

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the current President of the Philippines is one of the political leader that currently catch the attention of the world, especially regarding his anti-drug policy which widely known as “War on Drugs” campaign. The study will focus on two important aspects; first, how Duterte’s administration different approach over its domestic problem specifically the anti-drug campaign and with his international reaction on South China Sea territorial dispute. This study wanted to analyze how the Duterte’s administration response to these two major issues by looking at his action over the past three years after he got elected as the President of the Philippines.

War on Drugs has existed not only in the Philippines but several countries across the globe. While drug users have slowly taken over the concord of the state. The declaration purpose of “war on drugs” was to minimize the drug users. Especially, in the Philippines, the term use by the government was to cold blooded.¹ Although the purpose of Duterte adopted the method with good intentions, still it transgress the international norm on human rights.² In which he believes that he can bring peace by applying War on Drug which previously a success on Davao city during his time as a Mayor. Meanwhile, South China Sea being one of the busiest

¹ “Philippines: 'Drug War' Devastates Children's Lives.” Human Rights Watch, June 28, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/27/philippines-drug-war-devastates-childrens-lives>.

² *Ibid.*

sea route that bridges countries around the area such as China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, and many other countries. It become a serious issue until today as the clarification of who exactly own the area still remain unclear.³ Both event were occurred in contiguous time, however, those two gain different reactions from the international arena.

Moving on to where Duterte become the 16th President of the Philippines. He plans to resurrect the death penalty which was suspended back in 2006 by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.⁴ A statement made by Amnesty International (AI) which disagree with death penalty for any felony.⁵ In which death penalty should be confined to the most severe crime, that drug did not meet the condition to use death penalty as the tool for creating peace.⁶ However, after Duterte become the President of the Philippines he resurrected the law under his administration in order to abolish drug usage in the country.

By the time as a president massive execution within the Philippines occur, over 8000 people were executed as the suspect of drug users.⁷ The controversy of war on drugs escalating as there are many criticism by international actors who demand him to stop the massive killings, as it seemed to be violating the human rights of human being. Nevertheless, Duterte still insist to implied the policy and did not

³ "South China Sea Dispute." South China Morning Post, February 19, 2019.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2186449/explained-south-china-sea-dispute>.

⁴ "Philippines: Don't Reinstate Death Penalty." Human Rights Watch, December 3, 2016.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/03/philippines-dont-reinstate-death-penalty>.

⁵ "Philippines: The Death Penalty Is an Inhumane, Unlawful and Ineffective Response to Drugs." Amnesty International. Accessed September 14, 2019.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/philippines-the-death-penalty-is-an-inhumane-unlawful-and-ineffective-response-to-drugs/>.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

even flinch by any critics from United Nation (UN), AI, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and many other organizations. Duterte reaction towards the critics only saying that the one who can criticize him is his people only, and he believe that what he does is purely for the Philippines society and the nation.

The next case which is South China Sea dispute, a territorial dispute between People's Republic of China (PRC) and several other nations around the water area. The dispute over territories and sovereignty across the water area. With PRC claimed majority of the territory which defined as the nine dash line, that eventually there is no official statement whether belong to PRC or any other nations.⁸ The connection with the Philippines is that despite being part of the disputed country, the President itself said after he got elected as the head of state that he will take side with PRC on this issue over the United States (US). By Philippines siding with PRC, international criticism starts to firing President Duterte by not giving any warning to the nearness area that PRC has stationed a defense fortress on the recently built islands, Scarborough Shoal island. Both President from the Philippines and PRC have already held a several meeting in regarding the territorial issue, in which makes the Philippines more lenient towards PRC. Hence, the pragmatic approach towards PRC can have a potential for the Philippine's foreign policy and its sovereignty to be shaken or do not have establishment.⁹

⁸ "Why Is the South China Sea Contentious?" BBC News. BBC, July 12, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>.

⁹ Richard Javad Heydarian. "China Rolls out the Red Carpet for Duterte." Politics | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, October 27, 2016. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/10/china-rolls-red-carpet-duterte-161024134807797.html>.

The needs to compare both focus is to perceive on the President intention in giving both different responses to deal with the issue. Seeing from the international reactions on both event, Duterte reacts differently as he sees to be more careful in South China Sea rather than War on Drugs. Moreover, it raises a question of the Philippines sovereignty as the President himself is not consistent with his words and actions.

Associate with the study of International Relations which tend to discuss on politics, economy, security, and social events that occur in states. Various irrational events in global society occurred by the unorganized decision making by policy makers. Duterte's controversial statement during his campaign compare to his term as a President of the Philippines has been the heat in the international arena. Thereby, the suitable theory to support the study is by using constructivism theory.

According to Alexander Wendt, the theory of constructivism was associated by the end of Cold War, with the belief that traditional theories such as liberal and realist are failed to conduct peace during the war.¹⁰ Arguing that institutions and system are socially constructed, which interplay one another.¹¹ Whereas institutions can be refers to International Organization (IO), states, and any other actors. While system refers to Duterte's administration and policies which effect both domestic and global community. With the base of socially constructed, any decision making can be complex and unpredictable.

