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An Examination of Rodrigo Duterte's Rhetoric on
the War on Drugs in the Philippines: The
Apocalyptic Narration

Aishath Rumana Mahir
3508226
Utrecht University
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Abstract

Rodrigo Duterte introduced a harsh anti-drug campaign based on hunting down drug users and distributors to eliminate the persistent drug problem in the Philippines. The campaign resorted to the extrajudicial killings of drug users and distributors in the country instead of a legal route to justice. The justification was that the targets were extremely dangerous to the survival of the country. Thus, this research will explore how Duterte securitized drug users and distributors and legitimized the extrajudicial killings under the War on Drugs in the Philippines. It examines Duterte's speeches from 2016 and 2017 to understand how Duterte framed the situation through narratives to legitimize the EJK. This research adopts the Securitization Framework to discuss the threat construction and legitimization process. Concurrently, it uses the concept of apocalyptic narration by Philip Smith to examine the narrative at play. This research examines: the polarization of 'good and evil' and the exaggeration of the extent of the threat to construct an existential threat; and the presentation of Duterte himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' introducing a 'miraculous' solution to the drug problem. I argue that these narratives create an apocalyptic narration of events, thereby securitizing the drug users and distributors and legitimizing the extrajudicial killings. This research will explore the societal and cultural contextual elements constructing the narratives in Duterte's discourses to induce fear and anxiety and inspire hope, thereby legitimizing the extrajudicial killings.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

EJKs

Extrajudicial Killings

PNP

Philippine National Police

DDS

Davao Death Squad

EDSA

Epifanio de los Santos Avenue

An Examination of Rodrigo Duterte's Rhetoric on the War on Drugs in the Philippines: The Apocalyptic Narration

1 Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Rodrigo Duterte won the 2015 presidential elections on a 39 percent victory with the promise of rapid change and accessible government for the Filipino people¹. His administration was consumed by his 'unorthodox' (to the Philippines) political moves and focus on drug/crime problems in the country.

The Philippines persistently struggled with drug/crimes for decades. There was a rise in the number of drug traffickers, dealers, and users resulting in the need for a resolution². The rampant drug crimes are part of the cycle of poverty in the country³. Yet, it was not an imminent threat to the survival of the country until the 2015 elections. The anti-drug campaigns in the past introduced rehabilitation initiatives in addition to anti-poverty programmes targeting the urban poor to give them another path⁴. These strategies failed due to the corrupt administrations prior to Duterte's rise⁵.

Duterte embarked on an extreme anti-drug campaign called "Oplan Double Barrel"/ "Operation Double Barrel", targeting the suspected drug distributors and users nationwide⁶. The goal of the campaign was to eradicate drug crimes in six months. The

¹ Clarissa David, Atun J. M, Cossid R, and Soranio C. 'Building a Dataset of Publicly Available Information on Killings Associated with the Antidrug Campaign'. *The Drug Archive*, 2018. Building a dataset of publicly available information on killings associated with the antidrug campaign.

² Mark R. Thompson 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 52, no. 3 (27 May 2022): 403–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2021.1910859>; Bama Putra and Darwis. 'The Paradoxical Security Implications of Duterte's War on Drugs: Emergence of a Domestic Security Dilemma'. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies* 4, no. 3 (27 June 2022): 01–07. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jhsss.2022.4.3.1>.

³ Chris, McCall. 'Philippines President Continues His Brutal War on Drugs'. *The Lancet* 389, no. 10064 (January 2017): 21–22. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)32598-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)32598-3).

⁴ Wataru, Kuraka.. 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'. *Philippine Sociological Review* 65 (2017): 49–75. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45014309>.

⁵ Ramon C. Casiple. 'The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon'. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 38, no. 2 (2016): 179–84.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/70/article/628453/pdf>; Ronald A. Pernia. 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 19, no. 3 (2019): 56–71. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335927725>.

⁶ Human Rights Watch. "'License to Kill' Philippine Police Killings in Duterte's 'War on Drugs'", 2 March 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/02/license-kill/philippine-police-killings-dutertes-war-drugs#6467>; David et al., "'Building a Dataset of Publicly Available Information on Killings Associated with the Antidrug Campaign'

campaign built on “Change is Coming”⁷ slogans and coarse and violent rhetoric seemed to have struck a chord with the Filipino population, thereby attaining support. This phenomenon was debated and investigated by scholars as many observers were left in uproar over the possibility of deteriorating democratic and human rights norms in the country.

Following this transitional moment in Philippine politics, Duterte kept his promise to combat drugs in the country. The number of extrajudicial executions skyrocketed from the first day of presidency⁸. The Philippine National Police (PNP) who oversaw the anti-drug campaign estimated around 7025 killed- by the hands of police officers and vigilantes⁹- between July 1, 2016, and July 1, 2017 (average 34 per day)¹⁰. This number was debated as calculating the exact number of killings became a challenge. The International Criminal Court reports 12,000-30,000 victims between 2016-2019¹¹.

Despite government statements that all the people who were killed were criminals, Human Rights Watch investigations show many victims belonged to the urban poor¹². Many were suspected drug users but not dealers. The bodies were found with spent ammunition, guns, and drug packets next to them, which numerous investigations found were planted by the police; supporting their claim that the use of force was justified¹³.

The rampant violence in the country created an environment of fear invigorated by Duterte’s violent rhetoric¹⁴. The drug users and distributors were constructed as dangerous, and threatening the survival of the country, thereby legitimizing the extrajudicial killings (EJKs) for security¹⁵. Followed by repetition of statements such as “I

⁷ Casiple, ‘The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon’.

⁸ David et al., “Building a Dataset of Publicly Available Information on Killings Associated with the Antidrug Campaign’

⁹ Numerous reports show that un-identified armed persons took part in the killings (Amnesty International, 2017; Kishi and Buenaventura, 2021; David et al., 2018). The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project report shows that the vigilantes were responsible for 48% of civilian targets in 2016; Amnesty International found that 4,146 people were killed by vigilante killers between 1st of July and 9th January 2017 (Amnesty International, 2017).

¹⁰ Amnesty International. ‘Philippines: “If You Are Poor, You Are Killed”: Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines’ “War on Drugs”, 31 January 2017.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa35/5517/2017/en/>.

¹¹ The Economist. ‘How Many People Have Been Killed in Rodrigo Duterte’s War on Drugs?’ *The Economist*, 22 November 2021. <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/11/22/how-many-people-have-been-killed-in-rodrigo-dutertes-war-on-drugs>.

¹² Human Rights Watch. “License to Kill” Philippine Police Killings in Duterte’s “War on Drugs”

¹³ Human Rights Watch. “License to Kill” Philippine Police Killings in Duterte’s “War on Drugs”

¹⁴ Putra and Darwis. ‘The Paradoxical Security Implications of Duterte’s War on Drugs: Emergence of a Domestic Security Dilemma’

¹⁵ Thompson, ‘Duterte’s Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the “Death of Development” in the Philippines’

will kill you..." and "do not fuck with my country with drugs. I will destroy you"¹⁶, illustrating his commanding leadership amidst the chaos.

This thesis is built on the securitization framework to address the threat construction and legitimization of the EJK through existential security narratives.

The main research question for this thesis is: How did Rodrigo Duterte securitize the drug users and distributors thereby legitimizing the extrajudicial killings under the War on Drugs in the Philippines?

Sub questions of this thesis that will guide the chapters:

1. How did Rodrigo Duterte present drug users and distributors as threats to the population and the survival of the country?
2. How did Rodrigo Duterte present himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader', and how did it contribute to the legitimization of EJK?

Philip Smith introduces the idea that in contemporary politics, war, or any matter where force is used, is measured under the "universalistic yardstick themes of justice, freedom, and democracy"¹⁷. States must take extensive measures to legitimize their actions within public discourses and claims where human life is at cost¹⁸. Smith states that certain forms of narratives are introduced to frame the situation as acceptable to the people to legitimize the use of force and lost lives¹⁹. By legitimization, this thesis refers to the justification through logic or narratives to establish a dominant perception of the issue at hand²⁰.

Therefore, the goal of this research is to understand how Duterte framed the situation through narratives specific to the Philippines to legitimize the use of extreme security measures, EJK. This research will adopt Smith's version of 'apocalyptic genre of narration' where a threat is so extreme that it attacks the survival of the country thereby evoking an apocalyptic nature to it. Thus, requiring a 'miraculous' approach to save the country, which a hero will present.

¹⁶ Rodrigo, Duterte. "29th Annual National Convention of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines (Speech) 4/6/2017", RTVMalacanang, April 6th, 2017, YouTube Video, 1:18:51.

¹⁷ Philip, Smith. *'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'* (London: The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 2005), 1-60.

¹⁸ Smith, *'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'*

¹⁹ Smith, *'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'*

²⁰ Julie, Wilhelmen. 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory'. *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 2 (2017): 166–83. <https://www-jstor-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/stable/48512937>.

This research acknowledges that the anti-drug campaign is a window-dressing for the extreme policy, and that not all those killed are drug users and distributors; most are just suspected of the crime. However, this thesis is based on the idea that regardless of the crime the people may or may not have committed, EJK is not an acceptable punishment.

Previous research lacks exploration on the role of narratives at play in the anti-drug campaign and the EJK method. The researches incorporating securitization framework have examined the audience's reaction to the policy, assessing their acceptance and support for Duterte; or the environmental factors that allowed the policy to function in the society. For instance, Dan Jerome Barrera's research on the "Drug War Stories" in the Philippines examined the nature of narratives in Duterte's speeches to argue that an apocalyptic story was told, casting Duterte and his followers under a "hypnotic spell"²¹. He focused on understanding the narratives introduced through dialogical narrative analysis to understand the effects of the narratives.

This research builds on Barrera's argument that the construction of an 'existential threat' introduced an apocalyptic narrative, to show how the apocalyptic narration is presented²². I aim to assess how the apocalyptic narration was delivered and through which frames.

Therefore, it is relevant because I examine how the EJKs were presented as a justifiable measure to combat the drug problem in the country. An overwhelming number of lives were lost to this 'war' and was deemed the cost for 'peace' and safety of the country and rest of the population. The narratives presented under this discourse were constructed from the Philippine cultural and societal contexts, rooting down from historical events. Thus, understanding how such a measure can be presented as acceptable contributes to the research of the Philippines as a society and the political system under Duterte.

This research will analyse Rodrigo Duterte's speeches during the first two years of his presidency (July 1st, 2016-December 31st, 2017), by using an approach informed by the critical discourse analysis method (CDA), to explain how the EJK was legitimized through Duterte's rhetoric. To understand how this took place, narratives from the securitization framework and apocalyptic narration will be combined. These narratives will be the threat

²¹ Dan Jerome, Barrera. 'Doing Dialogical Narrative Analysis: Implications for Narrative Criminology'. In *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*, edited by Jennifer Fleetwood, Lois Presser, Sveinung Sandberg, and Thomas Ugelvik, 367–88. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019; Dan Jerome, Barrera. 'Drug War Stories and the Philippine President'. *Asian Criminology* 12 (2017), 1.

²² Barrera, 'Doing Dialogical Narrative Analysis: Implications for Narrative Criminology'

construction narratives such as polarization of the 'good' and 'evil' and the exaggeration of the insecurity of the country; and the narratives presenting Duterte as a hero in this story, 'heroic interventions'.

The period of July 1st, 2016-December 31st, 2017 was best to observe the themes in the speeches: from the beginning of the presidency; to the heavy criticism and international backlash; and to denials on first-hand involvement of giving orders to the PNP. The peak of violence took place during these two years, as there was a goal to crackdown on alleged drug users and distributors to meet the six-month deadline Duterte promised during the elections. Duterte was publicly denying his role in instigating the killings, and the justifications of the use of force ranged from 'if necessary' to 'they are better off dead'.

In addition, Duterte's speeches ranged from dehumanizing language such as use of animal imagery, dismissive terms and phrases, and implication of mental stability in association to drug users and distributors. On occasion he referred to 'God's will' in affirming his position as the President and continued crime busting to gain religious legitimacy from the Christian's in the Philippines. As there were some Christian leaders who believed that Duterte was appointed by God to cleanse the society of social ills²³. Yet, Duterte's understanding of God was that of who supported him and not of the 'hypocritical' Catholic Church²⁴.

Duterte's rhetoric resembles the discourses of the Catholic Church on drugs from the 1970's to 2016, which is the hypocrisy he referred to²⁵. The Catholic Church was involved in the mission to eradicate drugs as they were involved in influencing controversial legislative measures²⁶. The discourses over the decades emphasized: destruction of the youth, attack on human dignity, and social and moral decay²⁷. Duterte's discourses share a similarity to these trends. Therefore, elements from these contexts will be addressed in the analysis.

²³ Paterno R. Esmaguell II. 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'. *Rappler*, 28 June 2019. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/234115-why-filipinos-believe-duterte-appointed-by-god/>; Jayeel Cornelio and Erron Medina. 'Christianity and Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines'. *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 20, no. 2 (3 April 2019): 151–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2019.1617135>.

