

Human Rights Advocacy in a Context
of Extreme Securitisation: Amnesty
International and the ‘War on Drugs’
in the Philippines
(July 2016 – May 2017)



Lauren Stansfield
5948320
Utrecht University
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Abstract

This thesis aims to research how Human Rights Organisations are attempting to desecuritize a so-called ‘War on Drugs’ in the Philippines that is happening within the context of shrinking civil society space owing to a government-instigated process of what this research terms ‘extreme securitisation’. The definition of extreme securitisation is elaborated on within the thesis and depicts the phenomena of how human rights defenders have come to be vilified in the same way as drug users in the ‘War on Drugs’. The research locates the success of the extreme securitisation within a context of fragile democracy and weak state institutions, going back to the years of the Marcos dictatorship. Important contextual factors are examined to help understand the rise of penal populism, the election of populist leader President Rodrigo Duterte, and the resultant securitisation of illegal drugs. To examine how Human Rights NGOs in the Philippines are operating in this environment of mass support for the president and his drug policies, securitisation and desecuritisation theoretical frameworks are applied. Predominantly, strategies for desecuritising illicit drugs and moving them back to a public health issue are identified and discussed. This research is a case study analysis of human rights advocacy in the ‘War on Drugs’ in the Philippines, with a special focus on Amnesty International, to provide a deeper analysis of how such an organisation can operate in this difficult environment of limited political space.

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Map 1 - Philippines, showing locations of Manila and Davao cities



Source: Operational World Organisation¹

¹ <http://www.operationworld.org/phil> [Accessed 27/07/2017]

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAH	Crimes Against Humanity
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
COPRI	Conflict and Peace Research Institute
CS	Copenhagen School
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDB	Dangerous Drugs Board
EJK	Extra-judicial Killings
HR	Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NUPL	National Union of People's Lawyering
PAHRA	Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
PDEA	Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
PNP	Philippine National Police
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network

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Human Rights Advocacy in a Context of Extreme Securitisation: Amnesty International and the 'War on Drugs' in the Philippines (July 2016- May 2017)

"My order is shoot to kill you. I don't care about human rights, you better believe me"
President Rodrigo Duterte, August 2016¹

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction, Research Design, and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Following the presidential elections on 9 May, 2016, the long-standing 'crime-busting' Mayor of Davao, Rodrigo Duterte, celebrated his victorious win with a crowd of screaming, banner-clad supporters. More reminiscent of a celebrity pop concert than a political event, Duterte confirmed his campaign promise to eradicate illegal drugs within six months and 'fatten the fish of Manila Bay with the corpses of criminals.'² Duterte's surprise victory saw him capture 39% of the popular vote: a landslide in terms of the pluriform multi-party electoral system in the country. The international community, Duterte's political opponents and local human rights (HR) organizations and NGO's in the Philippines were shaken. Duterte's foul-mouthed and unapologetic hard-line campaign that had promised to restore law and order and wage a 'bloody war on drugs' had gained traction with many voters who had become increasingly fearful of the seemingly ever-growing social problems in the Philippines.

Duterte launched his campaign in a climate of fear about rising crime and drug use across the country and vowed to 'clean up the streets' with brutal crackdowns on government corruption, rising crime and drug peddlers. Duterte's macho rhetoric was well received with voters and he was already renowned for his unorthodox methods of 'ruling with an iron fist in return for social peace and personal security' during his 28 years as mayor of Davao.³ After his inauguration on June 30th 2016, Duterte made good on his promise to implement his Davao model nationwide, and reliable sources reported that nearly 1,800 people had been killed by police and vigilantes in the antidrug war in the first seven weeks alone.⁴ By May 2017, Reuters stated that the toll stood at 9,500 including nearly 3,000 deaths from 'presumed legitimate law enforcement operations.'⁵ Although EJKs are not a new phenomenon in the Philippines, the openly state-sponsored and brazen nature of the killings demonstrate a break from what would previously have been secretly organised, clandestine operations.

Confronted with widespread public backing of the war on drugs, and a general consensus that the killings are a necessary collateral damage in 'making the country safe again', HR advocacy organizations are facing an extraordinarily tough environment. The case of the Philippines is a puzzling one. It has been 30 years since the reinstatement of democracy, and the creation of the independent,

¹ Susan Mapp and Shirley G. Gabe (2017) 'Government Abuses of Human Rights' *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* 2 (1) 1-2 : 1

² 'Duterte's Talk of Killing Criminals Raises Fear in the Philippines' *The New York Times*, 17 May 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/18/world/asia/rodrigo-duterte-philippines.html> [Accessed 22/06/17]

³ Julio C. Teehankee and Mark R. Thompson (2016) 'The Vote in the Philippines: Electing a Strongman' *Journal of Democracy* 27 (4) 125-134 : 126

⁴ *Ibid.* p.132

⁵ 'Nothing to See Here, Philippines tells U.N. Human Rights Council', *Reuters*, 08 May 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-un-idUSKBN184134> [Accessed 22/06/17]

fiscally autonomous, Commission on Human Rights. Yet, despite the efforts of multiple NGO's in the three decades succeeding the 1987 Peoples Power Revolution, human rights have not progressed or developed to the acceptable, internationally-recognized standard that the Philippines pledged to achieve when they became signatories to the United Nations Rome Statute⁶. There has instead been an identifiable retraction of HR values at the national and local level, physically embodied by relative public indifference to the drug-related EJK's.

There is seemingly a new narrative winning the war of words: that 'human rights' are a threat to progress, and an impediment when it comes to eradicating crime and reforming society. The point is commonly made that not only are illegal drugs and all those involved in the drugs trade a threat to security, but so as well are the HR defenders who seek to promote the universality of HR. In May 2017, an unfazed Duterte openly made the threat on local media to behead HR advocates critical of his war on drugs: 'I will take all your heads off... don't fuck with me.'⁷ Yet these sorts of outbursts on public media are common, and have little to no effect on presidential approval ratings. So how did this happen? How did a 71-year-old city mayor cum President manage to convince a Catholic nation to endorse a bloody drug war that has seen EJK numbers rocket beyond the totality of EJKs under the entire Marcos dictatorship?⁸ And what are local HR NGO's in the Philippines doing to resist and reverse this trend, and counter the government policies?

In this thesis I have used "securitisation theory" to critically analyse the case of the war on drugs in the Philippines. Specifically, it explores what methods and strategies local HR NGOs are adopting and inventing to 'desecuritize' government policies on illegal drugs within the emergent environment of compressed political space. I argue that the Philippines is a case of 'extreme securitisation' (a concept that I myself have coined), whereby the strength of the securitising discourse is to such an extent that not only are those individuals who involved in the drug trade vilified and denounced, but this hostile behaviour has also been increasingly extended to HR defenders themselves. NGOs are being pressured and harassed when they voice criticism of the president.

This thesis seeks to answer this core research puzzle: 'How are Human Rights NGOs attempting to desecuritize a so called 'War on Drugs' in the Philippines that is happening within the context of shrinking civil society space owing to a government-instigated process of 'extreme securitisation', in the period 2016-2017?'

I have further broken down this core research puzzle into these central questions, which together will help us to understand the complexities of this hostile NGO environment in the Philippines:

- (1) Why has the securitisation of illegal drugs been so successful within a context of state fragility and weak democracy, and what are the key factors behind this popular success?

⁶ 'Philippines Ratifies the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court' *United Nations*, 30 August 2011, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39416#.WUu4WzJ96M8> [Accessed 22/06/17]

⁷ 'Duterte Threatens to "Behead" Human Rights Critics' *The Manila Times*, 20 May 2017, <http://www.manilatimes.net/duterte-threatens-behead-rights-critics/328205/> [Accessed 22/06/17]

⁸ *The Manila Times*, '3,257: Fact checking the Marcos killings, 1975-1985' 12 April 2017, <http://www.manilatimes.net/3257-fact-checking-the-marcos-killings-1975-1985/255735/> [Accessed 26/06/17]

- (2) What is the process by which the securitisation of drug users and traffickers has been extended to a process I call extreme securitisation, to include the HR defenders themselves?
- (3) How are the audience participating in practices leading to a condition of extreme securitisation of the so-called 'War on Drugs'?
- (4) How has extreme securitisation affected the way in which HR NGOs work?
- (5) How have HR NGOs responded by trying to desecuritize the president's drug policies and counter the denunciation of human rights? Specifically, how have HR NGOs, like Amnesty International, attempted to shift the issue of illegal drugs out of 'security mode' and back into the public sphere of normal politics?

Human rights abuses in the Philippines are not a new and emerging issue. From the era of the Marcos dictatorship up until the present day, there have been HR violations, forced disappearances, and killings. However, the unique mix of a dramatic rise in the number of EJKs, the complicity of the wider public, and the discrediting of HR NGOs and their counter-narrative fight-back, all make what is currently happening in the Philippines an intriguing case worthy of deeper study. What makes my research significant and relevant is that there has been comparatively little investigation into how 'desecuritisation' actually happens empirically, especially in a context of extreme securitisation, and limited political space.

"Desecuritisation" is an emerging field of research. Research on applied desecuritisation is underdeveloped, and thus my research aims to contribute to this by offering an analysis of practices through which desecuritisation have been enacted. In an article on 'Securitization and Desecuritization',⁹ Wæver (1995) introduces both terms, and suggests that they were created as conceptual opposites. Hansen adds that 'Desecuritisation thus creates or restores a genuine public sphere, where humans can, in an Arendtian fashion, 'debate and act to build a common world'.¹⁰ This is important and suggests, like in Wæver's article, that desecuritisation is something security studies should be interested in conceptually developing to the same degree of sophistication as the idea of securitisation. HR NGOs adopting new policies and striving to desecuritize the war on drugs in the Philippines are engaging in a normative undertaking through advocacy and engagement within a public debate.

This thesis takes the shape of a case study: defined as something that takes '*multiple perspectives* (whether routed through single or multiple data collection methods), and is *rooted in a specific context* which is seen as critical to understanding the researched phenomena'.¹¹ The context of the Philippines, both past and present is critical to analysing and accounting for how Duterte's 'war on drugs' could emerge and develop.

The research upon which it is based included a 10-week fieldwork placement in Metro Manila from March until May 2017, a time period after the 'relaunching' of the drug war and when reported extra-judicial killings were consistently high. I embedded myself as a researcher with Amnesty International (AI). AI is the primary NGO in the Philippines that has habitually advocated for the HR of

⁹ Ole Wæver (1995) 'Securitization and Desecuritization'. in RD Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security*. Copenhagen: Columbia University Press, pp. 46-87 :.48

¹⁰ Lene Hansen (2012) 'Reconstructing desecuritisation: the normative-political in the Copenhagen School and directions for how to apply it' *Review of International Studies* 38 : 525-546 : 531

¹¹ Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (2013) *Qualitative Research Practice*, London, Sage. p.76

alleged criminals, asserting that HR are universal and extend to all citizens, including to those involved in the using or selling of illegal drugs. AI therefore does not have to adopt or modify their mandate to advocate for the HR of drug suspects.

The reason I chose to focus my research with AI is because it is both a local and an international organisation, and as such offers unparalleled opportunities for insights, and access to a wide spectrum of information, and network linkages to other organisations. In addition, the Philippines branch of AI has recently published the most detailed investigative, analytical report about the drug-related executions. Gaining entry into this organisation therefore provided me with a valuable opportunity for networking and reaching other HR NGOs, for comparing different strategies of challenging the government's drug policies, and for identifying longer-term strategies for maintaining a HR discourse within an increasingly hostile socio-political environment.

1.2 Research Design and Methodology

Epistemologically, this thesis takes a social-constructivist approach to the subject of security. Within security studies, constructivism is 'concerned with the impact of norms on international security. Norms are intersubjective beliefs about the social and natural world that define actors, their situations, and the possibilities of action'.¹² A constructivist approach locates actors within a social structure that shapes those actors, and is in turn shaped by their interaction.

Constructivists are concerned with how international norms arise and are reproduced through state action, and with seeing how international norms 'connect with local agents'.¹³ Predominantly, many constructivist studies focus on the diffusion of international human rights norms.¹⁴ My research is primarily concerned with how local HR actors—with a focus on Amnesty International—are seeking to remain operational within a context of extreme securitisation. Specifically, how AI is attempting to desecuritize illegal drugs, and to pressure the president to adherence to international human rights norms and standards. As such, a constructivist approach is the most relevant one to take in this case study.

1.2.1 Research Phases and Methodology

The research for this thesis consisted of four phases: First, the phase of preliminary literature-based research in the Netherlands (2) a first stage of field research in the Philippines, which consisted of 'mapping the field' of the HR NGO community, and (3) a second stage of field research which focused specifically on Amnesty International, their pressured situation in an environment of extreme securitisation, and what coping strategies they were adopting to continue HR advocacy and the desecuritisation of illegal drugs, and 4) thesis writing.

The primary data collection techniques used during these phases were (a) content research of newspapers, policy documents, incident reports, NGO internal logs, digital media (news websites/social media) and visual data, and minutes of meetings, (b) participant observation (such as at forums and strategy meetings), and (c) in-depth interviews (both with prominent figures in the NGO community and with EJK victim family members). These main sources of evidence were used to

¹² Theo Farrell (2002) *Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program*, 4 (1) 49-72 : 49

¹³ Ibid. p.55

¹⁴ Jeffrey T. Checkel (1999) 'Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe,' *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (1) : 83-114

triangulate my data from a variety of different angles; for example, interviews were used to triangulate data found online or through some of the NGO's published material, and vice-versa.¹⁵

I will briefly discuss the research phases and which data collection techniques were used at each phase, and how data was codified and analysed. The first phase consisted of preliminary research in the Netherlands. After deciding to focus on HR advocacy in a case of extreme securitisation, the Philippines was selected for my research. The country has a strong history of civil society engagement and an interesting and diverse human rights community—a community that is now arguably in turmoil after Duterte's extremely successful securitisation of illegal drugs. During this time, I did a thorough literature review on the history of the Philippines, so I could understand the contextual factors that shaped the securitisation of what is commonly regarded as a 'crime of immorality,' and equally to understand the scope for desecuritisation by HR NGOs.

Furthermore, I began networking and contacting figures in the human rights community in Quezon City, Metro Manila where the majority of the NGOs are located, in order to organise preliminary meetings and interviews. In order to facilitate contacts, I also joined many social media site groups, such as 'Facebook Amnesty International Philippines,' and 'Philippine Alliance on Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)' to keep track of current activities and protest events, and to determine what the most active and vociferous groups were in the war on drugs vs human rights debate.

The second stage of the research involved 'mapping the field' of the NGO community in Metro Manila, which engaged the first two to three weeks of my research time. This 'mapping' period involved seeking to answer questions such as: how is the HR NGO community structured in the Philippines? Does the HR NGO community work together harmoniously, and if so whether on similar issues? What activities are taking place? What methods and strategies are being adopted to resist the extreme securitisation of illegal drugs?

To answer these questions, I used non-probability snowball sampling¹⁶ to access a broad and diverse number of NGO senior staff members and smaller human rights movements (such as those mobilised by the church), and to reach EJK victim family members. Snowball sampling, or 'networking method,' worked well in the Philippines as the war on drugs topic can be sensitive and taboo, and EJK victim families are always initially fearful and distrusting of outsiders. During this second stage, I gained a good insight into the HR NGO community, the problems, internal quarrels and disunity within what is in fact a politically divided array of civil society organisations. Through this mapping process, I located Amnesty International as the most relevant human rights organisation to conduct an in-depth case study, as a group that claims to be independent from political affiliations, and the recent producer of a detailed report into the drug EJKs.

The third phase of research focusing on Amnesty International involved (a) document analysis, (b) comparing internal reports and logs from past events with current events so as to understand the shrinking political space, (c) reviewing social media content, and (d) in-depth interviews with senior staff members. Roundtable meetings and minute-taking were useful data collection techniques with members of AIs coalition groups, such as IDefend, which were founded in response to protest EJKs in the Philippines. All of the persons I spoke to for the in-depth case study analysis of AI were senior

¹⁵ Hennie, Boeije (2010) *Analysis in qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications. p.176

¹⁶ Ibid. p.40

staff members from the AI headquarters, as my focus was primarily on leadership and advocacy strategy. I was welcome to make use of AI office space to observe daily operations.

During the third phase I continued to interview other relevant actors to gain a wider contextual understanding of the Philippines. These persons may or may not have been actively involved with AI, but were active on the same issues, and could provide me with valuable information to better understand the field. For example, this included interviewing high-level staff at the Commission on Human Rights, and political figures from the Senate and House of Representatives that have a voice on human rights issues, with the power to condone or debate the EJKs, or vote on the death penalty. The sampling of these actors was similarly based on non-probability (snowball sample) on the basis of information and networking previously undertaken during past interviews and meetings.

During my fieldwork placement, I kept a journal and would log daily events and important conversations, which I occasionally refer to as 'author's fieldnotes' in this thesis. I acknowledge that journals can be methodologically problematic due to bias and subjectivity, so I tried to subjugate this by keeping the journal factual. As such, it contains only events, and the names and quote summaries from people I had spoken to on certain days.

1.2.1.1 Data Collection Methods and Analysis

My data collection methods in phases two and three involved the continued gathering and reviewing of press newspapers in Manila and social media content, although the main data collection involved 'structured' and 'semi-structured' in-depth interviews with relevant participants connected to HR advocacy. The interviews would usually consist of two parts. Part one would be structured questions such as those regarding issues of when the organisation became active, how many staff they have, how they are funded, etc. Part two would consist of more general and open questions regarding organisational stance on EJKs and human rights. For example, if political space felt under pressure, what strategies are in place to survive and fight back? I also collected self-evaluations of success in their common goal to desecuritize illegal drugs and advocate for human rights.

In phase three, when I refined my focus on AI, data collection techniques involved in-depth interviews, reviewing incident reports and strategy meeting logs, and participant observation. After my fieldwork research, all recorded interviews (listed in Annex 1) were transcribed to make for easier comparative analysis. I then codified this data by highlighting common patterns and trends in responses using Lene Hansen's 'four forms' (which I will elaborate on in chapter three) to categorise certain strategies, and considering and analysing the reasons behind disparate or contradicting responses or experiences.

1.2.2 Sensitivity of the Topic

The war on drugs is considered a sensitive topic. Political space in the Philippines and scope for dialogue on human rights is under immense pressure and as will later be discussed, the wider public can be quick to anger and feel affronted by exploratory conversations that they feel questions the integrity of the president. HR NGO's may therefore be reserved, and not forthcoming and completely open about their strategies for desecuritising drugs. I was initially worried about access issues to the internal workings of HR NGO's, but the snowball-sampling networking method proved invaluable and

I quickly built up rapport with leading figures in the community who would introduce me to other organisations, etc.

Interacting with drug EJK victim's families required a high degree of sensitivity on my part, and individuals were understandably fearful of telling their stories to an unknown outsider. However, being affiliated to and introduced by the HR NGO workers who they already trusted, many of the victim's family members came to trust me as well, eventually even becoming eager to share their experiences with me. In respect of their wishes, I made notes of these interviews but I did not record them, and certain respondents were kept anonymous.

1.2.2.1 Limits of the Research

The qualitative nature of my case study research is not intended to be statistically representative, and although lessons can be deduced from the research findings which may be of use for HR advocacy strategy elsewhere, the findings are not intended to be generalisations or widely applicable to other cases. I acknowledge that my interview material expresses respondent's opinions and perspectives as they see it. I do not consider what I am told in interviews to be an external, objective 'truth', and when respondents have made claims of 'facts' I have tried to verify the accuracy of such claims by triangulating with other sources, documents, and with what other interview informants have told me.

Travel constraints, such as the UK Foreign Office advising against all travel to the Mindanao region of the Philippines, meant I was unable to visit Davao City and conduct interviews in the president's home city, something that would have helped contextualise the president's popularity from his first major support base. However, since my research focused primarily on HR NGOs (the vast majority of which are located in Quezon City) my location choice was appropriate and non-restrictive.

The ongoing peace talks taking place in the Netherlands in March and April 2017 between Filipino communist groups and the Duterte government meant that some civil society figures of interest were unavailable, and some interviews were conducted via Skype rather than in person. Time restraints limited the quantity of in-depth interviews that I could conduct. Nevertheless, I am confident that I conducted enough interviews with relevant individuals and organisations for my research to present an accurate picture of the subject. The majority of my respondents had a very good grasp of English, so not being able to speak Tagalog was not a hindrance for me.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, there is a possibility that some of my respondents were reserved and guarded during their interview participation, but this was subverted by adhering to ethical recommendations, such as reassuring respondents they would not be recorded or named in published material. Another limitation to my research is the necessity to omit the details of certain events, as to protect those involved in contentious situations that may threaten their safety. I was shown internal documents of a sensitive nature, but for ethical reasons of confidentiality I am not permitted to disclose fully the information that they contain. Despite certain limitations that are typical problematiques of qualitative research, I remain convinced that my data collection, sampling, and analysis methods were thorough and appropriate for the nature of this case study research.

1.3 Chapter Outline of Thesis

Chapter Two of this thesis will examine the current academic debates in the field of securitisation / desecuritisation theory. The securitisation of illegal drugs seems to fit the Copenhagen School's

criteria for securitization in many ways, but I assert that these criteria are too simplistic and neglect the important agency of the audience. As I argue for the elevated centrality of the audience and emphasise the coactive role of the audience and the securitising actor, I have selected frameworks of analysis from the Paris School and borrow from authors such as Thierry Balzacq, Adam Coté, Michael Williams, and Stuart Croft. Lene Hansen provides an interesting framework for reconstructing desecuritisation, and how to apply it. I found this useful for the critical analysis of my data, and for considering how HR NGOs are trying to adopt new strategies to desecuritize whilst traditional channels have been blocked. Additionally, in this chapter I will examine Keck and Sikkink's 'Boomerang Model'¹⁷ and their corresponding literature on 'transnational advocacy networks'¹⁸ (TANs), and discuss the potential of TANs as a desecuritisation tool (or not) in the war on drugs.

