

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

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ABSTRACT

Since his inauguration in late June 2016, Duterte has adopted "shoot-to-kill" policy for suspected criminals and drug addicts. Despite public support, the policy received growing international backlash over extra-judicial killing and mass slaughter of youth, mainly the urban poor communities. This paper attempts to analyze the process of securitization waged by President Duterte to construct a state of emergency of drugs so that extraordinary yet outrageous measures can be justified by using the Copenhagen School's securitization concept developed by Buzan, Waever, and Wilde (1998). This paper argues that President Duterte's speech acts and politicization of threats successfully build public support of harsher law enforcement on drug-related crime. Furthermore, the paper also connects the dot between the securitization of drugs as Duterte's political weapon and the disproportionate impact it has on the minority poor and vulnerable children. Using the critical application of securitization theory developed by Charett (2009), the paper concludes that the asymmetrical power relations will lead to securitizing actor maintaining its power in the expense of oppressing the marginalized voice, especially the minority poor and children population, thus de-securitization model (Hansen, 2012) is more effective in dealing drug-related crimes in the Philippines.

Keywords: Securitization of Drugs; War on Drugs; Duterte; Philippines

ABSTRAK

Sejak pelantikannya pada akhir Juni 2016, Duterte telah mengadopsi kebijakan "shoot-to-kill" untuk pelaku kriminal dan pecandu narkoba. Walaupun mendapat dukungan publik, kebijakan tersebut menerima reaksi internasional yang meningkat atas pembunuhan ekstra-yudisial dan pembantaian massal kaum muda, terutama masyarakat miskin di perkotaan. Makalah ini mencoba untuk menganalisis proses sekuritisasi yang dilakukan oleh Presiden Duterte untuk membangun keadaan darurat narkoba sehingga tindakan luar biasa namun keterlaluan dapat dibenarkan dengan menggunakan konsep sekuritisasi Copenhagen School yang dikembangkan oleh Buzan, Waever, dan Wilde (1998). Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa pidato Presiden Duterte dan politisasi ancaman berhasil membangun dukungan publik terhadap penegakan hukum yang lebih keras pada kejahatan terkait narkoba. Selain itu, makalah ini juga menghubungkan antara sekuritisasi obat sebagai senjata politik Duterte dan dampak yang tidak proporsional yang dimilikinya terhadap minoritas miskin dan anak-anak yang rentan. Dengan aplikasi kritis dari teori sekuritisasi yang dikembangkan oleh Charett (2009), makalah ini menyimpulkan bahwa hubungan kekuasaan asimetris akan menyebabkan aktor sekuritisasi mempertahankan kekuasaannya dengan mengorbankan penindasan suara yang terpinggirkan, terutama minoritas

miskin dan populasi anak-anak, sehingga model desekuritisasi (Hansen, 2012) lebih efektif dalam menangani kejahatan terkait narkoba di Filipina.

Kata kunci: Sekuritisasi Narkoba; Perang melawan Narkoba; Duterte; Filipina

Introduction

President Rodrigo Duterte's promise to kill drug dealers, addicts, and criminals successfully attracted public support in his presidential campaign which led to his landslide victory by 6.6 million votes compared to his closest rival in the 2016 election. Associating himself to Adolf Hitler, Duterte pledged to slaughter three million drug addicts and claimed the country could become a "narco-state." However, the drug problem in the Philippines may not be as bad as Duterte has portrayed. Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) reported in the 2015 Nationwide Survey that the current drug use prevalence among Filipinos aged 10 to 69 years old is at 2.3%, or an estimated 1.8 million users, much lower than Duterte's figure of three million drug addicts, showing how the statistics he used might have been flawed or exaggerated (Baldwin & Marshall, 2016).

