

# Extrajudicial Killings in the Eye of the Children

Ruel R. Parena LPT, MAPA

**Abstract**—Philippines as a Christian nation has been divided between the turn of the drive of the new government to eradicate drugs and giving chance to those who are involved in the syndicate that are rooting in the realm of the country's unexpected places. With the various media, news about the “*alleged extrajudicial killings*” are explicitly showcased that children nowadays are exposed to. It was observed that killings are blatantly shown in the newspaper, television and in the internet. It is the intention of this research to explore how children were able to know and define the “*alleged extrajudicial killings*” in their own understanding with the utilization of Collaizi's seven steps data analysis. Also, it attempts to dig down their stances in the “*alleged extrajudicial killings*” as the government embattles drugs syndicate. The results revealed the following: 1.) Extrajudicial killing is an act of injustice. 2.) Children feel sad and afraid of the killings which involved drug activities. 3.) Children want the extrajudicial killings to be stopped. 4.) Students know this information through watching news program during the evening. Whether it is good for the country however, extrajudicial killing is still inappropriate in the eyes of the children.

**Keywords**—Children, extrajudicial killings, illegal drugs, illegal syndicate

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the mouth of law it states that “No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the law. However, the prevalent killing every day we hear and see through all the forms of media gives us a thought that there might be people who are exemption to the law. The alleged “extra-judicial killings” that is rampant nowadays in the country consistently reflects the weak ruling in the country stated by Senator Leila De Lima. Accordingly, Article III, Section 14 paragraph 1 which reads, “No person shall be held to answer for a criminal offense without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws. This law promulgates that no one is allowed to judge a person criminal or not without the correct process of judiciary. It is the drive of the President and his men to eradicate the state under the illegal drugs and eventually dismantle drug syndicates that are lurking in the most unexpected places of the country. It is the will of the new government to exterminate the country in this illegal issue that roots the different crimes (i.e. snatching, killing, etc.) in the country.

The effort of the new government of the Philippines paved way by declaring war on drugs—people who are involved in the infamous industry that do not only degrades the person's value however cascades its influence to the family that

eventually affects the whole society. Yahoo.com reported almost 1,800 people had died in just seven weeks due to the Philippine's war on drugs. With this scenario the Philippines as a country was placed on the spotlight that the world took notice on the enraging war of the drugs to the syndicate coming from Mexico and China (CNN, 2016) that influences the Filipino people to engage such vice (Katigbak, 2016).

For many years our country has confronted significant denunciation from the international media, human rights activists and even in the local civil society for the causes of the deaths of political activist, journalists, and others that reproof the will of the government. Accordingly, perpetrators of the said killings are pointed to the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) (Pangilinan, 2010). Instead of enforcing the rule of law, police on the other hand, violated the constitutional right of these suspected criminals (Baguilat, 2016)

The alleged “extra-judicial killings” is explained as the slaying of people without legal or no prior judgement of the court (Lanfer, 2010). An average of 13 drug users and personalities every day in the Philippines has been slain since the administration of President Duterte began. USAID and the ASIA Foundation called this as a national epidemic considering that there are multiple people had been killed and involved in the operation (Parreno, 2010; GMA, 2016).

The Philippine National Police publicly pronounced the results of Project “Tokhang” that was initiated since July 1 up until September 6, 2016. The operation that was conducted by the uniformed men range to 15,905 operations and around 15,193 were arrested on the operations and around 1,033 were killed.

Thus, interestingly, this study is conducted to solicit the perception of the children regarding the most celebrated issue that divides the country.

This study sheds light on the stance of the children regarding the alleged extrajudicial killings. It is vital to identify how these innocent children define the unbecoming phenomena that our society dwells in. Spherically the study determined the lived experience of children who have seen the news (in any form of media) through chronicling their feelings, understanding and belief regarding the issue concerning the alleged “extrajudicial killings”.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive type of research that is Husserlian Phenomenology in particular. A descriptive type of study that deferred all possibilities, related to the cognizance of the informants to the situations, and was based on the meaning of the individual's experience (Van, 1990). Relatedly, epoche/bracketing was applied in the study, consequently, this is the initial phase in the phenomenological

---

Ruel R. Parena LPT, MAPA, PhD Student, Quiot Elementary School, Cebu City Division, Region VII, Department of Education, Philippines

reduction procedure (Moustakas, 1994). All the predetermined ideas about the phenomena were set aside or were bracketed at hand to the greatest extent possible. In this process, the researcher is able to fully comprehend the lived experience of the participants' point of view. The study used purposive samples in identifying samples, the researcher included the eligibility inclusion and exclusion criteria for the researcher to rightfully choose the subjects that are essential in the process and choose those subjects that are not necessary in the study.