Chapter Three of this research will examine the historical and current context of the Philippines, as this is central to comprehending the securitisation phenomena. Part one of this chapter will examine fragile democracy and weak rule of law in the Philippines which has contributed to the despondent attitude towards human rights and NGOs. Part two of this chapter will locate the 'strongman' narrative and authoritarian tendencies of Duterte as traceable back to the Marcos dictatorship and account for why this resonates with the public in the Philippines. I will use the securitisation theories of Balzacq and other scholars I discussed in Chapter 2 to aid the analysis of the audience and what I assert to be their primary and central role in the securitisation of illegal drugs.

Chapter Four of this research focuses on the divisions within the HR NGO community, and how political affiliations and alignments shape and structure the advocacy strategies of certain (or all) HR organisations. The chapter then empirically applies Lene Hansen's 'four forms' of desecuritisation to categorise the methods and strategies of HR NGOs, and to analyse and categorise their activities as falling into these 'four forms'.

The Fifth and final chapter will focus on Amnesty International, and account for what it means to be a HR NGO within a situation of extreme securitisation. This chapter examines the transformed environment for AI under the Duterte Administration, and how the ultra-securitisation has impacted and pressurised their political space. Using Hansen's framework, I will again analyse the methods and strategies that AI are adopting and inventing to survive in this new environment, in furtherance of their goal to desecuritize illegal drugs.

¹⁷ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1999) *Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. p. 89

¹⁸ Ibid. Note: Keck and Sikkink define such a network as that which 'includes those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.'

CHAPTER TWO: Analytical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Securitisation theory ‘stands at the intersection of three streams of IR theory – realism, poststructuralism, and constructivism.’¹⁹ Depending upon which stream a securitisation theorist aligns with, there are many ‘theories of securitisation.’ Each one contains contesting assertions about the objective or subjective nature of *threats*, and the divergent salience given to particular factors and actors within a securitising move. This chapter will introduce ‘security studies’ as a field, and go on to discuss the evolution of securitisation theory since its conception at the Copenhagen School (CS), before examining theories and frameworks of analysis specifically relevant to this research.

Whilst the CS is an interesting point of departure for security analysis, I assert that the Paris School accounts most convincingly for an empirical analysis of extreme securitisation in the Philippines. In particular, Balzacq’s lens of ‘the analytics of government’, which emphasises practices and processes, as well as providing a framework with which to zoom in on the salience of *context* and *audience(s)*²⁰ - an invaluable tool for analysing the important role of the context of weak democracy and the agency of the Filipino audience. The chapter will then examine *deseuritisation* and the debates surrounding its normative-political nature and the potential of *deseuritisation* to be a desirable outcome, whilst discussing and acknowledging that it may not always be a desirable outcome. As this research focuses on HR NGO strategies to *desecuritise* illegal drugs, I have included in this chapter the theoretical model of transnational advocacy networks (TANs), and how NGOs could use this as a possible *deseuritisation* strategy to pressure the government to move illegal drugs out of extreme security measures and back into the political bargaining sphere.

2.2 Security Studies

At the turn of the millennium Steve Smith surmised that security had become a ‘genuinely contested concept’²¹. During the 1980’s there was a breaking away from the strict focus on national security and the security of the *state* towards a wider, more inclusive focus on the security of the *people*, either as individuals or as a global or international collectivity.²² The most enduring and impactful security reconceptualization emerged at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) of Copenhagen and is represented by the authors Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. This school of thought became known as the Copenhagen School.²³ It is not necessary to give a detailed review of security studies in general, as that has already been done by many others, but I will be using the wider, more inclusive, non-military focussed concept of security as it is relevant for the case of social security in the Philippines.

¹⁹ Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard and Jan Ruzicka (2016) ‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases’ *International Relations* 30 (4) : 494–531 : 518

²⁰ Ibid. 494

²¹ Steve Smith (2000) ‘The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualising Security in the Last Twenty Years.’, in Stuart Croft and Terry Terriff (eds.) *Critical Reflections on Security and Change*, London: Frank Cass. p.96

²² Wæver, 1995 : 48

²³ Ralf Emmers (2007) ‘Securitisation’ in A. Collins (ed.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp 109-25 : 110

2.3 The Copenhagen School

It would not be possible to talk about ‘securitisation’ without considering the security concepts born from the Copenhagen School (CS). At first glance, the case of the Philippines appears to be a classic CS case of securitisation. We can identify the markers of speech act, audience acceptance, and extreme measures (discussed below), which are the salient features of the CS’s analysis.

For the Copenhagen School, ‘security is about survival... when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object’.²⁴ Referent objects are defined as ‘things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival.’²⁵ With the focus on *survival* and *existential threat*, the CS identifies five categories: military, environmental security, economic, societal, and political security.²⁶

The CS model of securitisation claims that any specific matter can be non-politicised, politicised, or securitised. An issue is non-politicised when it does not require any policy, action, or intervention from the state, and is not an issue for public debate. An issue can become politicised if it is included in public debate and is managed within the political system, for example if it is debated in parliament or if there is legislation for that issue.

The CS states that an act of securitisation occurs when a securitising actor frames an already politicised issue as an *existential threat* to one of the five categories. A securitising actor is typically from a privileged position, such as from the government or from military or state elites.²⁷ The CS stresses the importance of the *speech act* performed by the securitising actor to convince an *audience* of the existential threat, so that such an audience will be accepting of extreme measures to subvert and counter such a threat.

Securitising an issue and revealing the required response to quell the threat is a three-stage process.²⁸ In stage one, the securitising actor (an elite) has to tag the issue as an existential threat. This does not mean that this will be accepted, and automatically become a ‘successful’ securitisation. As Wæver writes, ‘discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization – this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such’.²⁹ The second stage is therefore when an audience accepts and adopts a securitising actor’s interpretation that the threat is dangerous enough to warrant extreme measures, resources, and mobilisations to overcome the impending threat. If these two stages are completed then the issue has become securitised. The final stage is the actual ‘mobilisation of resources to overcome the threat, known as adopting extraordinary measures.’³⁰ Extraordinary measures could involve actions such as border controls, new government policies (both defensive and pre-emptive), and even declaration of war. In the case of the Philippines, extreme

²⁴ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p21

²⁵ Ibid. p.36

²⁶ Ralf Emmers 2007 : 110

²⁷ Alan Collins (2005) ‘Securitization, Frankenstein's Monster and Malaysian Education’ *The Pacific Review* 18 (4) : 567-588

²⁸ Ibid. p.570

²⁹ Buzan et al, 1998 : 25

³⁰ Collins, 2005 : 570

measures are embodied by the state-sponsored extra-judicial killings, and the immense pressure on human rights organisations.

2.3.1 Beyond Copenhagen

There are many critiques of the conceptual limitations of the CS. The most preliminary are underscored by Emmers, and include Eurocentrism, the blurred political and security realms, and the narrow focus on speech acts.³¹

The emphasis on security as a *speech act* is most acutely and convincingly challenged by Balzacq, who asserts that rather a strict focus on speech, 'securitization is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) practice that occurs within, and as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the *context*, the *psycho-cultural disposition of the audience*, and the power that *both speaker and listener* bring to the interaction.'³² For Balzacq, security as a speech act is highly problematic, overlooking (or at least not paying due attention) the important factors of context, audience orientation, and political agency. Securitisation is here redefined as strategic (pragmatic) practice. Balzacq disputes the speech act as being the driver of security discourse to achieve security goals, and concludes that *strategic or pragmatic* action operates at an equal level of persuasion. Various other artefacts, such as metaphors, emotions, stereotypes, gestures, silence, and even lies, may be used to reach security goals.³³ This move away from speech provides a more comprehensive scope for analysis for the Philippines. In Thailand, and other South-Asian countries, the societal threat from illegal drugs has been articulated in speech acts from leaders in the past³⁴. Yet these countries have not seen the extreme securitisation that has occurred in the Philippines.

When analysing an act of securitisation, context is crucial. The CS implies that by uttering security speech, the context changes. Balzacq queries this 'internalist' approach, whereby the context is shaped and remodelled by the use of the concept of security (based on the necessary CS rules for linguistic acts to produce their effects). This approach does not require the existence of a real 'out there' threat, and is based fundamentally on the 'abductive power'³⁵ of words to activate a new context.³⁶ An 'internalist' approach to context can therefore overstate the power of the use of security concepts, and dually understate important contextual factors. Indeed, to direct audience attention towards an issue that a securitising actor is construing as threatening or dangerous, the issue needs to resonate and respond with the context within which the actor's actions are located.

Balzacq contests the internalist perspective, and instead proposes the 'externalist' approach, which underscores the importance of 'external and brute threats'; in other words, that which exists 'out there.' Externalists emphasise the hazards to human life that do not depend on the mediation of

³¹ Emmers, 2007 : 116-118

³² Thierry Balzacq (2005) 'The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context' *European Journal of International Relations* 11(2): 171–201 : 172 [My emphasis]

³³ Ibid. p172

³⁴ For Example, In February 2003, the Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, declared a 'war on drugs'. In 2015, the Indonesian President Joko Widodo, promised a new commitment to a 'war on drugs', and in March 2017, the Singaporean Minister for Home Affairs K Shanmugam vowed that 'Singapore will be relentless in its 'war on drugs'. See <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/asias-war-on-drugs/> [Accessed 25/07/2017]

³⁵ 'Abductive power' of words is defined as words that 'create their own conditions of receptiveness by modifying, or building a fitting context.' See Balzacq, *Three Faces of Securitisation*.

³⁶ Balzacq, 2005 : 180

language and speech act to be where they are. Balzacq therefore holds that ‘to win an audience, security statements must, usually, be related to an external reality’.³⁷ Understanding the local political histories and experiences of communities are therefore pivotal when grasping how securitisation operates in a given context.³⁸ This assertion matches my empirical observations from the Philippines. There is a threat from drugs in poor communities, audience members (the public) are afraid of gangs and the lawlessness that they witness in their everyday lives. For these reasons, Duterte’s articulation of the “threat of drugs” corresponds and resonates with an external and social reality that many Filipinos have experienced.

Claire Wilkinson further builds on the limitations of the CS for aiding empirical analysis in a case of securitisation. She notes that by giving primacy to the speech act, the CS prioritised theoretical coherence (for widespread applicability) at the expense of the consideration of important *local understandings*.³⁹ Wilkinson asserts that securitisation theory results in an account of security that has in effect been ‘decontextualized’.⁴⁰ This is to say that meta-narratives of security are both retrospectively and selectively chosen abstractions of the different (speech) acts and narratives that led to a successful securitisation; and in this process critical local dynamics and political-contextual histories are stripped of reference, for the sake of theoretical coherence. Yet these security narratives often bear little relation to how a securitisation is experienced and developed within a particular context. Furthermore, the CS implies a linear trajectory of security construction: as initiated by a securitising actor → who constructs a referent object and threat narrative → which is accepted or rejected by an audience. Wilkinson notes that in practice the process may start at any point, with the ‘component parts of securitisation – securitising actor, referent object, threat narrative and audience – developing simultaneously and being mutually constitutive’.⁴¹ Like Balzacq’s, Wilkinson’s approach seeks to reconceptualise security as a pragmatic act that allows room for the explicit and reflexive consideration of the context in which a securitisation occurs, in addition to providing analysis for the agency of the audience.

To examine effectively how a securitising actor, a threat narrative, and an audience can all be developing securitisation simultaneously, it is essential to consider the context of the Philippines, - a country communicatively transformed by the recent technological and ‘smart-phone revolution’. Contemporary political communications are increasingly embedded within televised televisual images as well as permeating through social media. It is interesting to note that even at the micro-individual level, time spent on spoken word and phone calls is ever decreasing, whilst interactions on social media that use text (e.g. WhatsApp) and images (e.g. Snapchat) are consuming ever-increasing amounts of network users’ time.⁴² As political communication follows suit, it becomes increasingly intertwined with the production and transmission of visual images. The processes of securitisation

³⁷ Balzacq 2005 : 183

³⁸ Ken Booth (2007) *Theory of World Security* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 166.

³⁹ Claire Wilkinson (2010) ‘The limits of spoken words : from meta-narratives to experiences of security’, in *Securitization theory : how security problems emerge and dissolve*, Routledge, Abingdon, England, pp.94-115. p.94

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.94

⁴¹ Ibid. p.95

⁴² ‘Mobile and Social: Apps are Making the Phone Call Obsolete’, *The Network*, 06 May 2015, <https://newsroom.cisco.com/feature-content?type=webcontent&articleId=1628677> [Accessed 28/06/2017]

'take on forms, dynamics, and institutional linkages that cannot be fully assessed by focusing on the speech-act alone.'⁴³

Williams asserts that social theory 'must develop a broader understanding of the mediums, structures, and institutions, of contemporary political communication if it is to address adequately questions of both empirical explanation and ethical appraisal in security practices'.⁴⁴ There are different *mediums* outside of speech, such as in print, electronic or 'hypermedia', and Williams stresses that these are not neutral in their communicative impact.⁴⁵ The mediums through which communicative acts are transmitted will ultimately influence how they are both produced and received – and this must be examined and not simply assumed. Williams gives the example of how the images of the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001 served to structure not only the understanding of the events by the recipients of the images, but ultimately also what an 'appropriate response' would be.⁴⁶ Televisual media and images are neglected by the CS, and Williams therefore asserts that CS must widen to incorporate and consider the active role that social media plays. If televisual images have the power to shape an audiences' credence about what an 'appropriate response' is, then this will clearly influence both the extent to which they will accept the securitisation act, and the spectrum of severity by which they are prepared to condone extraordinary measures. Social media images are said to have played an important role in shaping opinions during the presidential elections; and they have continued to play an important role in consolidating support for Duterte. Williams's critique is useful for examining how, beyond the speech act, contemporary political communication contributed to the securitisation of drugs, and underscores the intersubjective nature of security practice.

The intersubjective nature of security is also highlighted by Balzacq, who asserts that 'security issues are the result of leaders' efforts to understand and shape the world, which depend on the ability of a community to reconfigure 'its just and good way of life'.⁴⁷ The audience here must be central, as the carriers of the discourse of what *constitutes* a 'just and good way of life'. In the Philippines values of a good way of life may be shaped by religious, Catholic values; but these values will be equally located in the context of local political community's experiences.

Balzacq has argued that the CS 'negates the audience' when in fact they should be the 'central figure in securitisation'.⁴⁸ He questions the linguistic underpinnings of the original CS framework and argues that the emergence and dissolution of security threats extends beyond the illocutionary speech act and towards its *perlocutionary* effects.⁴⁹ A perlocutionary act (or perlocutionary effect) goes beyond the speech act, and is viewed at the level of its consequences, such as persuading, convincing, inspiring, or otherwise affecting the listener. This forces the securitizing actor to take the audience and its response (acceptance/rejection) into consideration when making the securitizing move.⁵⁰

⁴³ Michael C. Williams (2003) 'Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics' *International Studies Quarterly* 47 : 511-531 : 512

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p.517

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p.524

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p.524

⁴⁷ Balzacq et al, 2016 : 496

⁴⁸ Balzacq, 2005 : 179

⁴⁹ Côté, 2016 : 549

⁵⁰ Thierry Balzacq (2011) 'A theory of securitization: Origins, core assumptions and variants' In: Balzacq T (ed.) *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. New York: Routledge, 1–30.

By placing the audience in a central role, Balzacq argues that the actor must tailor the securitizing move to the audience, to make it more conducive to acceptance, facilitation and translation. In this way he tries to correct what he perceives as the hollow CS classification of securitisation, and instead suggests a new definition of the concept as ‘an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilised by a securitising actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications... that concurs with the securitising actor’s reasons for choices and actions’.⁵¹ This new definition shifts (but does not replace) the attention of securitisation theory away from a focus on the discursive speech act to an ‘analytics of government’ approach.

Balzacq borrows the ‘analytics of government’ approach from Foucault, and it places salience on regimes of practices and processes. Foucault defines an ‘analytics of government’ as ‘an analysis of the specific conditions under which particular entities emerge, exist and change’⁵² – that enables understanding of how security practices operate. This will be useful for considering how securitisation occurs through *practice* in the Philippines, Duterte’s language enables a situation whereby drug dealers can be killed by militias, but institutions such as the police force and practices of government are also (if not more) relevant. Furthermore, to uncover ‘the specific conditions’ that produced securitisation in the Philippines, the context, and audience agency must be examined. But how can the relevance of the audience be situated and analysed?

Côté provides an answer to the above questions by proposing a new framework. Côté centralises the audience and objects to how security studies have typically ‘characterised audiences as agents without agency, thereby marginalising the theory’s intersubjective nature.’⁵³ Côté states that the way the audience is defined and conceptualised within securitisation theory differs with the empirical literature that investigates securitisation processes. Whereas audiences are under-theorised within security literature, empirical studies often examine the highly intersubjective processes involving active audiences. As such, audiences *must*, according to Côté, be theorised as active agents, participating and engaging in the construction of security values. This may go some way to resolving scholars’ repudiations that the audience has been ‘radically underdeveloped’⁵⁴ and securitisation theory has left ‘the actual politics of acceptance... radically under-determined’.⁵⁵

Within the original CS model, the audience is omitted as a unit of analysis and the CS offers little guidance regarding its examination⁵⁶. Consequently, it is difficult to analyse the relationship between the speaker and the audience and, in turn, to analyse the role and influence of the audience as arbitrator of intersubjective security realities. To rectify this shortcoming, Côté sketches an actor-audience relationship framework by which audience agency can be analysed. This goes some way to

⁵¹ Ibid. p.3

⁵² Michel Foucault (2010) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, translated by Graham Burchell; Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: SAGE, 2010), p. 30.

⁵³ Côté, 2016 : 541

⁵⁴ Michael C. Williams (2011) ‘The continuing evolution of securitization theory’ In: Balzacq T (ed.) *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*. New York: Routledge. pp.212–222 : 212

⁵⁵ Mark B. Salter (2008) ‘Securitization and desecuritization: A dramaturgical analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority’ *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11 (4) : 321–349 : 324

⁵⁶ Buzan et al, 1998.

resolving the empirical/theoretical conflict. Côté's framework stresses that audiences are active participants and undertake 'deliberative processes' that lead to shared perceptions of issues as security threats. As such, securitization is not a one-way flow of discourse in which the actor articulates a threat to an audience, but instead is 'more of a deliberation between actor and audience, consisting of multiple iterative, contextually contingent interactions between actor(s) and audience(s) regarding a single issue over time.'⁵⁷ Audiences therefore have power to influence security realities and can exploit contextual advantages in order to extenuate greater or lesser power on a securitisation process. This will be useful to consider when examining the role of the electorate in the Philippines and comprehending the president's drug war high approval ratings.

Stuart Croft reshapes the CS's main assumptions in a way that makes for interesting and crucial analysis of the case of the Philippines. Croft's approach is interesting, because at first glance the case of the war on drugs looks like a classic CS securitisation. With Croft's framework, the CS markers in the Philippines can be acknowledged and considered, but are widened to account for a more thorough account of the social realities of the securitisation of illegal drugs. Croft makes amendments to the Copenhagen School's four focal pillars: speech act, state actors, in-group threat, and extraordinary measures.⁵⁸ Firstly, the speech act is widened to include other performative politics, intertextuality and even silence can be communicative. Secondly, securitising agents are not limited to state actors – issues can be securitised by print media, think tanks, lobbyists, NGOs, religious bodies and novelists. Power is not primarily at the disposal of the state, but is diffused through a wider elite. The wider elite would include high-flyers from the political and cultural realms, such as government officials, the most influential media figures, senior military and police personnel, and leaders of powerful religious bodies.⁵⁹ Croft explains that although actors in the elite will have divergent stances, in order to constitute an 'elite' they must share a 'common discourse' – a common interpretation of what comprises the collective identity of the elite to which they belong, and a shared sense of the social whole, and subsequently a shared view of what constitutes a threat. A securitising move can therefore be initiated 'from any direction from within this elite, and will reflect wider elite discourse'.⁶⁰ Thirdly, the focus on in-group threat is relaxed and the audience is not fixed or separate from the securitising actor. A post-Copenhagen approach will also include by-standers and elements of the audience resisting the securitisation. The fourth pillar focuses not only on the extraordinary measures, but the everyday practices and norms of citizens in reinforcing securitisation elements. In a post-Copenhagen approach, the audience play an active role in co-producing a new social reality which, consequently, allows for a reconstitution of collective memory.⁶¹ Securitisations are shaped and reconstituted by performances in everyday life, such as employment practices, the telling of jokes, or expressions of identity such as those that occur between rival sports teams.

Croft's four-pillars framework gives a deeper account of the wider elite and public participation in incidences of securitisation. This framework is very useful for analysing the case of the Philippines. At first glance, the Philippines seems a 'textbook' case for CS analysis. Should we therefore tick the boxes of the four markers and turn away? – To do so would miss a deeper understanding and

⁵⁷ Côté, 2016 : 552

⁵⁸ Stuart Croft (2012) 'A post-Copenhagen securitization theory' in *Securitizing Islam: Identity and the Search for Security*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p80

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.82

⁶⁰ Ibid. p.82

⁶¹ Ibid. p.83

analysis of all the actors and factors at play. The CS framework scratches the surface of the case, but Croft provides the framework for a wider understanding. If HR NGOs in the Philippines can grasp the true nature of the securitisation that is happening, and why it happened, then they will be better equipped to launch their desecuritisation strategies.

The critiques of the CS made by multiple scholars, which I have outlined above, are but a small slice of the wider debates in critical security studies and securitisation theory. Balzacq is crucial and the most relevant theorist selected for this research project, and allows for a more inclusive reconceptualization of security that focuses on the three facets of: political agency, context, and audience. By using an ‘analytics of government’ approach and examining securitisation as ‘pragmatic’ or ‘strategic’ practice enables a more thorough examination of the case of the Philippines.