Since the start of the "war on drugs," Duterte administration has mobilized the Philippine National Police and local governments unit to use punitive measures, engaging in extensive

door-to-door operations (Simbulan *et.al.*, 2019). The anti-drug campaign has been dubbed as "Operation Double Barrel" in which one of its major operations, the Oplan Tokhang in order to "knock and plead" drug addicts and pushers which can lead to dozens killed in just one-night operation. To date, Duterte's hardline "war on drugs" has claimed the life of 12,000 Filipinos, mostly urban poor, and at least 2,555 killings have been attributed to the Philippine National Police (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Not only the number is terrifying, but most of the killings are conducted extra-judicial or without due process in the name of eliminating drug crime where the perpetrators, be it the Philippine National Police officers or unidentified "vigilantes," enjoy impunity (Johnson & Fernquest, 2018). The campaign received international condemnation from human rights activists, international organizations, and even the International Criminal Court which begin to conduct a "preliminary examination." Despite international backlash, Duterte enjoys relatively high

popularity and support from the public. This paper attempts to answer the process of how a securitizing actor, President Duterte, subjectively assess and construct a threat, drugs, to a state-survival level so that the use of extraordinary measures can be justified even supported by society, despite the hardline policies seem to have an unprecedented impact on homicides and extrajudicial killings and disproportionately target the poor populations.

This paper argues that by using pervasive and relatable speech acts politicizing the threat of drug-related crimes, Duterte has successfully created a state of emergency and capitalized public support for his policies. Danilo Reyes (2016) dubbed the policy as a spectacle of violence, sending a message to intimidate other potential abusers in which law-abiding citizens have a sense of feeling safe knowing that the threat has been eliminated by Duterte's policies. Supporting the argument, this paper will further analyze the possible motives and impacts the policies have, that Duterte himself benefits from securitization which – as emphasized by Kennert & Eligh (2019) – is to gain prominence and reinforce his power in

politics. Even most Filipinos believe that drug-related crimes rate has decreased, however, homicides and extrajudicial killings continue to surge and have disproportionate impacts minorities, specifically among the urban poor and children (Kim *et.al.*, 2017). This paper finally attempts to make visible the power relations between Duterte, the state elites, the general Filipino middle-class, and the urban poor: their roles in securitization and how they are impacted by the campaign.

Conceptual Framework

In international relations, the concept of security is connected with the Copenhagen School as a synthesis of constructivist approach which focuses on a process-oriented conception of security instead of the materialist approaches of classical security theorists (Williams, 2003). Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde (1998) define securitization as a process of state actors transforming subjects into matters of “security” which involves an extreme version of politicization to justify the use of extraordinary means and without the normal (democratic) rules and deliberations in policy-making

The concept occupies the middle ground between the traditionalist vs wideners debate in security whereas securitization explains how non-military issues have been transformed into the security of state concerns. The school believes that threat is constructed therefore is subjective and that security issue is politicized. Thus, the concept seeks “to determine how, by whom, under what circumstances, and with what consequences a certain issue is classified as existential threats but not others” (Eriksson, 1999).

The concept central to securitization is *speech act* which has specific grammar and rhetorical structure in the attempt of framing and lifting the issue above politics. McDonald (2008) outlines four main elements of securitization through speech acts: (1) The securitizing actor who initiates the process by declaration. (2) The issue (an existential threat) that is shifted into emergency mode beyond normal politics. (3) A referent object whose survival is threatened and must be protected by extraordinary means. (4) Public acceptance to justify the use of extraordinary means. This paper will identify McDonald's four elements in analyzing Duterte's speech acts.

To prevent ‘everything’ from becoming a security issue, Buzan, Waever, and Wilde (1998) identified successful securitization to consist of three steps: (1) identification of existential threats; (2) establishing the need for an emergency action; (3) a rejection of rules which govern inter-unit relations under normal conditions. This paper will utilize a qualitative research method that will focus on analyzing speech acts by Duterte if they qualified the indicator of successful securitization.