In analyzing the data of this study, the researcher followed the Collaizi's Method. The following steps represent Collaizi's procedure in conducting phenomenological data analysis (Sanders, 2003; H.J. Speziale & Carpenter, 2007) that: (1) reading and re-reading of each transcript is a must to generate a sensible thought about the whole content; (2) for the individual transcript, important testimonials that relates to the phenomenon under the study should be culled; (3) meanings should be generated from the valuable statements from the informants; (4) the meanings are then segregated into different categories, groups of themes and themes; (5) the outcomes of the study should be cohesively exhausted to the phenomenon under study; (6) the basic structure of the phenomenon should be termed; and then (7) justification of the findings of the study should be pursued from the research informants to equate the researchers' descriptive results with their experiences.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study showed a very remarkable repercussion towards the issues concerning the extrajudicial killing in the present times. This portion of the study details how the children learn about the issues regarding the extrajudicial killings. Thus, how they defined and felt such activities in the country nowadays are also elaborated.

#### **Extrajudicial Killing Is An Act Of Injustice**

Children were able to identify such proposition directly to the point because of the obvious scenarios in the different media where access towards sighting videos and reports regarding this matter are easily seen. That even themselves were able to see some of their neighbors were not able to escape from the killing. A large amount of killings have been conducted at the victims' vicinity, work or in between and the shooter was masked and made a very quick escape through riding a motorcycle (Melo, 2007).

The haste of violence and killings in the present times signifies the instability and weakness of the politics in the country (Martin, 2007). Each extrajudicial killing perpetually creates a question about the rights and due process of the citizens in the country (Tatad, 2016). Thus, in the present time, EJK is always rationalized as the victim deserved to be killed (Casiño, 2016)

*"Extrajudicial killings are killing people even if you don't really know if they truly did the crime or did something that is not good to the society".*

Informant No. 21, Transcript No. 1, Line Number 33-34

*"They were killing people, innocent or not, I mean killing without evidence".*

Informant No. 3, Transcript No. 5, Line Number 5-6

*"My knowledge about EJK is that there are people who kill innocent people, once they shot the person who are suspected for a drug use and running, they put a message above the body of that person which says: 'Don't follow me, I am a drug lord,' (Druglordako, wag tularan)".*

Informant No. 10, Transcript No. 11, Line Number 15-16.

*"I don't like the idea of killing directly those people who are involved in drugs, instead, jail them and follow due process".*

Informant No. 39, Transcript No. 5, Line Number 37-38

The children really defined the alleged "extrajudicial killings" as very negative considering that there was already a practice of violence where the citizens become insensible to the fact killing is a deterrent to the delinquents and this help solve our dilemma of drugs and bring it under control (Laiko, 2016).

#### **Sad and Afraid**

Unearthing the cause of the killings basically will show us the drug related activities. The dreadful happening of those people who were salvaged and killed in the middle of their family or even outside with their friends are hanging around caused traumatic experiences to children even though they are not related to or just hearing the news. I can decipher regarding the idea of cleaning the Philippines with this problem, however, this cannot deny the fact that shoot to kill is not acceptable to Christians. Accordingly, when did fighting fire with fire actually work in solving this kind of problem (Katigbak, 2016).

Undeniably, it was actually the President who imposed the shoot-to-kill orders to the Philippine National Police (PNP) when these suspects resist, he, too, in his prerogative that even civilians can arrest and kills criminals for self-defense and citizen arrest if necessary (McKirby, 2016).

*"I feel bad; you don't have the right to kill a person".*

Informant No. 12, Transcript No. 16, Line Number 20-21.

*"I will not approve it, because "EJK" is not good, because there were lots of innocent people that were killed in the operations".*

Informant No. 8, Transcript No.11, Line  
Number 10-11.

*"I feel angry because they don't give the sinners a chance to live".*

Informant No. 14, Transcript No.18, Line  
Number 24-25

*"I feel sad because there are a lot of people die every day and there are no cases filed in the police".*

Informant No. 21, Transcript No. 25,  
Line Number 31-32

*"It makes me sad knowing the fact that those innocent persons who were killed were not able to be given justice".*

Informant No. 7, Transcript No. 9, Line  
Number 8-9

### **Extrajudicial Killings Should Be Stopped**

The Extrajudicial Killing has been experienced in the country not only during this administration. Previous administrations like Marcos, Aquino, Estrada, Arroyo and even during Pinoy EJK has been experienced however the degree and the number of killing is not par as of before (Katigbak, 2016). The news that exposed Philippines to the international arena had been taking a downward trend regarding the increase of cases the alleged extrajudicial killings (Gonzales, 2016).