In the next chapter, the context and audience role in the securitisation will be examined. Furthermore, the post-Copenhagen approach of Croft and Williams’ inclusion of modern political communication will be of paramount expediency for my analysis of the conditions that produced an extreme securitisation in the Philippines, and how HR NGOs can strategize to desecuritize illegal drugs. HR NGOs have a complex task ahead, in a complex environment. Desecuritisation has been undertheorized conceptually and therefore methods of how to achieve this can be unclear. Balzacq sums up the concept in a single word: ‘fragile’.⁶² Yet, the efforts of HR NGOs in the Philippines can tentatively be described as ‘attempted desecuritisation.’ The next section will clarify this concept, and elaborate on Lene Hansen’s framework for analysis.

2.4 Desecuritisation

Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde established the logic that securitisation is a move that takes politics ‘beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as *above politics*’.⁶³ Going beyond politics permits the acceptance of measures outside of normative political practices. Issues can be plotted along the non-politicised, politicised, and securitised spectrum of the CS securitisation model. Yet this is not a one-way train, with all passengers ordered to permanently disembark at the securitisation station platform. The CS acknowledges and accommodates within their framework the possibility of a securitisation being reversed, or in other words: *Desecuritisation*.

‘Desecuritisation’ is defined as the ‘shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal political bargaining processes of the political sphere’.⁶⁴ CS scholars are quite adamant that desecuritisation is desirable, and is ‘the optimal long-range option’⁶⁵. Wæver stresses that it is the “the preferable ethico-political strategy for scholars and societal actors, regardless of time and space’.⁶⁶ This logic portrays security as something *negative*, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics. Wæver identifies three strategies that could equate to a desecuritisation: (1) not discussing an issue as a threat at all, (2) managing a securitisation so that it does not escalate further, and (3) moving the securitised issue back into the realm of ‘normal politics’. Of the limited literature on

⁶² Balzacq et al, 2015 : 85

⁶³ Buzan et al, 1998 : 23

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.4

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.29

⁶⁶ Ole Wæver (2000) ‘The EU as a Security Actor: Reflections From a Pessimistic Constructivist on Post-Sovereign Security Orders’, in Morten Kelstrup and Michael C. Williams (eds), *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration*, London: Routledge. pp.250–94 : 253

desecuritisation, the third strategy appears to be the most prevalent. In empirical studies, and for my case study research of the Philippines, the third strategy was a clear goal for many HR NGOs, involved in lobbying activities to move illegal drugs out of law and order (and security), and back under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health (normal politics).

Rita Floyd contests that desecuritisation is the 'optimal long-range option'. Floyd asserts that it is merely an analytical tool, and as such the normative preference for desecuritisation 'arises from Wæver's view of what politics *ought* to be, therefore not necessarily from how it actually is'.⁶⁷ Floyd has argued that a universal preference for desecuritisation is both arbitrary and unfounded. Floyd argues that the desecuritisation of issues could lead to their depoliticization. This has the potential for important issues to be shelved and overlooked if they are not presented in security terms, whilst in reality they may be deserving of political attention and public resources.

Therefore, those who characterise security / securitisation as universally negative may themselves be failing to consider when securitisation might be a preferable and necessary course of action. The 'unfounded' preference for desecuritisation could lead to the minimization of urgent priorities. However, although acknowledging the flaws of the concept, Balzacq still proceeds to defend it, asserting that 'despite controversies over what desecuritisation betokens, there is a widespread conviction that it brings politics back in to the realm of normal and that it opens up the political game to a broader variety of actors.'⁶⁸

Balzacq attempts to answer the controversy of desecuritisation's political status by identifying two forms of desecuritisation: the '*management way of desecuritising*' that relocates 'the security issues into a functional different sector', and the '*transformative way*' which is 'an attempt to overcome the exclusionary logic of security by unmaking hegemonic registers of meaning'.⁶⁹ This division reflects the debates between scholars about whether Wæver's desecuritisation lacks political content and is simply a managerial concept, or whether it should be read as having 'an explicit normative and political status'.⁷⁰ Lene Hansen is a pioneer in advocating a normative position for the idea of desecuritisation.

Lene Hansen stresses the normative political status of desecuritisation by pointing to four markers:

(1) its genesis: the concept of securitisation draws on the highly political works of Schmitt and commands understanding of security politics. As securitisation and desecuritisation were formulated in tandem, desecuritisation is inherently a political concept as well.

(2) the concept of the "public sphere." Habermasian affinities and post-structuralist elements point to the political.

(3) the emphasis on *responsibility* and *choice* are routed in highly political literature.

⁶⁷ Rita Floyd (2010) *Security and the Environment: Securitisation Theory and US Environmental Security Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁶⁸ Balzacq et al, 2015 : 85

⁶⁹ Balzacq et al : 109

⁷⁰ Hansen, 2012 : 530

(4) “desecuritisation” was first conceptualised from Wæver’s political analysis of Cold War détente.⁷¹

If the normative position of desecuritisation is to be accepted, how can it be operationalised empirically? How can HR NGOs in the Philippines make steps towards desecuritisation? Scholars who have attempted to give advice on how to operationalise desecuritisation and instruct on empirical application may take a deconstructivist stance.

For example, Jef Huysmans, although critical of the CS’s preference for desecuritisation as being technical, managerial and instrumental, rather than genuine political or ethical⁷², nevertheless offers a possible strategy. Giving the example of the securitised migrant other in Europe, he discusses how the portrayal of the migrant as a ‘dangerous other’ also serves to construct the threatened identity: ‘in creating threats – disharmony – the units create also their identity. This means that units and their identities are never just given in a security story, but that they develop within the story by the definition of threats’.⁷³ Taking this as inspiration, it is interesting to consider how an otherwise diverse audience in the Philippines has been shaped, constructed, and united in response to the threat of drugs, with a usually deeply divided electorate (especially along class lines) uniting behind the same presidential candidate - Duterte.

A strategy for dismantling negative and externally imposed constructed identities may be via *fragmentation*, defined here as replacing a securitised, and thus unified group of individuals (whether it be a migrant other or drug users connected to illegal drugs) – and replacing this with a plethora of shifting identities. Consequently, a migrant is not solely that identity, but also a ‘woman, black, worker, mother, etc. – just like the natives are.’⁷⁴ There is criticism that fragmenting identities limitlessly will eventually conclude with collective identities simply ceasing to exist; but Huysman suggests simultaneous positive identity constructions to ensure no one identity becomes dominant. Deconstructing a securitised identity in this way may be of some use to those wishing to back-peddle an issue out of the security realm and back into normal politics. This seemed to be one such strategy in the Philippines, with grassroots organisations uniting recovering addicts in work placements programs: no longer sharing only one collective identity as ‘drug criminals’, but now ‘farmers’ and ‘tumeric sellers’ with something to contribute to society, which in-group members may without fear be able to relate to.

Lene Hansen builds on the idea of identity in desecuritisation moves and asserts that desecuritisation requires a losing of the friend-enemy distinction possibly to the ‘whole-scale transformation where ‘the enemy’ sheds its identity’, as was the case in the Cold War when the Soviet Union ceased to exist.⁷⁵ Desecuritisation is *performative*, in that it must instantiate the non-threatening identity of an ‘other’ for the desecuritisation to be possible. Hansen stresses the political status of desecuritisation through its emphasis on *responsibility* and *choice*. We can see the CS

⁷¹ Ibid. p.529

⁷² Jef Huysmans (1998) ‘The Question of the Limit: Desecuritisation and the Aesthetics of Horror in Political Realism’ *Millennium* 27 (3) : 569-589 : 572

⁷³ Jef Huysmans (1995) ‘Migrants as a Security Problem: Dangers of “Securitisating” Societal Issues’ in Dietrich Thranhardt and Robert Miles (eds.) *Migration and European Intergration. The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*. pp. 53-72 p.58

⁷⁴ Ibid. p.67-68

⁷⁵ Hansen, 2012 : 533

foundations in this from Wæver's writings that call for a morally committed form of agency, and the responsibility of academics, politicians, citizens and 'all who speak' to work actively through security to reach desecuritisation. Hansen offers the most comprehensive framework yet for how we can analyse instances of desecuritisation. Striving actors, for example NGOs, may find their efforts to desecuritize an issue will fall into one of these four forms.

Hansen identifies four forms of desecuritisation⁷⁶:

- 1) The first form, *change through stabilisation*, has its origins against the backdrop of the Cold War. Hansen asserts that this approach implies 'a rather slow move out of an explicit security discourse, which in turn facilitates a less militaristic, less violent and hence more genuinely political form of engagement'.⁷⁷ This may be of some use and still identified in desecuritisation strategy if the focus is on *stabilising of systems* instead of a macro-desecuritisation equivalent to that of *détente*. System instability may breed anxieties and feelings of insecurity that may manifest in other logical or illogical ways: for example, an instable and inadequate international refugee program (system) may force refugees to cross borders illegally, which may create a fear of transformation or terrorism in receptive countries, which in turn may lead to a securitisation. Conversely, if systems are stabilised and improved, and policies are cast in terms other than security, 'threat issues' may be desecuritized.
- 2) The second form, *replacement*, theorises desecuritisation as the combination of one issue moving out of security while another issue is simultaneously elevated to security. Behnke draws on Schmittian ideas of the necessity of the friend/enemy distinction to the existence of political communities, 'as some point, certain 'threats' will no longer exercise our minds and imaginations sufficiently and are replaced with more powerful and stirring imaginaries'.⁷⁸ This form is rather pessimistic, and asserts that securitisation (of some nature of an 'other') is necessary in a society and depicts the way 'states constantly produce and reproduce their national identities through discourses of (in)security'.⁷⁹
- 3) The third form, *rearticulation* is when an issue is moved out of security due to their being political engagement and a political solution to resolve the impending threat or grievance. This form is a move out of the friend-enemy distinction and makes a bold claim that securitisations can be permanently resolved. This is problematic as it claims a finality, and finality is intrinsically impossible to declare. History has shown that conflicts that appear resolved can reignite again, even many years later, and can be (re)securitized. Furthermore, there is the question of whether it is *desirable* to present a conflict as resolved. Rearticulation could push things out of security when in fact the grievances have not been adequately addressed. There could be a blurring between rearticulation – and what in reality could be silencing. Yet, I assert in the case of the Philippines, a rearticulation strategy is appropriate for HR NGOs. Recasting illegal drugs as a public health issue lays the foundations for new policy

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.537

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.539

⁷⁸ Andreas Behnke (2006) 'No Way Out: Desecuritization, Emancipation and the Eternal Return of the Political – A Reply to Aradau', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 9 (1) : 62–69 : 64

⁷⁹ Hansen, 2012 : 542

to address grievances of both users of illegal drugs, and for citizens fearful of illegal drugs to see appropriate measures taking place.

4) The fourth form, *silencing*, is when an issue disappears or is no longer discussed in security discourse. Hansen warns that this form could be a 'strategy of exclusion' and could actually serve to disadvantage the not-securitized. The idea of silencing further challenges the CS's focus on security as a 'speech act'. Just because something is not articulated in security terms, does not mean that subjects are not in a precarious position of insecurity. Silencing can therefore be a powerful political tactic that individualises threats and makes resistance difficult. This form of desecuritisation as a strategy may not be useful or identifiable for NGOs since much of their work revolves around giving voice to marginalised and threatened subjects.

2.5 Desecuritisation as Transnational Advocacy?

One method HR NGOS may use to desecuritize illegal drugs in the Philippines is by utilising transnational advocacy networks (TANs). My research project initially intended to study how TANs were being roped in by local NGOs in Manila to help them desecuritize the government's drug policies. This sub-section will briefly explain the model, and how it works in theory.

Reflecting the evolution of world politics throughout twentieth century as moving away from a focus on interactions between states, Keck and Sikkink highlight the many non-state actors who interact with each other, interact with states, and with international organisations.⁸⁰ These interactions are structured in networks, which are increasingly visible and operational in international politics. *Activist* networks, distinguishable by the shared centrality of principled ideas and normative values motivating their formation are called 'transnational advocacy networks.' These networks frame issues in a certain way to make them comprehensible and relatable to target audiences. Network actors bring ideas, norms and discourses into policy debates. Norms can be defined as that which 'describe collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors within a given identity.'⁸¹

We can see the relevance here for the Philippines and how NGOs may try and network with external bodies, such as the United Nations, and echo international human rights norms and standards back into the domestic arena and pressurise the government to halt the extreme drug policies.

Keck and Sikkink describe the 'boomerang pattern' of when a government violates or refuses to recognise rights, resulting in individuals and groups (and NGOs) having no recourse within the domestic arena, consequently seeking international connections to express their concerns.⁸² This creates a 'boomerang' pattern of influence, and 'international contacts can amplify the demands of domestic groups, pry open space for new issues, and then echo these demands back into the domestic arena.'⁸³

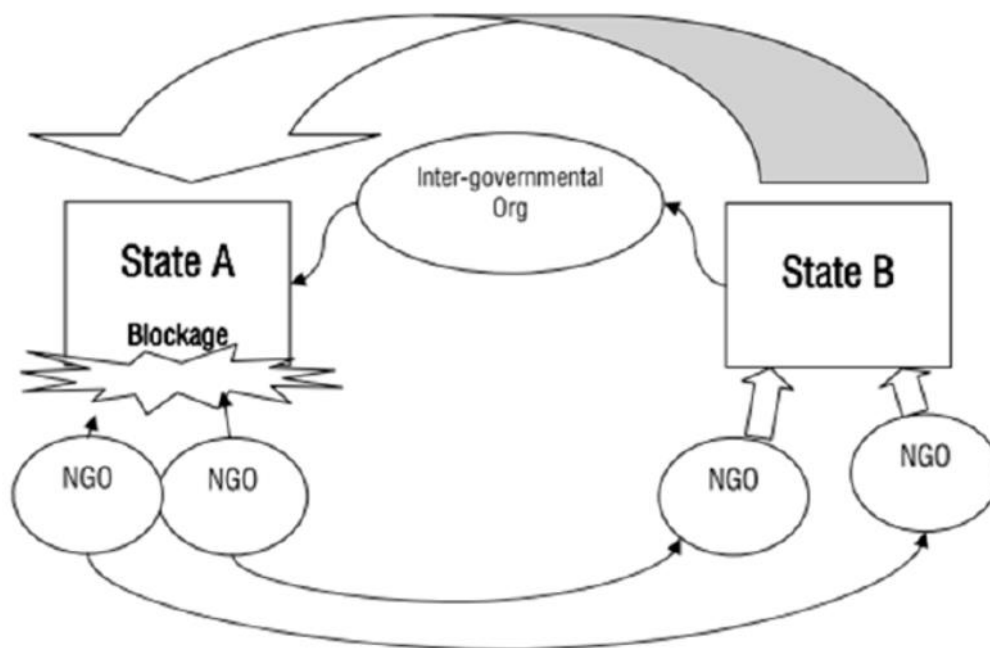
⁸⁰ Keck and Sikkink, 1999 : 89

⁸¹ David McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer Zald (eds) (1996). *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings*. Cambridge [England: Cambridge University Press.

⁸² Keck and Sikkink : 93

⁸³ Ibid. p93

Figure 1 – Keck and Sikkink’s Boomerang Model⁸⁴



If HR NGO organisations in the Philippines could utilise TANs as a way to move illegal drugs out of security (and emergency mode), they could bring the issue back into the realm of normal politics and policy – and TANs would therefore have contributed to the desecuritisation. In the next chapter, I will explain why this was not achieved due to the nature of current political space in the Philippines. I will then go on to examine what other alternative strategies NGOs are adopting in this environment of pressured political space, followed by a chapter that presents a detailed case study analysis of Amnesty International operations – and the organisations’ interesting position as both a local and international NGO in a Philippines under Duterte’s administration.

⁸⁴ Boomerang Pattern. State A blocks redress to organisations within it; they activate networks, whose members pressure their own states (and if relevant) a third-party organisation, which in turn pressure State A.

CHAPTER THREE – The Marcos Heritage and Securitisation in a Case of Weak Democracy

3.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts. Part one seeks to answer my first sub-question: why has the securitisation of illegal drugs been so successful within a context of state fragility and weak democracy, and what are the key factors behind this popular success? I will examine the important local political history of the Philippines in the nation's milieu of colonial rule, authoritarian rule under Marcos, and the post-dictatorship years. This context is important if we are to truly grasp the factors that enabled the emergence of the Duterte Administration, and the subsequent extreme securitisation of illegal drugs. The Filipino experience may go some way to explaining why a devoutly Christian nation, of which 86% of the population are Roman Catholic⁸⁵, are accepting and even co-producing the securitisation of illegal drugs, which involves a violence-based rejection of international human rights norms, and an apparent suspension of Christian values regarding the sanctity of human life.

A detailed chronology of the overall history of the development of democracy in the Philippines is not required for me to describe the relevant historical context in support of my analysis. General accounts can already be found elsewhere. I will instead give a more selective account of the background historical record, emphasising the features that account for weak democracy in the Philippines. This important background of state fragility and weak democracy is, as Balzacq implies, a critical external context that shapes a securitisation process, and underscores 'which heuristic artefacts shall a securitizing actor use to create (or effectively resonate with) the circumstances that will facilitate the mobilization of the audience'⁸⁶. This is where it is interesting to trace back Duterte's populist 'strongman' and authoritarian tendencies as rooted in a romanticised past: namely, of life under the Marcos dictatorship. Such things resonate with the audience in the Philippines, and it is significant to understand why.

Part two of the chapter will answer my second and third sub-questions: 2) What is the *process* by which the securitisation of drug users and traffickers has been extended to a process I call *extreme securitisation* and 3) How are the audience participating in practices leading to a condition of *extreme securitisation* of the so-called 'War on Drugs'? I will examine support for Duterte at all stages—before, during, and after the election—and widespread audience support for his infamous 'War on Drugs'. I will use the securitisation theories discussed in the previous chapter to aid the analysis of the factors and actors that have contributed to the construction of Duterte's securitisation. This chapter serves to set the scene for what the HR NGO community is up against in the Philippines, and account for *why* new strategies and methods are needed in their attempt to desecuritize illegal drugs and encourage adherence to international human rights laws.

That this unique form of securitisation—which I call *extreme securitisation*—has been achieved owes itself to the fact that the labelling of 'threat' to society (society being the 'referent object') has been extended from drug users and dealers to apply even to the defenders of human rights. That both the securitising actor and the audience have, in this instance of securitisation,

⁸⁵ 'Religion in the Philippines', *Asia Society: Centre for Global Education*, January 2017, <http://asiasociety.org/education/religion-philippines> [Accessed 04/07/17]

⁸⁶ Balzacq, 2005 : 179

succeeded in demonising and berating human rights defenders as a 'threat' to society in the same category as drug criminals, makes the Philippines a truly unique and puzzling case.

3.2 – PART ONE: South-East Asia's 'oldest democracy?'

The institutional foundations of the modern Filipino nation-state were largely shaped by the American colonial experience.⁸⁷ There have been sixteen presidents since the Philippines Republic was established in 1899 and, excluding the autocratic interlude of the Marcos years, the presidential form of democratic government has been firmly instituted in Philippine political life since it was first introduced by the American colonial regime in 1935.⁸⁸ Shaped by this American influence, the 1935 constitution established a House of Representatives elected by a constituency, an independent judiciary, the basic freedoms of speech, press and association, and adult suffrage.⁸⁹

These American tenets of democracy were not so easily transplanted onto a non-Western country with a completely disparate social and political history. James Putzel contends that this 'mismatch between the formal institutions of democracy introduced under US colonial rule and entrenched informal institutions of patronage politics has prevented democratic deepening and the construction of civic-minded social capital.'⁹⁰ Despite the Philippines' long tradition of being married to concepts of democracy, Putzel argues that democratic potential has never been fully realised due to patron-client politics and power being 'divided between the business, social and philanthropic associations of the elite'.⁹¹ Power has been concentrated in a network of elite actors, traditionally at the expense of ordinary citizens and workers. After 1945, elite democracy continued to sustain the long-contested revolutionary challenge from below. The failure of post-war presidents to reform the agriculture sector and pursue economic development and social equality goals were thwarted by 'rent-seeking oligarchs' and powerful landed elites.⁹²

By the 1960s and 1970s, an emergent educated middle class - including students, professionals and small business enterprises united to collectively demand for change. The rise of left-inspired radicalism and Filipino nationalism inspired mass protests against what was viewed as an elitist and corrupt government, shaped by and dependent upon the United States. Amidst widespread and growing social unrest, including the notorious political rally bombing at the Plaza Miranda in August 1971 that claimed the lives of nine people, President Ferdinand Marcos seized the opportunity to declare martial law the following year, under the pretence of national security. The move to martial law would allow for Marcos to remain as president indefinitely, as opposed to the two-term constitutional limit that was coming to an end. Marcos marketed the imposition of the new authoritarian regime as a 'revolution from the centre' – opposing the forces of the extreme right epitomised by the oligarchs and against the extreme left represented by radicals and communists.⁹³

⁸⁷ Julio C. Teehankee (2016) 'Weak State, Strong Presidents: Situating the Duterte Presidency in Philippine Political Time' *Journal of Developing Societies* 32 (3) : 293–321 : 298

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.295

⁸⁹ James Putzel (1999) 'Survival of an Imperfect Democracy in the Philippines' *Democratisation* 6 (1) : 198-223 : 203

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.198

⁹¹ Ibid. p.205

⁹² Teehankee, 2016 : 297

⁹³ Ibid. p299

The new authoritarian order, labelled the 'New Society', dismantled democratic institutions that had been instated in the post-war years, and instantaneously initiated crack downs on civil liberties. Members of the democratic opposition, along with protesters and street activists were 'rounded up and put in jail, the legislature was dissolved, press freedom suspended and, for the first time, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Constabulary were called on to play a political role in governance.'⁹⁴ Extraordinarily, after the initial transitional period in 1972, Putzel writes that there was 'a passive acceptance of Marcos' and that his 1973 constitution, which allowed him to remain in power indefinitely, 'bore witness to the shallowness of Philippine democracy.'⁹⁵

During the years of the dictatorship, Marcos ruled through a triad of previously marginalized actors: the technocrats, his cronies, and the power of the military. Marcos enacted what has been called 'crony capitalism'⁹⁶ whereby private businesses were seized by the regime and redistributed to associates or family members of the government, leading to chronic economic instability in later years. Strong efforts were made by Marcos to dismantle the political and economic strength of the agrarian elites and political patronage was redistributed to local political clans. Thompson states that throughout his authoritarian rule (1972-1986) Marcos 'pursued not ideological but personal goals, and his regime was organized around family and friends, not strong state institutions'.⁹⁷

In this climate of crony capitalism, compounded by economic stagnation and rising poverty, the assassination of previously exiled opposition leader Benigno Aquino II as he stepped off a plane in Manila caused public outrage and set in motion the downfall of the Marcos regime. In 1986, after a fraudulent 'snap election' failed to convince the public of Marcos's legitimacy, the regime collapsed under the weight of its own corruption. With the fleeing of Marcos into exile in the US, Cory Aquino (widow of the murdered Benigno Aquino II) was instated as the new president of the Philippines, signalling a new era for the country, the promise of a restoration of democracy, and a reformation of civil liberties and freedoms.