The past research on drugs policy in Southeast Asia, notably by James Windle (2016) in Vietnam and Thailand and Yanu Widiyono (2017) in Indonesia focuses on the process and policy implication of securitization, but there are gaps in explaining who are involved and their power relations in the process, even though such explanations are necessary to understand why securitized policies tend to have disproportionate impact on certain groups. In analyzing the consequences of securitization, this paper will use a critical application of the securitization theory, countering the assumption that everyone is involved equally in the process of securitization. Even though a successful securitization requires agreement between the

securitizing actor(s) and the public, we should not neglect the power structure between the statist elite, the general public, and the perceived, thus they are playing unequal roles in securitization.

The critical application of securitization theory developed recently by Charett (2009) attempts to challenge the normative dilemma by firstly, disclosing the power that elites maintain over securitized policies, secondly, presenting the tool to counter elite utterances by seeking out dissenting or marginalized voice of securitization. This article will attempt to uncover the power structure of Duterte (and his administration), the general Filipino public, and the marginalized voice of the urban poor and the role each group has over securitization process, thus making sense on the impacts of the drug war to the urban poor.

The theory problematizes the power that elites maintain over defining security policy which excludes certain groups and ideas, resulting in negative consequences not only for the groups but also for the whole community (Wyn Jones, 1999). Securitization theory needs to be dislodged from its narrow focus on state elites by also disclosing the dissenting discourse and deneutralizing

the power that state elites have over the 'regime of truth' of security (Bigo, 2002). This paper will analyze the impact of the securitization of drugs in the Philippines not just on minority groups but also to the long term effectivity of the drug war. In the end, this paper will try to present an alternative model on securitization by taking into account the marginalized and dissenting voices.

Results and Discussions: Theorising Securitization of Drugs through Duterte's Speech Acts

"Hitler massacred three million Jews. Now, there are three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them. I would like to finish the problem of my country and save the next generation from perdition," (Villamor, 2016).

The sentence uttered by Duterte as the securitizing actor was one of the most controversial not just because of praising Hitler, but also brutal grammar and harsh rhetoric "slaughter." In another speech, Duterte vowed that under his rule fish in Manila Bay would grow fat from the bodies of drug users

and addicts (Murdoch, 2017). Just several months in his campaign, Duterte also urged people to kill drug addicts, even promised to give them medal for doing it. It is important to note that drugs and criminality were not a major national concern until his candidacy. After taking his oath inside the presidential palace, the leader spoke in a speech using vulgar and profanity words in front of a crowd of 500 people in a Manila slum:

“These sons of whores are destroying our children. I warn you, don't go into that, even if you're a policeman, because I will really kill you,” (The Guardian, 2016).

Duterte uses the framing of “destroying our children, our state” to construct drugs as an existential threat compared to another threat as his political opponent, Risa Hontiveros, said, to move attention away from poverty (Hincks, 2016). Duterte attributed declining socio-economic growth to drug addiction and drug trafficking. Moreover, Duterte also dehumanizes drug users as no more humans and that drug-related crime is the root cause of all crimes, thus they are

justified to be killed even without due process. Therefore, the threat is not the drugs *per se*, but the persons that are using and engaging in the drug business.

Duterte also deployed loaded words such as “failed-state,” “lawlessness,” or “narco-state” hyperbolizing and creating his “regime of truth” on how the state is alarmed by the plague of drugs. From his speeches, the referent object is not only the societal sector which is the security of the children, families, and communities as a whole, but also the state in economic, political, and even military (security) sector, claiming that the lawlessness (criminality) and socio-economic decline are caused by drug-related crimes.

Generally, the general Filipino public is in favor of the war on drugs and is satisfied with the measures exercised by the Duterte administration, even though they feel like the killings are not really necessary. Duterte has successfully enjoyed overwhelming support of 82% and a net satisfaction of “excellent” (+70) in an independent survey in 2019 with only 12% net dissatisfaction (Flores, 2019). The dissenting voices mostly come from activists, human rights advocates, and

those who have become victims and suffered trauma from the drug war. This interplay between securitizing actor and the acceptance from audience demonstrates a successful securitizing move.