²⁴ Esmaguell II. 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'.
²⁵ Jayeel Cornelio and Gideon Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'. *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (24 June 2020): 327–41. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0112>.

²⁶ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

²⁷ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

I argue that Rodrigo Duterte securitized the drug users and distributors through apocalyptic narratives, thereby legitimizing the EJKs. Duterte's discourses constructed a threat by polarizing the drug users and distributors through characterizations of 'good' and 'evil' rooting down to their morals and behaviours. Concurrently, exaggerating the drug problem as a threat to the survival of the country and population. I argue that Duterte presented himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' amid the existential threat narrative to legitimize his position and policies. I argue that Duterte's discourses are aimed to create an environment led by a cycle of fear, anxiety, and hope to establish legitimacy. The fear and anxiety justify the desperation for a 'miraculous' security measure, and the hope feeds this desperation.

Furthermore, this thesis will be divided into two main analysis chapters, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. This introduction will include the: the literature review, where the past works investigating the EJK in the Philippines will be discussed and gaps in literature identified; followed by the theoretical framework section explaining the functions of the securitization framework; then the analytical concepts will be mapped out, which will guide this research; the approach and methodology; limitations to the research; and finally the chapter outline mapping out the whole thesis.

1.2 Literature Review

The phenomenon of Duterte's success despite his violent policies, coarse and unfiltered rhetoric, and exponential rise of EJKs are investigated by scholars. Scholars from various specializations have studied the political environment and drug/crime problems throughout history to assess the factors that sustained Duterte's support, making it a central theme to their research. This literature review will highlight research by sociologist, political scientists, criminology scholars, and ethnographers, to display the directions past research took to explain how and why Duterte managed to gain and sustain support.

After the end of the Marcos dictatorship²⁸ the result of the People Power Revolution known as EDSA Revolution²⁹ came into power, establishing a democratic system in the Philippines³⁰. Despite the 'People Power' sentiments it created a fatally flawed system³¹.

²⁸ Ferdinand Marcos was the President of the Philippines from 1966-1986. Between 1972-1983 Marcos imposed martial law and continued to lead as a dictator until deposed in 1986. Refer to Newsom (in Bresnan, 1986), for more on the Marcos dictatorship and the period after the presidency for further context. Further reading: John Bresnan. *'Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era and Beyond'*. Guildford, Surrey: Princeton University Press, 1986.

²⁹ EDSA stands for the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the highway where the demonstrations took place on February 1986.

³⁰ Amnesty International. 'EDSA People Power Revolution'. 22 July 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org.ph/2022/07/protestph-edsa-revolution/>.

³¹ Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'

Scholars have stated that the post-Marcos administrations were dominated by elites, making the government less accessible to the other classes³². The elite monopoly³³ destroyed the EDSA system and paved the way for Duterte as they were unable to uphold their promise and redistribute wealth and empower the other classes³⁴. Thus, exacerbating the effects of "mass poverty, inequality, and corruption"³⁵.

Political science scholars state that the success of Duterte's populist politics is determined to reflect the country's authoritarian culture and illiberal values³⁶. Ronald Pernia, political scientist, claims that Duterte's populist campaign depicts "disregard for liberal political institutions, norms, and practices like human rights"³⁷. Thus, highlighting the deteriorating democracy.

However, Ramon Casiple reshapes this view and states that Duterte's victory is a sign that the Filipino politics has shifted "towards a more inclusive democracy"³⁸. He claims that the 'transitional president' has solved conflicts and cracked down on corruption³⁹.

Walden Bello, a sociology professor, and former congressman of the Philippines, argues that Duterte's rise to power brought Fascism with it⁴⁰. His leadership style conveys that of a fascist leader⁴¹. Yet, he is different from the Fascist leaders of the past such as Hitler or Mussolini who for instance had an emotional connection to the concept of 'nation'⁴². Duterte comes in with a mix of power, commanding personality, and the charm of a

³² Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'; Casiple, 'The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon'; Nicole Curato. 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 35, no. 3 (1 December 2016): 91–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341603500305>.

³³ Liberal elites- elites from the traditional political families and landlord class who dominated the legislative branches post-Marcos. These were the elites who opposed Marcos. Elites who aim to maintain a feudal nature to Philippine society. More information can be found on: A. B Villanueva. 'Post-Marcos: The State of Philippine Politics and Democracy during the Aquino Regime, 1986–92'. *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 14, no.2 (1992) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25798149>.

³⁴ Walden Bello. 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'. *Transnational Institute*, 19 January 2017. <https://www.tni.org/en/article/rodrigo-duterte-a-fascist-original>.

³⁵ Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'

³⁶ Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'; Shiela Royo 'Perceived Threat of Crime, Authoritarianism, and the Rise of a Populist President in the Philippines'. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 43, no. 3 (3 July 2019): 207–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2018.1558084>.

³⁷ Maxwell, 'Perceived Threat of Crime, Authoritarianism, and the Rise of a Populist President in the Philippines'.

³⁸ Casiple, 'The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon'

³⁹ Casiple, 'The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon'

⁴⁰ Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'

⁴¹ Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'

⁴² Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'

gangster, mesmerizing the supporters and promising to end what they consider to be 'national chaos'⁴³.

Most scholars found the persistent poverty and ineffective criminal justice as steppingstones in the campaign to gain more support⁴⁴. Muhammad Anugrah Utama, political scientist, highlights how Duterte utilized the failed anti-poverty schemes and criminal justice system in his campaign to address the urban poor⁴⁵. Chris McCall investigated the reasons for the sustained drug/crime problem in the country⁴⁶. McCall states that "poverty is synonymous with the Philippines", which means that there are less jobs to support the people, driving them to the life of drugs/crime⁴⁷. Johnson and Fernquest argue that the "ineffective, inefficient, and corrupt" criminal justice system caused the drug crime problem to persist, leading to EJKs as a quick solution⁴⁸.

Sol Iglesias, writer, and political scientist, adds that Duterte's rise and acceptance of EJK is caused by democratic backslide in the country determining further failings of liberal values⁴⁹. Iglesias identified the cause for the increase and decrease of violence in the Philippines during Duterte's presidency to identify the strategy⁵⁰. Iglesias found a similarity between the logic of War on Drugs and War on Terror to induce support and mobilize dissent⁵¹.

Concurrently, Shiela R. Maxwell, Criminal Justice professor, explores the general Filipino population's understanding of the drug/crime problem to assess what is fueling support for Duterte⁵². Maxwell finds that fear is used to manipulate and exploit the citizens. If a threat is perceived as too extreme it can create desperation for results and even support for authoritarian solutions. This is because authoritarian solutions promise rapid change at any cost.

⁴³ Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'

⁴⁴ Muhammad Anugrah Utama. 'Securitization in the Philippines' Drug War: Disclosing the Power-Relations between Duterte, Filipino Middle Class, and the Urban Poor'. *Indonesian Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 1 (26 January 2021): 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.32787/ijir.v5i1.146>.

⁴⁵ Utama, 'Securitization in the Philippines' Drug War: Disclosing the Power-Relations between Duterte, Filipino Middle Class, and the Urban Poor'

⁴⁶ McCall, 'Philippines President Continues His Brutal War on Drugs'.

⁴⁷ McCall, 'Philippines President Continues His Brutal War on Drugs'.

⁴⁸ David T. Johnson and Jon Fernquest. 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'. *Asian Journal of Law and Society* 5, no. 2 (2 November 2018): 373. <https://doi.org/10.1017/als.2018.12>.

⁴⁹ Sol Iglesias. 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'. *Asian Politics & Policy* 15, no. 2 (3 April 2023): 164–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12689>.

⁵⁰ Iglesias, 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'.

⁵¹ Iglesias, 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'.

⁵² Maxwell, 'Perceived Threat of Crime, Authoritarianism, and the Rise of a Populist President in the Philippines'.

Sociologist, Nicole Curato's research shows that Duterte relied on politics of fear and politics of hope to build a cycle of "constant negotiation" with the Filipino people⁵³. It works by building up their anxiety on the already existing issues of the drug problems, and then inspiring hope within the people⁵⁴. Curato found that the drug/crime problem was seen as a national problem by the people despite lack of drug/crime locally. Such politics are used to manipulate the people and exploit them to gain support⁵⁵. Curato adds that this is a characteristic of penal populism.

Yet, Putra and Darwis found that throughout the administration support for Duterte plunged due to the rise of EJKs in the country⁵⁶. The study shows that the increased fear in the country led to a security dilemma where the unpredictability and amount of people killed created a cycle of fear, causing people to feel insecure and withdraw support for Duterte⁵⁷.

Mark R. Thompson, expert on Southeast Asian politics found that fear was utilized by Duterte as he demonstrated the criminalized 'others' as threats to legitimize the mass killings⁵⁸. Thompson argues that these strategies of securitization such as discrediting the liberal reformist narrative of good governance and weakening the state's key strategic groups such as civil society, are done through illiberal populist politics of fear⁵⁹.

Concurrently, ethnographer Wataru Kusaka, states that Duterte exudes the 'social bandit morality' which stems from populist ideals⁶⁰. He states that it is derived from the folk heroes who introduce extra-legal solutions to political problems, with a charismatic personality. Charismatic leadership is a recurring theme in populist understanding as a persona which contributes to gaining support⁶¹. Kusaka examines morality politics to argue that a certain morality where the concept of 'moral citizenry' was enforced on the people

⁵³ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power', 1.

⁵⁴ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'

⁵⁵ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'

⁵⁶ Putra and Darwis. 'The Paradoxical Security Implications of Duterte's War on Drugs: Emergence of a Domestic Security Dilemma'

⁵⁷ Putra and Darwis. 'The Paradoxical Security Implications of Duterte's War on Drugs: Emergence of a Domestic Security Dilemma'

⁵⁸ Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

⁵⁹ Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

⁶⁰ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

⁶¹ Paul D. Kenny and Ronald Holmes. 'A NEW PENAL POPULISM? RODRIGO DUTERTE, PUBLIC OPINION, AND THE WAR ON DRUGS IN THE PHILIPPINES'. *Journal of East Asian Studies* 20, no. 2 (10 July 2020): 187–205. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jea.2020.8>.

casting an idea of deserving to be saved from the dangers. Thus, leading to the acceptance of the extreme measures and Duterte himself⁶².

Many scholars identified that the history of violent measures in situations of instability normalized the idea of EJK to combat the 'threat'⁶³. For instance, the country is still healing from the bloody Marcos era, and Duterte's time as Mayor of Davao brings out a familiarity⁶⁴. Iglesias identified the similar principles adopted from the Davao period where Duterte initiated the Davao Death Squad (DDS) to 'rid the town of criminals'⁶⁵. He replicated the same combination of state terror and political success which allowed him to dominate Davao City politics for over 20 years⁶⁶.

Most citizens of Davao found that Duterte's style of governance brought safety and calm to the city and resolved strife⁶⁷. Millions of Filipinos are envious of Davao's transformation as they believe that DDS helped deter crime and drug use⁶⁸. Johnson and Fernquest identify the tales of Davao to be a factor that built support for Duterte⁶⁹. Thus, violence is not new to the Philippines, and it is often seen as a norm.

On the other hand, Barrera, criminology professor, states that studying the crisis performance of Duterte simply based on the 'dangerous other' narrative limits the research⁷⁰. Barrera claims it disregards the cultural moment and does not show the cultural structures influencing human actions⁷¹. He claims that Duterte is telling an apocalyptic story where he is also under his own "hypnotic spell"⁷². He dives into the power of narratives to explain the role culture on human actions. He finds that these cultural and historical aspects such as those discussed above- folk tales, poverty, failing criminal justice system, history of violence- forms these narratives and influences the people and Duterte himself.

The past works examined here focus on the perception of the Filipino people to assess how they understood the anti-drug campaign, leading to their support. The researches presented the specific factors that allowed Duterte to utilize to gain support such as the

⁶² Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

⁶³ Iglesias, 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'; Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'.

⁶⁴ Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'.

⁶⁵ Iglesias, 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'

⁶⁶ Iglesias, 'Explaining the Pattern of "War on Drugs" Violence in the Philippines under Duterte'

⁶⁷ Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'.

⁶⁸ Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'.

⁶⁹ Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines'.

⁷⁰ Barrera, 'Drug War Stories and the Philippine President '

⁷¹ Barrera, Drug War Stories and the Philippine President '

⁷² Barrera, Drug War Stories and the Philippine President '

deteriorating democracy, rise of populism, rise of authoritarianism, and the increased drug crimes and poverty. These factors were then theorized by scholars such as Curato and Iglesias who claim that were used by Duterte to create terror, fear and hope in the society which allowed him to rise with solutions.