3.2.1 - The 1986 People Power Revolution: The Dawn of a Democratic Era?

In 1986, Cory Aquino suspended the sham constitution drafted under Marcos and proclaimed the 'Freedom Charter.' This was eventually replaced by the more thorough 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, which remains valid even today. The new constitution stressed 'independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace.'⁹⁸ Filipinos hoped for the dawning of a new democratic era, bringing with it the reforms that would achieve social equity after many years of stagnant socio-economic progression (at least for the poor and middle classes). The new administration 'gave strong emphasis and concern for civil liberties and

⁹⁴ Putzel, 1999 : 208-209

⁹⁵ Ibid. p.209

⁹⁶ David C. Kang (2002) *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹⁷ Mark R. Thompson (1996) *The anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*, Quezon City: New Day Publishers.

⁹⁸ 'The Philippine 1987 Constitution, Preamble', *Rappler*, 02 February 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/121019-fast-facts-1987-philippine-constitution> [Accessed 04/07/2017]

human rights, and advocated peace talks with communist insurgents and Muslim secessionists... Cory [Aquino] also focused on bringing back economic health and confidence.⁹⁹

Aquino wrote into the charter a six-year term limit, which to date, has been respected by all outgoing presidents. Mark Thompson summarises the strengths of the EDSA¹⁰⁰ administration. These included freedom of the press, the right of a strong opposition, electoral democratic consolidation, strong macroeconomic financial institutions, and strong economic growth.¹⁰¹ However, the EDSA and post-EDSA governments have dually suffered multiple crises of legitimacy and been weakened by government inefficiency, the lack of popular participation, social neglect under President Fidel Ramos, the overthrowing of President Joseph Estrada, President Gloria Arroyo's corruption charges, and (perhaps most importantly) growth *without* poverty reduction, resulting in a deepening of the divisions between the rich and the poor.¹⁰²

Despite the constitutional banning on political dynasties, in 2013 between two-thirds and three-quarters of the members of Congress belonged to political dynasties and the proportional number amongst governors and mayors possibly even higher.¹⁰³ David Timberman highlights five enduring political debates in the Philippines that have contributed to public frustration and loss of faith in elite governance.¹⁰⁴ Firstly, *the nature of state power*: policy-making dictated by elites has served particularistic economic and political interests, and deprived the state of coherence and autonomy. Secondly, *the value of democracy to Filipinos*: many Filipinos are dissatisfied with democracy. Most telling of this is the near-win of Ferdinand M. Marcos Jr., the past dictator's son, for the vice presidency in May 2016. Thirdly, *who should govern and how should this be organised*: political parties are arbitrary and with multiple candidates there is electoral pluralities rather than majorities, which makes it more difficult for bills to be passed in the senate.

In 2015, 'the public mood was one of disenfranchisement.' In 2015, more than one quarter of the population were still living below the poverty line, making the Philippines one of Southeast Asia's poorest countries.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the fact that the second Aquino administration had failed to address the continuing poverty and societal inequality in the Philippines had for many left a question mark over the true value of democracy.¹⁰⁶ In November 2015, Rodrigo Duterte launched his late-comer campaign bid for the presidency.

⁹⁹ Women in History, 'Corazon Aquino: Revolutionary President of the Philippines', <http://www.womeninhistory.com/corazon-aquino-revolutionary-president-philippines/> [Accessed 25/01/17]

¹⁰⁰ The acronym EDSA stands for 'Epifanio de los Santos Avenue', which is the main artery of highway in the Manila capital, and was the scene of many civil society demonstrations and protests against the Marcos regime, which led to the 1986 revolution being referred to as the 'EDSA Peoples Power Revolution' and the subsequent government under Cory Aquino being called the 'EDSA Administration'.

¹⁰¹ Mark R Thompson 'The Spectre of Neo-Authoritarianism in the Philippines' *Asia Pacific*, July 2016, <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/Keynote-presentations.pdf> [Accessed 25/01/2017]

¹⁰² Ibid...[Accessed 25/01/2017]

¹⁰³ David G. Timberman (2016) 'Elite Democracy Disrupted?' *Journal of Democracy* 27 (4) : 135-144 : 139

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p.144

¹⁰⁵ Richard L. Harris (2016) 'Critical Perspectives on Politics and Development in the Philippines: Preface to Special Issue on the Philippines' *Journal of Developing Societies* 32 (3) : 209-219 : 211

¹⁰⁶ Teehankee, 2016 : 321

3.3 PART TWO: Rodrigo Duterte and a Case of ‘Extreme Securitisation’

“Forget the laws on human rights. If I make it to the presidential palace, I will do just what I did as mayor. You drug pushers, hold-up men and do-nothings, you better go out. Because I’d fucking kill you. I’ll dump all of you into Manila Bay, and fatten all the fish there.”¹⁰⁷

- Erstwhile presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte at a campaign rally in April 2016

3.3.1 – Duterte’s Populism and Securitising Illegal Drugs

In a shroud of ‘will-he/won’t-he?’ excitable anticipation mobilised huge gatherings, fundraising appeals, and online petitions to support his candidacy, Duterte finally filed for a candidate substitution with the current runner from his PDP-Laban party. Thus, his presidential campaign was launched.¹⁰⁸ This ‘maybe/maybe-not’ jaunt kept Duterte in the limelight, dominating headlines in broadsheets, and capturing valuable airtime on primetime news channels. Duterte’s new style of political populism whipped up a storm up and down the country, and mobilised masses of supporters at campaign rallies that were packed to the rafters with thousands of banner-waving fans wearing ‘Du30!’ T-shirts.

Visiting the election rallies in May 2016, Duncan McCargo remarked that he was ‘taken aback to find that academic colleagues at the University of the Philippines, the doctor who treated me for a cough, and even self-styled human rights lawyers were cheering on a candidate whose major campaign themes comprised valorising his own masculinity, and solving policy problems through extra-judicial killing.’¹⁰⁹ In the absence of traditional policy pledges on health and education, Duterte’s key election promise was to restore law and order within six months by ‘any means possible, including extrajudicial killings and martial law’ to eradicate the societal and economic threats proposed by the illegal drugs trade.

Duterte is not the first president to declare a ‘war on drugs’, although his methods are undeniably unique. Many of the discourses of fear and threat that strengthened under his election campaign had already existed prior to his running. Fifteen years before Duterte erupted into mainstream politics, President Gloria M Arroyo attributed 70% of all heinous crimes in the Philippines to the illegal drug trade in her first ‘Letter of Instruction’ in 2001.¹¹⁰ In 2002, in her State of the Nation Address, Arroyo dubbed drug lords ‘enemies of the state’ and moved the issue from a police to a military issue, by mandating the Armed Forces of the Philippines to support the interagency law enforcement bodies such as the Philippines National Police (PNP), the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ BBC World News, ‘Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte in Quotes’, 30 September 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36251094> [Accessed 05/07/2017]

¹⁰⁸ Nicole Curato (2016) ‘Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism’ *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47 (1) : 142-143 :153

¹⁰⁹ Duncan McCargo (2016) ‘Duterte’s Mediated Populism’ *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 38 (2) : 185-190 : 185

¹¹⁰ Alma Maria Salvador (2016) ‘Duterte and his War on Drugs’ *Business World Online*, 23 August 2016, <http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Opinion&title=duterte-and-his-war-on-drugs&id=132333> [Accessed 05/07/2017]

¹¹¹ Ibid. [Accessed 05/07/2017]

Parallels can be drawn between the terminology of Arroyo's speech in which drug lords were denounced as 'enemies of the state', and Duterte's framing of those connected to the drugs trade as a 'threat to the nation'. Speaking at the 50th ASEAN summit, hosted by the Philippines in April 2017, Duterte further articulated this threat-to-the-state rhetoric. With perceptibly more diplomacy than he would address an exclusively home crowd, Duterte warned that:

'...the drug problem threatens the gains of community-building and destroys lives, especially of the youth. The illegal drug trade apparatus is massive. But it is not impregnable. With political will and cooperation, it can be dismantled, it can be destroyed before it destroys our societies'.¹¹²

We can see a consistency in the political and security discourse surrounding the language used by Arroyo, and then Duterte many years later. This illustrates the prevalence in Filipino political society and culture of (in)security discourses that are reproduced and reconstructed by those in power, and have the influence to construct social realities and mobilise a nation against a perceived threat.

Finding securitising speech acts from Duterte is not difficult, for there are many to choose from. Throughout his campaign and beyond he became internationally infamous for his outrageous and foul-mouthed tirades, issuing statements such as 'there will be blood in 'cleansing' this country of drugs... My God I hate drugs, and I have to kill people because I hate drugs'¹¹³. Duterte regularly used dehumanising language to refer to drug users and sellers on the campaign trail, calling them 'rats' and 'less than human'. By framing drug users as less than human, Duterte enabled a get-out clause of not honouring human rights obligations of which the Philippines are signatory to. This type of language is reminiscent of Hitler's dehumanising speech acts against Jewish people in the 1930s and 1940s, ironically, a comparison Duterte himself has proudly drawn: 'Hitler massacred three million Jews ... there's three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them all'¹¹⁴ he proclaimed at a press conference in his home town of Davao.

If international audiences were horrified, conversely, such speeches were 'received enthusiastically by home audiences and served only to consolidate his popularity'¹¹⁵. Bursting onto the scene and provocatively declaring in strongman fashion 'just don't fuck with me,' he mesmerised many ordinary Filipinos, for whom he seemed a refreshing and welcome change from the usual elite crowd of politicians. Tapping into *local political histories* and corresponding historical grievances about colonial rule and elite politics, Duterte was able to rebrand international human rights concerns as a continuation of attempted colonial intervention in domestic policy. The populist, strongman style was appealing to a public who had perceived years of rising crime, and no action from the government to curtail it.

¹¹² Rodrigo Duterte (2017) In an address at the opening ceremony of the ASEAN 50 summit, Manila, Philippines, 29 April 2017.

¹¹³ Inquirer.net, 'Duterte: There will be blood in 'cleansing' this country', 20 January 2016, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/757273/duterte-there-will-be-blood-in-cleansing-this-country> [Accessed 05/07/2017]

¹¹⁴ The Guardian, 'Duterte vows to kill three million drug addicts and likens himself to Hitler', 1 October 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/30/rodrigo-duterte-vows-to-kill-3-million-drug-addicts-and-likens-himself-to-hitler> [Accessed 05/07/2017]

¹¹⁵ Teehankee and Thompson, 2016 : 132

A conventional CS interpretation would merely describe the ‘speech acts’ of a securitising actor (Duterte), through which he is successfully convincing an audience (the public) of an existential threat to a referent object (national and citizen security in the Philippines). However, the prior discussion has shown that by tapping into local political histories, a more dynamic field of influence in a securitisation can be depicted, beyond just the ‘speech act’. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are more thorough frameworks of analysis for providing a lens through which to examine the case of securitisation in the Philippines.

Duterte had tapped into a very real ‘*externalist*’ contextual fear of the Filipino public. Although crime statistics can be unreliable or biased in the Philippines, under the Benigno Aquino administration from 2010 until 2016 official records show a steep rise in heinous crimes committed (including murder, rape, and theft), and a sharp drop in cases being solved by the authorities.¹¹⁶ In the first half of 2015, the number of such crimes being reported was nearly 50% higher than the same period of the previous year, and several high-profile crimes including shopping mall shootings and student rapes created the feeling that crime and lawlessness in the country was out of control.¹¹⁷ Crystal meth (shabu) usage is the most common drug in the Philippines, and figures show increased usage and Barangay drug-related arrests rising under Aquino¹¹⁸. With crime seemingly out of control, and Duterte’s campaign warning that the country was becoming a ‘narco state’, his ‘Safe With Me’ slogan and promise to restore law and order resonated with the public audience. This bears out Balzacq’s assertion that ‘to win an audience, security statements must, usually, be related to an external reality’.¹¹⁹

As discussed in the previous chapter, Balzacq has stressed the need for more attention to the audience (and to context more generally) in the securitization framework.¹²⁰ The ‘*psycho-cultural disposition*’ of the audience can be understood in relation to this externalist cultural context of fear of criminality. In provocative and rousing speeches steeped in patriotic language, Duterte demanded of the audience: ‘will we allow our country to become running [sic] over with drugs by criminals who rape our children and steal from our homes?! ... who turns our country into a narco state and stopping [sic] legitimate and hardworking business?’¹²¹ Duterte constructed a direct causal link between illegal drugs and the reason the economy had not developed. Rooted in a psycho-cultural disposition of years of economic neglect, for the Filipino people, the drug war consequently was where *change* begins—and ‘change’ (whatever the audience believes that vague idea to mean) is presented as the potential bringer of prosperity.

Wilnor Papa, Campaigns Manager of Amnesty International, explained to me his opinion of why Duterte became so popular, and why the public has rallied behind his war on drugs:

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 130

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.130

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p.130

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p.183

¹²⁰ Balzacq, 2011 : 27

¹²¹ BBC News, ‘Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte in Quotes’, 30 September 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36251094> [Accessed 23/07/2017]

*'The situation is not something new. It did not happen overnight. This has been going for decades... Duterte said things that people wanted to hear – he said it the WAY people wanted to hear it. He said that he will kill the drug addicts, the criminals, and the corrupt people in the government. He said things that resonated with the deepest part of people that are angry with the government. And it worked.'*¹²²

It is interesting that, according to AI, 'corrupt people in the government' were targeted in the same manner as drug addicts and criminals in the Duterte campaign. After the corruption charges levied against President Gloria Arroyo, culminating in her spending five years in detention at a military hospital, and the corruption charges that had dogged other past administrations, Duterte used this to his advantage. By condemning corruption, and tarring corrupt figures by associating them with criminals and drug addicts, Duterte unequivocally sets himself apart from the traditional elite by presented himself as a man of the people – which 'worked,' as Papa says above.

Returning to Balzacq's reconceptualization of securitization as a *strategic* or *pragmatic practice*, as occurring in a specific context and set of circumstances, where gaining an understanding of audience '*psycho-cultural disposition*' is analytically crucial, in is reasonable to argue that the case evidence of prevalent discourses of fear surrounding drugs and crime are likely to have facilitated the transformation of (in)security discourses into security practices (Extra Judicial Killings). By examining discourses of fear and vulnerability in Filipino society we can locate a source of the audience's perceived *need*, which may shape a bottom-up process of securitisation, in contrast to the top-down process that the CS often assumes.

It was a recurring theme in my interviews that my respondents attributed a significant measure of Duterte's electoral success to his methods of catering to the vote of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Carlos Conde, a researcher for the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch, and the proprietor of an ongoing study into the role of OFW's in the election campaign explained to me:

"...the first mass support base of Duterte is the overseas Filipino. If you look at the economic profile of the overseas Filipino they are poor, middle class, lower middle class and they are abroad working their asses off all over the place..."

"If you ask them what are their main concerns back home and they will tell you 1. If their kids are going to school or 2. If their kids have enough food and 3. If their kids are using illegal drugs..."

"Duterte knew this and tapped into this support base. On Facebook. He presented himself as the father that they will never be as long as they are abroad. He said 'I will be the disciplinarian father that you always wanted to be but you cannot while you are working abroad. I will discipline your children back home. Elect me and I will do that. He spread this narrative in the overseas Filipino community'"¹²³

Overseas workers bought into Duterte's 'Safe With Me' campaign promises. These promises included bringing back the death penalty for heinous crimes (to include drug crimes), and to eradicate

¹²² Author interview of Wilnor Papa, Amnesty International Philippines' Campaigns Manager, 24 March 2017.

¹²³ Author interview of Carlos Conde, Human Rights Watch Asia Division Researcher, 11 April 2017.

the threat of illegal drugs by killing up to 100,000 criminals connected to the trade. OFW's primary fears of their children using illegal drugs were reassured by the new 'disciplinarian' security practices pledged Duterte, if he should win the elections. Audience interaction here is key. OFWs can be regarded as the carriers of discourses on the threat of illegal drugs, and as such were able to echo these discourses back to their families in the Philippines via social media.

With up to three million Filipinos working abroad, the necessity of social media to keep in touch with family and friends back home is palpable. Globally, in terms of time spent per day, per user, the Filipinos spend the most time on social media apps, predominantly Facebook, than any other country in the world. Comprehensive network-user studies show that this equates to an average of 4 hours, 17 minutes a day on such sites.¹²⁴ Curato reports that during the campaign 'Overseas Filipino Workers remitted money to their families to print banners they designed themselves to hang outside their homes'.¹²⁵ Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that the main breadwinner, providing financial support to the family from overseas, will have a persuasive voice in the voting direction of their families.

These kind of audience interactions aptly illustrate Balzacq's redefinition of securitisation in the previous chapter as 'an articulated assemblage of practices contextually mobilised by a securitising actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications... that concurs with the securitising actor's reasons for choices and actions'.¹²⁶ We can see a case for rejecting the strict division of roles between 'securitizing actors' and 'audiences', claiming that their roles can be blurred, and mutually constitutive. The OFW example I have just described clearly shows how the audience can be elevated to a co-securitizing role in the case of the Philippines. Adam Cote asserts that audiences have the power to influence security realities and undertake 'deliberative processes' in constructing a security threat with a securitising actor. If this is taken to be true, then it is interesting to examine what role the wider public played in such deliberative processes in the Philippines. Duterte's support base cross-cuts the usual dividing lines of social class; people from all class backgrounds would attend his rallies, offering standing ovations to his commitment to a bloody drug war.

The massive level of support that Duterte receives from poor neighbourhoods, the very neighbourhoods in which the illegal killings happen, is truly puzzling. The victims are not often outsiders or strangers, but rather are neighbours know to the inhabitants. Nicola Curator accounts for this allure of 'penal populism' (a political style that builds on collective sentiments of fear and demands for punitive politics) as 'built on two political logics that reinforce each other: the politics of anxiety, and the politics of hope'.¹²⁷

The politics of anxiety focuses on the language of crisis, danger and uncertainty. During an extensive project researching support for populist leaders in slum communities, Curator located a constant, yet 'latent' fear of drugs that was a perpetual source of anxiety for residents. The 'drug

¹²⁴ Miguel R. Camus, 'PH World's No.1 in Terms of Time Spent on Social Media', 24 January 2017, <http://technology.inquirer.net/58090/ph-worlds-no-1-terms-time-spent-social-media> [Accessed 06/07/2017]

¹²⁵ Curato, 2016 : 148

¹²⁶ Balzacq, 2011 : 7

¹²⁷ Curato, 2016 : 91

problem' was 'articulated in everyday conversations before Duterte placed this issue at the centre of national politics.'¹²⁸ In other words, Duterte appealed to their external realities.

Yet, Curator asserts that fear is not the only sentiment driving penal populism, and that the 'politics of hope' have instated a sense of 'reclaimed democratic agency' to marginalised and frustrated citizens.¹²⁹ Duterte's populism overcame sentiments of abandonment for masses of poor communities, and broadened the sense of space for political action. Curator therefore suggests that Duterte's populism returned a sense of self-esteem to the people: they felt part of something. For example, in Typhoon Yolande disaster-affected areas, there was a sense of pride regarding 'reciprocity', and the ability to assist in Duterte's campaign. People reported feeling good to be in a position to support something (Duterte), after historically always being on the receiving end of help.¹³⁰ This explanation can be applied in a similar way, to account for the huge electoral support of President Trump in poor and marginalised communities across the United States. After years on the peripheries of society, there is an upward global trend of populist leaders reinstating a sense of political agency to poor communities. Curator's observations underscore the political agency of the audience:

*"Underscoring political agency is crucial in this narrative in order to challenge the depiction of Duterte supporters as unthinking masses who are duped by a charismatic leader. Instead... Duterte supporters are active participants in the campaign who can critically negotiate and reinterpret Duterte's pronouncements."*¹³¹

The resonance of, and constructive dynamics surrounding, Duterte's words are not constituted just in top-down fashion, from charismatic leader to 'unthinking masses'. Rather, as active participants in the campaign, we can regard the interaction between audience and actor as an example of what Cote calls 'deliberative processes.'