In analyzing the process of securitization by Duterte, it is important to note that Duterte initiates his presidential term on 30 June 2016, with words “need to be addressed with urgency ... rampant sale of illegal drugs.” As the first step of securitization of drugs, Duterte signed a declaration of a “state of national emergency” which equates criminality including the use and trade of drugs to other extraordinary crimes such as bombing and terrorism which are causing lawlessness in Mindanao. The presidential proclamation orders the Philippine law enforcement officials to carry out suppression of violence including drug-related crimes “as may be permitted in the Constitution and existing laws.” (Official Gazette, 2016).

“When I become president, I will order the police to find those people [dealing or using drugs] and kill them. The funeral parlors

will be packed,” (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Duterte has continuously called for the killing of drug traffickers and drug addicts using profanity words such as “son of a bitch,” even to as far as calling for “shoot-to-kill” policy without due process to the Philippine National Police and even vigilantes, as Human Rights Watch dubbed “giving the license to permit extrajudicial killings.” Duterte has been mobilizing extraordinary measures to respond to the “emergency” of drug-related crimes. In 2017, Duterte planned a controversial move to involve the military as he calls police to be “corrupt from the core,” due to his allegation of police officer involved in the drug trade.

"I'm taking in the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and raising the issue of drugs as a national security threat so that I will call on all the armed forces to assist," (Regencia, 2017).

The Government has asserted that majority of killings have been committed by vigilantes “fed up with the current justice system.” Duterte

administration officials have always cultivated a public sentiment among Filipinos – particularly those living in high-density, poor areas affected by the drug economy – that “real” justice could only take place outside of the courtroom (Kennert & Eligh, 2019). The way Duterte justifies his anti-drug campaign calling for a life-or-death struggle against a “drug menace,” (Kine, 2017) represents the full process of securitization as Duterte rejects the past law enforcement by the court and law enforcer and calls for more extraordinary measures such as ordering military or even vigilantes to kill as well as police officer without due process.

Disclosing the Power Structure: Duterte's Power among the Filipino

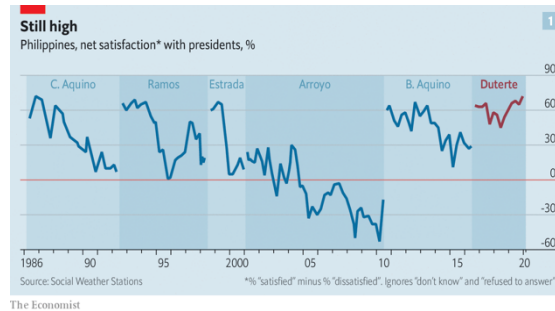
The critical securitization theory explains that a successful securitization is best explained by uncovering the power structure of the actor, therefore it is not just a mere intersubjective agreement among the subjects (Charett, 2009). Waever explicitly states that “by definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it so” (Waever, 1995). States elite due to their advantaged position over articulating security threats, the general public might

be swayed by the popular opinion or few who dissent have less power, and the marginalized community might be excluded from the process and face disproportionate impact from securitized policies.

Duterte benefited from securitizing the issue of drugs, gaining political popularity since his campaign for presidency. The ‘Dutertismo’ style has been described by a Filipino Journalist, Randy David as “pure theater” rather than the rational application of ideas to society’s problems” while the other adopted a more positive tone describing the phenomenon as an anti-elite and revolutionary “radical politics” (Labastin, 2018). Duterte’s machismo was widely described as the “punisher” and having a “reputation for toughness and honesty.” Duterte’s net satisfaction remains high at 70% as of May 2017, steadily higher compared to his predecessors according to a survey conducted by Social Weather Station (The Economist, 2017). In 2019, Duterte’s net satisfaction even reaches a new record as ‘excellent’ with +72 net satisfaction score and 82% Filipinos saying they are satisfied with Duterte’s performance, however that might change

in 2020 due to Covid-19 factor (Tomacruz, 2020).