¹⁰ "Introducing Constructivism in International Relations Theory." E, n.d. <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/23/introducing-constructivism-in-international-relations-theory/>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Moreover, the use of constructivism theory as the basic foundation of this study in order to figure on what image does Duterte want to build and show to the international world by responded differently on the two issues. Alongside with several concepts which are sovereignty, national interest, human rights, and great power will soon be given broad explanation on the next chapter.

Therefore, the reason why I choose this topic to be my study is that I found it interesting to go deeper. As it is focusing on the field of sovereignty while the two event has different response by President Duterte. Both cases are completely different from one another, however, sovereignty that bridges the two has transformed Duterte to act differently in handling it. Questioning on his consistency about his understanding of sovereignty and why does he give such different approaches towards both event. Duterte being all hard power towards anti drugs and ignore any outside criticism, while on the other hand he come to an agreement with China over the territorial dispute. While both countries have strong legitimacy over the territory, yet strangely they become sort of ally in this matter. Thus, I decided to have thoroughly analyze on both event to be able to know the reason behind Duterte different responds on both event.

1.2 Research Question

In view of the circumstances clarified previously, I came up with the following research questions:

1. In what way President Duterte reactions about the idea of sovereignty are starkly different between war on drugs policy and the South China Sea

territorial dispute?

2. What was the reason behind the different reactions despite the two cases to certain extent related with Philippines sovereignty ?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the research is to find out the correlation on the policy on war on drug that Duterte's applied in the Philippines, as follows:

1. To know what is Duterte goals regarding the sovereignty of the Philippines. Where he gave different responses on War on Drugs and South China Sea dispute which is highly questionable. As both event connected towards sovereignty as the main focus of this study.
2. To elaborate the reason of him being "biased" on his prescription on both events and answering why does he make such decision in the first place.

The intention of conducting the research is to conduct significant analysis on what is exactly sovereignty does Duterte wants to build for the Philippines under his control. By comparing from the perspective of War on Drugs and South China Sea dispute. Which it in this circumstances it could shaken the sovereignty of its nation by having a leader who is not consistent with his stance.

1.4 Research Significance

The determination of this research is to provide profound analysis on the debating issue. As well as by looking at the progressive changes on War on Drugs and South China Sea dispute. By focusing on Duterte himself as the President in

dealing with relating issues. Moreover, this research will degenerate each possible outcome on why he adopted aggressive approach on drugs while being lenient to China in the territorial dispute in regards to its sovereignty.

The finding over sources on this research will be based on data and news update, which actually its quite limited as there are not much of reliable data that can be gather. By gathering the data as much as I can to answering on what Duterte's stance actually, and why does he has different response on both relating issues. How his action can effect the Philippines on their sovereignty matter. With the main focus is towards President Duterte himself as the prime object to be analyze. Thus, the importance of this research will hopefully have a good insight towards International Relations arena, also for the next generation to study and have diverse perspective of analysis on not only studying states issue, rather than seeing from the individual point of view such as Duterte with his flip flop stance as a President.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The study will be divided into five chapters, such as the following:

CHAPTER I: Introduction

The first chapter will provide brief explanation of the topic that will be brought later on the next chapters. Including background as the introduction to the study, research question to make the readers aware of what the goals of this study, and the research objective which to elaborate the purpose on choosing such research question in the first place. Moreover, with mentioning the theory and concepts that will support this study more comprehensively. In relating to War on Drugs and South China Sea dispute, this chapter will slightly give the information of both

focus on the perspective on Duterte as the President of the Philippines. By giving a little bit of the recent update of the drugs and territorial dispute under his administration.

CHAPTER II: Theoretical Framework

The second chapter will provide more significant data with the context of literature review. In which the data will be gathered from book, journals, report, and reliable news, in relate to the research question above. Moreover, by providing the theory that will be use in this research which is constructivism theory. As well as concepts that seen to be supporting the theory such as sovereignty, national interest of the Philippines itself, and human rights.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

In the third chapter, it will elaborate on what methods and approach in conducting this research study. By using qualitative as the approach, this chapter will explain on every methods and approaches. Moving on to the process of gathering the data, and the analysis procedures.

CHAPTER IV: Analysis

The chapter 4 which is the core of the study, it will focus on the data analysis that will answer the research question on the chapter I. By having thorough analysis on the data in line with the research question as detail as possible using reliable data. Thus, I will provide information that can be used to support the research question in the most efficient way to make the readers have easier understanding on the research study.

CHAPTER V: Conclusion

The last chapter which the conclusion of the research, in which I will summarize all the research that already been conducted before by providing general end on my examination study and the association of the two focuses on this study.

After giving the introduction of this research in this chapter, the following chapter will be discussing on the theoretical framework and provides literature reviews that will be use in the study. Including theories and concepts in order to answer the research questions.