Carlos Conde, a researcher for Human Rights Watch, echoed the idea of audience members as 'active participants' and explained to me that:

*"[the drug war] ... was one campaign promise that was really wanted by the people. The drug problem is a problem in their eyes – there should be actions and policies. People want to feel more secure..."*¹³²

If we turn once again to Cotes' 'deliberate processes' we can perhaps locate an example from the suspension, and subsequent relaunch, of the drug war four weeks later in January and February of 2017. After anti-drug police officers were found to be accountable for the murder of a South Korean businessman in a botched kidnap-for-ransom,¹³³ Duterte suspended the drug war, 'Operation Double Barrell', in the face of (inter)national outrage and horror. The suspension was announced as temporary

¹²⁸ Ibid. p.100

¹²⁹ Ibid. p.100

¹³⁰ Ibid. p.102

¹³¹ Ibid. p.103

¹³² Author Interview of Rose Trajano, Secretary General of the Philippine Alliance on Human Rights (PAHRA), on 11 April 2017.

¹³³ Note: The South Korean businessman's body was found inside the grounds of the National Police (PNP) headquarters with his head wrapped in packaging tape and he had been strangled. See: Al Jazeera, 'Philippine Police to Suspend Drug War to Deal with Corruption', 30 January 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/philippines-drug-war-170130091943373.html> [Accessed 07/07/2017]

until Ronald dela Rosa, the Director-General of the National Police, could ‘cleanse the corruption in the police force’.¹³⁴

The suspension lasted one month, after which ‘Operation Double Barrell *Reloaded*’ was launched, seemingly with a new unit of ‘specially trained’ drug-enforcement expert officers. What is interesting to examine is the multiple surveys that were published in the media, and on social media, during the time of the suspension. The surveys indicated rising property crime with statistics such as ‘robbery and burglary up 8%’¹³⁵ and the Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella stated that ‘the temporary suspension of police antidrug operations proved to be a window of opportunity for illegal drug violators to engage in burglary and car theft’.¹³⁶ Whether the statistics are accurate or not (some civil society organisations contest that they are not), is not important: the point is that *they were being accepted by the audience*. Through a deliberate processes with the government, the audience were again pushing for the drug war to be resumed¹³⁷, reconstructing and consolidating the securitisation once more as response to this threat of rising crime.

3.3.1.2 – Extreme Securitisation in a Technological Nation

This subsection will analyse how the technology of contemporary political communication beyond the speech act contributes to the success of extreme securitisation. As discussed in the previous chapter, Williams stresses that contemporary political communications are increasingly embedded within televised tele-visual images, which permeate social media. Curator, concurring with Williams, states that ‘politics today is predominantly conducted in televised and digital media’.¹³⁸

Despite widespread poverty, smartphones are relatively cheap and ubiquitous, and 94% of Filipinos have access to the internet, even without money for data to access regular news websites. In 2015, Facebook owner Mark Zuckerberg made a deal with mobile networks to secure free access to Facebook for all in 2015.¹³⁹ For many inhabitants in slum communities, the Internet is their main source of information.

A comprehensive study undertaken by Jayson Troy Bajar at the Central Philippines University was conducted to determine the extent of utilization by which Filipino politicians use social media to further a political agenda. The study examined Facebook posts from the five presidential candidates and concluded that the ‘text and photo’ combination is the most dominant medium used by politicians. The study suggested that how content is visually presented bears significance in the likelihood of audience to interact in the post.¹⁴⁰ The still image with a small caption was much more likely to be shared or reacted to, as opposed to lengthy bodies of text or moving video (typical of traditional speech acts), which are more time consuming for the user. The captioned text at the

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Social Weather Stations, ‘Statistics for Advocacy’, 24 April 2017, <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20170424145005> [Accessed 07/07/2017]

¹³⁶ The Inquirer, ‘SWS: More Families fall victims to crimes’, 25 April 2017, p9.

¹³⁷ A survey by the Social Weather Station conducted in February 2017 demonstrated that 78% of those sampled thought drugs were a bigger threat than police corruption, and that the drug war should continue.

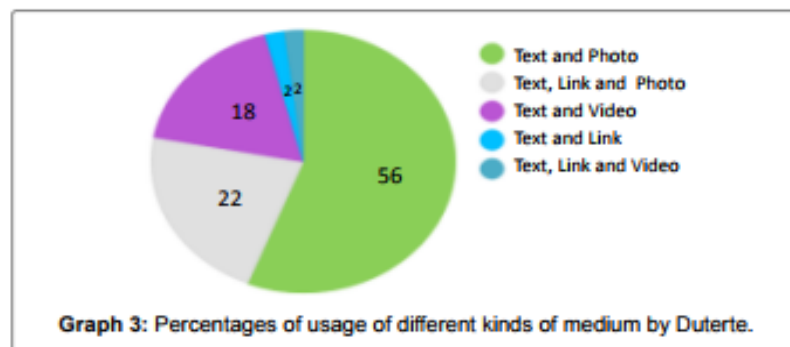
¹³⁸ Curato, 2016 : 146

¹³⁹ Philippine Star, ‘Facebook offers free internet access in Phl’, 20 March 2015, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/03/20/1435536/facebook-offers-free-internet-access-phl> [Accessed 07/07/2017]

¹⁴⁰ Jayson Troy Bajar (2017) ‘Online Democracy: A Content Analysis of Facebook Pages of 2016 Philippine Presidential Candidates’ *Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism* 7 (2) : 1-18 : 1

bottom of an image is of course still of a 'speech act' nature, but the study highlights the importance of photos and televisual images at carrying the discourse.

Figure 2 – Different Mediums of Securitisation used by Duterte.¹⁴¹



There is evidence that modern mediums of communication played a huge role in the spread of security discourse during the election, and after. Further investigation into the role of social media as carriers and constructors of security discourses during the election campaign is evident in Duterte's army of online followers. Sean Williams writes that 'Online trolls can earn up to \$2,000 a month creating fake accounts on social media, and then using those "bots" to flood the digital airwaves with pro-Duterte propaganda.'¹⁴² Paid or not, after the election victory, the president's spokesman warmly thanked Duterte's '14 million social media volunteers', who tweeted, shared, posted, and spread support for Duterte and his campaign. Here the audience and securitising actor truly become blurred. In this way, the speech act is proven to be less significant and the sharing of televisual images, such as of a clenched fist Duterte, standing beside the Filipino flag, as more effective for spreading security discourses. Images of the president kissing the flag would be shared and re-shared on Facebook, conjuring up nationalist identity and societal unity – a society he will protect with his war on drugs.

Another form of social media that proved crucial to helping drum up a sense of Duterte's rampant popularity were the so called 'twitter bots'. Software can create fake user profiles and retweet or re-share information thousands of times a minute. According to Affinio, a social media analytics firm, a staggering 20 percent of all Twitter accounts that mention Duterte are bots.¹⁴³ If a social media account has a very high frequency of tweets, as in thousands a day, it is likely that they are a bot. The results of an investigation by Rappler into tweets that mentioned the presidential candidate within the space of one month are shown below.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p8

¹⁴² Sean Williams (2017) 'Rodrigo Duterte's Army of Online Trolls: How authoritarian regimes are winning the social media wars', 04 January 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/138952/rodrigo-dutertes-army-online-trolls> [Accessed 07/07/2017]

¹⁴³ Affinio, 'The marketing intelligence platform that reveals hidden audience insight at scale', <http://www.affinio.com/> [Accessed 07/07/17]

Figure 3 – Candidate Mentions by High Frequency Tweeters (November 2015) ¹⁴⁴

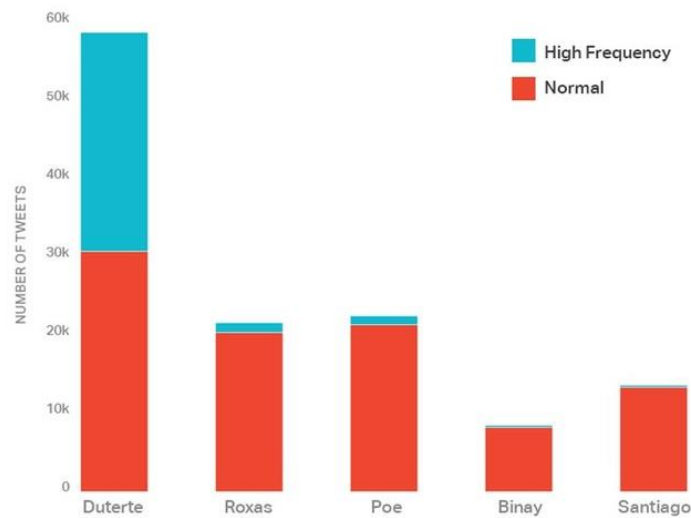


Figure 3, above, shows that nearly 50% of tweets about Duterte were posted by ‘high-frequency tweeters’, in comparison to between 2-6% for the other presidential candidate. The sharing of such tweets and images online most certainly have contributed to the construction of the security discourses that Duterte is the solution to the fear and threat coming from drugs.

In addition, non-digital images also appear to have played a key role in constructing security discourses during the election campaign and beyond. During my fieldwork in Manila, I visited the Pandacan slum (where EJKs had taken place). I was surprised to see that Duterte propaganda was everywhere: flags hanging from the shanty homes, Duterte T-shirts worn by the slum youth, supportive graffiti painted on tin walls, and multiple ‘Duterte for President’ posters left over from last year. Surprisingly, even EJK victims’ families did not seem to attribute blame to the president, or to his drug policies, but preferred instead to blame the police for botched anti-drug operations. One mother I interviewed at a sanctuary retreat hosted by the church had lost her two sons and husband in an alleged Oplan Tokhang¹⁴⁵ (police) operation, and a possible case of mistaken identity as she asserted that only one of her sons had a history of drug use (but had already stopped the previous year). Despite the injustice of losing her family, while clutching a crumpled photo from her purse showing her two sons, she said ‘... he [Duterte] is good man... he helping... making better for the country... the police are good... my friend is police... my friend came and say to me sorry for what happen... we can no be angry with all police for one bad man’.¹⁴⁶ This could be a possible indication of how the drug-threat discourse is. (Or, rather than being genuine, the praise they continued to give to

¹⁴⁴ Rappler, ‘Twitter Bots, Polls: Quality Not Just Buzz’, 01 April 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/technology/social-media/127920-kathniel-twitter-bots-elections-quality-buzz> [Accessed 07/07/2017]

¹⁴⁵ ‘Oplan’ stands for ‘operation plan,’ and ‘Tokhang’ fuses two words that translate as ‘knock and plead’ —as the strategy involves door-to-door visitations by the police to request that people involved in drugs ‘voluntarily’ surrender to the authorities and cease their drug activities.

¹⁴⁶ Author interview of Interviewee A, Victim family member of an Oplan Tokhang operation, 9 March 2017.

the police and to the president might simply come from fear, particularly in a community where masked police or state-sponsored vigilantes come in the night to execute people.)

At this stage of the chapter, the descriptive evidence and analysis presented above can now be viewed through the lens of Stuart Croft's post-Copenhagen approach. Croft goes beyond the original focus of the CS's on 'speech acts' to extend the analysis to performative politics, intertextuality, and even silence. Curator equates Duterte's style of contemporary populism to the model's first analytical pillar, which Croft calls a 'repertoire of performance', that builds the relationship between the leader as performer and the people as his audience.¹⁴⁷ Duterte's performative antics can be made sense of in this way, as contributing and negotiating wider security discourses. For example, the way in which Duterte uses lewd language, such as when an Australian missionary was raped and murdered and Duterte joked it was a shame because she was so beautiful and that as mayor, 'he should have gone first'.¹⁴⁸ These utterances are not simply unfiltered speech, they are a performative act, playing to an audience and building on a relationship with the audience, who have claimed that by saying such things 'make him [Duterte] more human and relatable'¹⁴⁹. Furthermore, the discussion above regarding social media and intertextuality can be framed within this post-Copenhagen model. Performative politics are not limited to linguistic utterances, for as I have demonstrated from my evidence, social media and intertextuality also play crucial roles.

The second analytical pillar is based on the premise that power is not static, but rather is diffused through a wider set of institutional elites. This is evident in the reproduction and construction of security discourse via the Philippine National Police, the military, influential media figures from pro-Duterte news outlets. Through this analytical pillar, even the celebrities and film stars that came out to show their support for Duterte during the presidential campaign can be considered as potential securitising agents.

The third pillar, which focuses on in-group threat is relaxed and considers the audience as a non-fixed entity and not necessarily separate from the securitising agent. With the wider public pushing for the drug war and cheering to promises of a bloody demise to criminals, it is important to consider the two-way flow of discourse. As the evidence I have shown regarding twitterbots and online Duterte supporters demonstrates, the audience can be elevated to securitising actors, with their own agency, serving to construct negative discourses in tandem with Duterte.

Croft's fourth pillar is perhaps the most profound for the case of the Philippines. It focuses not only on the extraordinary measures, but the everyday practices and norms of citizens in reinforcing securitisation elements. Croft discussed how securitisation processes are shaped and reconstituted by performances enacted in everyday life, such as employment practices, the telling of jokes, or expressions of identity. In the Philippines, everyday practices are often articulated on social media, sharing jokes, images and information. Often they are of a political nature. By repeatedly discussing shared fears of drugs and crime, and the need for heavy-handed responses to these social

¹⁴⁷ Curator, 2016 : 143

¹⁴⁸ Inquirer.Net, 'Duterte's Rape Joke on Australian Missionary: Too Much?', 17 April 2016
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/779912/viral-duterte-rape-joke-on-australian-missionary> [Accessed 30/07/2017]

¹⁴⁹ Author interview with Arpee Sanitiago, Executive Director of the Ateneo Human Rights Centre and ASEAN Secretary General, 3 May 2017.

problems, the audience hereby plays an active role in co-producing and reproducing their social realities.

Having explored the contextual factors of weak democracy and state-fragility, and through a systematic descriptive analysis that is informed by the operationalisation of a post-Copenhagen model of securitisation, this chapter has been able to present an account for why and how extreme securitisation has developed in the Philippines, particularly the factors and actors that have contributed to its construction. In the next chapter I will explore the HR NGO community; specifically, how operating as a HR NGO within conditions extreme securitisation is being experienced, and how this in turn affects the responsive methods and strategies of Filipino HR NGOs to desecuritise illegal drugs.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Human Rights NGO (HR NGO) Community

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will seek to answer my fourth sub-question: How has *extreme securitisation* affected the way in which HR NGOs work?, and my fifth sub-question: How have HR NGOs responded by trying to *desecuritize* the president's drug policies and counter the denunciation of human rights? I will examine the experiences of HR NGOs, and their response to the challenges they are facing, in the complex social environment of extreme securitisation. I will argue that Keck and Sikkink's TANs model is not currently a useful method of desecuritisation for HR NGOs, due to the extreme securitisation. Instead, I will demonstrate how Hansen's 'four forms of desecuritisation' framework may provide a more accurate understanding of the different strategies that HR NGOs can utilise to desecuritize drugs in the Philippines.

4.2 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and NGOs

Many CSOs and NGOs in the Philippines were formed in response to the HR violations perpetrated during the era of Ferdinand Marcos. Although the strict conditions of the Marcos dictatorship allowed little space for civil society and HR NGOs, in areas where the government could not deliver (such as in providing necessary social services), other stakeholders, particularly NGOs, had to step into that role. During the dictatorship years, many CSOs 'built up strong relationships with the poor'.¹⁵⁰ For example, the Medical Action Group (MAP) were formed in 1982 in response to the HR violations of the regime, and on their website declare themselves to be a collective of volunteer health professionals who 'render health services to the urban poor, political prisoners, internally displaced peoples and workers.'¹⁵¹

The activism and mobilising nature of civil society eventually culminated in the People Power Revolution that ousted Marcos and brought Corazon Aquino to power in 1986. Having once been the voice of the poor and championing human rights to the extent of driving an authoritarian president into exile, it is interesting to examine the status of civil society today whereby large numbers of the poor apparently reject many HR values, denounce NGOs, and unite behind their authoritarian (or authoritarian tendencies) president.

4.2.1 The Divided Nature of the NGO Community

The resistance movement against the Marcos dictatorship was led by the CPP/NPA/NDF (CNN)¹⁵² communist faction, founded by Jose María Sison. CNN mobilised students and civil action groups to unite in contesting the legitimacy of the Marcos regime, through social revolution.¹⁵³ Due to the fact that the resistance was led by CNN, the majority of HR NGOs that were active in civil society in the

¹⁵⁰ Asia Development Bank, 'Civil Society Briefs: Philippines', <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/30174/csb-phi.pdf> [Accessed 24/07/2017]

¹⁵¹ Medical Action Group, <http://magph.org/about-us> [Accessed 24/07/2017]

¹⁵² The communist coalition of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA), and the National Democratic Front (NDF)

¹⁵³ Author's Fieldnotes, March 2017.

1980s would have at some time been affiliated with the CNN leftist movement. After the overthrowing of Marcos and the reinstatement of democracy, there was a difference of opinion in how to move forward. A ‘progressive movement’ emerged and focused on what could be achieved through the new channels of democracy, such as advocating and campaigning for the ratification of major international treaties.¹⁵⁴ Such a position was rejected by the CNN, which saw this path as not what they had been fighting and dying for during the years of dictatorship.

The overthrowing of the regime was supposed to be the start of an armed revolution that would see a complete socialist restructuring of society. Advocating for parliamentary reforms within a democratic government was not compatible with the interests of the CNN, who had already boycotted the 1986 elections that resulted in the inauguration of Cory Aquino. There was a discourse amongst the left that those who were deviating from the true revolutionary path were ‘rejectionists’ – and, as such, traitors.

In the early 1990s, after a crisis of leadership and the questioning of the legitimacy of the ruler-in-exile, Sison¹⁵⁵, civil society organisations split into two factions. Rose Trajano, of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates explained this to me:

“After martial law and the fall of Marcos, during that time we were all still working together then [CSOs], then the R.A. / R.J split happened in the early 90s... almost all legal organisations, NGOs, CSOs became aligned with either RA or RJ...”¹⁵⁶

The ‘RA’ group being referred to is the ‘reaffirmists’ (of the armed struggle) – those who align with the militant left, support Sison’s leadership and include groups such as Karapatan or others from the ‘Makabayan Bloc’¹⁵⁷ Conversely, the ‘RJ’ group represents the ‘rejectionists’ (who advocate for parliamentary reform and progressive change) and include PAHRA and other non-sectoral human rights organisations¹⁵⁸. The main reason for the split that created the RA and RJ camps was, therefore, ideological. Twenty-five years later, these two factions seldom work together on advocacy campaigns. As such, this might be a lost opportunity for desecuritisising illegal drugs in the Philippines and countering the government’s policies. In an environment of pressured political space, the disunity and mistrust between HR NGOs seemed to weaken the greater cause. Instead, smaller, parallel campaigns have run side-by-side, as if in competition with each other.

The RA or RJ categorisation is important as it affects advocacy strategy. Duterte pledged in his campaign to resolve the ongoing conflict with the militant left, which has been partly responsible for sporadic violence flaring up over the past decades. Upon taking office, Duterte resumed stalled peace talks with the CNN, freed a number of communist rebels, and appointed CNN representatives to key positions in his cabinet.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Author Fieldnotes, March 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Jose Maria Sison has been living in exile and residing in Utrecht, The Netherlands since 1986.

¹⁵⁶ Authors interview with Rose Trajano, Secretary General of PAHRA, 29 March 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Makabayan Bloc - is an alliance of leftist militant organizations. It was founded on International Workers' Day, May 1, 1985 as part of the opposition during the Marcos dictatorship. Based on Marxist, Leninist and Maoist values.

¹⁵⁸ Reaffirmist HR orgs often serve ‘sectors’ – for example agricultural workers, or factory workers. They serve sectors, and as such, the Rejectionist side says that they do not believe in the universality of human rights.

¹⁵⁹ Asean Economist, ‘Duterte Pledges Communist Talks’, 19 June 2016, <http://aseaneconomist.com/duterte-pledges-communist-peace-talks/> [Accessed 24/07/2017]

Makabayan members are now serving as top officials in various governmental departments¹⁶⁰. RA affiliated organisations, like Karapatan and the National Union of People's Lawyering (NUPL), attended the government peace talks in the Netherlands in April 2017, and they have representatives in the cabinet pushing a leftist agenda. They are more inclined to be reserved when it comes to criticising the president, for want of not jeopardising the peace process.

RJ groups on the other hand can afford to be more openly critical of the government's drug policies in the sense that they are not bound by these strategic matters and political negotiations. Consequently, they have more freedom to criticise the president and the drug war policies. However, 'freedom', 'freedom of speech', and 'political space' are still under immense pressure for all HR NGOs regardless of political affiliation.

It is interesting to note that RA groups under the Arroyo administration had no recourse for government engagement, while the RJ groups were permitted to engage and even train government affiliated bodies in joint civil society operations (as I will discuss in the final chapter). RA groups under Arroyo were red-tagged and oppressed, and there was a 'great purge' to kill communists that was rumoured to be state-sponsored.¹⁶¹ Conversely, RJ groups had relatively good engagement with the government at this time (2001-2010). Under Duterte however, the situation flipped. Now the RJs are on the oppressed and silenced margins, whilst the RAs have some (albeit limited) channels for engagement with the government. Krissi Conti of the NUPL (RA) explained to me her opinion of Arroyo and then Duterte: 'Arroyo was evil. Shrewd and cunning. She was a villain. ... With Duterte there are complications, but we also have agreements with him. I like that he appointed the leftist cabinet ministers.'¹⁶²

4.3 Human Rights Advocacy under Duterte

Due to the pressured political environment, I contend that Keck and Sikkink's TANs boomerang model is not currently functional as a useful tool for desecuritisation. There is evidence of these channels of Trans-National Advocacy being used in the past by the local NGO community in the Philippines. For example, under the Arroyo government the leftist human rights organisation Karapatan mobilised local solidarity groups in other countries through OFWs in its efforts to raise the profile of their campaign to 'Stop the Killings' (of political activists).¹⁶³ So TANs *can* be a useful tool for gathering support or bringing international attention to an issue. But in the case of the war on drugs, is it useful for desecuriting drug policies? The evidence suggests that it seems to be less so.