Figure 1: Philippines' Presidents Net Satisfaction



Source: Social Weather Stations, reprocessed by The Economist

Duterte's popularity illustrates the growing wave of strongman leaders who use rhetorical coercion for the dissenting opponents. While Thompson (2016) stated that the failure of liberal democratic promises in or failure of human rights discourses led to the rise of Duterte, hereby I argue that Duterte's popularity was mainly due to his success on securitizing drug as a national emergency, earning a reputation as a tough leader who exploits the society's insecurity by creating a sense of emergency, be it through exaggerated or false statistics, his coercive rhetorics. Duterte also used authoritarian moves to intimidate political opponents or dissenting voices and awaken fascist spirit with anti-Western values to invalidate international critics (Pernia, 2019).

Duterte utilizes social media to tarnish opponents, deploying internet trolls to curb criticism, intimidating those who have not yet spoken out, and mobilized mass constituency through social media, Facebook in particular, with the use of radical rhetoric portraying a corrupt elite that coddles drug dealers and addicts. He also using judiciary to muzzle press and his political opponents, for instance, a Philippine Senator, Leila de Lima, who criticized him for extrajudicial killings was convicted of taking bribes from drug dealers (Thompson, 2016; Bernstein, 2020). Duterte is also known for dissing activists, human rights advocates, and even international bodies and figures. He literally raised middle finger to the European Union and call Obama a "son of a whore" for meddling in the

country's human rights situation (Curato & Ong, 2018).

Duterte might claim or brand himself to be the anti-elite, anti-establishment, or outsider of the politics, but his strongest support did not come from the poorest voters but rather from the "other" elites and the middle class (Thompson, 2016). Duterte has been targeting liberal and traditional business oligarchs using his bureaucratic power. In fact, he has been replacing them with a new "yellow" elite coalition – mostly from his Davao connections, for instance, Dennis Uy – who contributes to Duterte's campaign donor and support for his authority to enforce his law-and-order monopolistic narrative in exchange of preferential treatment for their company (Heydarian, 2019). Duterte selectively attacks liberal and traditional oligarchs, replacing them with his "Dutertegarchs" who supports his policies, giving him enough power to remove institutional constraint to his violent anti-drug campaign.

The power Duterte has through his bureaucratic power and monopoly of discourse has influenced the majority middle class or silenced the unheard voices from the general Filipino public. In the emergency mode of politics, a

securitizing actor plays the highest role in influencing and creating the "regime of truth" as opposed to the normal politics where more democratic bargaining could happen. Even though most Filipino – including those from the lower-class who were bought with the idea of drugs causing socio-economic problems – hated what he's doing, but they feel like it's the necessary steps to be done and willing to accept the draconian measures. The middle-class Filipino plays a major role as the majority urban population in legitimizing Duterte's cause of the drug war.

Duterte activated and exploited the agency of the precarity and insecurity of the wealthier middle-class (Ramos, 2020) by politicizing fear, especially among the workers living in urban areas where criminality and drug-related crimes are perceived as rampant and disturbing. As drug-related crimes have been associated with the urban poor, majority of the urban population which consists of a more educated and wealthier middle class welcomes the effort of Duterte to strike upon the imminent "disease" of the society. Thus, the Duterte phenomenon is not a revolt of the "anti-elite" poor, but is driven by

the angry protest of the relatively wealthier and more educated new middle class (Teehankee, 2016).

Kusaka (2017) furthers the argument on how Duterte uses “social bandit-like” morality, building a narrative on “cleaning” and shaping the poor from immorality, linking drugs as the source of other crimes and underdevelopment. Poverty and unemployment are the root causes of drug-related crimes, however Duterte successfully transformed the discourse the other way around and monopoly the definition and construction of threat. Human Rights Watch reported in 2017 by citing several news sources such as Reuters and Time magazine that there are concerns about “dubious data” Duterte used as exaggerated, flawed, or non-existent, illustrating how drug problems are not as bad as the president depicts to be.

