HOPEFUL NARRATIVES, GRIM REALITIES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE SATISFACTION OF DUTERTE SUPPORTERS IN TONDO, MANILA REGARDING THE TRAIN LAW & ANTI-ENDO BILL

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INTRODUCTION

With the presidential term of Duterte coming to an end, this phenomenological study intends to bring about an assessment through the Satisfaction of Duterte Supporters regarding the implementation of the TRAIN Law and vetoed Anti-Endo Bill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expectations and Perceptions on a potential Duterte Presidency
- Anti-Contractualization (Tomacruz, 2018); Tax reform Platforms (Elemia, 2017)
- Populist Campaign and Populist Voters (Kyle and Gultchin, 2018; Argulles, 2019)

Satisfaction of Duterte Supporters (Main Variable)
- Attitude of the electorate towards the policy outcome of the government (Esaiasson, Gilljam & Persson, 2016). Expectation of the electorate and the actual perceived performance (Abou-Khalil and Aoun, 2020)
- Economic factors as determinants of approval (Meer and Hakhverdian, 2016; Stiers and Kiern, 2018).

Socio-Economic Policy Decisions (Independent Variable)
- Implementation of TRAIN Law (Atienza, 2019)
- Veto of Anti-Endo Bill (Esquivias, 2019)
- Advantages of maintaining contractualization (Paqueo & Orbeta, 2016; Cortez, 2019)

METHODOLOGY

Approach:
- Qualitative

Method:
- Descriptive-Explanatory

Design:
- Phenomenological

Data Collection:
- Semi-structured in-depth interview

Selection Criteria:
- Resides in Tondo, Manila
- Taxpayer or Contractual Worker
- Supported or voted for Duterte during the 2016 presidential election

Method of Analysis:
- Narrative Analysis
- Thematic Analysis

RESULTS

CATEGORICAL THEME 1
High Taxes and Presence of Contractualization Prior to the 2016 Presidential Election
- Reforming the Tax System
- Hardships of Contractual Workers
- Reforms will Benefit the lower class the most

CATEGORICAL THEME 3
Negative experiences for taxpayers and contractual workers under implemented TRAIN Law and vetoed Anti-Endo Bill
- Prices of goods and services went up
- Taxes were reduced but the lower class remain affected the most
- Disappointment towards the decision to veto the Anti-Endo Bill
- Ignored the welfare of workers
- Decision to veto Anti-Endo Bill considered both Employers and Employees

CATEGORICAL THEME 2
Positive Perceptions and High Expectations Towards Duterte Presidency
- Duterte appeals to all social classes
- 'Populist' Qualities of Duterte
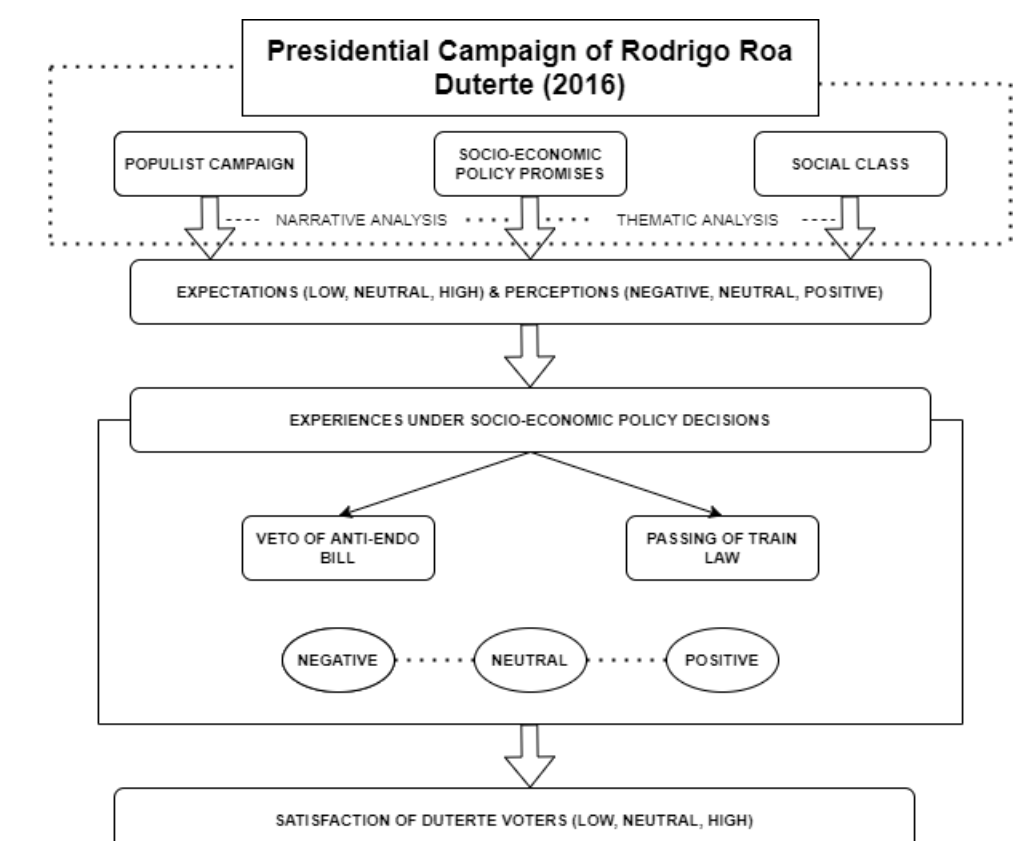- High expectations towards a Duterte Presidency