This thesis investigates how Duterte presented these narratives through his speeches based on the context of the Philippines. It does not focus on the response of the audience. This thesis is informed by the concept of fear and hope from the research presented above, to argue that Duterte aimed to create fear, anxiety, and hope to sustain support and legitimize EJK. It will use the apocalyptic narration concept by Smith⁷³ to show how Duterte's speeches form an apocalyptic narration of the anti-drug campaign in the Philippines. Therefore, I adopt certain theorizations and concepts from sociology and political science scholars.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This thesis is built on the theorizations of Securitization Framework to explain the threat construction and use of extreme security measures as a result. Securitization Framework is a vast theory and has, in very broad terms, two main schools of thought: Paris School and the Copenhagen School. This research adopts theorizations from both the schools as it follows Juha Vuori and Cai Wilkinson's approaches in expanding the theory to understand the securitization process better⁷⁴. Thierry Balzacq of the Paris School differentiates the two variations based on sociological and philosophical aspects⁷⁵. The Paris School follows a more sociological approach and the Copenhagen School, a philosophical approach.

In order to explain the threat construction and use of extreme force, I find that the past work from the sociological and philosophical approach have value, which will be explored in this section.

Definitions

⁷³ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

⁷⁴ Juha A. vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'. *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (1 March 2008): 65–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066107087767>; Juha A. vuori. 'Religion Bites: Falungong, Securitization/ Desecuritization in the People's Republic of China'. In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq, 1st ed., 186–211. London: Routledge, 2010; Cai Wilkinson. 'The Limits of Spoken Words: From Meta-Narratives to Experiences of Security'. In *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, edited by Thierry Balzacq. London: Routledge, 2010.

⁷⁵Thierry, Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2010.

Copenhagen School defines security as a concept about 'survival' based on traditional military contexts⁷⁶. Buzan, Wæver and Wilde define securitization as the presentation of an issue as an existential threat to the designated referent object (audience), and extending the security-survival logic to politics, economics, and environmental sciences⁷⁷. Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde state that "security is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game" thus framing the issue as a "special kind of politics or above politics"⁷⁸. Hence claiming that securitization is an extreme version of politicizing issues.

Balzacq defines securitization as a collection of practices that are "contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor" aiming to persuade an audience to resonate with practices through emotions about the "critical vulnerability of a referent object" thereby justifying the securitizing actor's reasons for the choices and actions⁷⁹. This is achieved through constructing the referent subject as a threat, thus increasing the immediacy of the action plan⁸⁰. Balzacq states that the development of security problems can better be studied by expanding what the Copenhagen School has theorized⁸¹. The schools differentiate their understandings based on how the analysis is done, giving context to what the schools consider as a securitizing act, the role of the referent object, the audience, and the context.

The Speech Act

The "social magic" of language creating a threat with the mere utterance of 'security' is central to the Copenhagen School⁸². The philosophical theorizations stress the power of language and speech act in constructing a threat by constructing reality⁸³. Sociological theorizations describe securitization as a process where practices, contexts, and power relations can characterize how a threat can be constructed as stated above⁸⁴.

⁷⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde. *'Security: A New Framework for Analysis'*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1998.

⁷⁷ Buzan, Wæver, and Wilde in Ralf Emmers. 'Securitization'. In *Contemporary Security Studies*, 109–25. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁷⁸ Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *'Security: A New Framework for Analysis'*, 23.

⁷⁹ Balzacq, Thierry. *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*, 3.

⁸⁰ Thierry Balzacq and Stefano Guzzini. 'Introduction: "What Kind of Theory – If Any – Is Securitization?"' *International Relations* 29 (2015). <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0047117814526606a>.

⁸¹ Balzacq, *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*

⁸² Emmers, 'Securitization'.

⁸³ Balzacq, Thierry. *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*

⁸⁴ Balzacq, Thierry. *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*

This refers to the connections between the different actors based on context, behaviour, and power relations.

Vuori stresses the importance of combining the linguistic and socio-political analysis to “understand the performative securitization in real situations and contexts”⁸⁵. For instance, the position of the securitizing actor and how the speech is disseminated plays a role in how it is perceived; or the culture-independent language which refers to phrases and such specific to that culture, which changes the way the securitization process works.

Discourses makes the social construction of existential threat possible. Discourses allow for the narratives to be disseminated into the desired environment of securitization. This thesis analyses Duterte’s speeches (the speech act) to examine the narratives at play. The speech act is analysed to understand how each actor was characterized and the message that was conveyed as a result. It takes into consideration the power relations and the context.

Legitimization

Legitimization is the process where some representations of reality become the dominant perception of a problem or subject which distinguishes the policies or course of action people take⁸⁶. Patrick Jackson defines legitimization as a process that draws and redefines boundaries “ruling some courses of action as acceptable and others unacceptable”⁸⁷. Legitimization process defines the acceptable action, shaping how it is perceived, “making it possible for certain policies to be enacted”⁸⁸.

Within the securitization theory, this is a result of the securitization that the actor was hoping to achieve. Among other goals of securitization such as control. This research focuses on how the EJK was legitimized by presenting the situation as urgent and dangerous.

The Audience

The role of the audience is widely debated within the securitization theory as the Copenhagen school claims that the audience must accept the securitizing act for the securitization to be successful. Yet, Balzacq argues that instead of assessing whether it

⁸⁵ Vuori ‘Religion Bites: Falungong, Securitization/ Desecuritization in the People’s Republic of China’, 187.

⁸⁶ Wilhelmsen, ‘How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory’.

⁸⁷ Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. ‘*Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West.*’ Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 2006, 16.

⁸⁸ Jackson, . ‘*Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West*’, 16.

was successful or not, we should examine how the message resonated with the audience⁸⁹. Hence, it gives more agency to the audience. Balzacq states that one should study other factors around the securitizing act such as the timing, how it was curated and planned out by the securitizing actor⁹⁰.

Vuori states that the audience are evaluators of the political legitimacy of the actions thus the aim here is to justify the actions that would otherwise be judged illegitimate by the evaluators⁹¹. Therefore, there is room for them to reject the legitimacy, but the securitizing efforts remain. This stresses the role of the audience because the position of the actors is an important factor in securitization process.

Balzacq states that is where the context comes into play as the position of the audience based on how much power they have in comparison to the securitizing actor influences their reaction to the securitizing act⁹². In addition, Jeff Husymans claims that this process is simultaneous and mutually constitutive between the component parts- securitizing actor, threat narrative, and the audience⁹³.

I will assess how the audience is characterised during the securitization process to assess the polarizing effects between the audience and the 'threat', and the portrayal of the securitizing actor-Duterte. This is crucial for this research as the three groups are simultaneously influencing each other.

The Context

The setting of the securitization process is another factor that is relevant for the analysis. Balzacq states that to win the audience, the historical context specific to the environment or society should be a crucial factor⁹⁴. The setting can reflect the "constitution of social and political communities" which can guarantee the success in one community but may not be as effective in a different setting with the same issues⁹⁵.

⁸⁹ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

⁹⁰ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve';Thierry Balzacq 'The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context'. *Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 4 (2005): 171–201.

⁹¹ Vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'

⁹² Balzacq,'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

⁹³ Jeff Husymans. 'Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, on the Creative Development of Security Agenda in Europe '. *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 4 (1998): 479–505.

⁹⁴ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

⁹⁵ Salter, 2008 in Wilkinson 'The Limits of Spoken Words: From Meta-Narratives to Experiences of Security'

Vuori's research focuses on expanding the theory to fit into social and cultural contexts⁹⁶. Wilkinson argues that securitization theory has followed a Westphalian route and ignoring the local interpretations and understandings limits it to this straitjacket⁹⁷. Speech acts need to be analysed deeper based on the unique atmosphere of the empirical case. As the 'grammar' or the necessary culture-dependent language within different cultures can influence the study of securitization processes⁹⁸. The actions and speeches have intersubjective codes specific to the culture and society it takes place in⁹⁹. This is referring to innuendos and specific phrases or terms that have more meaning to the people who understand it. Even utterances can have more meaning for those who can interpret their meaning based on mutual recognition of the content¹⁰⁰.

This research aims to adopt this version of the theory as the Philippines does not fit into the 'straitjacket'¹⁰¹ theorizations due to it being a hybrid system, a fledgling democracy. In doing so, it explores the cultural and societal elements in the narratives used to frame the situation. Such as: the discourses of the Catholic Church from 1970s-2016 and the 'social bandit' persona. These contextual elements inform the apocalyptic narrative Duterte presented to legitimize the EJK.

1.4 Analytical Concepts

This research aims to understand how Duterte's rhetoric forms apocalyptic narratives that legitimize EJK. I will analyse the discourses with consideration to the Filipino context to assess how it forms these narratives. As narratives are not pure fiction or truth but an amalgamation of it, and it is a roadmap to understanding the scenario it defines¹⁰² Narratives draw from historical, cultural, and societal contexts¹⁰³.

⁹⁶ Vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'

⁹⁷ Wilkinson 'The Limits of Spoken Words: From Meta-Narratives to Experiences of Security'

⁹⁸ Stritzel, 2007 in Vuori 'Religion Bites: Falungong, Securitization/ Desecuritization in the People's Republic of China'

⁹⁹ Wilhelmsen 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory'

¹⁰⁰ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

¹⁰¹ Vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'

¹⁰² Josefin Graef, Raquel da Silva, and Nicolas Lemay-Hebert. 'Narrative, Political Violence, and Social Change'. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 43, no. 6 (2020): 431–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2018.1452701>.

¹⁰³ Molly Patterson and Kristen Renwick Monroe. 'Narrative in Political Science'. *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no.315–32 (1998) <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.315>; Jessica Senehi. "Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process." *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2002.1026>.

Smith defines narratives as stories we construct and exchange to make sense of the world¹⁰⁴. Smith states:

*"Narratives allocate casual responsibility for action, define actors, and give them motivation, indicate the trajectory of past episodes and predict consequences of future choices, suggest courses of action, confer and withdraw legitimacy, and provide social approval by aligning events with normative cultural codes"*¹⁰⁵.

As discussed previously, Smith states that we have viewed war and violent interventions as a norm, as over time the idea that human life can be sacrificed for a greater good or survival of the state was introduced by states. However, today war or any form violent intervention are under the microscope of "universalistic yardstick themes of justice, freedom, and democracy"¹⁰⁶. Smith adds that states take extensive measures to legitimize their actions within public discourses and claims¹⁰⁷. This justification process involves using cultural and social contexts to build narratives to present to the people to frame the situation. Smith states that there are genres within narratives that frame the way current affairs are perceived and to understand them the way the state intends them to¹⁰⁸. As narratives are lenses to view the world.

Among the genres, Smith introduced the apocalyptic genre of narratives, apocalyptic narration¹⁰⁹. A commonly used narration to legitimize wars by justifying the use of violence or measures that would otherwise be too extreme.

I use the apocalyptic narration as a concept to explain how Duterte constructed the threat and how the 'hero' and 'strong leader' was introduced to the Filipino population. I aim to show that the narratives presented in Duterte's speeches form an apocalyptic narration, thereby legitimizing the EJK- due to how the situation is framed.

1.4.1 Apocalyptic narration

Apocalyptic narration displays the idea that a "radical evil" that gives no room for compromise or negotiation for reasonable measures to combat 'evil' and "maintain a balance of power"¹¹⁰. This narration constructs evil as so absolute that the "evil must be destroyed"¹¹¹. Framing a situation within this narration invokes 'end of the world' mentality

¹⁰⁴ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.', 1-60.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.', 1-60.

¹⁰⁷ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁰⁸ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁰⁹ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹¹⁰ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.', 1-60.

¹¹¹ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.', 1-60.

and creates an environment where people act for their survival and safety¹¹². It plays out the way stories do with a protagonist, antagonist, and heroic intervention¹¹³. The narrative of the 'good' confronting the 'evil' is at the center evoking the highest and lowest of human motivations¹¹⁴.

It combines with the securitization framework's use of security narratives to create a threat so extreme resulting in use of extreme force to combat it. By shaping the situation as an existential threat, it introduces an apocalyptic narration of the events¹¹⁵.

Under this genre, the narratives that from the apocalyptic narration are polarization of 'good' and 'evil', 'existential' threat, and heroic interventions. These narratives co-constitute the events as they frame the actors based on context and power relations. Together these narratives form an apocalyptic narration.

1.4.1.1 Polarization of 'good' and 'evil'

Polarization of 'good' and 'evil' divides target groups by presenting contrasting characteristics for the groups which define who they are and their motives. It can influence personal or group identities¹¹⁶. This process can create an 'us' versus 'them' mentality within the community as it enhances distrust, fear, and anxiety.

The 'good' here refers to the 'Filipino' people who Duterte addresses when he speaks. Populist research shows that populist leaders speak out and dedicate their strategies to 'the people' in their constituency to address their needs and bring out solutions for their suffering¹¹⁷. 'The people' could end up siding and supporting the demonization of unpopular minorities and attacking human rights principles as they are defined with identifiers that contrast them¹¹⁸. Curato claims that Duterte constructs antagonisms between 'the people' and alleged "hardened criminals"¹¹⁹. Thompson states that the dichotomization between 'the good people' and the criminalized 'others' led to the mass killings within the populist breakthrough¹²⁰. Kusaka argues that morality was involved in this process, casting the 'the people' as 'moral us'¹²¹. I adopt 'the people'

¹¹² Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹¹³ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹¹⁴ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹¹⁵ Barrera, 'Doing Dialogical Narrative Analysis: Implications for Narrative Criminology'

¹¹⁶ Senehi, "Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process."