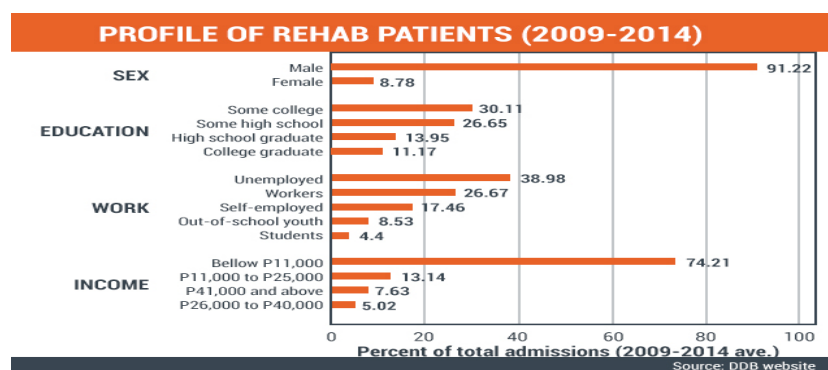
People in the low-income bracket have the least amount of capital which translated to a weak ability to influence his campaign, their dissenting voices are unheard as they are persecuted in high-intensity and without prior warning unlike those from middle- and upper-class (Jun You, 2018). The poor and slum neighborhood has been stigmatized

as the source of “trash” (drug-addicts) and that they are persecuted like animals, thus explaining why their voices are powerless. Few people filled a case against the Philippine National Police but mostly the poor can do nothing but to remain silent and accept the monopolistic discourse the Duterte administration has, that they are being “saved” from the danger of drugs.

The Impact of War on Drugs: Seeking Marginalized Voice

There has not been so much reliable and aggregated data that can be cited in terms of killings of the urban poor in Duterte’s war on drugs. However, the data from Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) from 2009-2014 indicated that an overwhelming amount of rehab patients from drugs are male from low-income families with average income below P11,000 in urban areas despite the average income of the Philippines being P22,000. In recent data by DDB in 2018, most drug abusers are unemployed (50.06%) and underage, mostly high school-educated (28.14%). From this profile, it is clear that the poor, unemployed, and the underage will be disproportionately affected by Duterte’s war on drugs.

Figure 2: Profile of Drug Patients in Rehabilitation Facilities



Source: DDB Website, reprocessed by Rappler (2016)

Drug users come from all economic classes, but the police target the poor and rarely crackdown on drug users in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods (Jun You, 2018). Police as well as vigilantes or dressing as vigilantes stormed into poverty-stricken neighborhood, rushed into houses, and without prior notice shoot or kill alleged drug addicts or drug traffickers. About 40 percent of the killings were conducted in the slums of Metro Manila and most victims were construction workers, vendors, drivers, farmers, those with low-income, or even unemployed (Coronel *et.al.*, 2019). The poor, criminals, and those who lived at the margin whom Duterte calls living in “low-lives” have their bodies laid in the streets, made into text by placards, humiliated, and paraded in public (Reyes, 2016). The cruelty doesn’t stop

there, the police benefits from killing with payments ranging from P8,000 – P15,000, even worse, they also stole goods from the already impoverished families and made them pay for each body – providing them the incentive to kill (Wells, 2017).

The government has claimed that the drug-related crime rate had decreased and that the government is “winning” the drug war. The public opinion seems to agree that criminality has dropped due to Duterte’s war on drugs. During Duterte’s first year in office (2016-2017), while all crimes drop by 9.8%, killings including murders and homicides rise by 22.75% (Talabong, 2017). The killings overwhelmingly targeted vulnerable communities: urban poor and their children. The impact of the anti-drug campaign was human rights abuses (right to due process), extrajudicial

killings, and a climate of impunity – causing homicide and murder rates to skyrocket. Instead of war on drugs, Duterte is declaring war on the urban poor, specifically those who have been accused of drug-related crimes.