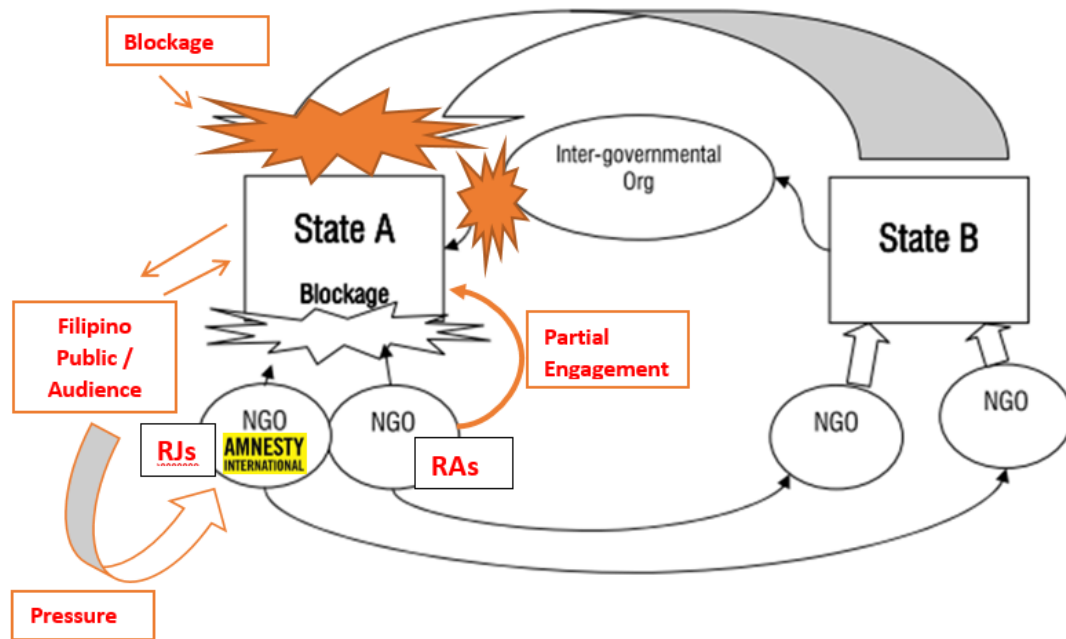
¹⁶⁰ There are Makabayan members serving in top posts in: the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Social Works and Development, the Department of Education and the Office of the Secretary to the Cabinet

¹⁶¹ The Philippine Star, 'Killing of Leftist Leaders: A Great Purge?' 18 May 2006, <http://www.philstar.com/freeman-opinion/337293/killings-leftist-leaders-purge> [Accessed 24/07/2017]

¹⁶² Personal Interview, Krissi Conti, NUPL, 30 March 2017

¹⁶³ Carolijn Terwindt and Chris van der Borgh (2016) NGOs under Pressure in the Philippines, Unpublished Draft. P.15

Figure 4 – The New Situation for Transnational Advocacy



In Figure 4, above, I have made some adaptations to Keck and Sikkink’s original model. (Adaptions are in colour). The new model I propose describes the situation that HR NGOs in the Philippines are facing. The diagram shows State A (Philippines) blocking NGOs: that is nothing new. However, the red boxes show how the TAN model is, in reality, not working as anticipated. Duterte is not allowing the international community, whether the United Nations or the United States, to become involved in influencing or altering his policy on the war on drugs. The new two-way red arrows show the flow of discourse, from Duterte and his government to Filipino citizens during the securitization of drug users; correspondingly, also shown by the red arrows is the citizenry’s agency as audience members, contributing and building the negative discourses in tandem with the government. This has created a new pressure on NGOs like Amnesty International, an unforeseen challenge that further increases pressure within political space. The new arrow shows the Filipino public, in support of Duterte, putting greater pressure on NGOs. Consequently, HR NGOs are now faced with having to deal with top-down pressure from the Duterte regime, in addition to pressure from the wider public that at an earlier time had been supportive of them. In the diagram, I have divided the NGOs into their respective RJ / RA camps as a way to reflect their differing experiences. As I mentioned earlier, RAs today have higher scope for government engagement. Although TAN channels are currently blocked, it hasn’t always been this way, as I will explain below.

4.4 The Rise and Fall of Transnational Advocacy in the Philippines

TANs have had varying degrees of utility in past decades. During the time of Marcos, TANs were arguably an invaluable tool for HR advocates. After the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown, HR NGOs typically enjoyed substantial public support. Ana Elzy Ofreneo from the Commission on Human Rights explained to me that after the Marcos years, HR advocacy and relations between the government and civil society were even a source of national pride and that visitors would come from other countries to learn:

*'In the past, we have had visitors and delegations coming from all over, Afghanistan, Korea, Indonesia, South Africa, Mexico... they come here to learn from us. We used to hold the gold standard for human rights [advocacy] in the region. But now we are dealing with a president who holds human rights in contempt.'*¹⁶⁴

This is an interesting reflection. In the post-Marcos years, although transnational advocacy was mobilised from time to time, civil society and HR NGOs typically enjoyed good relations with government, and international support was not needed in the same way as under the dictatorship. Since the People Power Revolution, up to the time of Duterte, HR NGOs had a sense of democratic agency and 'would often serve as an alternative to weak political parties.'¹⁶⁵ When illegal drugs became extremely securitised (to include human rights into the threat discourse), channels for government interaction and for transnational networking opportunities snapped shut.

In short, the TAN as a force to elicit change in the Philippines has gone through three rudimentary stages: 1) a valuable channel under the Marcos regime, 2) of some sporadic use in the post-Marcos years, and 3) incapacitated under the Duterte Administration. If TANs are currently incapacitated as a means for HR NGOs to desecuritisise drugs, then what other methods can be used?

4.5 HR NGO Desecuritisation Strategies – Hansen's Four Forms

This subsection will analyse the strategies of multiple HR NGOs, and locate and categorise the desecuritisation as falling under one of Hansen's four forms of securitisation. The four subsections, below, correspond to the forms and provides a structure for how to make sense of what is currently happening in the Philippine HR NGO community under conditions of extreme securitisation and pressured political space.

4.5.1 Change Through Stabilisation

Desecuritisation through stabilisation involves a move out of an explicit security discourse toward a less militaristic, less violent, and more genuinely political form of engagement by way of *stabilisation*. In the Philippines, what seems to contribute to the successful securitisation and public acceptance of this 'dirty' war on drugs was general feeling of despondency, that the system does not work. Carlos Conde, of Human Right Watch, explained it to me in this way:

*"If you have visited a typical urban poor area in Manila it is not a pretty experience. It is dirty, chaotic, there is crime... no way to live. Yet millions of Filipinos live that every day. It is a sense of nothing works, the system doesn't work... the courts don't work... The sense of poverty and vulnerability is real."*¹⁶⁶

The judicial system is in disarray. Justice is cripplingly slow, there are still court cases pending for crimes committed under martial law. It can take literally decades to have a case heard in court. When I visited the Quezon City Jail with Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) it became apparent that the overcrowded prison was filled with prisoners who had been waiting for years to

¹⁶⁴ Author's interview with Ana Elzy Ofreneo General Secretary, Commission on Human Rights, 7 April 2017.

¹⁶⁵ Timberman, 2016 : 135

¹⁶⁶ Author's interview, Carlos Conde, 30 March 2017

even have their first hearing, some having already out-served the maximum sentences for their alleged crimes.¹⁶⁷

The public have no faith in the judicial system. I shared conversations with local young people at an open forum at the University Philippines, and in response to my questions about the courts and due process, many proclaimed that in its current form the courts cannot be a truly useful crime deterrent as 'it takes too long... and you can get drugs in the jails easier than you can on the outside... it's not a good resolution... what's the point'.¹⁶⁸ If the courts were stabilised and the prisons secured from drugs, and people truly believed in an effective rehabilitation and restorative criminal justice system, it might be possible to move those connected with the illegal drug trade out of extreme security mode and back into the realm of the courts and normal due process.

In addition to this sense of ineffective courts and judiciary, there is a culture of impunity and forgiveness in the Philippines that leaves many people feeling exasperated or despondent when seeking justice and security through conventional channels. The majority of my interview respondents attested to this culture of impunity as being deeply ingrained within Filipino society. Wilnor Papa, Head of Campaigns for Amnesty International explained it in this way to me:

*"There is a trend that we have never held our leaders accountable. That is why Duterte is behaving this way now. We really have to change the way we view things in this country, from the community level. There is a culture of acceptance. This is years of neglect."*¹⁶⁹

The public are largely convinced that formal judicial systems are ineffective: there is corruption, bribery, favouritism, legal cost-considerations; and even then, trials and resolutions are painstakingly slow. The public, therefore, favour informal avenues for attaining justice. Duterte has gained popularity by his populist policy of informal politics and bypassing informal procedures. This accounts for one tenet of public support for his willingness to bypass ineffective, conventional, and formal procedures and 'get the job done' with EJKs and a non-due-process approach to drugs and crime.

There has been much discussion about the ICC and case filings against Duterte for crimes against humanity (CAH) and war crimes. The case filing against Duterte at the Hague's ICC by Jude Josue Sabio, lawyer of self-confessed Davao Death Squad hitman Edgar Matobato, cited Duterte and 11 other officials for crimes against humanity. Yet the NGOs did not lend their support to this. This case filing prompted a crisis meeting between PAHRA-affiliated NGOs over whether or not to openly support the ICC proceedings. In the end, it was decided (with consensus) that any such proceedings would be premature, and might even cause a public backlash against the HR NGOs.¹⁷⁰

Of all the HR NGO leaders I interviewed, not one believed it was the right time to file a criminal case. The reason why is, firstly, to do with the rule of Complementarity. Complementarity governs the relationship between the ICC and national legal orders. Article 17 of the Rome Statute allows the ICC to step in and exercise jurisdiction only where states are unable or unwilling genuinely to investigate or prosecute, without replacing judicial systems that function properly. Although there is clear evidence that the court systems in the Philippines are not working as they should, case filings

¹⁶⁷ Author's fieldnotes, April 2017

¹⁶⁸ Authors fieldnotes, April 2017, discussion at an open forum, University of the Philippines.

¹⁶⁹ Author's interview with Wilnor Papa, Campaigns Manager of Amnesty Internatioanl, 10 April 2017

¹⁷⁰ Fieldnotes, PAHRA Affiliated Meeting, March 14th.

against police officers and state-officials for drug EJK's are early in the judicial process: the war on drugs is just one year running. There is not enough evidence as yet to prove the government or the courts are unwilling or unable to investigate alleged EJKs.

Further to this, the public aversion of anything 'international' as Western, colonial, and interventionist, might further alienate HR NGOs from the people if HR NGOs put their support behind such a case filing. It is certainly seen as a possible tool in the future, but 'an ICC case now would be premature. You can't just file an ICC case, you need to prove CAH [crimes against humanity], it is legal, it is technical. Can we file now? Definitely not'.¹⁷¹ Romel Bagares, a human rights lawyer from Centerlaw, stated that 'Duterte is so popular, the international does not matter right now. There will be no international saviour, the battle needs to be here in the Philippines.'¹⁷² From a legal point of view, the ICC is not a tool that can be utilised now. From a public relations point of view, it is equally redundant.

In the Amnesty International Report 2017, there was a discursive emphasis on strengthening the local judicial sector, with 26 detailed recommendations made to the Department of Justice. Just one recommendation was made to the prosecutor of the ICC. According to the Report, 'Unless [all other] key steps recommended here are promptly taken, initiate a preliminary examination into unlawful killings...'¹⁷³ I asked the AI campaigns manager if this was deliberate and was told, 'we are having to keep away from the ICC right now, we have to break the Duterte magic on the ground before we can do that – we are focussing on our own courts.'¹⁷⁴

In addition to the discursive focus on local judiciary, NGOs are conducting other activities to improve the court system. Centerlaw are training documenters, so a comprehensive inventory of cases may be built. The Ateneo Human Rights Centre is offering education programs at grassroots level. The NUPL are offering free legal aid to those arrested in the war on drugs campaign—or in the case of an EJK, to the victim's families. The Bertha Foundation is funding the training of human rights lawyers in Makati City. AI are funding a high profile EJK case, something that they would not normally do as a campaign organisation. The 'Rise Up' movement, funded by the Bacalaran Redemptorist Church, is educating families and community members on how to preserve crime scenes after an EJK. The Commission on Human Rights is providing witness protection for victim families during the legal process. There is the belief, or the hope, within the NGO community that if people could only witness a judiciary system that *worked*, based on the rule of law, due process, retribution, rehabilitation and restoration, then perhaps negative discourses and the perceived necessity for extreme measures will abate.

4.5.2 Replacement

I observed HR NGOs as seeking to replace the issue of illegal drugs, which they do not perceive as the real threat causing social problems and instability in the Philippines, and instead trying to underscore *poverty* as the real threat to society. The question that arises, therefore, is whether it is possible to

¹⁷¹ Author's interview with Arpee Sanitago.

¹⁷² Author's interview with Romel Bagares, Board member of Centerlaw 13 March 2017.

¹⁷³ Amnesty International (2017) *If you are poor you are killed: Extrajudicial executions in the Philippines: war on drugs*, London: Peter Benenson House.

¹⁷⁴ Author's interview with Wilnor Papa, 24th March 2017.

replace the frame of 'drugs' as the fundamental social threat with that of 'poverty'? In answer to this, several of my respondents shared these opinions:

*"Three million drug addicts? No. Observation, research and statistics show that the reality is different. There are much bigger problems. Poverty is getting worse. Why people are taking drugs in the first place? Poverty."*¹⁷⁵

Edel Hernandez, a nurse with the Medical Action Group (MAG), makes the further point that poverty sometimes drives people who perceive no further options to enter the drug trade: *"Many people who are selling the drugs do so because they have no other option or income... they are wanting to stop but they have no alternative. There is no jobs in the community..."*¹⁷⁶

By sharing these narratives in reports, forums and online, NGOs are challenging the discourse of drugs as the primary threat in Filipino society. This strategy does not blame the government directly (as this might attract harassment) but instead identifies issues that people can connect with. As I have shown, by cultivating sympathetic common ground with the audience and highlighting the 'real' issue of poverty, the HR NGOs are engaging in the strategy of replacement.

However, HR NGOs in the Philippines need to tread carefully. Attempting to replace the issue of illegal drugs with poverty might be problematic within the securitisation framework. For if 'poverty' is securitised¹⁷⁷, then resulting extraordinary policy measures could lead to even graver human rights violations. In other words, to replace the securitisation of illegal drugs with a narrative that identifies poverty as the root cause of major social problems in the Philippines is to sail too closely to the perilous reef of the communist revolutionary movement's militant, insurgent ideology. For the HR NGOs that would simply open a Pandora's box of new political problems.¹⁷⁸

4.5.3 Rearticulation

This is the desecuritisation strategy I found to be most prevalent during my research of HR NGOs. As previously explained, rearticulation is when an issue is moved out of security when political engagement and a political solution is developed to resolve the impending threat or grievance. NGOs are involved in many practices to actively offer a political solution to threats and grievances, and they attempt to reframe the issue as a public health issue instead of a law and order issue.

Dennis Febre of the 'Rise Up' movement explained to me what the movement does, and what the aims and strategies are to help drug users and their families. It is hoped that the movement can effect a change in the public narrative of this group as being an existential threat. Although they are a church-affiliated movement and not an NGO, they are backed and supported by Karpatan and the NUPL:

¹⁷⁵ Author's interview with Ana Elzy Ofreneo, Executive Director Commission on Human Rights, April 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Author's interview with Edel Hernandez, Medical Action Group, 19 April 2017.

¹⁷⁷ It is interesting to note the argument that poverty has already been securitised in the Philippines, and that the drug war is just a symptom of this. That the 'unruly poor' in slum communities have been securitised, with the succour of the wider urban poor community, makes the task of a replacement strategy more complex. There are securitising audience agents, and 'threat actors' coexisting in the same poor communities.

¹⁷⁸ The limitations of this thesis do not permit me to explore at length the question of how a problem like a war on drugs might morph through the securitisation process into being framed as being connected to the insurgency problem in the Philippines. However, for more insight into this, see Timberman 2016.

“The aim of Rise Up is to offer financial assistance, psycho-spiritual, interventions and therapies. We do community level outreach, we are providing education, training and jobs. We are for victims. Victim advocacy for their human rights. We now have a website and Vice made our video featuring our church...”¹⁷⁹

Activities of the Rise Up movement include providing sanctuary at the church for the families of victims of the war on drugs, most of whom fear the police. Other strategies involved offering addicts alternatives to taking drugs. The Rise Up movement had a multi-pronged strategy: first, dealing with addiction by offering holistic therapies and acupuncture, a session of which seemed hugely popular and oversubscribed at the Baclaran Church. Secondly, jobs were offered in the harvesting, packaging, and selling of turmeric to give drug users or sellers an alternative source of income and to be seen to be making a positive contribution to society.

Rise Up’s approach presents an innovative way to a move out of the friend/enemy distinction, and seems like an inherently positive desecuritisation strategy. It is something that could be implemented more widely as an alternative to the Oplan Tokhang operations. Hansen states that one challenge to the desirability of rearticulation is whether it actually addresses the grievances upon which a conflict has been addressed. If not then this could lead to silencing instead of to a genuine solution.¹⁸⁰ For example, drug users being forced into rehabilitation programs, without the root causes of poverty and drug use being addressed, will be silenced through their institutional incarceration while leaving the larger social problem unresolved. However, in this instance, the Rise Up movement claims that the main grievance of the audience, which is the repercussions of drugs and crime, are largely mitigated and subverted by such initiatives as user therapy, access to health services, the creation of jobs, and the offer of education programs.

Edel Hernandez, from the Medical Action Group, offers similar services to drug victims and their families, including medical, psychological, and psychosocial services. However, while she acknowledges that rearticulation and solutions of the kind attempted by Rise Up can be a desirable and immediate response to counter the government’s drug policies, she says that they should nevertheless be led by the department of health, and expert services like the Medical Action Group who have trained nurses, doctors, and therapists volunteering for them.

“As a health agency we want to support people away from drug use – rather than taking a moral high ground and taking the faith based approach such as in the Catholic Church and Inglesio De Christo Church. We ask questions such as do you need counselling? Do you need anger management – rather than claiming that worshipping Jesus Christ will be the magic answer’.

‘My critique is that drug problems cannot be solved by the church and faith alone.’

‘It also creates another stigma for drug users – oh you are without morals, you are not God fearing or God loving. But really they just want to forget the problems associated with poverty.’

This is an interesting critique from the Medical Action Group. Drug users certainly do not need further stigmatisation in society. However, perhaps with all contextual factors considered, and given

¹⁷⁹ Author’s interview with Dennis Febre, Organiser of the Rise Up Movement, Baclaran Church, 31 March 2017

¹⁸⁰ Lene Hansen (2000) ‘The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29 (2): 285-306

that the Filipino audience are predominantly Christian, it could be a tactful strategy to desecuritize drug users under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. In a mainly Catholic country like the Philippines, the Church has promising potential to become a powerful platform for rearticulating the security threat of drug users.

The activities above could arguably be a case of Jef Husyman's deconstructivist desecuritisation strategy: dismantling constructed and feared identities (those associated with the drug trade and their families) by way of *fragmentation*. Fragmentation involves replacing a securitised, and thus homogenised category of individuals, and replacing such a category with a more varied plethora of shifting identities. The Baclaran Church could argue that they are constructing new, positive identities not defined by drug use. The new category labels can, for example, be 'women', 'children', 'Church-goers', 'redemptorist', 'employees', 'tumeric sellers' and 'artists' (one of the victim advocacy programs involved the erection of a huge 100ft mural along the wall of the church, designed and crafted by reformed addicts and victim family members). These new identity categories are relatable to the securitising audience, and may challenge the 'othering' being done by the security discourse.

In addition to rearticulating the threat of drug users out of security, there is a need to rearticulate HR in general – to reconnect once again with the masses. Duterte's threat to kill HR advocates and journalists who criticise his drug war and framing them as a threat to progress and reform, whilst maintaining public support, clearly flags out the need to redefine human rights. Angie Gonzales, of the Commission on Human Rights explained to me why:

*'HR has become academic... people do not warm to HR. It represents an arrogance of the learned – It represents privilege. The challenge now is to bring HR to the language of the poor. It is a failure of civil society groups. We do lectures, use big foreign words and concepts that are not tangible and digestible. It is time to go back and use examples that are present in their lives. HR not in terms of neo-liberalism and utilitarianism – but housing, food, HR in terms of life and death'*¹⁸¹

For reasons already discussed above, the idea of Human Rights has largely lost resonance with the people. This rising pessimism about HR was exacerbated by Duterte's rhetoric of it as something negative and even harmful for Philippine society.

Therefore, if HR NGOs can reshape and swing public opinion about HR into a more positive direction, as something that has a direct and active role in improving the daily lives of citizens, then they might stand a chance of regaining popular respect and support for HR (and thus for their a long-term strategy for the eventual desecuritisation of illegal drugs). In NGO strategy meetings I have attended this objective was frequently identified, with corresponding grassroots education programs being crafted to that end. However, to date NGOs face obstacles in the implementation of their programmes from Barangay (community) leaders.¹⁸²

4.5.4 Silencing

Silencing, as I explained earlier, is when an issue simply disappears, or fails to register in security discourse. I did not find any evidence of a '*silencing*' desecuritisation strategy during my research. Due

¹⁸¹ Author's interview with Angie Gonzales, Rainbow Trust, 7th April

¹⁸² Author's Fieldnotes.

to the environment of extreme securitisation, it is unlikely that illegal drugs will suddenly cease to be a security concern. Furthermore, Hansen's warning of silencing as being a possible 'strategy of exclusion', and how this can serve to disadvantage the non-securitised, resounds in the case of drug users. Since HR NGOs typically give voice to the marginalised, (see the AI report) a silencing strategy would not be compatible with their goals. This form of desecuritisation is therefore less relevant, and not useful for this particular case study.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have analysed the history and its consequences for the present-day realities of HR NGOs. In the course of my descriptive analysis, I have provided concrete demonstration of how Lene Hansen's Four Forms framework can aid in the conceptual analysis of desecuritisation strategies within the NGO community.