¹¹⁷ Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'

¹¹⁸ Roth, 2018 in Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'

¹¹⁹ Curato. 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'.

¹²⁰ Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

¹²¹ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

concept to show how they are characterized in the scenario by highlighting the discourses that portrayed them under a positive light in contrast with the drug users and distributors.

The 'evil' in the story used to describe the 'other' or the danger to the survival of the state—they are villainized. Thompson discusses how the populist rhetoric identifies the 'evil others' as those who must be warded off or purged¹²². Researchers claim that penal populism is strongest when it is directed towards an unpopular enemy who are defined as deviant and their existence a danger¹²³. Kusaka's research describes them as the 'immoral other'¹²⁴.

This research will show how 'the evil' narrative is constructed through dehumanization; dismissive language; and insinuation of mental instability. This is the use of series juxtapositions of signs and qualities of the two groups to place them at two ends of the scale; thereby presenting the idea that the two cannot exist in the same reality together¹²⁵. This frame influences their position in society and are aimed to present them as a 'threat' to introduce a measure that will strip them of their Right to Life and proper routes to justice.

1.4.1.2 'Existential' threat

This narrative builds the insecurity of the country by exaggerating the situation that the country is in. Descriptions of the vulnerability of the country, and how dire the fate of the country is can create fear and anxiety. This narrative introduces future determining discourses to convey impending doom of the country¹²⁶. This is the narrative that presents the danger of the threat, deeming it as existential, threatening the 'survival' of the people and the country. I assess the discourses that exaggerate the extent of the threat through language, and compounds the cost of the threat.

1.4.1.3 Heroic interventions

Heroic interventions narrative shows how leaders present themselves amidst war- or in this case an existential threat evoking an apocalypse- as the hero or strong leader evoking a sense of control to reclaim stability in a fragile context¹²⁷. Amidst anxiety and

¹²² Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

¹²³ Johnson and Fernquest, 'Governing through Killing: The War on Drugs in the Philippines.'

¹²⁴ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹²⁵ Based on Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory'

¹²⁶ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹²⁷ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'

fear comes hope. Populist research relies on the charismatic leader who rises during a time of elitist control to represent the lower classes¹²⁸. Kusaka has defined this as the 'social bandit', specific to the Filipino culture where a machismo character will bring out extra-legal solutions to protect the people¹²⁹. Derived from folk tales and later moved on to movies¹³⁰. Kusaka claims that actors who have starred in social bandit roles have succeeded in the political arena¹³¹. I adopt the 'hero' and 'strong leader' concept to explain where in the discourses he presents himself as the hero to legitimize the EJK by inspiring hope of surviving.

1.5 Approach and Methodology

This research will analyse Rodrigo Duterte's speeches during the first two years of his administration (July 1st, 2016-December 31st, 2017). It is an exploratory thesis aiming to analyse the speeches to assess the narratives Duterte presented to the people to legitimize EJK. The goal here is to present an overview of the narratives used, and through which context.

The speech analysis will be conducted through critical discourse analysis (CDA) method to systematically explore the relationship between the discursive practices and the wider social and cultural context in the Philippines; to understand how the speeches were presented to the Filipino people to legitimize the EJK as a reasonable security measure¹³². Based on Norman Fairclough's works, this research will follow the CDA method of description, interpretation, and explanation. CDA method focuses on the "linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures"¹³³, which I utilize to understand the aspects from the Filipino history, culture, and structures that contributes to these narratives, and which discourses exhibit them.

Speech analysis was chosen because it is a reasonable method to study securitization and narratives, as the speech act can present the securitizing actor's intention and goal. Therefore, I chose to study Duterte's speeches to understand the narratives he used to legitimize the EJK. The CDA method can be used without the algorithm¹³⁴ which is not necessary for this research.

¹²⁸ Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'

¹²⁹ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹³⁰ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹³¹ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹³² Norman Fairclough. '*Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language.*' 1st ed. London and New York: Longman Group Limited, 1995.

¹³³ Fairclough, '*Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language.*'

¹³⁴ For quantitative discourse analysis that is based on an algorithm. Used more frequently in in-depth analyses.

1.5.1 Data collection

The data collection process involved collecting speeches from July 1, 2016, and December 31, 2017. The speeches were selected from YouTube, uploaded by local news channels such as RTV Malacanang. 10 speeches were selected, transcribed, and analysed. The speeches ranged from 'State Nation' addresses to Police addresses. These speeches were selected with consideration to the language barrier therefore the speeches that were mainly in English. However, it should be noted that the speeches were conducted in English and Tagalog together, therefore some of the phrases and sections were missed as I focused on the sections in English. A table with the analysed speeches can be found in Appendix A.

The primary sources are supplemented by secondary literature and reports since this is an exploratory thesis scratching the surface of this topic. Findings, and theorizations from secondary literature will be addressed to illustrate where the analysis stands.

1.6 Limitations of this research

The main limitation to this research is the language barrier, as I do not speak Tagalog. The Philippine government documents as well as some speeches are mainly in Tagalog which made the data selection process lengthy and difficult. The selected speeches in this research are not entirely in English, however they are mostly in English thus enabling analysis. Some phrases and minor outbursts in Tagalog are not included. Despite this considerable challenge, this analysis does contribute to a more granular understanding of how Duterte used narratives to justify a deadly policy.

In addition, this research only uses 10 speeches between July 1, 2016, and December 31, 2017. Thus, the analysis cannot reflect all the changes and shifts in the speeches throughout his administration in reference to domestic and international reactions to the deadly policy of EJKs. However, the number of speeches is sufficient to illustrate the narratives Duterte used, supplemented by the secondary literature and the existing reporting.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This thesis consists of two analysis chapters followed by this introduction. The second chapter explains the threat construction function of these narratives and the third chapter will explore the 'heroic interventions', followed by the conclusion.

The second chapter called 'Threat Construction' will explain how the alleged drug users and distributors were presented as threats to the people. This chapter will discuss the 'Polarization of 'Good' and 'Evil'' and the 'the 'Existential' Threat'. It will analyse the

discourses under these narratives and provide explanations regarding cultural and societal ties.

The third chapter called 'Heroic Interventions' will explain the role of Duterte within this story. This chapter will present the discourses that illustrate the 'Religious legitimization' and 'Saviour and Strong Leader' and 'Extra-legal mentality' to show his efforts to legitimize his position as president and his extreme measures.

The concluding chapter will bring together all chapters and present the final arguments and findings. It will answer the main research question and highlight the arguments made in this thesis. It will present the final limitations and suggestions for future research on this topic.

2 Chapter Two: Threat Construction

2.1 Introduction

Threat construction is a process where an event, group, or actor is presented as capable of posing 'serious' danger to the referent object (the country and people)¹³⁵. Threat construction is central to the securitizing process as it allows the securitizing actor to introduce emergency or extreme measures to combat the threat¹³⁶. This process involves understanding what the securitizing actor declares as 'what threatens' and 'what is threatened'¹³⁷. In this process the "critical vulnerability" of the referent object is communicated, juxtaposing with the referent subject (the threat) with an "aura of unprecedented threatening complexion"¹³⁸. The threat construction process works by redefining the identity of referent object and referent subject under contrasting morals, goals, and characteristics, and emphasizing the extent and cost of the threat thereby creating an image of danger and fear¹³⁹. This process legitimized waging war against the threat despite the cost of life, as the threat was presented as extremely dangerous requiring urgent extreme force¹⁴⁰.

Within the apocalyptic narratives this process is the construction of an 'extreme evil' threatening the 'good people', therefore they must be defeated through 'miraculous' or extreme force¹⁴¹. This is the construction of the existential threat suggesting the apocalyptic nature of events, thus justifying the killings¹⁴².

Duterte's speeches presented the drug users and distributors as dangerous and evil, and capable of threatening the future of the country. Duterte's discourses had a polarizing effect where 'the people'-the general Filipino people- (referent object) were presented as good and vulnerable, threatened by the 'evils' of the drug users and distributors (referent subject). The two groups were characterized by contrasting discourses, presenting conflicting images.

¹³⁵ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'; Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'

¹³⁶ Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis'.

¹³⁷ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

¹³⁸ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve', 3.

¹³⁹ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory'.

¹⁴⁰ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'; Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

¹⁴¹ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁴² Barrera, Drug War Stories and the Philippine President'

The extent of the danger was exaggerated in his speeches as he magnified the already existing drug problem as a much bigger threat¹⁴³. Such discourses worked together in Duterte's favour to create an environment of fear and anxiety to legitimize the EJKs as an acceptable security measure. These discourses share a similarity with the Catholic Church's discourse on drugs from the 1970s to 2015¹⁴⁴, as will be discussed throughout the discourse analysis in this chapter; to display how the events of the present and past can be used to construct a threat¹⁴⁵ to frame it in a way that would be 'acceptable' to the people.

This chapter will demonstrate how Duterte presented the drug users and distributors as threats to the population and the survival of the country through discourses. It will examine how polarizing images of 'good' and 'evil' were introduced, and how the extent of the drug problem and its effects were exaggerated. In the first section I will examine how the drug users and distributors are characterized as dangerous under the 'evil' categorization, and 'the people' as 'good' and vulnerable. In the second section I will explore the discourses that present the extent of the threat that functioned to declare it existential.

2.2 Polarization of 'good' and 'evil'

The concept of polarizing narratives of 'good' and 'evil' is based on Smith's theorizations that contrasting narratives between the actors bring out the idea of the good confronting the evil, or the good threatened by the evil¹⁴⁶. This involves intense character polarization based on assumptions of the highest and lowest human motivations¹⁴⁷. Similarly, within securitization framework the series of juxtapositions between the threat and the threatened is essential for legitimization of the method to combat the threat¹⁴⁸. Such polarity can bring out an 'us' versus 'them' dynamic within the community leading to conflicting identities. This narrative is based on the idea that 'we do not attack the good people', therefore presenting a group as different based on characteristics that frame them as evil works to justify the actions to combat them¹⁴⁹. In addition, this narrative makes way for the securitizing actor to present the heroic interventions to a more susceptible audience.

¹⁴³ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope'; Maxwell, 'Perceived Threat of Crime'

¹⁴⁴ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

¹⁴⁵ Balzacq, '*Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*'

¹⁴⁶ Smith, '*Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.*'

¹⁴⁷ Smith, '*Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.*'

¹⁴⁸ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'

¹⁴⁹ Based on Barrera and Smith's research. Barrera, Drug War Stories and the Philippine President'; Smith, '*Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.*'

In this case, I observed that Duterte's speeches created a polarizing effect where 'the people' and drug users and distributors were placed on two ends of the scale of good and evil. Duterte used his speeches to construct a threatening identity for the drug users and distributors based on human dignity through dehumanization discourses such as animal imagery, dismissive language, and an attack on psychological wellbeing. I will present these discourses and assess how they present a message of dehumanization of the 'other' to cast them as 'less deserving' of human rights, redemption, and legal rights.

2.2.1 Dehumanization: the 'evil'

Dehumanization is a psychological process where a group is described as less than human, psychologically distant, and not deserving of human treatment and the basic human rights and moral consideration¹⁵⁰. They can be described as less than human through animal imagery or as dangerous animals, thereby equating and reducing them to sub-humans¹⁵¹. Duterte presented the drug users and distributors as inhuman and dangerous, and equated it to 'less deserving' of rights, therefore justifying EJK. Duterte's discourses portrayed them as aggressive through these characterizations to pit the drug users and distributors and the general Filipino people against each other¹⁵². Hence, contributing to the apocalyptic survival logic, by giving them an enemy.

Animal imagery

Animal imagery was commonly used by Duterte to describe or refer to the drug users and distributors. The speeches below are examples of this discourse:

July 7th, 2016: "The armed forces will not take it sitting down the Philippine National Police, even if I'm gone, they will not allow these, uh, **animals**¹⁵³ to have their day."

¹⁵⁰ Susan Opatow. 'Drawing the Line: Social Categorization, Moral Exclusion, and the Scope of Justice'. In *Conflict, Cooperation, and Justice: Essays Inspired by the Work of Morton Deutsch*, edited by B.B Bunker and J.Z Rubins, 347-69. Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 1995.

¹⁵¹ Margit Feischmidt. 'Deployed Fears and Suspended Solidarity along the Migratory Route in Europe'. *Citizenship Studies* 24, no. 4 (18 May 2020): 441-56.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2020.1755157>; Steuter, Erin, and Deborah Wills. 'Discourses of Dehumanization: Enemy Construction and Canadian Media Complicity in the Framing of the War on Terror'. *Global Media Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009): 7-24.