Overly-securitized policies benefit and reinforce the power of state elites, while securitization tends to ignore and even has a disproportionate impact on marginalized groups, in the case of Duterte's war on drugs it's the urban poor and children (Kim *et.al*, 2017). The "rescuing" mission does not provide them protection but exposed them as targets of abuse and violence. Families are torn apart as men are usually the breadwinner of the already impoverished family, driving the family further into poverty. Many children suffered lasting harm from psychological distress, economic hardship worsens by the death of a family breadwinner, as well as the stigma in society (Conde, 2020).

Duterte's administration eliminated the people instead of asking why they are engaged in the industry in the very first place. Duterte has been able to shift the discourse of poverty to drug-related criminality and that the latter caused the former, simplistically ignore

the socio-economic reasons of people engaging in the drug business in order to demonize former President Benigno Aquino whose presidency arguably facilitated economic growth despite increasing crime rate (Regilme, 2020). By disclosing the power-relations in securitization of a certain threat, we would be able to understand that there are marginalized dissenting voices that have been silenced by the "loud and tough" campaign of war on drugs.

"Those who are rich are jailed and turned into witnesses. How come the poor are being killed? In our neighborhood...they usually kill those of us who have families – people who sell to have a little money. If people had other opportunities, they wouldn't," (Wells, 2017).

Duterte's war on drugs is an effort to reinforce his political power and legitimacy using his already strong bureaucratic power at the expense of the urban poor. State power as Reyes (2016) argued, is exercised in a spectacle of body humiliation and violence to those whose voices are unheard and often ignored. Duterte has exploited society's

political agency, especially among the middle class, by the interplay of politics of anxiety and hope (Curato, 2016), justifying his extraordinary measures in the war on drugs; killing the poor, destroying families, while ignoring socio-economic issues.

En Route to Desecuritization: Addressing Socio-Economic Issues of Drugs

The critical application of securitization theory is to overcome the normative dilemma in the theory itself that asymmetrical power-relations in the process of securitization led to disproportionate negative effects on the marginalized. The next step is to offer an alternative model by seeking the voice of the marginalized. The securitization theory offers a concept called desecuritization, which focuses on shifting an issue outside of emergency mode into normal bargaining politics to stop the use of extraordinary measures that brings counterproductive results.

The problem of drugs in the Philippines is deeply rooted in the issue of poverty as we can see in DDB statistics in Figure 2 above. It is poverty that leads to drug addiction and trafficking, instead of the other way

around as Duterte may have thought. There are strong links between poverty, inequalities, and drug use as well as fragile family bonds, psychological discomfort, low job opportunities, and few community sources (Shaw *et.al*, 2007). As DDB chairman, Dionisio Santiago, stressed, drug proliferation plagues the poor community the most, therefore if they did not get shot, they will die out of hunger or disease because they don't have money for medicine (Talabong, 2017).

While many people believe the crime rates might have fallen in the short term due to the current drug war, the long-term efficiency of the campaign is highly-doubted. As those who are trapped in the poverty cycle have no choice but to engage themselves in the business and those who are less-educated, mentally and physically deprived – either due to poverty or because of poverty cannot afford medication – are prone to substance abuse. As Duterte continuously dehumanizes drug addicts, he fails to address the socio-economic side of drugs. If he continues the oppressive measures eliminating the people, instead of the root causes of the drug-problem itself, it is indeed a war on the poor.