The line of argumentation I have developed in this chapter consists of four main points, which I will briefly reiterate: 1) That the Philippines has an established civil society sector dating back to the dictatorship years, and although government-engagement opportunities have varied from administration to administration, CSOs have typically enjoyed strong and positive relations with poor communities *in the past*, 2) relationships between poor communities and civil society organisations have more recently broken down, and HR advocacy organisations are now facing a pressured environment owing to extreme securitisation, 3) the NGO community is divided into two political camps, and fractured along ideological-political lines. Whichever side of the RA/ RJ divide an organisation situates itself will affect their opportunities for government engagement (the Duterte being less sympathetic to the RJ camp), and therefore the strategies for HR advocacy that they can effectively devise, 4) Hansen's Four Forms framework (or the first three forms in this case) offers a demonstrably useful analytical framework for interpreting and categorising desecuritisation strategies of HR NGOs.

The next chapter will be an in-depth case study of Amnesty International. It focuses on the changing political environment discussed above, and will analyse what advocacy opportunities are available for the organisation. Additionally, it will also specify in greater detail the scope for desecuritisation that exists for AI in this setting of extreme securitisation, and shrinking political space.

CHAPTER FIVE: Amnesty International—Human Rights in Crisis?

“We had this grand plan at the beginning of 2016 – the new strategic goals that were part of a four-year plan to run internationally, but then low and behold Duterte won...”¹⁸³

Wilnor Papa, AI Campaigns Manager

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an answer to the second component of my final sub-question: how have HR NGOs, specifically Amnesty International, attempted to shift the issue of illegal drugs out of ‘security mode’ and back into the public sphere of normal politics? This chapter provides a focused case study analysis of how Amnesty International are trying to remain operational in a hostile NGO environment of extreme securitisation. This chapter will explore the history of AI as an organisation, how it has operated in the past, the government channels that were variably open for HR advocacy and how this has changed under the Duterte government. I will examine how AI is experiencing the pressures of extreme securitisation, embodied by operational restrictions in their advocacy practices, and by online and offline harassment. Finally, using the desecuritisation literature discussed in Chapter 2, I will examine the methods and strategies, old and new, that AI are adopting in response to extreme securitisation in the Philippines, whilst acknowledging it is too premature in the enactment of these strategies (the drug war is but one year running) to assess the success or failure of such methods.

5.2 History of Amnesty International

According to their website, AI purport to be a global movement operating in over 150 countries, with more than 7 million members and activists who ‘campaign to end abuses of human rights worldwide and lobby governments and states to honour and observe international human rights standards’.¹⁸⁴ They are a membership-funded organisation and claim that they are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion.

Amnesty International began to have a presence in the Philippines in the 1970s in response to the human rights abuses taking place under the Marcos dictatorship, and were able to produce two detailed reports on torture issues in 1975 and 1981. After the People’s Power Revolution, AI became an officially accredited and registered local NGO in 1987. Since AI locate their institutional origins from outside the Philippines, they claim independence from political affiliations and do not self-identify as either ‘reaffirmist’ or ‘rejectionist’.

However, despite not having the same CNN historical linkages as other mainstream NGOs in Manila, they are commonly categorised as ‘rejectionists’ by those from the CNN / Makabayan Bloc because AI do not advocate for the armed struggle. This is further compounded by the fact that Jessica Soto was hired as an executive director, and is also married to a former leader of Makabayan, and therefore now labelled as a ‘rejectionist’. Furthermore, AI’s advocacy coalition partners are predominantly from the rejectionist camp.¹⁸⁵ Being labelled as a rejectionist-aligned organisation, AI

¹⁸³ Author’s interview with Wilnor Papa, 24th March

¹⁸⁴ Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/> [Accessed 12/07/2017]

¹⁸⁵ Author’s interview with Wilnor Papa, 24th March

do not currently enjoy (for reasons explained in Chapter 4) the deliberative government channels that are open to the leftist reaffirmist groups.

Whilst the RA/RJ human rights NGOs have been divided since the ideological split in the early 1990s, they have traditionally worked on overlapping HR campaigns and sometimes even together, albeit rarely. The leftist group Karapatan even joined the first BRAT event in 2002.¹⁸⁶ They were an original member of the United Against Torture Coalition, and were therefore working on joint advocacy with AI and other RJ groups in the early 2000s. The point to stress is that they were fighting for the same issues: women’s rights, worker’s rights, anti-discrimination rights, all under the banner of human rights. They may have been running separate campaigns, but they were lobbying and pressing the same issues. This has not been the case since the Duterte Administration, and RA organisations have been accused by RJs and international organisations such as Human Rights Watch of falling silent on the drug-related killings, in favour of advancing their own political agenda.

5.3 Structure of Amnesty International

The structure of AI in the Philippines is organised as a ‘section’. Sections organise and coordinate AI advocacy activities, and will frequently be joined by voluntary members, in addition to a paid, professional staff. Each section may appoint two representatives to the International Council, that convenes once every two years, to assess and determine the direction of the movement. The International Secretariat (IS), a body made up of 450 staff and led by a Secretary General, is responsible for overseeing the campaigns and advocacy goals of sections, and for ensuring that agreed policies and procedures are being adhered to.¹⁸⁷

The AI HQ office in Quezon City, Manila is modest: a house-to-office conversion located on a residential street in Teacher’s Village near to the University of the Philippines. (See photos 1 and 2.)

Photo 1 – Amnesty Office Street View



Photo 2 – Amnesty Office Inside



¹⁸⁶ BRAT is an acronym for the ‘Basta! Run Against Torture’ campaign .

¹⁸⁷ Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/> [Accessed 12/07/2017]

There are twelve permanent staff members, two temporary project staff, and a small rotating number of student researchers or interns. In terms of funding, Campaigns Manager, Wilnor Papa, explained to me that:

*'We don't get much funding locally. AI Philippines is a small organisation compared to the European counterparts who can basically fund all their operations through their members. We get our funding from the International Secretariat...'*¹⁸⁸

Papa explained to me that, in his opinion, internationally sourced-funding was a positive thing, as AI has a strong and fixed mandate regarding the projects they can work on:

*'It is good that Amnesty is part of a wider movement, our work is defined for us by our membership worldwide. There is no chance we will be working on campaigns we shouldn't be – or being forced to open our doors to funders who could hurt and devalue the organisation...'*¹⁸⁹

Despite being part of this wider, international human rights movement, Papa situated AI as more of a local NGO than an international organisation:

'I think we have proven ourselves to be more of a local organisation. We are seen as an integral part of many local coalitions. The fact that we have continued working on local issues and coalitions longer than our international campaigns planned for...'

*'...There is no way we could have operated in the way we have these past decades if we were not seen as a one of the locals by the national organisations in the Philippines... But that was before Duterte.'*¹⁹⁰

Some of the many local campaigns and coalitions that AI support include: United Against Torture Coalition (UATC), Coalition Against Forced Disappearances, Coalition Against Trafficking of Women, and the Philippine Action Network to Control Arms.¹⁹¹ AI have active campaigns fighting for the rights of women, persons with disabilities, those from LGBTQ communities and anyone at risk of discrimination. Many of these campaigns have been running for years, and were operational before political space became severely restricted under Duterte.

5.4 Diminishing Political Space: Examining an AI Campaign

The 'Basta! Run Against Torture (BRAT)' campaign has been running for 15 years. It is useful to analyse this campaign in order to see how AI have operated in the past. Then a comparison can be made between the kind of channels that were previously open to AI to lobby for human rights and mobilise public support, and those within the conditions that exist today. This will enable a better

¹⁸⁸ Author's interview with Wilnor Papa, 2 May 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Amnesty International Philippines, <https://www.amnesty.org/ph/> [Accessed 12/07/2017]

understanding of how the HR NGO environment in which AI operates has been shaped in the years leading up to and during the Duterte Administration.

The first BRAT was held in June 2002 and served as the launching pad of the national campaign against torture of the newly formed United Against Torture Coalition (UATC). The UATC is a network of anti-torture advocates that was organized in May of 2002 by AI Philippines' 'Stop Torture' project. The first BRAT was launched in a well-publicized event, covered by multiple radio, print and TV media, and involved a televised banner march from the start of the Oblation Statue at the University of the Philippines (UP) and ended at the Quezon City Memorial Circle. There a huge crowd had assembled in support of AI's campaign. When the demonstrators reached the Circle, a one-hour televised press conference took place, giving AI a welcome national platform to promote human rights and their new campaign.¹⁹²

Subsequent years of the BRAT campaign saw similar success. Noteworthy years included 2008, where another well-publicized and highly-attended event opposing torture saw 'an unprecedented 200 participants from the Philippine National Police (PNP) headed by the PNP Human Rights Affairs Office (PNP HRAO) and the Quezon City Police District (QCPD).'¹⁹³ The event was even attended by members and secretariat of the House of Representative Committees on Justice and Human Rights (with fulfilled promises of passing the anti-torture bill in the House of Representatives), and members of the local government of Quezon City.

In the years 2009-2015, the activity included the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, the Department of Justice, and the Presidential Human Rights Committee. From humble beginnings of a plan to carry an anti-torture banner, the event had grown and gathered nearly a thousand participants from the above-mentioned organisations and agencies.

For BRAT's 10th run (2016) while AI anticipated the human rights policies of the incoming Duterte Administration, the coalition aimed to raise the bar of 'freedom from torture' advocacy. The event aimed to solidify and ensure a 'zero tolerance for torture' commitment from the organizations and agencies involved. Surprisingly, more than 1,300 people attended the event, including participants from the Department of National Defence, the National Defence College of the Philippines, and the Philippine National Police Academy. The event was widely reported by the media due to the fact that it was held one week before Duterte's presidential inauguration.

Many of the human rights laws, or international treaties ratified between 2002-2016 were due to active CSO involvement, complimented by the more welcoming disposition of many government agencies during these times. Inter-agency support to proposed human rights policies through resolutions were easier to gather, resulting in the creation of consistent and long-lasting working groups for certain concerns such as torture, women's rights, children's welfare, and education.¹⁹⁴ AI assert that the Department of Foreign Affairs continued to require CSO involvement and advice in ASEAN matters and international treaty matters up until the Duterte Administration, showing just how significant the channels between the government and the organisation used to be.

¹⁹² Amnesty International, BASTA Report Logs, 2002-2017

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

Therefore, pre-Duterte, there was evidence of participation by government agencies in the adherence to human rights standards, and that they were open to human rights education (at least outwardly). Notwithstanding cases of left-leaning figures suspected of CNN links becoming the target of summary killings and disappearances under Arroyo, AI logs show that in their opinion, ‘despite these concerns... CSO activities can still be considered as robust - and engagement with national and local government is still considered more progressive as compared to neighbour countries’.¹⁹⁵

It appears that in the time before Duterte, although EJKs of political activists and gross state-sponsored human rights abuses were prevalent, the government position was more ambiguous. There have always been sectors in the Filipino state that are largely unaccountable, and not all violations are the work of government agencies. There is evidence of past administrations taking serious action in response to human rights abuse claims.

The Arroyo administration launched an investigation that resulted in numerous arrests of prominent political leaders including Risa Hontiveros and Conrado De Quiros and resulted in the detainment of Major General ‘The Butcher’ Jovito Palparan¹⁹⁶, who remains in jail and was tagged as the mastermind behind the anti-communist killings and disappearances.¹⁹⁷ This was in response to mass civil action, international outrage and multi-sectoral partners demanding a stop to the killings and calling for the accountability of the military personnel involved.

With Duterte, there is no ambiguity to his position on human rights. ‘I don’t give a shit about human rights’, he declared at an Aljazeera-televised press conference. His promise of impunity to anyone who goes out and murders drug users in their community (police, vigilante or citizen), stands in contrast to previous government attempts to hold those who carry out killings accountable.¹⁹⁸

How has this affected AI operations in 2017? We can analyse the BRAT 2017 event to answer this question. Papa explained it to me in this way:

‘We used to have lots of government channels... We used to meet regularly with the Department of Justice, the Department of Interior Local Government, the PNP and agencies that have mandates in terms of human rights protection. We would be invited to discuss policies and advise on guidelines... but since the Duterte Administration there has been nothing... Our last visit to the PNP national headquarters was in June 2016...’¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Inquirer.Net, ‘5 Things You Need to Know About Jovito Palparan’, 12 August 2014, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/628418/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-jovito-palparan> [Accessed 12/07/2017]

¹⁹⁷ Aljazeera, ‘Philippines Arrests Ex-General “The Butcher”’, 16 August 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia-pacific/2014/08/philippines-arrests-ex-general-butcher-201481662435854922.html> [Accessed 12/07/2017]

¹⁹⁸ Inquirer.Net, ‘Duterte Statements Create Environment of Impunity’, 23 June 2016, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/792035/duterte-statements-create-environment-of-impunity> [Accessed 27/07/2017]

¹⁹⁹ Wilnor Papa, (2017) 02 May, Personal Interview 3

The first BRAT under a Duterte Administration extended the torture campaign to include drug war EJKs and the warning of martial law in Mindanao²⁰⁰, which they feared was a front by the president to eventually expand martial law to the entire Philippines. The additional topics of EJKs and martial law were included in the campaign, unsurprisingly, as being viewed to be the most current and heinous threat to human rights.

There was poor turnout at this event, attended by less than 500 individuals, exclusively from the UATC and IDefend coalitions. The general distrust and animosity with government, specifically with members of the security sector, meant that there was no government agency participation in 2017. This absence, compared with past participation from the PNP, the military and the Department of Justice, along with many others, demonstrates just how transformed the advocacy environment had become in 2017, from just one year of a Duterte Administration. What was once an annual and by all means friendly event, attended by government agencies and civil society organisations alike had been reduced to a small number of organisations, and poor media coverage.

The AI logs²⁰¹ indicate some of the factors they attribute to the poor outcome of the event: 1) Some members of the public were not allowed by their community leaders to participate. Leaders felt fearful of the repercussions from local government in allowing community members to join 'anti-government' events; 2) Some of the UATC and IDefend members did not want to extend the invitation to the so-called 'Yellows'²⁰²; 3) Difficulty in gathering support in traditional communities, some were afraid to join or be identified, lest they be mistaken as 'Dilawan' (Yellow or Liberal Party supporters) - or worse, supporters of criminal elements if they are identified as having criticized the government's war against drugs. The AI February Report 2017²⁰³ into EJKs found a high-level of fear among inhabitants in afflicted communities, who are afraid to speak against the government/police, and this could be a factor in low mobilisations among groups who do not support the war against drugs.

By comparing the many BRAT's pre-Duterte with the 2017 event, it is clear that human rights organizations have lessened or stopped engagements with various government departments and agencies. These channels are being blocked. Amnesty describe a situation whereby their requests go unanswered, and previous invitations such as for training events are now non-existent, 'now the only semi-government body we work with is the Commission on Human Rights... we are trying to engage the Department of Justice but there is not much window'.²⁰⁴

5.5 Missed Opportunities: Losing Public Support

AI had invested in a large proposal at the beginning of 2016. This included new strategic goals that were part of a four-year plan to run internationally, focusing on the rights of refugees and displaced persons. When Duterte was elected, the four-year trajectory had to be shelved. As the AI campaigns manager describes: 'everybody was very quiet at the office that week. All our hopes and plans, and

²⁰⁰ On May 23rd 2017, President Duterte declared martial law across the Mindanao region in response to fighting between Armed Forces of the Philippines and Islamist Militant Groups.

²⁰¹ Amnesty International, BASTA Report Logs, 2002-2017.

²⁰² 'Yellow' is the colour associated with the Liberal Party Coalition. Some HR NGOs do not want to be seen as working together with this mainstream party for accusations of being funded by them or having a political agenda.

²⁰³ Amnesty International Report EJKs, January 2017.

²⁰⁴ Author's interview with Wilnor Papa, 24th March 2017

suddenly we were back to square one... opposing the death penalty and advocating for level one basic human rights'.²⁰⁵ AI had to refocus on the human rights problems at home.

Duterte's campaign promises of EJKs, death-penalty reinstatement (with drugs as a capital offense), and criminal-responsibility age-lowering (from 14 to 9), signalled troubling times ahead for AI. That the public applauded such promises at campaign rallies, and the support base cutting across all class lines, demonstrated the rejection of HR by the people: they had lost faith in civil society being able to improve their lives. Papa discussed the self-reflection AI undertook at the time:

"We have done all these things for human rights and then someone like Duterte wins, so was there something wrong with our strategy? Why didn't we connect with the people? What did we do to deserve a Duterte Administration? We had to look back at how we do things."²⁰⁶

It is important to trace when and why the tide turned on human rights to allow for such an extreme securitisation to occur. In the previous chapter, it was discussed how a Commission on HR advocate explained that the concepts had become 'too academic' and out of touch with the people. Wilnor Papa, of AI, explained this to me in more detail:

'... Human rights organisations see themselves as saviours – and that the people should follow them. And people got tired of the whole rhetoric. People think 'oh look they are rallying again, the same old flags, the same old people, the same old faces. People got pissed off with it. They got tired of the rhetoric whereby 'if you don't think what we think, you are lowly, you are stupid.'²⁰⁷

In Papa's opinion, many HR NGOs in Manila, regardless of political affiliations, have unwittingly contributed to an elitist narrative that has turned off the public. Certain groups have derogatory terms for people who are not educated in their rights. For example, the leftist groups talk about the 'bourgeoisie', but they use pejorative terms for 'common people' and for those who are unlearned in their human rights. These terms are used in meetings, and coalition talks between NGOs, and creates a superiority narrative whereby HR NGOs portray themselves as politically more mature and that 'they know better'. This has served to isolate the very people they claim to represent. AI self-identify this as a failure of the wider HR community.²⁰⁸

That people got tired of the human rights rhetoric whilst rallying behind a president who openly vilifies human rights as an obstacle in the way of reform, shows just what a difficult position AI are in at winning back support and attempting to mobilise the public against the drug policies.

5.6 The Public Backlash: Aggressive Public Response to Securitised Human Rights

This subsection will examine two examples of new phenomena that AI are experiencing in the pressured political environment. Specifically, in addition to the verbal threats levied against the organisation by Duterte, (for he has explicitly referred to AI when levying hate rhetoric against human

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

rights defenders)²⁰⁹, how has the wider public participated in this aggression? This analysis further underscores the role of the audience as mutually constitutive securitising actors along with Duterte.

1) Online Trolls – Organised and Unorganised

In this case, a ‘troll’ is defined as a person who propagates discord on the internet by posting abusive and inflammatory messages. The goal of a troll is to denounce, attack, and harass people online, and this has even equated to incitement for extreme violence against AI staff members.

Web search definitions of ‘trolls’ typically equate the practice with fake user profiles. Twitterbots and paid, possibly organised, online agents have been discussed in a previous chapter. However, I assert that there are many *unorganised* trolling agents attacking AI. Seemingly legitimate profiles are leaving the most abhorrent of trolling posts. This further demonstrates active audience agency, and the strength of the extreme securitisation.

Trolls are a relatively modern problem, but a fast-growing one. The prevalence of online social media trolls that operate around the clock make it ever more difficult for AI to challenge the discourse on human rights and mobilise support to challenge the drug policies. As previously discussed, the Philippines is a country whereby ever more time is spent on social media, and interactions are increasingly digital.

It appears that the Duterte narrative has continued with the level of success seen at the election, with the ability to pull people in – and push others out. The president’s hate rhetoric practically becomes policy when addressing human rights issues. In May 2017, he threatened to behead HR advocates. Many communities appeared to support and welcome this rhetoric, and echoed it themselves online.

The following page reflects a small sample of some of the negative discourse towards AI. The postings are taken from the Amnesty International Facebook Homepage review section, where members of the Filipino public can review the organisation.²¹⁰ As of July 2017, the mode value of ratings is 1* (the lowest). This is down from a mode value of 4.5* in January 2015 (5 is the highest). The attacking and aggressive content of the online postings from Duterte supporters echo his own rhetoric. One Facebook user has written of AI staff members, ‘I would be happy to slaughter them all’ (post C), and this clearly correlates with Duterte’s openly violent verbalisations towards HR advocates. AI are furthermore referred to as a ‘shameless liberal organisation’ that ‘represent all that is wrong and evil in the world’ (post A). They are called ‘criminal sympathisers’ and told that their ‘advocacy is twisted and against moral law’ (post D). Some of the posts were much more violent and hateful, and are too obscene to print in this thesis.

²⁰⁹ The Philippine Star, ‘Rody hits Amnesty, NYT over drug war remarks’, 28 April 2017. This primary source newspaper article quoted Duterte as calling Amnesty International and New York Times ‘assholes’ and ‘sons of whores’ - and that there ‘publications must stop’.

²¹⁰ Amnesty International Philippines Facebook Homepage, https://www.facebook.com/pg/amnestyph/reviews/?ref=page_internal [Accessed 13/07/17]

AI are relatively defenceless against these sorts of online attacks. Some of the more violent postings such as those propagating the rape and murder of AI staff, can be reported to the social media site teams. Verbal attacks can be logged internally on incident report forms and reported and passed on to AI's Coms team; but these posts are widely disaggregated throughout the internet on many sites, and it can often be difficult to request removal of content. Furthermore, AI Philippines is a relatively small team, with approximately 15 staff members. Trying to counter the attacks from literally millions of trolls would be an impossible and fruitless undertaking.