Philippines has been labeled that our judicial system in terms of EJK is very expensive, lingering and very inefficient ((AHRC), 2016). There were already bulks of cases filed before the administration of Duterte. However, it increases, thus, not a single case has been resolved (Jesus, 2016).

*"I do not agree about allowing EJK because it is injustice, it is not fair. People lose their opportunity to continue their lives and fulfill their dreams because they are killed without proper trial. I am afraid if my family or the family of my friends will be one of the victims of that".*

Informant No. 17, Transcript No. 21, Line  
Number 25-26

*"I think they should be jailed first because if they are killed directly, I think there will be lots of family who will lose loved ones".*

Informant No. 13, Transcript No. 17, Line  
Number 22-23

*"Don't kill, stop EJK. Catch them first so that they will not do it again, they will learn how to keep away from drugs".*

Informant No. 21, Transcript No. 25, Line  
Number 31-32

*"It looks like that they don't know justice to those civilians. They kill directly without knowing if they really are drug pushers, or users. This should be stopped".*

Informant No. 36, Transcript No. 25, Line  
Number 45-46

*"This is not good, this should be end EJK. They should not kill, it is better that they will prove that they are drug users and sellers".*

Informant No. 2, Transcript No. 6, Line  
Number 3-4

### **Watching news and internet accessed students to know this information**

The easy access of the cheap internet in the community allows students to be informative regarding the extrajudicial killings. The news flashed in the newsfeed in their facebook accounts give a direct material where they are able to identify the happenings within the society. Another agent that gives a factual information regarding EJK is the news programs that reports morbid reality of the killings every day.

News program like TV Patrol, 24 Oras and the likes are the common news portal that the children watched while waiting for their favorite series in television. Also, in prints, still children are able to take notice news in the newspapers such as in the local or in the national newspapers. Children are not novice regarding social phenomenon, unlike the previous generations, where information are monopolized and the access towards these news are limited.

*"I got this news in TV and Facebook."*

Informant No. 18, Transcript No. 11,  
Line Number 27-28

*"Well heard it from the radio while I was sweeping the floor at home."*

Informant No. 48, Transcript No. 21, Line  
Number 69-70

*"I got it in newspaper and radio. Also, my parents told me about these happenings."*

Informant No. 30, Transcript No. 16, Line  
Number44-45

*"Our radio made me aware about extrajudicial killings, and I listen 99.5 too."*

Informant No. 28, Transcript No. 17, Line  
Number 40-41

*"My Lolo is buying newspaper every day, that's why I knew all these, also we watched TV Patrol every night"*

Informant No. 1, Transcript No. 5, Line  
Number 1-2

*"I got this information because I watched  
news, 24 Oras in our neighbor every night".*

Informant No. 50, Transcript No. 17, Line  
Number -73-73

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The rampant extrajudicial killings were viewed by the children as negative solution in addressing the issues about the lingering illegal drug dealings in the country. Children took notice how valuable life is, that everyone should be given a chance to those people wanting such. As a country that respects life, children were able to define injustice in the form of killing defenseless suspects.

#### V. IMPLICATION

The core phenomenon raises the question whether extrajudicial killing is a good solution in the eyes of the law in addressing this unruly characteristic in judging citizens that were involved in drug dealings all over the country. With the solution in resolving such problem, in the eyes of the children, it is still life that matters the most. The mean does not justify the end thus; killing is an act of immorality. The preservation of life that the children wanted to reveal in their statements presage that no one is allowed to take the life of the other people without due process. Also, people do not have any hold on what media can offer to its viewers, empirically, it still depends on the perception of the viewers of as to how they take or interpret the news. Nevertheless whether it is good or bad publicity for the children, what truly counts as the basis for judgment in such phenomenon is the set of values of the viewers. Extrajudicial killings are still inappropriate in the eyes of the children.

In observance of reflexivity in qualitative research, I would like to declare my biased understanding regarding the subject matter of this research. Thus, I declare my own point of perspective that my subjectivity to this circumstance prompted me to be careful in handling the thoughts that the informants gave to further the success of this study. This is to solicit stances that are paralleled to my stances. It is the best regard of this study to provide information purely with what the children want to reveal as they were able to observe the rampant extrajudicial killings every day in our present times.