Hansen (2012) provides four theoretical frameworks of de-securitization. Two of them are “change through stabilization” and “policy re-articulation.” Change through stabilization involves changing identity and interest of the threat which requires changing the narrative that the drug addicts and small-scale drug dealers could also be a victim of socio-economic problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and lack of access to mental and physical health facilities. The real threat is the drug itself, people living in underdevelopment fall into prey of uncontrolled substances. As drug addicts become dependent on drugs, in most countries, they don’t have access to affordable, humane treatment because of the stigma of being drug addicts (Csete *et.al.*, 2016). The process of deconstructing the label of threat could be done through campaign or speech act. For example, the “Love Life, Fight Drugs” campaign by DDB which focuses on protecting the life against the threat of the drugs as what they dubbed as “pro-life” and “pro-poor strategy,” (Espenido, 2018).

After changing the identity of the threat, the process to deconstruct

securitization of drugs includes policy re-articulation. To achieve de-securitization, the actor (not limited to the government) should articulate that there would be a change from an oppressive approach to a more humane but effective policy. In regards to law enforcement, the society must be ensured that the due process through justice system is necessary to serve justice and is effective, therefore anti-corruption policies must be socialized. The alternative solutions should address the socio-economic issues of the poor which has been ignored by the current administration. For instance, to balance the law enforcement approach, the proposed campaign by DDB “Love Life, Fight Drugs” adopts an evidence-based and holistic approach through education, health, and community projects focusing on social and psychological approaches. Aside from supply reduction programs, the campaign also focuses on demand reduction programs which include supporting sustainable livelihood programs, civic awareness, and regional as well as international cooperation (Manalo, 2017).

However, the process towards de-securitization not only requires the government agency to articulate a more

humane policy but media to shift the discourse towards evidence-based policy and health professionals to advocate a public health perspective (Bombarda, 2018) to counter the state elites' "regime of truth". Therefore, accountable research and statistic should be encouraged as a basis for policymaking. As people from lower class are often marginalized, the middle-class and influential leaders should speak up against the unprecedented impact and trauma the war has caused the Philippines. Human rights advocates, activists, both organic and nonorganic, should educate the general Filipino public about human rights, justice, and socio-economic perspective on the drug war by seeking and amplifying the marginalized voice, the urban poor whose voices and justice have been taken away.

Conclusion

Duterte through his speech acts has successfully securitized the issue of drugs, moving out the issue from the public sphere to the emergency mode to justify his extraordinary measures. Drug-addicts and drug-dealers have been constructed as imminent threat not only to the society's well-being, but also the

security of the state. Duterte implied how the current justice system and drug policies might not be adequate to deal with the emergency the country faced, then justify extrajudicial killings of drug-addicts and drug-dealers. Duterte's war on drugs has received wide public acceptance due to his vulgar grammar and harsh rhetoric which are able to create a sense of urgency of the use of extraordinary measures.

By disclosing the power-relations, we finally understand that Duterte's bureaucratic power helps him securitizing issues to reinforce his political legitimacy. He utilized autocratic moves such as tarnishing political opponents and oppress dissenting voices. His speech acts successfully activated the agency of the more educated and wealthier middle-class by the interplay of politics of anxiety and hope. The poor who have less influence in his campaign are the victims of Duterte's drug war as they are persecuted in high intensity and do not receive the same treatment as the rich when it comes to the "shoot-to-kill" policy.

The Philippines' war on drugs has a disproportionate impact on the poor due to blatant ignorance on the socio-

economic issues which might affect the long-term effectivity of the policy as well. This paper offers de-securitization as a means to overcome the consequences of the drug war. There is a need to shift the issue out of emergency mode into the normal bargaining in the public sphere by seeking the voices of those who have become victims and whose voices have been marginalized. Duterte's notion of "just killing the idiots" instead of rehabilitating them, which he scoffs at as an idea imported from the West and is rooted in being "soft" should be challenged (Bautista, 2017). The threat is the drug itself which is exacerbated by poverty, the government needs to have a holistic approach in both supply and demand reduction by rearticulating a more humane policy if society's security – not just popularity and political legitimacy – is really what they are fighting for.

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