¹⁵² Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

¹⁵³ **Coloured highlights on the speeches from this point on will present the discourses based on the theme.**

Colours: Red-Animal Imagery and criminalized discourse; Dark Red-Dismissive language; Purple- Mental instability; Brown- Innocent/vulnerable/the people; Green- Youth and Children; Enormity- Blue.

August 8th, 2016: "We have seen our country devastated by drugs and it has not only affected millions, but a lot of them are **no longer viable as human beings in this planet.**"

August 26th, 2016: "...crime against humanity? In the first place I'd like to be frank with you, **are they humans? What is your definition of a human being?** Tell me Human rights. Use it properly in the right context."

January 19th, 2017: "I will do everything. I will not allow my country to go to the **dogs.** And I will do everything to preserve my country, the Filipino people."

July 24th, 2017: "There is a jungle out there. There are **beasts and vultures** praying on the **helpless, the innocent, the unsuspecting.**"

Animal imagery is a form of disrespect in many cultures and contexts. Duterte's discourses include: 'animals', 'dogs', 'beasts', and 'vultures'. It presents disrespect and attacks their human dignity. This is another example of Duterte's coarse language, which normalizes such disrespect towards people in his country. These discourses depict them as aggressive animals– 'dogs', 'beasts', 'vultures'– hence, suggesting they are aggressive and dangerous¹⁵⁴.

Duterte questions the definition of human being and states that they are no longer "viable" as human beings. This speech was from August 26th, 2016, where he addressed the criticism from observers and human rights experts declaring the events in the Philippines as Crimes Against Humanity¹⁵⁵. Duterte implies that accusing him and the authorities of crimes against humanity is invalid as the drug users and distributors cannot be considered as human. Such discourses display Duterte's disregard for their human rights, and the idea that they do not deserve human rights as they are 'not human'. According to Curato, the Filipino society are more concerned with ending the dangers to their society and not human rights and due process¹⁵⁶. Thus, displaying the audience's priority amidst the existential threat.

On January 19th, 2017, Duterte refers to the drug users and distributors as 'dogs' and 'the people' as "Filipino people". Presenting contrasting characterizations where one

¹⁵⁴ Thompson, 'Duterte's Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the "Death of Development" in the Philippines'

¹⁵⁵ Adrian Gallagher, Euan Raffle, and Zain Maulana. 'Failing to Fulfil the Responsibility to Protect: The War on Drugs as Crimes against Humanity in the Philippines'. *The Pacific Review* 33, no. 2 (3 March 2020): 247–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2019.1567575>.

¹⁵⁶ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope'.

group can be regarded as people belonging to the nation and the other as animals. Such implications suggest that this 'other' is less deserving of human rights and the dignity of legal forms of justice as they are threatening the security of the country and the 'Filipino people'.

Dismissive language

Dismissive language was repetitively used regarding the drug users and distributors. These discourses devalued the drug users and distributors. Dismissive language works to declare a group less worthy of respect and high regard. According to Opatow's definitions, such language can fall under dehumanization as it presents the group as expendable¹⁵⁷. Repeatedly referring to 'the other' with such language, especially by someone in power¹⁵⁸, can lead to lack of respect, hatred, and less regard for them as it becomes a norm. The extracted speeches are below:

July 7th, 2016: "So my appeal to them is, uh, since they're **beyond redemption**, if they can **stop and commit suicide**. Because I will not allow these **idiots** to run show, not during my watch. "

January 19th, 2017: "...they are **slaves** eternally, to a chemical sponsored by a criminal, his pockets full of money, **at the expense** of the Filipino."

March 29th, 2017: "For example, at the time when he committed the crime, he was still good, but at the time of the trial, he no longer understands. He does not have a discernment of what is right and what is wrong. You cannot prosecute the **idiot**."

July 24th, 2017: "And I will make sure, very sure, that they will not have the luxury of enjoying the benefits of their **greed** and **madness**."

Duterte referred to these groups as 'idiots' and 'slaves'. The term 'idiot' was used repetitively throughout speeches. In addition, other phrases such as "beyond redemption" and "stop and commit suicide" were used alongside the derogatory terms. This has a blunt effect as both these phrases are straightforward. Yet, hearing a person in power use such language can have an effect where deeming a group as less deserving can normalize discriminatory treatment. Determining that they are "beyond redemption" and therefore

¹⁵⁷ Opatow, 'Drawing the Line'.

¹⁵⁸ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve.'

they should “commit suicide” devalues their right to life and justifies EJK as a legitimate security measure.

The speech on January 19th, 2017, inspired critical observation from local and international news outlets¹⁵⁹. Duterte referring to drug users and distributors as ‘slaves’ to the drugs, and later comparing them to people who were subjected to slavery was shocking due to its coarseness. He implies that their dependence on drugs it is costing the Philippines.

Concurrently, Duterte’s statements suggest that the drug users and distributors are benefiting from wealth of the Filipino people. He describes them with words like ‘greed’ and ‘madness’. In addition, he refers to ‘the expense’ of their drug habits which he claims is costing ‘the Filipino’ dividing the drug users and ‘the Filipino’ people. Thus, blaming the drug users and distributors for the persistent poverty in the country, as he hides the developmental issues of the country behind the exaggerated drug problem¹⁶⁰. These discourses hint at the literal cost of the drug users and distributors on the Filipino people.

These speeches suggests that the habits of the drug users are costing the Filipino people, casting them responsible for the everyday inconveniences of ‘the Filipino people’¹⁶¹. The cost of the drug problem is on a loop as the country is in a cycle of poverty driving people to drugs and crime, overflowing the prisons and rehabilitation centers¹⁶². Consequently, creating fear and anxiety over the vulnerability of ‘the Filipino people’ and the country to the costs and dangers of the drug users and distributors. It also goes further to cast them as the enemy by blaming them for poverty. Coupled with the discourses framing the drug user and distributors as “beyond redemption”, costing the country, and threatening the people’s survival works to justify the EJK as a legitimate method to eliminate the threat.

Mental Instability

Duterte dismisses the cognitive abilities of drug users. Opatow’s definition includes referring to groups as psychologically distant as dehumanizing¹⁶³. Duterte questions the mental wellbeing of the drug users to insinuate that they do not deserve human rights

¹⁵⁹ POLITIKO News. ‘Duterte: Better to Be a Slave than a Drug Addict’. *POLITIKO News*, 20 January 2017. <https://politics.com.ph/2017/01/20/duterte-better-slave-drug-addict/>.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson, ‘Duterte’s Violent Populism: Mass Murder, Political Legitimacy and the “Death of Development” in the Philippines’

¹⁶¹ Curato, ‘Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope’.

¹⁶² McCall, ‘Philippines President Continues His Brutal War on Drugs’.

¹⁶³ Opatow, ‘Drawing the Line’.

such as the legal routes to justice and punishment, as they are “beyond redemption”. The selected speeches are below:

August 17th, 2016: "Let us now say that there are about 400 drug addicts **no longer eligible for rehabilitation** for, they are really creasy. And **out of the senses** and **no longer have the...cognitive value of their person or their talent**. So, what do we do with it? We have about 300 **dead living Filipinos**. You know, it's very easy to complain."

"... 600 now safely (referring to the number of drug users), I would say there are about 200 who are already **permanently crazy**."

August 26th, 2016: "...every day, shabu will **shrink the brain of a person**. And these are really the **legal insanity**. They are **no longer functional**. They become **dysfunctional with the family...**"

March 29th, 2017: "You know, in criminal law, when you try a person in court or being prosecuted, it is important that we recognize his discernment. He must be in complete **mental faculties**."

"For example, at the time when he committed the crime, he was still good, but at the time of the trial, he **no longer understands**. He **does not have a discernment of what is right and what is wrong**. You cannot prosecute the **idiot**."

April 6th, 2017: "He commits a crime under the influence of drugs. **He kills, he rapes, robbery with homicide, robbery with rape...** and when the psychiatrist examines the **idiot**, he would come to a fairness, a conclusion that he was **not in his complete faculties**, or that he was **really insane** if he committed a crime or rape against..."

Duterte uses phrases such as “dead living Filipinos”, “out of their senses”, “permanently crazy”, “really insane”, and “legal insanity” to argue that the drug users “no longer have the... cognitive value” of a person. These statements describe the drug users as mentally unstable, and unable to ‘function in society’. Duterte argues that drug users do not understand what is right and wrong due the drugs and are unable to sit through the legal process of justice, and go through rehabilitation. Therefore, taking away their right to be tried in court.

Similarly, the Catholic Church’s discourse on drugs in the 1990s described drugs as morally decaying and an attack on human dignity to promote stricter laws and death

penalty for those who use and distribute¹⁶⁴. In addition, Catholic Bishops stated that drug users are “mental and physical wrecks” who “will be hopelessly doomed to ignominy unredeemable”¹⁶⁵. It reflects the moral panic around drugs that have been utilized by leaders to mobilize support¹⁶⁶. The similarity exhibits Duterte’s utilization of the Catholic Church’s discourses despite his conflict with the current leaders of the Catholic Church¹⁶⁷.

Duterte refers to them as ‘legally insane’ and being “dysfunctional with the family” thus casting them as a threat to familial values and a danger to the family. Stating drug users as mentally unwell therefore a direct danger to the family. Similarly, the Catholic Church’s statements reflected their concern for the “welfare of the youth, the poor, and the family”¹⁶⁸. Duterte used these terms when justifying the EJK and actions of the police.

The estimate of drug users is exaggerated and stressed to present the idea that there are too many users that are “too far gone”. Concurrently, he uses descriptive language such as “he kills, he rapes, robbery with homicide, robbery with rape”, to state that drug users commit such crimes under the influence due to them being “really insane”. Hence, framing them as unpredictable and dangerous to the people drawing a line between the threat and the threatened¹⁶⁹. It creates the idea of an impossible problem with the exaggerated estimate of drug users and dangers they pose, generating fear and anxiety in the country. The narrative that drug users are a danger to the people is constructed here, justifying his actions and the EJKs.

2.2.2 The ‘Vulnerable’ Filipino People

The ‘good’ or ‘the people’ were characterized under discourses framing them as vulnerable. In most polarizing discourses ‘the people’ are described to have an intense morality, which is the case for the Philippines as well¹⁷⁰. However, I observed that the

¹⁶⁴ Cornelio and Lasco. ‘Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines’

¹⁶⁵ Cornelio and Lasco. ‘Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines’, 333.

¹⁶⁶ Cornelio and Lasco. ‘Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines’

¹⁶⁷ Many leaders from the Catholic Church resisted the anti-drug campaign and the EJK. Four Catholic Bishops were charged with sedition. The Church declared that drug users deserved redemption and were against the killings. Esmaguell II, ‘Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was “Appointed by God”’; Paolo Affatato. ‘Duterte and the God - Avenger’. *La Stampa*, 5 August 2017. <https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/en/2017/08/05/news/duterte-and-the-god-avenger-1.34431668/>. ; Cornelio and Lasco. ‘Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines’.

¹⁶⁸ Cornelio and Lasco. ‘Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines’

¹⁶⁹ Based on Balzacq, ‘*Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*’

¹⁷⁰ Kusaka, ‘Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte’s Moral Politics’; Anna Bræmer Warburg, and Steffen Jensen. ‘Ambiguous Fear in the War on Drugs: A Reconfiguration of Social and Moral Orders in the Philippines’. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 51, no. 1–2 (3 June 2020): 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463420000211>.

discourses victimized the people by presenting them as vulnerable victims to the threat of the 'evil' drug users and distributors. The selected speeches are below:

July 25th, 2016: "With this administration shall be sensitive to the state's obligation to promote and protect, **fulfill the human rights of our citizens, especially the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable** and social justice will be pursued even as the role of law shall at all times prevail."

January 19th, 2017: "I will do everything. I will not allow my country to go to the **dogs**. And I will do everything to preserve my country, **the Filipino people**."

July 24th, 2017: "I believe then, as I believe still that progress and development will squatter if **criminals, illegal drugs, illegal users of drugs** are allowed to roam on the streets freely **victimizing** seemingly with impunity the **innocent, the helpless...**"

"There is a jungle out there. There are **beasts and vultures** preying on the **helpless, the innocent, the unsuspecting**."

Duterte uses discourses such as 'poor', 'marginalized', 'vulnerable', 'unsuspecting', 'helpless', and 'innocent' to describe the general people of Philippines-'Filipino people'. 'The people' fit under the title of the Filipino people, whereas the drug users are not under this description as they are contrasted against 'the Filipino people'. In addition, the fulfilment of human rights also belongs to 'the people' or 'citizens' of the country, and not the drug users and distributors as they do not fit under this category.

Discourses such as 'vulnerable', 'unsuspecting', 'helpless', and 'innocent' characterize them under a positive narrative, in contrast to the drug users and distributors who were described as 'criminals', 'beasts', and 'vultures'. He describes 'the people's' morals and behaviour and their position in society, as a group that needs to be protected.