What is interesting about these posts are the profiles from which they originate. These are not extremists, or 'loners', or members of society with criminal pasts and dispositions to extreme violence. Clicking through to the profiles, these are students, middle-class mothers, young businessmen, medical graduates, and so on. One poster had written 'I hope all you [AI staff] get shot and die you scallywags hate our country walang kwentang grupo! [worthless group]'.²¹¹ When I connected onto the profile, there was a smiling picture of a woman with her young daughter, and details listing that she was a primary school teacher. Another poster stated that he wanted to dig up an AI staff members' deceased grandmother and rape her corpse – again from a normal-looking profile, with a picture of a suited businessman with his arm around what appears to be his own grandmother.

This shows the extremity of the securitisation: it takes security *beyond* emergency measures. There is a clear creation of an in-group and an out-group that goes beyond the usual 'extraordinary measures' that are enacted to subjugate a perceived threat to a referent object. The mobilisation of the audience is vast. AI are at times being treated and threatened in the same way as the drug users and criminals by the wider public. This is a new phenomenon in the Philippines.




²¹¹ Ibid. [Accessed 13/07/2017]

Amnesty Abuse




“The propaganda against human rights is working... The president is convincing people that human rights is the real evil – the reason why drugs and crime have proliferated... there is a battle happening, human rights defenders are being labelled criminal sympathisers...” – Campaigns Manager, Amnesty.

 **Henry Bernardino** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  23 February · 


This is a shameless liberal organization who intervenes and dips their dirty fingers on other nations' noses. Shameless. They represent all that is wrong and evil in the world.

 **Dee Ilejay Glen** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  2 March · 




this piece of shit group should be removed from the face of earth.. paid assholes

 **Andoy Hernandez** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  7 March · 


This group wants to destroy humanity of every mankind instead of criticizing criminals. If I have an overwhelmed power, I would slaughter them all without any regrets and hesitation.


 **Christopher Cruz III** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  21 May 2016 · 




You call yourselves protectors of human rights and yet you are more keen on protecting criminals not the victims. Your advocacy is twisted and against moral law.

 **John David** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  2 March · 

this is a pathetic organization who wants to cuddle criminals and condemn the victims.. sorry but youre really pathetic..

 **Peter Willey** Human rights activists do not define what they mean by “human”. The simplest definition I know is that “HUMANS ARE RATIONAL ANIMALS”. Does this mean that they think the selling of drugs which fry the brains of our kids and results in their death from overdosing is a rational action? If not, then the killing of drug dealers is not the same as killing a human but rather vermin, which everyone approves of.

Like · Reply ·  1 · 23 February at 09:04

 **Oliver Cadenas Rebusora** reviewed Amnesty International Philippines –  22 February · 

this group is garbage like the people who on this group

2) Organised Out-of-Country Harassment: New Zealand

Incidences of harassment of AI staff are not confined to the online world, and are equally not confined to Filipino borders. In May 2017, AI campaigns manager, Wilnor Papa was invited by the University of Auckland in New Zealand to speak in a public forum on the current human rights situation in the Philippines, and to advise on what strategies human rights organizations are currently employing to address the situation, as well as informing on the personal and professional difficulties they are facing – and what the New Zealand government and its people can do to help alleviate the situation.²¹²

The event included an audience profile varying from students, journalists, concerned or interested individuals, university professors and other NGO workers. Halfway through the talk, a number of Filipino individuals who introduced themselves as OFWs began to heckle the AI representative from the audience, interrupting and branding his information ‘fake news’ and ‘completely false’. They continued to heckle and challenge AI for speaking against the government and criticising the president unjustly. After a prolonged interrogative attack lasting up to 30 minutes, they were eventually stopped by other audience members, particularly journalists, who themselves started questioning their persona and motives for being there.

It later transpired that the hecklers were organised by a group called ‘DDS New Zealand’ who are partnered online with the Facebook group ‘OFW Global Movement Supports President Rody Duterte’ of which there are nearly one million members.²¹³ The group made an official video filming the AI representative, ‘fact-checking’ and ‘falsifying’ AI findings and proclaiming in the online forum with the release of the video:

“A person like him [Wilonor Papa] who questions the wisdom and will of the 16 million Filipinos who voted for Duterte and who thirst for real change in our country has no desire but to continuously malign our government in the international arena. Instead of actively participating in the campaign against drugs, crime, corruption, and poverty - they would rather exhaust their effort against the government....

Thank you to DDS New Zealand and some Filipinos who attended the event to protect and defend our President!”²¹⁴

This demonstrates just how widespread and far reaching the anti-human rights and pro-Duterte discourse has spread. In the same New Zealand visit, there was a second incident in Christchurch whereby Duterte supporters turned up at an event to harass and challenge the AI staff member. As far as the Philippine section is concerned, this is the first time that an organized group supporting any president or political leader in the Philippines has confronted any AI Philippines staff

²¹² Amnesty International Staff Incident Report, 25th March 2017.

²¹³ OFW Global Movement Supports President Rody Duterte (Facebook Homepage, https://www.facebook.com/OFWGlobalMovementForEmpowerment/?hc_ref=SEARCH [Accessed 13/07/2017]

²¹⁴ Duterte Supporters Video, 22nd June 2017, Let's watch and see how some groups continue to spread lies against President Duterte and his government. [Accessed 13/07/17]

outside the country to discredit Amnesty International's information or defend the government or political leader's policies and programmes.²¹⁵

Considering similar reports by members of IDefend and other human rights organizations whose members have been asked and tasked to attend international meetings and conferences on the current human rights situation in the Philippines, it is evident that pro-Duterte supporters, many of them OFWs, have been actively organizing to counter personalities critical of the Duterte administration.

They do this through face-to-face engagements and online attacks. Whether they are paid to do this or not is unclear. AI surmises in their incident logs that the harassers are most likely volunteers actively seeking to engage with people who are critical of the government. Volunteers or otherwise, these groups seem to have established and well-organised communities that are ready to confront detractors both online and offline.

5.7 Amnesty International and Desecuritisation Strategies

The above gives an indication of the difficult environment that AI are operating in. Whilst they may not need to change *policy*, indeed the policies for human rights in the Philippines already exist, even ratified in domestic laws, what they have needed to change is their *strategy*. The public mobilisations and marches that have traditionally been effective in the past are not a useful tool when the public is mostly against the HR advocacy of AI – the public do not agree that human rights extend to those connected with the drug trade.

Although AI did not rely on transnational advocacy in the post-Marcos years, (due to fairly good relations and open channels with government), the Keck and Sikkink model was still a tool in which AI (and other HR NGOs) could draw support from, in terms of HR discourse, United Nations guidelines on HR and the diffusion of international HR norms and practices to the Filipino domestic arena.

TANs are currently of seldom use, in a country where the president barred the UN Special Rapporteur from making an official visit to investigate drug EJKs and stated on television 'maybe we'll just have to decide to separate from the United Nations. If you are that disrespectful, son of a whore, then I will just leave you'.²¹⁶ There is such negative discourse around HR and anything international.

In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss a number of strategies AI are adopting to try and increase their legitimacy and bolster their campaign to desecuritize illegal drugs in an environment of blocked international and governmental channels.

1) Amnesty, or Amnesty International?

"The president is making it seem as though international concern is not welcome. The issue of sovereignty is being abused...The president knows for a fact that there are not any real sovereignty issues with the international community condemning the human rights abuses –

²¹⁵ Amnesty International Staff Incident Report, 25th March 2017

²¹⁶ The Telegraph, 'Philippines president threatens to quit 'stupid' UN in foul mouthed tirade over war on crime', 21 August 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/21/philippines-president-threatens-to-quit-stupid-un-in-foul-mouthe/> [Accessed 13/07/17]

*but he wants to show he is a man on his own, he can stand up to Western powers, the Philippines is independent. It's a propaganda thing – and it's working*²¹⁷

The quote above describes how 'international' and 'human rights' have currently come to assume negative connotations in the Philippines. Duterte has crafted the discourse of human rights and international NGO's by building on years of anti-colonial political feeling and resentment of external actors and organisations who are depicted as meddling in Filipino affairs. Duterte has equated external condemnation of his drugs war as another case of external interference, and threat to the sovereignty and independence of the Filipino nation.

I noticed a discursive emphasis on the *locality* of AI, and the concomitant distancing of the word '*International*' in the organisation's name. AI appear to have dropped the 'I' and become simply 'Amnesty' in local advocacy campaigns. When staff were interviewed they referred to the organisation as simply 'Amnesty'.

I queried whether this was intentional or just for the ease of abbreviated language. I was told that:

*'it depends on who you are talking to... in a way being 'international' helps with bringing in the noise – or at least it did in the past, and it ensures that an issue doesn't die down just because it has died down in the Philippines, but at the moment the rhetoric being used by government against anything international and not of the Philippines, then it helps us just to focus on our role as a local organisation, which is how we have always operated anyway – as a local organisation.*²¹⁸

This method fits with Hansen's *rearticulation* strategy. AI are making a conscious effort using language to rearticulate not just the meaning of human rights, but the very nature of the organisation itself. AI will always be international, but it is currently useful to play down this aspect of the organisation's identity and structure as an international entity. This is only a small step towards increasing legitimacy, but there are very few options to do so in the present political climate.

2) The Report: Winning Back Poor Communities with a Confrontational Strategy

As previously described, AI had lost touch with poor communities, which were the traditional targets (and supporters) of their HR advocacy. AI release reports regularly, but the somewhat provocatively-titled 'If you are poor you are killed: Extra Judicial Killings in the Philippines War on Drugs'²¹⁹ was a confrontational strategy, directly addressing the government and taking them to task on their HR abuses, specifically against the poor.

There was a strategic emphasis on the abhorrence of the war on drugs, as not simply a war on drugs, but a war on poor people in general. The release of the report can be considered a courageous undertaking – and a risky one in the current political climate. AI took a gamble with the report, hoping that by highlighting what they perceive to be the realities of the drug war – a continuation of the historic victimisation and repression of the poor) that they could reconnect to and rearticulate their prior position: as representatives of the rights of the poor.

²¹⁷ Author Interview with Wilnor Papa, 24 March 2017

²¹⁸ Author Interview with Wilnor Papa 10th April 2017.

²¹⁹ Amnesty International Report 2017.

The report was released in January 2017, and gave a comprehensive account of the drug war's EJKs. The report cited extensive evidence of the state-sponsored nature of the killings, the denial of due process, the killing of those who voluntarily gave themselves up during Oplan Tokhang operations, police officers planting evidence and falsifying reports, police looting crime scenes after carrying out an EJK, and the continued harassment and intimidation of victims' families.²²⁰

The report included harrowing eyewitness accounts from victim family members and highlighted the fact that nearly all killings were carried out in urban poor communities, waged principally against low-level drug pushers and street sellers. The report made extensive recommendations to President Duterte, The Senate, and to the House of Representatives, the PNP and other law enforcement agencies, the Department of Health, the Dangerous Drugs Board and to International Donors. With the blocking of communication and interaction with such agencies since the start of the Duterte Administration, this was an alternative way to get their message across and clarify the position of AI on the drug policies and EJKs.

By portraying the reality of the drug war as predominantly a 'war against the poor' AI hoped and anticipated public empathy and condemnation of the drug policies. In the recommendations, AI clearly state to the Department of Health that they need to 'formulate a public health approach and develop and implement a public campaign to confront and reduce stigma and discrimination against people who use drugs'²²¹ The attempt to move the issue of drugs out of security and back to politics is clear.

Publication of the report further demonstrates AI's 'rearticulation' strategy. AI are attempting to reframe and rearticulate what they assert the drug war actually to be – a war on the poor. This counter-narrative from AI, is a two-pronged approach. First, they hope to rearticulate the drug problem as a public health problem (and not a law and order problem) and secondly, stressing that 'yes, drugs are a problem, but this war is class based' insofar as it does not tackle warlords or people at the top of the drugs trade. AI wanted to assert that picking off low level drug sellers will not bring down the resilient and complex hierarchical structure of the drug trade.

There was an animated reaction to the report, with responses unsurprisingly mixed. The report made good press and the findings were widely reported in print and televised media. AI said that:

'the amount of coverage and interest we received exceeded our expectations. It raised the bar in terms of interest in Amnesty and concerns over Amnesty. We have never heard so much concern over our funding, our political alliances and other questions. There have been lots of discussion over whether Amnesty is a credible source of information'.²²²

Concerns and questions over funding and political alliances came from multiple directions, the public were discussing it on online forums, and AI headquarters received an influx of requests from news stations asking for clarification on the findings, and requesting prime-time televised interviews

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Author Interview with Wilnor Papa, 2 May 2017

with AI staff involved in the production of the report.²²³ The media interest was welcome, and gave AI a platform to voice their counter-narrative of the government drug policies.

Predictably, coupled with the interest, there was a backlash from the report, with Duterte supporters calling it 'fake news' and even calling for the makers of the report to be murdered. The releasing of the report in this environment shows that for AI, Duterte's (and his followers) politics of intimidation will not deter them from 'giving voice' to the poor, and mobilising resistance to the drug war.

It is worth noting Hansen's warning about 'rearticulation' strategies here, that pushing things out of security without adequately resolving or addressing grievances could equate to silencing (further oppressing the poor). For example, if drug use is successfully rearticulated as a public health issue and is dealt with as such, then policies need to tread carefully to subjugate further oppression and silencing. I assert that AI addresses this in the report by including recommendations to the dangerous drugs board that 'compulsory rehabilitation and confinement models run afoul of human rights'.²²⁴ In other words, drug users should still have a voice and a say in their treatment within the sphere of public health.

3) The Efren Morillo Case

Another strategy of AI has been to provide legal funding to the 'Efren Morillo Case'. Although AI constantly observe and advise on how legal processes can adhere to human rights standards, funding a legal case is something that they normally would not do as a campaign organisation.

Efren Morillo featured in the AI report, and his case has become well known. On a day in August of 2016, Morillo and four friends were at a property when anti-drug police arrived. There were many eyewitnesses. The police proceeded to handcuff the five men, and all were shot execution style whilst pleading for their lives and cooperating with police. The police then proceeded to plant 'drug evidence' of silver foil and lighters before looting the place of any worthwhile possessions. Despite sustaining a close-range bullet to the chest, Morillo survived and managed to escape before eventually being taken into a witness protection program by the Commission on Human Rights.²²⁵

AI have designated Morillo an 'individual at risk', which means they elevate his profile and request his safety and security in a public way. AI have been liaising with Centerlaw, a legal HR advocacy group representing the case-filing against the police officers involved, with how they can support and finance the case. Interestingly, the police officers have been reassigned to different areas of Manila – but not suspended.

Since becoming more involved in such things, it was explained to me that AI have recently had to review their security measures and procedures. Members of AI staff have received invitations to shady locations by those who purport to be representing the government and the Duterte Administration, and whom do not make the purpose of the meeting clear, with the suggestion that all will be explained when the meeting takes place. All invitations are now declined, unless the location will be at AI HQ, where there is more thorough security and CCTV.

²²³ Authors Fieldnotes, conversations with AI Staff.

²²⁴ Amnesty International Report 2017

²²⁵ Ibid.

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have examined how Amnesty International is coping and strategizing to challenge the negative discourse on human rights and the extreme securitisation of illegal drugs. By locating the history of AI in civil society and the structure of AI as both a local and international organisation, it was possible to form a contextual understanding that affects the advocacy and limitations of the organisation in the current environment. By analysing AI's recently turbulent relationship with the urban poor, highlighted by mass support for Duterte in poor communities, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of how AI might strategise to reverse that trend.

A number of strategies were discussed, but it is too premature to assess the effectiveness and success of such desecuritisating moves. Furthermore, it is clear that desecuritisating is not one, linear, coherent strategy. There are multiple and concurrent initiatives taking place, and various measures being taken with the overall goal of desecuritisating illegal drugs. Yet, the nature of the extreme securitisation makes evaluation, comprehension, and identification of desecuritisating strategies complex. Due to this, it is difficult to truly know or conclude what actions will lead to desecuritisating – and whether HR NGOs in the Philippines are currently operating in the best way they can, given the pressured political space in which they must operate.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

In this thesis I have attempted to provide an answer to the question of how Human Rights NGOs are attempting to desecuritize a so-called 'War on Drugs' in the Philippines that is happening within the context of shrinking civil society space owing to a government-instigated process of 'extreme securitisation'. In order to answer this question, I have used the analytical frameworks of Balzacq, Croft, and others, to examine the processes of securitisation. Following this, I applied the framework of Hansen, which provided the analytical categories to study the desecuritisation strategies of HR NGO's and Amnesty International. Fundamentally, HR NGO desecuritisation strategies aim to bring the issue of illicit drugs out of 'security mode' and back into the realm of 'normal politics'.

To address my main research question, it was important to address the resultant sub-questions that originated from the core puzzle. In this thesis, I formulated the concept of 'extreme securitisation' as I assert that the Philippines goes *beyond* the normal parameters of securitisation. Not only are extraordinary measures being levelled against a perceived threat (drugs, and those involved in its use or trade), but those attempting to defend their human rights are increasingly becoming the recipients of similar treatment. Through their advocacy, they are regularly accused of undermining security, whilst receiving abuse, denouncement, threat of physical attack, and so on. I have demonstrated through my evidence the *gravity* of the extreme securitisation, with a focused case study analysis of Amnesty International. But I have also shown through the same case study how, through limited though innovative ways, HR advocacy might yet survive in a time of crisis, and within restricted civil society space.

I located the success of the extreme securitisation within a context of fragile democracy and weak state institutions, going back to the time of the Marcos dictatorship. The review of literature on the history of Filipino politics and democracy identifies widespread disappointment, unfulfilled socio-economic aspirations, and growing disillusionment, with the belief in formal channels that aim to bring social-economic reform, and therefore to improve lives. Globally, the sweeping success of populist leaders and the idea of *penal populism* has been discussed at length in this thesis and can best be accounted for with the idea of a restoration of a sense of 'democratic agency' to the marginalised masses.

It is an important and relevant topic of study, and parallels can be drawn in the *regimes of practices* undertaken by other populist leaders such as Donald Trump. For example, *practices* such as the use of lewd and crude language by both Duterte and Trump, and how this appealed to poor communities in Filipino slums, and in the American South respectively. This appeal translated into massive electoral success, and what has been dubbed the 'disruption of elite democracy'.²²⁶ The emphasis on the *local* political history of the Philippines was consistent and important for my analysis, having selected Balzacq's Paris School analytical approach of securitisation and the cruciality of *external realities* to understand Duterte's securitising move.

In order to show that context and a securitising move are co-dependent, this analysis has concluded from the evidence collected that the securitising actor (Duterte) and the audience (the wider public) are co-dependent and mutually constitutive. I assert that *extreme securitisation*, (as including measures *against* HR defenders) would not have been possible without the audience

²²⁶ Timberman, 2016 : 135

participation discussed in previous chapters, such as the trolling and harassment of HR organisations like AI both online and offline. My research has demonstrated the unusual nature of the securitisation, whereby mothers, students, teachers, and so on, have been mobilised to not just accept extraordinary measures by a government, but to actively participate in incitement to extreme violence and aggression towards civil society organisations and human rights defenders.

The research sought to examine how HR NGOs are affected in this new phenomenon of *extreme securitisation* and I tracked and traced changes in operational freedoms and shrinking civil society place. I identified that political and ideological affiliations, along the 'rejectionist' (RJ) / 'reaffirmist' (RA) lines, dictated advocacy opportunities and avenues for government engagement. I concluded from my findings that rejectionist HR NGOs, including AI, are most affected by the loss of public support, the blocking of interagency advocacy by government bodies, the vilification of defenders as criminal-sympathisers, and the discursive negativity attached to human rights as a continuation of colonial, externally-imposed, Western discourses that are not appropriate or relevant in an unsafe and threatened Filipino society.

Applying Hansen's Four Forms of Desecuritisation proved a valuable tool of analysis in chapters 4 and 5; namely, for categorising and analysing the desecuritisation of HR NGOs, and more specifically Amnesty International. I found evidence of the first three forms: 1) *change through stabilisation*, 2) *replacement*, and 3) *rearticulation*, but I could not identify in the evidence any strategies of 4) *silencing*. I have previously explained my field research findings, but I argue that in this particular case study the fourth form was not relevant. In opposition to silencing, one of the primary tasks of HR NGOs is to escalate (or de-escalate) issues back to the political realm, and 'give voice' to the marginalised. Silencing would not serve this purpose or address grievances for either the afflicted drug user, or for a fearful and threatened society.

It is too early to assess the success or failures of desecuritisng moves made by HR NGOs in the Philippines. Alas, the drug war is just one year running at the time of writing. The evidence would seem to indicate that HR NGOs in the Philippines are 'in crisis': the new phenomena of extreme securitisation has produced a social environment that makes their position precarious at best, and untenable at worst. The concept of 'desecuritisation' can help both academics and activists to make sense of such extreme circumstances, and how to proceed forward. Unfortunately, desecuritisation has not been paid due attention in academic, theoretical or empirical study and as such, there is still very little we know about what particular actions (methods and strategies) can bring about a successful desecuritisation - and move out of 'security mode', particularly from within an environment of *extreme securitisation*.

I have contributed to the field of securitisation, with my case study analysis of the Philippines, and have coined the concept of *extreme securitisation*. I assert that the field of security studies could further investigate the processes and practices that allow for such an occurrence, with a sharper focus on audience agency and actions that extend extraordinary measures beyond the referent threat. For the field of desecuritisation, as discussed, the theoretical literature is limited, and empirical study of the concept even more so. I have applied Hansen's framework to the case of the Philippines to conduct a desecuritisation empirical study. I had hoped to identify some clear strategies of HR NGOs that could offer advocacy guidelines leading to desecuritisation that could be applicable to NGOs more widely. However, due to the unique nature of the *extreme securitisation* in the Philippines, and the fact that it is too soon to assess the outcomes of such strategies in a one-year old 'war on drugs', this was not

possible. Instead, I identified creative strategies by which HR NGOs can operate and survive in the Philippines, at this difficult time in their history. Therefore, future research could investigate and try to identify successful methods that may bring about desecuritisation, as presently it is unclear.

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