during the 2016 election campaign.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested journalist Maria Ressa, top editor of the news website Rappler, in January 2019 on cyber-libel charges filed by a private businessman that were dismissed by the NBI itself in 2018, but revived by Duterte's justice department²⁵. Ressa, whose news website Rappler had been critical of Duterte's actions and policies, is already facing tax evasion charges on account of securities transfers uncovered by tax officials after corporate regulators revoked Rappler's corporate registration papers for allegedly violating the ban on foreign ownership in mass media.

Duterte's tirades against Church leaders critical of his drug war continues. In January 2019, in remarks outside of Manila, Duterte suggested that bystanders rob and kill Catholic bishops, adding that the prelates were useless, anyway. Critics have linked this statement to death threats received by the outspoken vice president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Caloocan Bishop Pablo Virgilio David. In February 2019, Duterte said the Catholic Church will be gone in 25 years because of the recent sex abuse scandals hounding the clergy²⁶. Duterte is obviously very eager to weaken the moral influence of the Church, a well-loved institution among Filipinos. This is because the Church had been instrumental to the popular ouster of two presidents, Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Despite all this, Duterte's popularity is not abating, and he is on track to becoming one of the most popular presidents in the post-Marcos era. The latest survey by the pollster Social Weather Stations, conducted from March 28-31, 2019, showed that 79 percent of Filipinos were satisfied with Duterte's perfor-

²⁴ Proclamation No. 572 s. 2018, Revocation of the Department of National Defense Ad Hoc Committee Resolution No. 2(#1) dated January 31, 2011 insofar as it Granted Amnesty to Former LTSG Antonio Trillanes IV, Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2018/08/31/proclamation-no-572-s-2018/>.

²⁵ J. Berlinger, L. Said-Moorhouse, (2019, February 13), "Maria Ressa, journalist and Duterte critic, arrested in Philippines", CNN.com, Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/13/asia/maria-ressa-arrest-warrant-intl/index.html>.

²⁶ N. Corrales, (2019, February 25), "Duterte: Catholic Church will disappear in 25 years", Inquirer.net, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1089747/duterte-catholic-church-will-disappear-in-25-years>.

mance as president, 8 percent were undecided, and 13 percent were dissatisfied. Duterte's satisfaction rating went up by 5 points from 74 percent in December 2018. Duterte's net satisfaction rating (satisfied minus dissatisfied) stood at +66 in March 2019, up by 6 points from +60 in December 2018²⁷.

The results of the recent midterm elections for half of the Senate, the entire House of Representatives and local governments, held on May 13, 2019, presents an opportunity for Duterte to consolidate his control of the government and achieve the remaining items in his legislative agenda, particularly the shift to a federal system of government.

Duterte allies won most of the 12 Senate seats up for grabs, including his long-time personal aide, Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, who has practically no elective or executive government experience, not to mention legislative experience; and Ronald "Bato" ("The Rock") dela Rosa, the former chief of the Philippine National Police who oversaw the bloody crackdown on illegal drugs²⁸. The entire opposition Senate ticket, called "Otso Diretso" or the "Straight Eight," which included former President Aquino's cousin Bam Aquino and former Aquino Cabinet secretary Manuel Roxas, all lost in the elections. It was a stunning defeat for the anti-Duterte forces.

Duterte and his daughter, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio, pulled all the stops to campaign nationwide for the more than a dozen pro-Duterte candidates running for senator. It should be noted that Duterte-Carpio is considering running for president in 2022, and has said she would make a decision by January 2021.

By all indications, Duterte plans to step down from power by 2022, but not before pushing hard, with the help of stronger majorities in Congress and bigger political capital, for the shift to federalism through wide-ranging changes to the 1987 Constitution. By then, Duterte would have fundamentally changed Philippine politics and society, in the process becoming the most consequential, albeit controversial, Filipino leader in modern history.

Keywords: *Rodrigo Duterte, The Philippines, Dutertism, authoritarian tendencies*

²⁷ Social Weather Stations, (2019), First Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey: Pres. Duterte's Net Satisfaction rating rises to „Very Good” +66, Retrieved from <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20190410190723>.

²⁸ P. Ranada, (2019, May 14), "The Davao boys are headed to the Senate", Rappler, Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2019/230396-bong-go-ronald-dela-rosa-davao-boys-headed-senate>.

Streszczenie

Filipiny: Trzy lata pod rządami Rodrigo Duterte

Prezydent Rodrigo Duterte jest w trakcie sześciolletniej kadencji, określanej przez niego jako pragmatyczny populizm, a który komentatorzy nazwali „Dutertism” lub „Dutertismo”. Duterte pozostaje niezwykle popularny politykiem pomimo potępienia w kraju i na forum międzynarodowego swojej krwawej wojny z narkotykami, która oficjalnie doprowadziła do ponad 5000 ofiar śmiertelnych; a także jego ataków na Kościół katolicki, tendencji autorytarnych i represji wobec krytyków i opozycji. W tym artykule prześledzimy rozwój wydarzeń jaki miał miejsce podczas pierwsze połowy obecnej kadencji Duterte, a w szczególności osiągnięcia, które podtrzymały jego popularność w społeczeństwie Filipin.

Słowa kluczowe: *Rodrigo Duterte, Filipiny, Dutertism, tendencje autorytarne*

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