On July 24th, 2017, Duterte stated that the progress and development of the country will halt if "criminals, illegal drugs, illegal users of drugs" are "allowed to roam on the streets freely". He goes on to add that they are victimizing the "innocent and the helpless". These discourses refer to the everyday struggles in the Philippines, and the development of the country. Yet again, he blames them for the problems of the country. Thereby putting the two in different boxes, the victims, and the victimizer.

Warburg and Jensen (2020) describe the moral discourses within policing in the Philippines that are based on social injustice, family and religion. Distinctions on human behaviour on right and wrong.

In addition, the reference to the 'poor' people of the country stems from the government's efforts to tackle drug crime over the years¹⁷¹. One of the measures was the anti-poverty programmes as it is a persistent problem of the country. Kusaka claims that the anti-poverty programme's goal was to mould the poor into the "moral citizenry" and to exclude those who do not adhere to the 'civic morality', hence are considered undeserving¹⁷². Under this backdrop most of the poor accept the War on Drugs measures as they believe that behaving as 'good citizens' and 'victims' grants them safety¹⁷³. It adds to the idea of deserving and undeserving to be saved.

These discourses show the direct polarization between the groups where the drug users are described as "beasts and vultures" who are "praying" on the 'helpless', 'innocent' and 'unsuspecting' people. It exaggerates the message, and the threat itself as it highlights the extreme contrast between the groups based on the power they seem to possess. In addition, an intense apocalyptic narrative is formed as the idea of helpless and innocent people under threat from beasts and vultures, being 'victimized' by said group. Duterte introduced the idea that he is giving a voice to the voiceless and representing the helpless people from the evil threat¹⁷⁴. This intense polarity between the two groups builds fear and anxiety over the imbalance of power and the extent of the threat.

2.3 'Existential' threat

The extent of the threat is presented through discourses from the securitizing actor to the audience over the levels of danger attached to an issue or actor¹⁷⁵. It presents the threat as extremely dangerous hence there is no future where the threat and the audience can exist together¹⁷⁶, requiring extreme force to combat it. The intensity of the threat defines the impact it can have on the community's way of life.

Duterte declared the drug users and distributors as a threat thereby evoking extreme security measures to combat the threat. Here I identify the discourses that presented the extent of this threat by analyzing who and what is threatened. The previous section discussed how 'the people' are victimized in contrast to the drug users and distributors as the victimizers. This section will discuss the groups Duterte declared as the target that would hinder the future of the country. These discourses determine the future doom by highlighting the dangers to the next generation. Duterte highlighted the 'enormity' of the problem through descriptive discourses that present it as such. Such

¹⁷¹ McCall, 'Philippines President Continues His Brutal War on Drugs'.

¹⁷² Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics', 1.

¹⁷³ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹⁷⁴ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope'.

¹⁷⁵ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'

¹⁷⁶ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'

discourses present apocalyptic narratives where the future and survival of the country are at stake. Thus, declaring the threat 'existential'.

'Youth and Children'

Duterte refers to the 'youth and children' and the 'next generation' in his speeches to convey that the drug users and distributors are targeting the youth and children directly in this war. Youth and children are a common focus in disaster scenarios as the number one priority for safety and security. These discourses exaggerate the danger. The selected speeches are below:

July 7th, 2016: "People, you know, when I said they're **destroying the country** and, uh, they're **destroying the youth of the land**. "

August 17th, 2016: "I will not allow anybody to **destroy the next generation** of what good will it be to us when I am already old and **my children or the children's children** are **gun served and crazy**, who will spoon feed me with my food when I am old?"

December 7th, 2016: "I ought to take full control of the fight against drugs because this is not just an ordinary police case. The drug lords **declared war** against **our country** targeting the **youths of the land**, and that was, I was forced to say, **do not destroy the next generation and deprive us of our sons and daughters happiness**."

April 6th, 2017: "...if you bring in drugs into my city, I will kill you. And if you destroy **our daughters and sons**, I will kill you."

July 24th, 2017: "I will not allow the **ruin of the youth**. The **disintegration of families** and the **retro aggression of communities forced by criminals** whose **greed** for money is as **insatiable** as is, is **devoid of moral purpose**. Neither will I be mobilized into inaction by the fear that I will commit an act that will expose me to public condemnation or legal prosecution."

"If you harm the **children** in who's **hands the future of this republic is entrusted** and I will hound you to the very gates of hell."

September 8th, 2017: "I repeated that warning when I was president. 'Do not destroy my country because I will kill you. Do not **destroy the youth of the land** because still I will kill you.' Now find me a law, local, international, be it in Somalia

or Yemen that says it is illegal to say those words, 'I will kill you if you destroy my country and the youth of my land'..."

The references to the 'youth and children' alongside discourses such as: 'destroy', 'gun served', 'deprive', 'greed', 'devoid of moral purpose' and 'crazy' creates a negative image. It illustrates the danger they are in, with it the future of the country. Duterte uses this narrative to stress that the youth are threatened as they are the direct targets in the War on Drugs.

These discourses exhibit descriptive imagery of the possibilities of the future due to the persistence of drug crime. Such as questioning their happiness in the future and whether they will be taken care of in their old age. These discourses tie to familial values which is a common method of evoking fear and anxiety in politics and when addressing drugs¹⁷⁷.

The 'destruction of the youth and children' discourse stems from the Catholic Church's discourses on drugs in the 1970s¹⁷⁸. The bishops declared that the youth and children were the number one target of the drug 'threat' as they would destroy the next generation¹⁷⁹. They described the drug producers and distributors as "saboteurs of the country" destroying young lives as they become "mental and physical wrecks" beyond redemption¹⁸⁰. As stated previously, Duterte's speeches against the drug users share a similarity to these discourses from the past. These discourses are intended to create an environment of fear and anxiety, to justify the killings.

Such discourses can evoke the 'security survival logic'¹⁸¹. It presents the existential threat as it threatens the next generation hence the future of the country. Thus, presenting an apocalyptic narrative. It creates an urgency to solve the problem through the context of the imminent danger to the youth and children, consequently the future of the country. This exhibits Balzacq's theorizations on the contextual meaning through text to create urgency¹⁸². These discourses share an expressive message where Duterte's feelings and attitudes are displayed. It is a speech act dedicated to evoking an emotional response. It shows Duterte's the intention to create panic and insecurity in the country.

¹⁷⁷ James E. Hawdon. 'The Role of Presidential Rhetoric in the Creation of a Moral Panic: Reagan, Bush, and the War on Drugs'. *Deviant Behavior* 22, no. 5 (30 September 2001): 419–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639620152472813>.

¹⁷⁸ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

¹⁷⁹ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

¹⁸⁰ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines', 333.

¹⁸¹ Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 'Security: A New Framework for Analysis'.

¹⁸² Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

'Enormity' of the threat

Duterte's discourses show the use of descriptive language to exaggerate the extent of the danger by describing it as more extreme than it truly is. These discourses add to the existential threat narrative, to legitimize the EJK. The selected speeches are below:

August 8th, 2016: "We have seen [our country devastated by drugs](#) and it has not only affected millions, but a lot of them are no longer viable as human beings in this planet."

August 17th, 2016: "Let us now say that there are about [400 drug addicts](#) no longer eligible for rehabilitation for, they are really creasy. And out of the senses and no longer have the...cognitive value of their person or their talent. So, what do we do with it? We have about [300 dead living Filipinos](#). You know, it's very easy to complain."

"... [600 now safely](#) (referring to the number of drug users), I would say there are about [200 who are already permanently crazy](#)."

July 25th, 2016: "If we do not (get) help from friends here in Asia and America and Europe, this here number and problem, believe me, [will drown us as a republic](#)."

"But that is really the [enormity of the problem](#). It's so [enormous](#) that you are intimidated even just to make the move. Because you know [you cannot stop it anyway](#)."

April 6th, 2017: "What is at [stake](#) is my [country](#)."

July 24th, 2017: "Sometimes I have almost tempted to conclude that [peace might not be able to come during our lifetime](#), but believe me, it'll not be for one of trying and I will persist in our goal of obtaining [peace to the last day of this administration](#) and maybe even beyond, although in a different capacity."

Duterte uses phrases such as: "enormity of the problem", "enormous", "drown us as a republic". These discourses exaggerate the already existing drug problem. In addition, Duterte exaggerates the problem by overestimating the number of drug users and distributors in the country¹⁸³. Coupled with the discourses where these drug users and

¹⁸³ The statistics were exaggerated by Duterte: Utama, 'Securitization in the Philippines' Drug War: Disclosing the Power-Relations between Duterte, Filipino Middle Class, and the Urban Poor'

distributors are mentally unstable and inhuman and endangering 'the people' of the country, these discourses can compound the extent of the threat.

Discourses referring to the 'peace of the nation', the 'capacity of the nation', 'inability to stop the drug problem', or the 'drowning of the republic' presents an apocalyptic narrative. As if the drug problem is invincible, thus extreme measures should be taken to combat it. The phrase "what is at stake is my country" creates an urgency for the problem, and a sensitivity coupled with the rest of the discourses. These discourses form an apocalyptic narrative aimed at creating anxiety and fear¹⁸⁴, thereby allowing Duterte to legitimize the EJK.

2.4 Conclusion

It is evident that Duterte constructed an existential threat by using polarizations between the drug users and distributors and 'the people' of the Philippines; and the exaggeration of the extent of the threat. Duterte's speeches show how he constructed these narratives through practices, context, and power relations as they influence one another through the speech act¹⁸⁵.

The speeches show that the drug users and distributors are declared responsible for other crimes in the country and for the overall insecurity. By centering the discourses around ideas of social justice and human dignity, the drug users and distributors are seen as the embodiment of danger that require extraordinary measures to combat them¹⁸⁶. The 'evil' other narrative was built on the already existing inconveniences and mundane problems of society due to drug problems, and Duterte managed to give a voice to these issues by exaggerating them¹⁸⁷.

These descriptors can function as justification for the cost of life as it deems a group less deserving as they are portrayed as a threat. Therefore, drawing a clear contrast between 'the people' and the accused drug users and distributors, where they are cast as evil enemies decreasing their status in the social structures. Consequently, these discourses securitize the drug users and distributors. They redefine their identity thereby changing the "cohesion, power, and stability" of the social group and produces an urgent need for the securitizing actor to act with authority to counter the threat. Concurrently, these discourses frame the drug users and distributors as less deserving of the dignity of identifying as humans and the right to legal routes of justice. Such discourses have a way

¹⁸⁴ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁸⁵ Balzacq, 'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'

¹⁸⁶ Warburg, and Steffen Jensen. 'Ambiguous Fear in the War on Drugs' ; Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

¹⁸⁷ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope'.

of diminishing their power in contrast to 'the people' who are given the idea that they have power, therefore showing the role power can play in this context. These discourses work to justify the lost lives, thereby legitimizing EJK as an acceptable measure.

The extent and cost of drug crimes are exacerbated by Duterte as he refers to 'youth and children' to create uncertainty about the survival of the next generation and the country's future. In addition, the problem is described as 'enormous' and undefeatable presenting the idea that the drug problem is everlasting if not dealt with force. Thus, establishing the threat as existential and urgent, creating an apocalyptic narrative.

These narratives are constructed through the contextual meaning Balzacq refers to which evokes the sense of urgency and 'survival logic'¹⁸⁸. By combining these narratives together, it shows the presentation of the drug users and distributors: as underserving of redemption; and threatening 'the people' of the Philippines; threatening the youth and children of the country; thus future of the next generation, making it an existential threat. It presents the apocalyptic narrative where 'the evil' is extremely strong, threatening the 'good' people, and the survival of the country, thus a miraculous measure needs to be taken against it.

¹⁸⁸Balzacq, '*Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*'; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, '*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*'.

3 Chapter Three: Heroic Interventions

3.1 Introduction

The heroic intervention narrative is when the leader evokes a sense of control during a time of crisis presenting themselves as a saviour or hero to defeat the source of the problem to establish peace and stability¹⁸⁹. Duterte's actions and speeches show that he presented himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' taking control in a time of crisis to defeat the existential threat after constructing it. Bello states that Duterte's leadership style exudes 'cariño brutal', which is a mix of "will power, commanding personality", and gangster-like charm presents a "father figure" who will end the 'national chaos'¹⁹⁰. These actions are aimed at bringing out hope in the country after building up their fear over the threat of drug users and distributors. Establishing himself as such a leader in this scenario is aimed at legitimizing his position as the President and the actions he took in the anti-drug campaign, such as the EJK.

Duterte relied on familiar concepts within the Filipino context such as religion (Christianity) to gain legitimacy as he referred to 'God's will' on occasion. Duterte relies on the Christian population as it is the majority religion in the country, by referring to an idea of God which he claims is independent from that of the 'hypocritical' Catholic Church's God¹⁹¹. These discourses are aimed to garner support from the rest of the Christian community.