As a researcher, I was able to gain insights along the process of the conduct of this research. Children nowadays are more active and aware as to the happenings in the country due to the easy access of the multimedia. Contrary to the previous generation wherein information were monopolized and the access towards this news and prints were sometimes inaccessible. We cannot blame the ignorance of the children in terms of how they perceived the actions of the people they look up to for what matters the most in their mind are the values instilled by the family. Giving weigh to life is a precedence and an anchor as to what the church has influence these young minds. In the process, children still need guidance in understanding what they see and read in the media may it

be in the internet or what they see and read in the news. Parents can modify the thoughts of the children, enlighten them of what is confusing and correct them of what is misunderstood. Parental guidance is still highly advised.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] (AHRC), A. H. (2016). Summary and Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines. *United Nations Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review of the Philippines*, 3rd Cycle, 27th Session.
- [2] Baguilat, T. (2016, September 23). *newsinfo.inquirer.net*. Retrieved October 12, 2015, from [newsinfo.inquirer.net: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/794846/look-into-extrajudicial-killings-under-duterte-congress-pressed#ixzz4M2DA1eeK](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/794846/look-into-extrajudicial-killings-under-duterte-congress-pressed#ixzz4M2DA1eeK)
- [3] Casiño, T. (2016, September 19). *Confronting Extrajudicial Killings under Duterte*. Retrieved September 30, 2016, from [www.rappler.com: http://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/146642-confronting-extrajudicial-killings-duterte](http://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/146642-confronting-extrajudicial-killings-duterte)
- [4] GMA. (2016, September 18 18). *PNP Killed 1, 140 drugs suspect since July*. Retrieved October 14, 2016, from <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/: http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/581817/news/nation/npn-killed-1-140-drug-suspects-since-july>
- [5] Gonzales, J. (2016, September 9). *www.abs-cbn.news*. Retrieved October 14, 2016, from [http://news.abs-cbn.com: http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/14/16/why-some-funeral-parlors-are-not-raking-in-profits-from-drug-killings](http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/07/14/16/why-some-funeral-parlors-are-not-raking-in-profits-from-drug-killings)
- [6] H.J. Speziale and D. R. Carpenter . (2007). *Qualitative Research in Nursing: Advancing the Humanistic Imperative*, . 4th Edition Philadelphia, Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins.
- [7] Jesus, J. L. (2016, August 12). *PNP exec admits: Not one case of extrajudicial killing solved*. Retrieved September 25, 2016, from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/805693/npn-exec-admits-not-one-case-of-extrajudicial-killing-solved>
- [8] Katigbak, T. (2016, August 10). *www.philstar.com*. Retrieved October 12, 2016, from <http://www.philstar.com/opinion/2016/08/1611958/n0-extrajudicial-killings: http://www.philstar.com/opinion/2016/08/1611958/n0-extrajudicial-killings>
- [9] Laiko. (2016, October 8). *www.cbcpnews.com*. Retrieved October Friday, 2016, from [www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?=82464: www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?=82464](http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?=82464: www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?=82464)
- [10] Lanfer, A. (2010). Extrajudicial Killings- A Human Rights Crisis. *OBSERVER: A Journal on threatened Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines* Volume 2.
- [11] Martin, G. E. (2007 ). Testimony of G Eugene Martin, U.S. Institute of Peace executive Director of the Philippine Facilitation Project, before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs. *Extrajudicial Killings in the Philippines: Strategies to End the Violence*.
- [12] McKirdy, E. (2016, September 18). *Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte: Public "can kill" criminals*, CNN. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://edition.cnn.com: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/06/asia/duterte-drug-dealers-lethal-force-vigilantism/>
- [13] Melo, e. a. (2007). Report on Independent Commission to Address Media and Activist Killings. *Melo Report*.
- [14] Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Chapters. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>
- [15] Pangilinan, C. D. (2010). The Dispute Over Extrajudicial Killings: The Need To Define Extrajudicial Killings As State Sponsored Acts .
- [16] Pareno, A. A. (2010). Report on the Philippine Extrajudicial Killings (2001-August 2010). *USAID and Asia Foundation Report*.
- [17] Sanders, C. (2003). Application Of Colaizzi's Method: Interpretation of an auditable decision trail bby a novice researcher. . *Contemporary Nurse Journal* , 14 (3), 292-302. <https://doi.org/10.5172/conu.14.3.292>
- [18] Tatad, F. (2016, July 10). *What do you tell your child about these killings?* . Retrieved Setember 15, 2016, from <http://www.manilatimes.net: http://www.manilatimes.net/what-do-you-tell-your-child-about-these-killings/272920/>
- [19] Van, M. M. (1990). Research Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy. *State University of New York Press*.



**Ruel R. Parena, LPT** is a reading and language teacher of Quiot Elementary School in Cebu City, Philippines. He is a Licensed Professional Teacher since April 10, 2010. He earned his degree in Public Administration at Cebu Normal University and currently pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy in Education Major in Research and Evaluation in the same school.

He debut in research last 2015 and was able to produced researches pertaining to evaluation and action researches in education. He is also a speaker in various topics for Faculty Development in their school during in-service trainings. He chaired Value-Laden Professional Circle (VLPC) a non-government organization which focuses on Youth Development in Cebu City since 2012-2014 respectively.