

Assassinations in the Philippines: Pre and Post Election of Rodrigo Duterte



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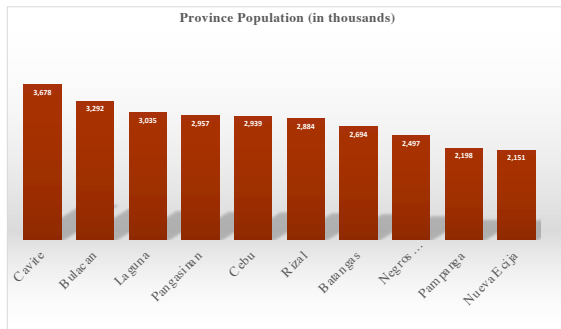


BACKGROUND

Filipino President, Rodrigo Duterte first served as mayor of Davao, a city in the southern part of the country. He had a legacy of creating a clean and efficient city where he “crushed street crime and humiliated corrupt officials.” In Davao, it was also rumored that Duterte operated a death squad that killed approximately 1,000 people, but he denies this allegation. After his election as president, Duterte’s claim to political ‘fame’ was declaring war on *shabu* (a cheap variant of crystal meth).. Four months after his election, on October 26th, 2016, Duterte made a television appearance in which he waved a stack of papers, a so-called ‘hit list’, and proclaimed “this list of names ... is the drug industry in the Philippines.” He also claimed that about 3 million Filipinos were drug addicts, and that he would be happy to kill them. This ‘hit list’ would contain names of people from all walks of life in the Philippines, including police officers and village officials whom Duterte called corrupt. (1)

METRICS

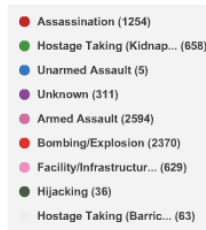
- How are we determining changes in violence types and levels?
 - Number of attacks (assassinations) before versus after election
- We used data from 2014-2018
 - Duterte took office May 30th, 2016
 - BEFORE ELECTION: January 1st, 2014 → May 29th, 2016
 - AFTER ELECTION: May 30th, 2016 → December 31st, 2018
- BEFORE ELECTION: 144 total incidents, 60 assassinations
- AFTER ELECTION: 169 total incidents, 81 assassinations



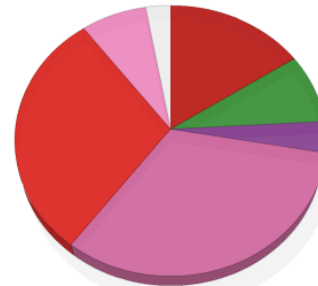
We chose to focus our research on the 10 most populous provinces in the Philippines, represented above.

GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE (GTD)

- The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is an open-source database comprised of terrorist events from around the world since 1970 (2)
- Attack Type Variable
 - Assassination: “primary objective is to kill one or more specific, prominent individuals. Usually... military officers, government officials, celebrities” (3)



All terrorist attacks in the Philippines, filtered by attack type, since 1970 as recorded in the GTD. (2)



RESEARCH QUESTION

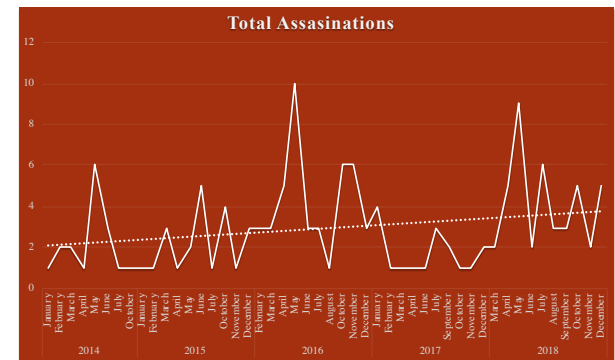


President Duterte in 2020. (4)

- Did the election of Rodrigo Duterte as president of the Philippines cause an increase in the number of assassinations within the country?
- We hypothesize that if the election of Duterte caused him the ability to assassinate adversaries based on his ‘hit list’, then we should see an increase in the number of assassinations on political figures in the Philippines after Duterte’s election in relation to before.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

We found that before Duterte took office, 41.67% of all recorded incidents for the given time period were assassinations. After Duterte took office, 47.93% of all recorded incidents were assassinations. This is a **15.02% increase in assassinations** after Duterte took office as compared to before. Another point of note is that May of 2016 shows a **spike** in assassinations, with 10 total assassinations. May 2016 was the election month of President Rodrigo Duterte.



All assassinations in the Philippines from 2014 to 2018, filtered by month. Includes a trend line depicting increase in assassinations.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

In addition to our quantitative findings, we also researched each assassination incident committed by an “unknown” perpetrator extensively. Through our review of relevant news articles in the GTD both before and after Duterte’s election, we found notable trends. In pre-Duterte content, there was no mention of Duterte in any incident news articles or GTD descriptions. There was also no mention of politically motivated assassinations by the state itself. In post-Duterte content, there were 5 incidents and GTD descriptions that explicitly mention Duterte. Some of these assassination victims were connected to the drug trade. Other victims have allegations against them by Duterte, and one victim was mentioned on Duterte’s ‘hit list.’

REFERENCES

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