CATEGORICAL THEME 2
Low levels of satisfaction for taxpayers and contractual workers Duterte appeals to all social classes
- Dissatisfaction with socio-economic policy decisions
- Contractual Workers are mostly affected by Duterte's policy decisions
- Low levels of satisfaction
- Neutral towards competence of Duterte in handling the tax reform and contractualization

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
MET EXPECTATIONS THEORY

DISCUSSION

- The researchers have determined that prior to the 2016 presidential elections, the living conditions of both contractual workers and taxpayers were difficult given the harsh conditions under contractualization and high taxes in the country. The narrative of the participants is in line with Thompson's (2016) analysis, that despite the prior administration having a high GDP rate, poverty hardly dipped and self-reported poverty was rising.

- In determining the expectations and perceptions of the participants regarding a potential Duterte presidency, The participants focused on three key concepts: Duterte's appeal to all social classes (Arguelles, 2019), the populist qualities of Duterte during the campaign (Kyle & Gultchin, 2018) and the popular notion and reputation of Duterte as a former Mayor of Davao. The researchers found that the majority of the interviewees had high expectation levels on a potential Duterte-led government due to the campaign promise of restructuring the tax system to favor the poor and the advocacy to end contractualization.

- Although, some interviewees acknowledged that the choice to veto the bill considered both employers and employees. This theme highlights some notable ideas in the literature review that view the practice of contractualization as a means to keep the Philippine economy competitive and a mechanism to draw in foreign investors (Paqueo & Orbeta, 2016; Cortez, 2019).

- Contractual Worker #2 and Taxpayer #1 stated that the 'promises' of Duterte were left unmet, even though the president sought to expedite the passage of the bill in congress (Esquivias, 2019). Although Contractual Worker #3 and Taxpayer #2 observed an apparent decrease in taxes, they maintained that the lower class were mostly affected by the reforms since they were not directly affected by tax exemptions.

- One of the key postulates of the Met Expectations Theory (Claasen et al., 2013) indicates that the levels of satisfaction depend upon the experiences of the individual. Correspondingly, the interviewees cited economic factors as major determinants of their respective assessments of the socio-economic policy decisions (Stiers & Kern, 2018).

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Majority of Duterte Supporters generated **high expectations** and positive perceptions towards a potential Duterte-presidency.

- Majority of Duterte supporters were left dissatisfied with their experiences under Duterte's decision to pass the TRAIN Law and veto the Anti-Endo bill because it did not meet their prior expectations.

- Workers still suffer from unfair labor conditions brought by endo

- The TRAIN Law guarantees clear benefits, particularly to those exempted from taxes, there is a trade-off with regards to the prices of goods

- A wider array of literature centered around the lived experiences of taxpayers and contractual workers can greatly help further the assessment of socio-economic policies in the Philippines