Duterte's discourses present a gangster-like charm, saviour, and strong leader persona which stems from Filipino culture. In this research, the gangster-like charm is based on the 'social bandit' discussed by Kusaka, to show how he presents a disregard for the legal routes of justice and aims to achieve his goal to eradicate drugs regardless of the cost, for 'the people'¹⁹². This is presented through his commanding personality and acceptance of violence, thus creating an idea of a saviour.

The securitization framework discusses how the power position of the actor plays a role here, as the actor's position can give more authority to speak and act. Duterte's position as a political figure and president gives him this pre-existing power¹⁹³. Concurrently, his speeches that derive contextual elements from the Filipino culture and society adds to his power as it presents him as a hero and strong leader. As politicians

¹⁸⁹ Smith, 'Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.'

¹⁹⁰ Bello, 'Rodrigo Duterte: A Fascist Original'; Pernia, 'Human Rights in a Time of Populism: Philippines under Rodrigo Duterte'

¹⁹¹ Affatato. 'Duterte and the God - Avenger'

¹⁹² Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

¹⁹³ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking?'

have symbolic power that they constantly nourish and sustain¹⁹⁴, the legitimacy he gains for his position and his actions sustain each other.

This chapter will discuss how Duterte presented himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' through his speeches, and how it contributed to the legitimization of the EJKs in the Philippines. I will discuss how Duterte used religion, and saviour and strong leader persona to gain legitimacy in his position and his actions. I will show how these cultural and structural contexts are utilized by Duterte in his speeches adding to the narrative he is constructing here.

3.2 Religious Legitimization

Amid different stances on Duterte's anti-drug campaign from the Christian community in the Philippines¹⁹⁵, Duterte's rhetoric exhibits references to religion to legitimize his position as President, and the EJK.

Throughout the Duterte's administration, he disrespected the religious community by calling God 'stupid' and undermining the power of religion¹⁹⁶. He threatened the leaders of the Catholic Church for speaking out against the EJKs¹⁹⁷. In addition, Duterte's coarse language extended to calling God stupid. Yet, there are Filipinos who believe that Duterte was speaking out against the 'hypocritical' catholic church¹⁹⁸ and not the God who appointed him¹⁹⁹. Duterte had his own sense of God whom he referred to in his speeches, to draw support from the Christian community that supported him.

For instance, Duterte stated: "I have my own God? God who is all-knowing, who's kind. God who does not create hell, does not create heaven. He did not create human beings

¹⁹⁴ Bourdieu, 1991 in Vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'

¹⁹⁵ The different Christian groups in the Philippines reacted to the War on Drugs differently. The Catholic Church condemned the killings under Duterte; Cardinal Tagle declared 'a nation cannot be governed by killing', among other leaders who spoke out (Cornelio and Medina, 2019). Evangelical Pastors claimed that the drug users have a corrupt heart but are not irredeemable (Cornelio and Medina, 2019). Esmaguell II (2019) states that there were other Christian groups who declared Duterte as appointed by God. The Catholic Church leaders who spoke out against Duterte's actions were accused of plotting against him (Macairan, 2019).

¹⁹⁶ Esmaguell II, 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'

¹⁹⁷ Evelyn Macairan. 'Bishops on Sedition: Truth Shall Set Us Free'. *The Philippine Star*, 9 September 2019. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/09/09/1950252/bishops-sedition-truth-shall-set-us-free>.

¹⁹⁸ As discussed previously, the Catholic Church was involved in the mission to eradicate drugs from the Philippines. Their discourses over the decades presented drugs as: destruction of the youth, attack on human dignity, and social and moral decay. Death penalty was suggested: Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'

¹⁹⁹ Esmaguell II, 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'

just to be thrown to hell or to enjoy heaven"²⁰⁰. Duterte relied on his own idea of God to garner support from the people and gain legitimacy. The speeches below are examples of this discourse:

July 7th, 2016: "In the fullness of **God's time**²⁰¹, we will solve the problem. The drug problem of the Philippine."

"If **God does not want me to die**, I will not die. But **if God wants** me out of the scene, I will be gone."

July 25th, 2016: "Thus, to our religious bishops, leaders, priest, pastors, preachers, Imam, let me assure you that while I am a stickler for the principle of separation between church and state, I believe quite strongly that there should **never be a separation between God and state.**"

March 29th, 2017: "When I took ... office, **I promised to God** and to the people that I will **protect and defend the Filipino nation.**"

The discourses: "God's time" and "promised to God" suggest that it is 'God's will' that he is in power. Concurrently, Duterte stated, "if God does not want me to die, I will not die" followed by if he wanted Duterte to be out of power he would be. These statements suggest that it is 'God's will' that he is in power to carry on with his extreme security measures. Hence, adding to his legitimacy.

Duterte refers to the promise he made to God "to protect and defend the Filipino nation". These statements are commissive speech acts as they are vows that communicate his commitment to eradicate drug users and distributors to 'defend the nation'²⁰². These statements are based on the support he receives from the Christian community that support him and he utilizes them to further his support²⁰³. As Christian Church leaders have stated, "God appointed Duterte to root evil out of communities"²⁰⁴. Duterte preaches to all the religious communities to state that "there should never be a separation between God and state" to portray himself as man of God and to gain support from them as well. Concurrently, the religious leaders' discourses highlight 'good versus evil' narrative here.

²⁰⁰ Esmaguell II, 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'

²⁰¹ **Coloured highlights on the speeches from this point on will present the discourses based on the theme. Colours: Blue-religious legitimacy; Red- Bravado and saviour; Brown- extra-legal mentality.**

²⁰² Vuori, 'Illocutionary Logic and Strands of Securitization: Applying the Theory of Securitization to the Study of Non-Democratic Political Orders'

²⁰³ Esmaguell II, 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'

²⁰⁴ Esmaguell II, 'Why Filipinos Believe Duterte Was "Appointed by God"'

Claiming that God is on his side to combat 'the evil' legitimizes his position as the leader and the EJKs.

A striking element here is that Duterte' cultivates support from the other Christian communities while he "undermines the Philippines as a Catholic nation"²⁰⁵. These discourses can function in a similar way as the deserving and undeserving of saving discussed in the previous chapter. Those who speak out against Duterte based on religious sentiments are charged with sedition²⁰⁶ and it drives a line between the religious community on who sees 'God's will' here; a game of who the true believers are. It shows Duterte's aim to justify the EJK's by cultivating legitimacy through references to religion. Thus, gaining more power through religious legitimacy.

3.3 Saviour and Strong Leader

Duterte's strength and leadership exudes a gangster-like charm which is built on bravado and a commanding personality. Kusaka describes his personality as a 'social bandit morality' where it reflects the people's desire for a leader characterized by a combination of "humour, compassion, and violence in a patriarchal boss" who acquires justice "outside of the law"²⁰⁷.

Duterte received the nickname 'the Punisher' during his time as Mayor of Davao for the crime busting²⁰⁸. The nickname was derived from the Marvel comic book character 'The Punisher, Frank Castle' which is popular in the Manila²⁰⁹. The character is based on a ruthless avenger who sweeps the streets off criminals without hesitation²¹⁰. Similarities are drawn from this character and Duterte and over time he utilizes these contexts in his speeches.

These characteristics are visible from the way he presents himself as a 'saviour' and 'strong leader' through bravado; by accepting and introducing extra-legal measures exuding a commanding personality; violent rhetoric to justify the killings exuding gangster-like charm; and presentation of power.

²⁰⁵ Jose Mario C. Francisco. 'Challenges of Duterteismo for Philippine Christianity'. *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 4, no. 1 (9 March 2021): 145–60. <https://doi.org/10.1163/25424246-04010008>.

²⁰⁶ Macairan, 'Bishops on Sedition: Truth Shall Set Us Free'.

²⁰⁷ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

²⁰⁸ Affatato. 'Duterte and the God - Avenger'

²⁰⁹ Affatato. 'Duterte and the God - Avenger'

²¹⁰ Affatato. 'Duterte and the God - Avenger'

Duterte's violent rhetoric illustrates his efforts to present himself as the 'unyielding' brave hero who will save the nation from the drug users and distributors. The selected speeches are below:

July 25th, 2016: "There will be **no letup** in this campaign. **Double your efforts, triple them if need be. We will not stop** until the last drug, Lord, the last financier and the last pusher have surrendered or put behind bars or **below the ground if they so wish.**"

August 8th, 2016: "And frankly, one of the things that really prompted me was at the urgings of, uh, President Ramos. We will see himself as a matter of fact. Knew what was going on, and he came to me repeatedly and said, you run so that you'll have a President from Mindanao and **one who can save this nation.** The President is here."

August 26th, 2016: "**I will not hesitate** to order the armed forces of the Philippines. **Kill them, destroy them...**"

April 6th, 2017: "...if you bring in drugs into my city, **I will kill you.** And if you destroy our daughters and sons, **I will kill you.**"

"I said, **do not fuck with my country with drugs. I will destroy you.** That's why I said **I declared war.** I did not order the police to operate. I said, go to war, arrest all of them."

March 29th, 2017: "**Who will answer for them?** And in my time, I get the **responsibility to go after the criminals** and to **solve the problem.**"

"**If that is the only thing that I will, I can do, or I, I, I will do** in this lifetime as president, I will do. Just **do not destroy my country.**"

July 24th, 2017: "**I do not intend to loosen the leash** in the campaign or lose the fight against illegal drugs. Neither do intend to preside over the destruction of the Filipino youth by being timid and tentative in my decisions..."

"You harm the children in who's hands, the future of this republic is entrusted, and **I will hound you to the very gates of hell.**"

September 8th, 2017: "I repeated that warning when I was president. 'Do not destroy my country because **I will kill you.** Do not destroy the youth of the land because still **I will kill you.**' Now find me a law, local, international, be it in Somalia

or Yemen that says it is illegal to say those words, 'I will kill you if you destroy my country and the youth of my land'..."

Discourses such as "no letup", "double your efforts, triple if need be", "we will not stop", "I will not hesitate", "kill them... destroy them", "do not intend to loosen the leash", "I will hound you to the very gates of hell", and "I will kill you", exhibits his unwillingness to stand down and willingness to use any measure. These discourses are vows to the people, threats directed at the drug users and distributors, and commands for the PNP. The directness of the speech shows his efforts to present himself as the brave saviour of the nation.

These discourses are from his perspective where he places himself at the center of the war combating the drug users and distributors, no matter how dangerous the threat is. The repetition of "I will kill you" is a violent statement that displays the gangster mentality or 'the punisher'. Similarly, the statement "I will put you in the ground" is violent and it presents Duterte under the gangster mentality. It presents him as a leader that does not follow the Rule of Law and Rights of Citizens²¹¹, much like the 'social bandit'²¹².

The questioning of "who will answer for them?" and the statement "And in my time I get the responsibility to go after the criminals and to solve the problem", suggests that Duterte is the only one who will solve the problem. Accepting the 'responsibility' to "go after the criminals" here demonstrates him as the hero and saviour after he built the threat as extreme and existential. The use of 'responsibility' adds to his authority to act and take any measures regarding the threat.

These discourses illustrate the power to combat the existential threat. It displays him as a 'strong leader' addressing the problems in the country no matter the cost or extent of the threat through extreme force. These speeches are aimed at building trust and hope amongst the people towards Duterte himself, after he compounded their fear. In doing so, it legitimizes his position as president and nourishes his power in this situation²¹³.

Extra-legal Mentality

²¹¹ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

²¹² Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

²¹³ Based on Balzacq, Thierry. *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*; Bourdeu 1991

These speeches exhibit acceptance of extra-legal measures and to legitimize the EJK. It presents him as the leader who is willing to bend the law to acquire justice. The selected speeches are below:

December 7th, 2016: "Actually the drugs is war now going on down a lot, but until the last day of my term, Until the last pusher is out of the street, until the drug lord, the big ones are killed, the policy will remain. Do not destroy my country, and that is why I repeat my orders. **That's the reason why I declared a state of lawlessness**, so that I can call upon you the armed forces to help the civilian sector, to help the police...the very ones who would be preventing the crimes, solving the crimes, arresting the criminals are themselves into it."

January 19th, 2017: "**I will do everything. I will not allow my country to go to the dogs. And I will do everything to preserve my country, the Filipino people.** That is my job. That is the job of General De La Rosa. That is your task, your mandate and you will have everything you need. **Not worry about legal cases. I will protect you.**"

March 29th, 2017: "**I and I alone will be liable for that.** They're just obeying my order. So, any policeman or military man charged for killing these bastards, **they will have my protection.**"

"Was any problem, any problem? Do, do not, **do not think of politics when you are in front of me.**"

"...let me be very frank, **I am beyond politics.** ...I do not want to be tainted."

Duterte "declared a state of lawlessness" to help the police prevent and solve crimes. In addition, he exempted the police for the killings as he stated "...not to worry about legal cases. I will protect you", and "I alone will be liable for that", repeatedly. These statements suggest that the police have the approval to conduct their missions as they see fit since a "state of lawlessness" is declared. These statements approve the use of extreme force and legitimize EJKs.

Concurrently, he stated that he is "beyond politics" to present himself accessible to the people and to confront him if there are any problems. Suggesting that he can take care of their problems no matter the extent. Thus, exhibiting the saviour and strong leader character with compassion.

The promises of protection and extra-legal measures show his attempt to present his commanding personality in taking charge to combat the existential threat. It has a

positive orientation towards the campaign as he illustrates the future as something the people have control over, with Duterte at the center with the solutions to their problems²¹⁴.

These speeches show Duterte accepting responsibility for the extra-legal measures amid criticism on his anti-drugs campaign and human rights violations. It shows him stating that he brings solutions despite the pushback. Thus, presenting himself as a hero since he constructed an existential threat and induced fear. As Kusaka's 'social bandit morality' goes, the Filipino society have an understanding that the law is nothing more than a weapon of the elite²¹⁵, therefore when a leader exuding this 'social bandit' like persona offers to bring solutions and restore the nation by bending the law, this phenomenon is supported.

The idea of extra-legal measures after constructing an existential threat introduces the conclusion that the drug problem can only be taken care of through extra-legal measures. In addition, these speeches where he directs the police and speaks out over his responsibility conveys the idea that he is the only one willing to take these measures to bring solutions. He aimed to imply that he is willing to kill and humiliate in the name of the Philippines and the people, despite the pushback²¹⁶. This is to gain and sustain support for himself throughout the anti-drug campaign.

Furthermore, these discourses show that Duterte builds on this idea to take charge and to flaunt himself doing so with bravado and compassion to take down the threat he constructed. It builds the hero and strong leader narrative to inspire hope amongst the people and to sustain his power.

3.4 Conclusion

It is evident that Duterte presented himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' to the people through discourses that derive cultural and societal elements to form the narrative. The narrative of 'hero' and 'strong leader' to save the country and people, is to obtain and sustain his power and gain legitimacy for his actions. Consequently, it would add more weight to his

The discourses illustrate how Duterte used references to his own understanding of God to nourish his position as president by introducing the idea that it was under 'God's will' that he was in power. Duterte aimed to cultivate support from Christians by presenting

²¹⁴ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope'.

²¹⁵ Kusaka, 'Bandit Grabbed the State: Duterte's Moral Politics'

²¹⁶ Putra and Darwis. 'The Paradoxical Security Implications of Duterte's War on Drugs: Emergence of a Domestic Security Dilemma'

himself as a 'hero' approved by God to "save the nation". Hence, he utilized religious sentiments to gain legitimacy for the EJK by presenting the idea that it was 'God's will'.

The 'saviour' and 'strong leader' characteristics are presented through a combination of bravado, gangster-like charm, commanding personality, and compassion. Duterte's presents an unwillingness to "back down", which he displays through violent rhetoric such as by stating "I will kill you" repeatedly. He threatened the drug users and distributors after he built them up as extremely dangerous, hence his attitude towards combating them head on exudes bravado. It presents him as 'the punisher' and the 'father figure' taking on the existential threat no matter the cost.

In addition, Duterte accepted responsibility for the repercussions of the extra-legal measures, if there would be any in the future. He promised the PNP that he would protect them and make himself available to the people as he was "beyond politics". These discourses present him as a hero willing to take on drug users and pushers despite the effects on him. It presents him as a 'strong leader' with a commanding personality willing to resort to any measure for the country and the people. Such discourses are aimed at inspiring hope and support for himself, and to justify the EJK.

Together these discourses create the 'hero' and 'strong leader' narrative. Consequently, the narrative adds more weight to Duterte's words contributing to the securitization of drug users and distributors²¹⁷. These discourses build trust for Duterte through religious sentiments and as the 'saviour' and 'strong leader' willing to take on these measures for the country and the people. These discourses justify the use of EJK as it presents the idea that extra-legal measures are required. After building up the existential threat- and with it, fear, and anxiety-Duterte introduces himself as the 'hero' with 'miraculous' solutions with the aim to inspire hope, completing the apocalyptic narrative.

²¹⁷ Based on Balzacq, Thierry. *'Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve'*.

4 Chapter Four: Conclusion

The Philippines went through a bloody anti-drug campaign resulting in an overwhelming number of lost lives, shifting their politics and society for the coming years. The EJKs were conducted under the guise of safety and protection of the people of the country, to rid the country of the drug problem by exterminating those who were associated with them. The drug users and distributors were presented as an existential threat to the country, and it was the base for the justification and legitimization of these killings. The notion of the campaign violates their Right to Life and is a Crime Against Humanity²¹⁸, regardless of guilt or not.

This research examined how Rodrigo Duterte securitized the drug users and distributors and legitimized EJK under the War on Drugs in the Philippines. I aimed to understand how Duterte framed the situation through narratives specific to the Philippines to legitimize the use of extreme security measures. Thus, I argue that Duterte constructed an apocalyptic narration of the situation by framing: the drug users and distributors as a great 'evil' targeting the 'good' people of the Philippines and the survival of the country; and himself as the 'hero' and 'strong leader' to 'miraculously' save the nation. This act displays the co-constitutive relationship between the securitizing actor, threat narrative, and context²¹⁹. I argue that in doing so, each of these narratives legitimized the EJKs.

The drug users, distributors, and 'the people', were referred to and framed based on a series of juxtapositions of signs and qualities that place them at opposite ends of the scale of 'good' and 'evil'. Thus, constructing the narrative of 'good vs evil'. The drug users and distributors were framed as mentally unstable with animal instincts and dismissed through coarse language. Whereas 'the people' were framed as 'vulnerable' and 'innocent' in contrast to the other. Duterte constructed a narrative where the evil was so dangerous that they threaten the very survival of the country by exaggerating the extent of the threat. Thus, constructing an existential threat. I argue that these narratives were to legitimize EJK as an acceptable security measure to defeat the threat as they declare the threat existential.

Then, Duterte presented himself as a 'hero' and 'strong leader' through discourses exhibiting bravado and a gangster-like charm, framing himself as the saviour to defeat the great threat by any length such as extra-legal measures. Duterte relied on his 'social

²¹⁸ Gallagher, Raffle, and Maulana, 'Failing to Fulfil the Responsibility to Protect: The War on Drugs as Crimes against Humanity in the Philippines'.

²¹⁹ Based on Husymans, 'Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, on the Creative Development of Security Agenda in Europe '.

bandit' and 'Punisher' reputation, to present the 'hero' narrative. Concurrently, Duterte utilized the majority Christian community's support by relying on 'God's will' to legitimize his position and his actions. By nourishing and sustaining his already existing power through these narratives his actions and speeches against the drug users and distributors have more weight and more authority. I argue that Duterte employed the hero narrative for this purpose.

Concurrently, these characterizations of the actors contribute to the securitization process, based on position and power. Labels have consequences on those who bear them²²⁰. It contributes to how one is perceived in society which dictates the treatment they receive from others. Since this thesis is focusing on how they were framed instead of how this frame was perceived, I argue that Duterte used these frames to influence how they would be treated thereby legitimizing the EJK. In doing so, he brought on a self-empowering narrative for himself.

For instance, Duterte defines himself as a hero and strong leader through which he gained power and more authority. 'The people' are framed as vulnerable and innocent, thus deserving to be saved, placing a priority on their lives. Whereas the drug users and distributors are framed as a threat based on human dignity, regarding them as underserving and discriminating on their right to life²²¹. Presenting the roles attached to these frames²²². It shows how the context and speech act can co-constitute when securitizing, how it can fuel each other.

Therefore, through polarizations, exaggerations of the danger, and heroic interventions, Duterte managed to present an apocalyptic narration of the situation. I argue that the narratives of 'good vs evil' and exaggerated danger creating an existential threat are aimed to induce fear and anxiety in the society, to make room for a 'miraculous' solution through Duterte as the 'hero' and 'strong leader', to hope. These narratives securitize the drug users and distributors, thereby legitimizing the EJK.

Limitations and Future Pathways

This thesis was exploratory, as the aim was to figure out the main narratives that were aimed at securitizing the drug users and distributors and legitimizing the EJK.

²²⁰ Vuori 'Religion Bites: Falungong, Securitization/ Desecuritization in the People's Republic of China'

²²¹ Wilhelmsen, 'How Does War Become a Legitimate Undertaking? Re-Engaging the Post-Structuralist Foundation of Securitization Theory'.

²²² Based on Smith's discussion of the roles of the protagonist and antagonist's power and relationship due to the frames attached to them: Smith, '*Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez.*'

Therefore, the research assessed the narratives in a nutshell. The research would benefit from expanding and analysing more speeches, perhaps with the use of an algorithm. Additionally, it would benefit from including the speeches that were in Tagalog expanding the research to understand the influences from the Philippine culture and society to construct the narratives.

For future research on this topic, shifting the investigation onto studying the audience's response to these narratives will be beneficial for the topic. Such as, analysing the outcomes of these narratives like Barrera's investigations on the influence of the apocalyptic narration²²³. Re-routing the focus to investigating the stances of the different communities in the Philippines; for instance, the perceptions of the different Christian Churches and communities on the War on Drugs throughout the Duterte administration (2016-2022). Therefore, expanding the timeline can allow us to understand the influence of Duterte's discourses on these communities and the impact. Or how Duterte's discourses are based on the past discourses of the Christian Community and to what extent²²⁴.

Based on the narratives discussed in this thesis, the research could expand to investigating the perception of these narratives in different regions of the Philippines. To assess whether Duterte's discourses were perceived based on the arguments in this thesis such as inducing fear, anxiety, and hope. Curato's research took a similar approach to investigate the perception of the extent of the drug problem in the Philippines outside of the Manila²²⁵.

Overall, this research managed to provide an understanding of how such an extreme use of force can be presented as acceptable through justifications by a leader. It provides narratives employed by Duterte in a nutshell, conceptualized from the Philippine societal and cultural structures. It illustrates how these narratives from the apocalyptic narration of events thereby legitimizing the EJK. It is based on the key research discussed above; therefore, it has the potential to be expanded in the directions discussed. It displays an amalgamation of the securitization theory and the apocalyptic narration to legitimize an extreme security measure.

²²³ Barrera, *Drug War Stories and the Philippine President*; Barrera, 'Doing Dialogical Narrative Analysis: Implications for Narrative Criminology'.

²²⁴ Cornelio and Lasco. 'Morality Politics: Drug Use and the Catholic Church in the Philippines'; Cornelio and Medina, 'Christianity and Duterte's War on Drugs in the Philippines'

²²⁵ Curato, 'Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power'

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Analysed Speeches

- Duterte, Rodrigo. "Press Statement on the Philippine Illegal Drug Trade Hierarchy 7/7/2016", RTVMalacanang, July 7th, 2016, YouTube Video, 17:45,
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- Duterte, Rodrigo. "115th Police Service Anniversary (Speech) 8/17/2016", RTVMalacanang, August 17th, 2016, YouTube Video, 30:07,
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- Duterte, Rodrigo. "10th Eastern Mindanao Command Anniversary 8/26/2016", RTVMalacanang, August 26th, 2016, YouTube Video, 1:14:14,
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Duterte, Rodrigo. "2017 State of the Nation Address", RTVMalacanang, July 24th, 2017, YouTube Video, 2:50:01, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09T3RI74I3M>

Duterte, Rodrigo. "116th Police Service Anniversary (Speech) 8/9/2017", RTVMalacanang, August 9th, 2017, YouTube Video, 31:05, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa2i2VJZJhM>

Appendix A: Analysed Speeches

Date	Occasion	Location	Link
07/07/2016	Press Statement on the Philippine Illegal Drug Trade Hierarchy	President's Hall, Malacañan Palace	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXRr8lwrEOA&list=PLYaXYCcsi3zhJ9-iAAmzzmvRsTnI1wEu9&index=19
25/07/2016	State of the Nation Address 2016	Batasan Pambansa, Quezon City	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66Sw9liQB7c&list=PLYaXYCcsi3zg7tZdw_NWKZRIVy-8JAnoA&index=10
17/08/2016	115 th Police Service Anniversary	PNP Multipurpose Center, Camp Crame, QC	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjmeFYckW08
26/08/2016	10 th Eastern Mindanao Command Anniversary	Naval Station Felix Apolinario, Panacan, Davao City	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umHARhr-WWE
07/12/2016	AFP Change of Command Ceremony	Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV2McnngLZyE
19/01/2017	PNP Oath Taking Ceremony	Rizal Hall, Malacañan Palace	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ELKB_diNCg&t=2072s
29/03/2017	People's Day Celebration 2017	Socorro Oriental, Mindoro	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JM0jgVus9fk
06/04/2017	29th Annual National Convention of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines	Royce Hotel, Clark Freeport Zone, Angeles City, Pampanga	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1DZpnN3H-I
24/07/2017	State of the Nation Address 2017	Batasan Pambansa, Quezon City	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09T3RI74I3M
08/09/2017	116 th Police Anniversary Speech	Camp Crame, Quezon City	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pa2i2VJZJhM